



**TURUN
YLIOPISTO**
UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU

Managing planned organizational change

A closer look at Change Organizations,
Change Management Practices and
Organizational Change Capability

Saara Karasvirta



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MANAGING PLANNED ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

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Change Management Practices and
Organizational Change Capability

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*For all the strong women –
may we know them, may we be them, may we raise them.*

*For all those who paved the way,
and for all those who will come after.*

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ABSTRACT

Change has become a defining feature of modern life. Over the past decades, many authors have noted that the pace of change is steadily increasing. Recent global events – such as the COVID-19 pandemic, political upheavals, environmental challenges, and technological disruptions – show that change affects societies, nature, organizations, and individuals ubiquitously. Long-term trends such as digitalization, demographic shifts, globalization, climate change, and new technologies continue to transform our world rapidly. Some changes are predictable and evolve over time, while others appear suddenly and unexpectedly. In some views, change is exceptional – something that happens only at certain times. In others, change is the normal condition of organizational life, with societies, individuals and organizations constantly adjusting and realigning.

Although change can be contextualized in many ways, this dissertation focuses on organizational change. Organizations change for several reasons. They may seek to improve performance, remain competitive, respond to crises, adopt new technologies, or adapt to market or regulatory shifts. Consequently, the study of organizational change has produced a wide range of theories and approaches. Some theories explain why change happens by examining drivers such as internal power dynamics, leadership decisions, technology, markets, or crises. Some theories examine how change unfolds, emphasizing the step-by-step processes, events, and interactions through which change becomes reality, while other theories describe the nature of change, distinguishing between, e.g., gradual and continuous change, large-scale transformation, or carefully planned and structured change.

Despite the wealth of research, organizations continue to struggle with change. Many change initiatives fail to achieve their goals, and there is no single proven recipe that guarantees successful change. Existing change management approaches can be confusing or even contradictory, leaving organizations with a wide array of options but little clarity about which methods to choose. As organizations face increasing complexity and multiple concurrent changes, the ability to manage change effectively has become essential for survival and success. Consequently, the topic of organizational change is a highly contemporary subject of research.

As a dissertation's scope is limited, this dissertation focuses on planned organizational change, meaning the intentional efforts that organizations undertake

to move toward a desired future state. Planned change is deliberate; it is designed and managed through models, frameworks, and structured practices.

Many empirical advances depict specific contexts where organizations are managing distinct planned change initiatives or specific types of planned changes. Examples of these are, e.g., studies examining planned change management in mergers and acquisitions, IT system implementations, hybrid work/workplace changes, circular economy change or digital transformation. This dissertation, however, takes an integrative angle by examining how large companies manage planned change above and beyond distinct planned change initiatives. Consequently, this dissertation studies *how large companies manage planned change in general, beyond individual planned change initiatives* (e.g., change programs, projects etc.).

In this dissertation, research was carried out via three themes and, consequently, three articles. The first article explores who is responsible for planned change management in large companies. As existing planned change theories seem to partly overlook the roles of individuals, teams, and networks dedicated to planned change management, the first part of the dissertation examines what kinds of “change organizations” (networks, teams and individuals) dedicated to planned change management exist in large companies. The second article examines what kinds of change management practices are used in planned change management across industries. In parallel, it studies how change management practices relate to change management models. The third article adopts a wider perspective by empirically studying organizational change capability (OCC). Although the concept of OCC is recognized as important, current definitions are vague and mostly theoretical. The third article therefore explores what large organizations themselves consider as the key elements of organizational change capability.

This dissertation draws on principles of engaged scholarship by involving practitioners early in the research process to ensure the findings are both academically grounded and practically meaningful. Applying an engaged scholarship approach, this dissertation’s research questions are explored through a qualitative multiple case study involving eleven large companies in Finland. A total of 33 executives, managers, and specialists dedicated to planned change management in their respective organizations were interviewed.

This dissertation’s main contribution is in disclosing, via an empirically grounded approach, how large companies manage planned organizational change in general – beyond specific planned change initiatives. As regards more specific theoretical contributions, this dissertation contributes to theorizing on planned change management, the literature on change management practices as well as theorizing on organizational change capability, via its three articles. Furthermore, based on the findings of this dissertation, an empirically grounded framework for developing organizational change capability in planned change management is presented. Using this approach, planned change management may be analyzed and developed in organizations – beyond specific change initiatives.

KEYWORDS: organizational change, change management, planned change, organizational change capability

TURUN YLIOPISTO

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Jo vuosikymmenten ajan tutkijat ovat todenneet, että muutoksen vauhti kasvaa ja kiihtyy. Viimeaikaiset globaalit tapahtumat kuten COVID-19 -pandemia, geopoliittiset mullistukset, ympäristö- ja ilmastohaasteet sekä teknologinen disruptio osoittavat, että muutos vaikuttaa yhteiskuntiin, luontoon, organisaatioihin ja yksilöihin kaikkialla. Pitkän aikavälin trendit kuten digitalisaatio, väestörakenteen muutokset, globalisaatio, ilmastonmuutos ja uudet teknologiat muokkaavat maailmaamme nopeasti. Osa muutoksista on ennakoitavissa ja kehitty hitaammin, kun taas toiset muutokset ovat äkillisiä ja odottamattomia. Joidenkin näkemysten mukaan muutos on poikkeuksellista, kun taas toisen katsannon mukaan muutos on normaali tila, jossa organisaatiot, yksilöt ja yhteiskunnat jatkuvasti mukautuvat ja suuntautuvat uudelleen.

Vaikka muutosta voidaan tarkastella monista viitekehyksistä katsoen, tämä väitöskirja keskittyy muutokseen, joka tapahtuu organisaatioiden kontekstissa. Organisaatiot muuttuvat useista syistä. Ne voivat pyrkiä parantamaan suorituskykyään, säilyttämään kilpailukykyänsä, vastaamaan kriiseihin, soveltamaan uusia teknologioita taikka sopeutumaan markkina- tai sääntelymuutoksiin. Organisaatiomuutoksen tutkimus onkin tuottanut laajan valikoiman lähestymistapoja ja teorioita. Osa teorioista pyrkii selittämään miksi muutos tapahtuu tarkastelemalla sen taustalla olevia tekijöitä kuten sisäisiä valtasuhteita, päätöksentekoa, teknologiaa, markkinoita tai kriisejä. Jotkut teoriat puolestaan tarkastelevat sitä, miten muutos etenee – korostaen vaiheittaista prosessia, tapahtumia ja vuorovaikutuksia, joiden kautta muutos konkretisoituu. Toiset teoriat edelleen kuvaavat muutoksen luonnetta, käsitellen esimerkiksi asteittaisia ja jatkuvia muutoksia, transformaatioita sekä suunniteltua muutosta.

Laajasta tutkimusperinteestä huolimatta organisaatiot kamppailevat muutosten kanssa. Monet muutoshankkeet epäonnistuvat tavoitteissaan eikä ole olemassa yhtä todistetusti toimivaa lähestymistapaa, joka varmistaisi muutoksen onnistumisen. Olemassa olevat muutoshallinnan ja muutosjohtamisen mallit voivat myös olla osittain ristiriitaisia. Organisaatioiden kohdatessa kasvavaa kompleksisuutta ja useita päällekkäisiä muutoksia, kyky hallita ja johtaa muutosta tehokkaasti on muodostunut elintärkeäksi organisaatioiden selviytymiselle ja menestykselle. Siksi organisaatiomuutoksen tutkimus onkin erittäin ajankohtainen aihe.

Tämä väitöskirja keskittyy organisaatioiden suunnitellun muutoksen (planned change) hallintaan ja johtamiseen. Suunniteltu muutos on tietoista; sitä suunnitellaan, hallitaan ja johdetaan mallien, viitekehysten ja rakenteisten käytäntöjen avulla. Merkittävä määrä empiiristä tutkimusta on tarkastellut tilanteita, joissa organisaatiot hallitsevat ja johtavat yksittäisiä suunniteltuja muutoshankkeita tai tietyn tyyppisiä suunniteltuja muutoksia. Tällaisia ovat esimerkiksi muutoksen hallinta ja johtaminen yritysostoissa ja fuusioissa, IT-järjestelmämuutoksissa, hybridityötä koskevissa muutoksissa, kiertotaloussiirtymissä tai digitaalisessa transformaatioissa. Edeltävä tutkimus selvittää suunnitellun muutoksen hallintaa ja johtamista tietyn muutoshankkeen tai -tyypin yhteydessä. Tämä väitöskirja ottaa kokonaisvaltaisen näkökulman ja tarkastelee sitä, miten suuret yritykset hallitsevat ja johtavat suunniteltua muutosta yleisesti, ilman yhteyttä tiettyyn muutoshankkeeseen (kuten muutosprojektiin tai -ohjelmaan).

Väitöstutkimus toteutettiin kolmen teeman ja kolmen artikkelin kautta. Ensimmäinen artikkeli tutkii, ketkä organisaatioissa ovat vastuussa suunnitelluista muutoksista. Koska olemassa olevat suunnitellun muutoksen teoriat näyttävät osittain sivuuttavan suunniteltuun muutokseen keskittyviä rooleja, väitöskirjan ensimmäinen osa tarkastelee, millaisia "muutosorganisaatioita" (verkostoja, tiimejä ja yksilöitä) suurissa yrityksissä on. Toinen artikkeli selvittää eri toimialoja läpileikkaavasti, millaisia muutoshallinnan ja muutosjohtamisen käytänteitä organisaatioissa on. Samanaikaisesti, artikkeli tutkii miten muutoshallinnan ja muutosjohtamisen käytänteet limittyvät osiksi muutoshallinnan ja -johtamisen malleja. Kolmas artikkeli tarkastelee organisaation muutoskyvykkyyden käsitettä empiirisesti. Vaikka muutoskyvykkyys tunnustetaan nykytutkimuksessa tärkeäksi, sen nykyiset määritelmät ovat epämääräisiä ja pääosin aiemmasta kirjallisuudesta johdettuja. Väitöskirjan kolmas artikkeli tarkasteleekin, mitä suuret organisaatiot itse pitävät muutoskyvykkyyden keskeisinä elementteinä.

Soveltaen osallistavaa tutkimusotetta (engaged scholarship), väitöskirjan tutkimuskysymyksiä tarkastellaan laadullisen monitapaustutkimuksen avulla, otoksen käsittäessä yksitoista suurta yritystä Suomesta. Tutkimuksessa haastateltiin yhteensä 33 johtajaa, päällikköä, esihenkilöä ja asiantuntijaa, jotka ovat vastuussa suunnitellun muutoksen johtamisesta omissa organisaatioissaan. Aineistoa kerättiin pääosin puolistrukturoiduin temahaastatteluin.

Tämän väitöskirjan keskeinen anti on empiirisesti osoittaa, miten suuret yritykset hallitsevat ja johtavat suunniteltuja muutoksia yli yksittäisten muutoshankkeiden. Väitöskirja tuo uutuusarvoisia näkökulmia suunnitellun muutoksen johtamisen, muutosjohtamisen käytäntöjen sekä organisaation muutoskyvykkyyden teorioihin, kolmen artikkelinsa kautta. Lisäksi väitöskirjan empiiristen tulosten pohjalta on johdettu viitekehys organisaation muutoskyvykkyyden kehittämiseksi suunnitellun muutoksen johtamisessa. Tätä lähestymistapaa voidaan hyödyntää organisaatioissa suunnitellun muutoksen johtamisen analysointiin ja kehittämiseen – yli yksittäisten muutoshankkeiden. Tämä väitöskirja tarjoaa organisaatioille jäsennellyn viitekehysten muutoskyvykkyytensä arvioimiseksi ja kehittämiseksi suunnitelluissa muutoksissa.

ASIASANAT: muutosjohtaminen, muutoshallinta, muutosten läpivienti, organisaation muutoskyvykkyys, suunniteltu muutos

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List of Original Publications

This dissertation is based on the following original publications:

- I Karasvirta, Saara and Teerikangas, Satu. Change Organizations in Planned Change – A Closer Look. *Journal Of Change Management*, 2022; 22 (2), pp. 163–201.
- II Karasvirta, Saara. Large Companies’ Change Management Practices: A Multi-industry Study. Accepted peer-reviewed full paper at European Academy of Management (EURAM) Conference, Dublin (Ireland), June 2023. (Under review at *European Business Review*)
- III Karasvirta, Saara (2025). Organizational change capability: toward a conceptual and empirical definition. *Strategy & Leadership*, Vol. ahead-of-print No. ahead-of-print.

Saara Karasvirta has written articles 2 and 3 as sole author, and co-authored article 1 as first author. Karasvirta’s role in the first article was collecting the empirical data and writing the first version of the article. Here, the co-author, as a senior scholar, was involved in planning and validating the research design and co-writing the different versions of the article from the manuscript via journal revisions toward a published article. The original publications have been reproduced with the permission of the copyright holders.

1 Introduction

1.1 Organizational Change

Authors seemed to consider the pace of change as ever-growing already twenty years ago (By 2005). When looking at today's world, one could wonder if the pace might yet increase. The past five years – while working toward this dissertation – have shown that nothing is constant but change, as put to words by ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus, according to legend. When considering recent events and major disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic, Brexit, global warming, the war in Ukraine, and the crisis in Gaza, just to name a few, it is evident that change is present in each day of our current times. Climate change, technological disruption, demographic shifts, urbanization, economic growth, energy consumption, connectivity, and geopolitics are mega-trends continuously changing our world (PwC 2024, ESPAS 2019). While some changes can be foreseen and developments are visible, some changes occur suddenly. Whether it be technological innovation, geopolitical shifts or environmental issues.

Yet, change is natural and constant, affecting everything from individuals to entire systems. Change represents the process of moving from one state to another: evolution and evolution (Weick & Quinn 1999), growth (Greiner 1997), renewal (Hurst 1995) and adaptation (Hannan & Freeman 1997) over time. Change occurs in and between individuals, nature, societies and organizations. Individual and interpersonal change arises through social interaction, dialogue, and shared sensemaking processes (Weick 1995), while change in nature is visible through evolutionary processes driven by variation, selection, and adaptation (Darwin 1859/2018). Societal change, in turn, encompasses transformations in cultural norms, institutions, technologies, and collective behaviors (Giddens 1984). These changes reflect evolving values, power relations, and historical developments. With organizations, change can be looked via alterations in structures, processes, or cultures to improve performance or respond to environmental pressures (Burnes 2017). Change can be seen either as something exceptional or as the normal condition of organizational life (Tsoukas & Chia 2002), where change is constant and the organization constantly shifts. Some authors argue that change itself is changing as it is evolving in ways that present new rules, new strategies for winning,

and increasing dynamic complexity (Smits & Bowden 2015). Change is an interesting topic of study because it is ubiquitous, an ever-present and natural feature of our universe (Tsoukas & Chia 2002).

Although change has many contexts, this dissertation focuses on *organizational change*. As futures shift rapidly, organizations are having to reinvent themselves to stay competitive (Warrick & Cady 2023), and it is likely that organizations having the ability to change and adapt can better endure an environment involving constant change (Smith et al. 2012). Consequently, theories and approaches on organizational change are focal (Gay & Vikkello 2012). Mastering change has become the norm for organizations to sustain their success and existence (Al-Haddad & Kotnour 2015, Jorgensen et al. 2009), as organizational change is prevalent.

In this dissertation, organizational change is viewed as the movement of an organization away from its present state toward a future, desired state (Aninkan 2018). Organizations change, for example, when they transform their structure and operations, moving from one status to another (Quattrone & Hopper 2001). In essence, organizational change is about the organization altering its structure, strategies, processes, culture, or operations to adapt to internal and external pressures (Burnes 2007, Senior et al. 2020). This dissertation studies change in the context of organizations, acknowledging that theories of organizational change bear divergent approaches. Recognizing distinct approaches toward organizational change is important because they reveal underlying assumptions about organizations and how change operates within and around them (Graetz & Smith 2010, p. 139). Accordingly, there are many ways of approaching organizational change.

First, looking at the study of organizational change, two distinct paradigms exist: the variance perspective (Mohr 1982, Van de Ven & Poole 2005) and the process perspective (Pettigrew et al. 1997, Langley 1999). Variance theories focus on explaining why change occurs by identifying causal determinants, while process theories explain how change unfolds through sequences of events and interactions. These approaches frame the study of organizational change from different perspectives.

Second, theories differ in their viewpoints about how change occurs. Smits & Bowden (2015) argue that the principal drivers for change can be strategy-related, linked to organizational lifecycle, based on learning or leader-initiated. With internal drivers, change can be driven by internal power struggles, interests and conflicts (Pfeffer 1981). Managerial agency is often emphasized (Weick 1995), and change can originate within the organization when leaders perceive a misalignment between strategy, structure, processes, and environmental demands (Nadler & Tushman, 1997). Change can also be a result of external drivers such as technological and market shifts (Tushman & O'Reilly 1996), institutional pressures and regulation (DiMaggio & Powell 1983) or environmental turbulence and crisis (Meyer 1982).

Organizational change can be built on organizational and inter-organizational interrelationships, complex systems, and adaptation (Brown & Eisenhardt 1998, p. 14), where change emerges unpredictably through dynamic interactions (Stacey 1995). In a Darwinist evolutionary theory approach, organizations and systems grow, adapt, and change; they evolve (Hannan & Freeman 1977). Thus, change can originate from various sources.

Third, organizational changes are of divergent nature. Examples of well-known theories discuss, for example, episodic and continuous change (Weick & Quinn 1999, Romanelli & Tushman 1994, Gersik 1991, Burnes 2004), transformational and transitional change (Cummings & Worley 1997, Burke & Litwin 1992, Amado & Ambrose 2001), and planned, emergent, and contingency approaches to change (Lewin 1947, Burnes 2004b, Cummings et al. 2015, Livne-Tarandach & Bartunek 2009, Burnes 2004, Dunphy & Stace 1993). Consequently, it is important to acknowledge that organizational realities are often complex and multilayered, as there are various organizational changes of different nature and origin taking place in organizations simultaneously. While on the one hand, some changes can be unprecedented, ambiguous, and hard to grasp, on the other hand, some can be planned, foreseen, and managed. An organization can have a cultural change that has been ongoing for the past ten years, all the while simultaneously executing a large IT transformation with careful schedules and planning.

In summary, theories of organizational change are thus multifaceted. Divergent approaches towards organizational change are explored more detailed in Chapter 2.

1.2 Organizations seeking to manage change

As regards organizational change, organizations tend to face weak success rates in change (Beer & Nohria 2000, Balogun & Hope Hailey 2004) with under half of change initiatives succeeding. Although some studies contradict these numbers (Hughes 2011), unflattering success rates in organizational change may still be related to a lack of well-founded approaches toward managing organizational change (Stouten et al. 2018, Jorgensen et al. 2009, By 2005). There does not appear to exist “one proven recipe” for successful change. Moreover, change management theories and approaches directed toward academics and practitioners can also be contradictory (By 2005), further adding complexity to the subject matter.

In a context where organizations must deal with multiple sizes and levels of changes at the same time, organizations seek to manage change (Montreuil 2022). Consequently, consistent and structured change management approaches have resulted in tangible benefits for organizations (Stouten et al. 2018, Jorgensen et al. 2009, Moran & Brightman 2001). Hence, both academic theories and practice-based guides and models abound, resulting in organizations having ample suggestions and

differing approaches toward change management (Da Ros et al. 2023, Al-Haddad & Kotnour 2015).

However, although theories and approaches are plentiful, in the change management literature there is disagreement regarding the most suitable approach towards managing organizational change (Bamford & Forrester 2003, p. 547). As abundant options exist, the question becomes how organizations should proceed if there is no clear way to best manage organizational change (Burnes 1996)? Recent literature emphasizes that searching for one “right” approach to change might even be futile (Smits & Bowden 2015, p. 17), advocating for the integration of scholarly research with management practices to create more effective change management strategies (Stouten et al. 2018). These approaches aim to bridge the gap between theory and practice, ensuring that change initiatives are both evidence-based and practically applicable.

To conclude, in an environment where organizations face constant change, change initiatives’ success rates do not appear consistent. For organizations, change management has become critical (Warrick & Cady 2023), and a plethora of theories and approaches exists.

1.3 Planned change

In terms of scope, this dissertation’s lens of study is narrowed from all theories of organizational change and change management to *planned organizational change management*.

In this dissertation, planned organizational change is defined as purposeful, deliberate and intentional efforts that organizations execute to progress from one state to another, desired end-state (Mintzberg & Waters 1985, Burnes 2004, By 2005, Cummings & Worley 2015). In other words, planned change does not “just happen” but rather is premeditated, and change is often managed via models and frameworks (Lewin 1947, Burnes 2004). Planned change models sequence activities toward a process-like approach via, e.g., phases, steps, and milestones. All the while, planned change approaches can also be more conceptual in nature (e.g., Hayes 2002) or can arise from a more systemic viewpoint (e.g., Senge 1999). Notwithstanding, the literature suggests numerous ways to manage planned organizational change (see, e.g., Rosenbaum et al. 2018). Section 2.2. of this dissertation provides a summary of literature on well-known planned change theories. Extant literature demonstrates that planned change is widely researched, and theories and approaches are bountiful.

To summarize, narrowing this dissertation’s focus to planned change management, planned change is intentional and deliberate. The focusing of this dissertation’s research on planned change management has been done based on two premises. First, focusing must be done to fit the research into a dissertation’s scope,

as a dissertation cannot study “everything”. Second, examining the current landscape of planned organizational change leads towards interesting research gaps in extant knowledge, addressed by this dissertation. The next section explains the research gaps that this dissertation begins to address.

1.4 The research problem

This dissertation’s study began with exploring theories of planned change and second, with a curiosity towards how organizations manage planned change. Planned change theories and approaches are plentiful and as regards *empirical* studies on managing planned organizational change, case studies are equally ample.

Many recent advances depict specific contexts, where organizations are managing distinct planned change initiatives or specific types of planned changes. Examples of these are, e.g., studies examining planned change management in mergers and acquisitions (Harikkala-Laihinén 2022, Li et al. 2021, Boling et al. 2017, Reddy et al. 2016, Eriksson & Sundgren 2007), studies focused on managing change in IT system implementations (Gupta et al. 2018, Okumus et al. 2017, Iveroth 2011, Collette et al. 2007, Huq et al. 2007, Martin & Huq 2007, Pries & Stone 2004), studies focused on planned change related to hybrid work/workplace changes (Hasbi & Van Marrewijk 2024), circular economy change (Re et al. 2024) or digital transformation (Chang & Cheng 2025). All the beforementioned empirical studies study planned change management in specific contexts, related to a distinct change type and/or case organization.

Taking a closer look at current studies, the subject of managing planned organizational change seems to be empirically researched first and foremost regarding *distinct* planned changes or types of planned changes that are managed. Here, the reader is left wondering if organizations approach planned change management apart from distinct planned change initiatives. Extant approaches do not provide straightforward answers to this query.

Consequently, looking at extant empirical studies on the topic of managing planned change, the question that current studies appear to partly dismiss is the following: How do organizations manage planned change beyond individual planned change initiatives, regardless of the change type being managed?

One might ask, then, whether this question is important or even relevant to answer. Should this topic be further researched? Do organizations consider planned organizational change from a wider viewpoint, and if yes, how could these notions be validated?

The researcher decided to seek answers following an engaged scholarship approach (Van de Ven 2007). Before engaging in a research project, the researcher thus decided to discuss the topic of planned change management with “the field,”

that is, practitioners and executives. As the researcher bears a background as a practitioner, it was relatively easy to engage in discussions with experts “from the field.” Therefore, the touchstone of the researcher’s own experience was as a valuable enabler of a potentially successful research endeavour (Strauss and Corbin 1990, pp. 35–36). Consequently, between the years 2019 and 2020, the researcher had vivid discussions with executives and practitioners across multiple organizations and industries.

As a first observation, discussions on organizational change brought the notion that change initiatives were often introduced in the shape of projects or programs as “vehicles for organizational change” (O’Donovan 2018, p. 3). It became evident that organizations’ planned change initiatives were plentiful, and organizations sought to manage these initiatives. During several months of constructive discussions, it also became evident that organizations do not consider planned change management *only* vis-à-vis specific planned changes, as designated planned change approaches did not diminish as planned change initiatives end. On the contrary, practitioners and executives expressed that organizations consider planned change management much more holistically than only focusing on specific planned change initiatives. Furthermore, organizations appeared to face a challenge: they expressed that existing approaches to planned change management did not always adequately support organizations, for multiple reasons. Some stated that approaches were too theoretical, and some felt that the focus was too narrow and the fit to their contexts were not good. Discussions with executives and practitioners were lengthy and interesting, providing the researcher with first-hand knowledge about how organizations see planned change management “in the field.”

Based on these discussions, it thus seemed that organizations approached planned change management from a more comprehensive perspective, not only coupled with distinct planned changes. And, in most discussions, they also expressed a sincere willingness to develop their planned change management capability further from a wider perspective, not only related to specific planned changes. Yet, looking at extant empiric approaches on planned change management, we seem to know very little about how organizations approach planned change management in general.

Consequently, after coming back “from the field,” the researcher was able to validate that the topic of research – planned change management in large organizations – was an important topic to pursue and to study. Following, the overall research problem guiding this dissertation was formulated as:

How do large companies manage planned organizational change in general, beyond distinct planned change initiatives?

Large companies' planned change management was thus chosen as a research topic for two reasons: first, based on the theoretical knowledge gap stemming from previous empirical research on planned change management and second, based on the practical importance of the topic, as fortified by organizations and practitioners themselves (Van de Ven 2007).

1.5 From the research problem towards research questions

Planned change management in large companies is an exhaustive topic of study. To begin exploring such a wide subject, it was necessary to further narrow the scope of study for a dissertation's purposes. To refine which themes to address, the researcher returned to the planned organizational change management literature, which was studied with care.

After thoroughly reviewing the literature and acknowledging that multiple options exist, three more specific research gaps were selected for empirical study, via three distinct research questions. These three research gaps and questions are briefly introduced next.

After studying planned change theories comprehensively, the researcher first focused on "who" is responsible of planned change management. This was done via studying which roles are dedicated to planned change management in organizations. Building on Lewin's (1947) work, planned organizational change models (POCMs) have undergone significant development in the past half century (Rosenbaum et al. 2018), offering numerous frameworks for managing such change. Yet, examining the bulk of this work, the roles of actors are not made explicit. More precisely, when examining classic planned change management models, extant approaches do not seem to thoroughly consider the roles of networks, teams, and individuals dedicated to planned change management. In empirical studies, there are few papers discussing change networks (Caldwell & Dyer 2020, Mohrman et al. 2003, Tenkasi & Chesmore 2003, Bartunek 2003) or change teams (Higgins et al. 2012, Theberge et al. 2006, Macdonlad 2003). Regarding individual roles in planned change management, change recipients and managers (e.g., Woiceshyn et al. 2020, Hyde 2018, Castillo et al. 2018, Oreg et al. 2011, 2018, Szabla 2007, MacAulay et al. 2010, Piderit 2000) and consultants (Shaw 2019, Martinez et al. 2016, Kaarst-Brown 1999) seem to be studied most. Furthermore, when considering the research problem of how large companies approach planned change management, many roles appear mostly coupled with distinct planned change initiatives. Thus, the first article starts by empirically addressing this theoretical gap via the following research question:

What do companies' change organizations consist of?

Here, “change organizations” is a concept used by the researcher when referring to networks, teams, and individuals dedicated to planned change management. The first article thus studies networks, teams and individuals in large companies’ planned change management.

Second, the focus of research is set on “what” is being done as organizations manage planned change. This is done more detailed via studying change management practices (CMPs) in planned change. Change management practices (Clarke & Garside 1997, Raineri 2011, Jansson 2013) include “...a variety of organizational interventions that, when executed properly and in consistency with internal and external organizational events, facilitate the enactment of organizational change processes” (Raineri 2011, p. 266). Linked to the overall research problem on how large organizations manage planned change, recent empirical research on change management practices has predominantly focused on specific industries and particular change initiatives (Ajani 2022, Sopa 2022, Aldossari et al. 2021, Maali et al. 2020, Lines & Smithwick 2019, Higdon 2016, Yamakawa et al. 2012), with relatively few studies spanning multiple industries (Raineri 2011, Clarke & Garside 1997). As a result, there is limited empirically grounded knowledge about the use of change management practices (CMPs) across various industries. Furthermore, extant studies describe CMPs independently, and previous empirical studies on change management practices do not connect CMPs to change management models. In addition, some studies argue that change management practices in the preparation phase are preferred over those in the implementation phase (Raineri 2011, Yamakawa et al. 2012), though these conclusions are not supported unanimously. In summary, there appear to be several aspects related to change management practices warranting further research to widen our understanding. Consequently, the research questions of the second article are:

What kinds of change management practices do large companies use in planned change management?

And, consequently:

How are these change management practices part of change management models?

The second article thus studies change management practices in large companies’ planned change management.

Third, taking a wider approach to planned change, organizational change capability (OCC) is one of the most prevalent research areas in the organizational change management literature (Kircovali & Cemberci 2020). As having a change-

capable organization is imperial for organizations' survival and success, organizations need to consider the development of change capability (Albrecht & Roughsedge 2023, Rahman et al. 2023, Fredberg et al. 2011, Higgs & Rowland 2000). However important the subject, research on organizational change capability remains scarce and there do not appear to be established definitions for OCC. To study OCC, researchers would need to know "what to study". Although some advances have been made to define the concept of OCC (Cao & Le 2024, Albrecht & Roughsedge 2023, Supriharyanti & Sukoco 2023, McGuinness & Morgan 2005, Montreuil 2022), paucity in precise definitions regarding organizational change capability prevails. As research on the concept of organizational change capability remains conceptual, previous definitions omit empirical perspectives, i.e., the organizations' points of view. Thus, we still do not seem to know much about how organizations themselves approach the concept of organizational change capability. This gap in extant knowledge, consequently, leads to the research question of the third article:

Adopting an empirically grounded perspective, what does organizational change capability consist of?

The third article thus studies organizational change capability via an empirical lens, widening the lens of study towards what organizational change capability constitutes of.

In the guise of summary and overview, Figure 1 describes this dissertation's rationale from the research problem to research problem validation. Based on the research problem, specific knowledge gaps in extant theory led to more precise research questions, addressed by this dissertation's three articles.

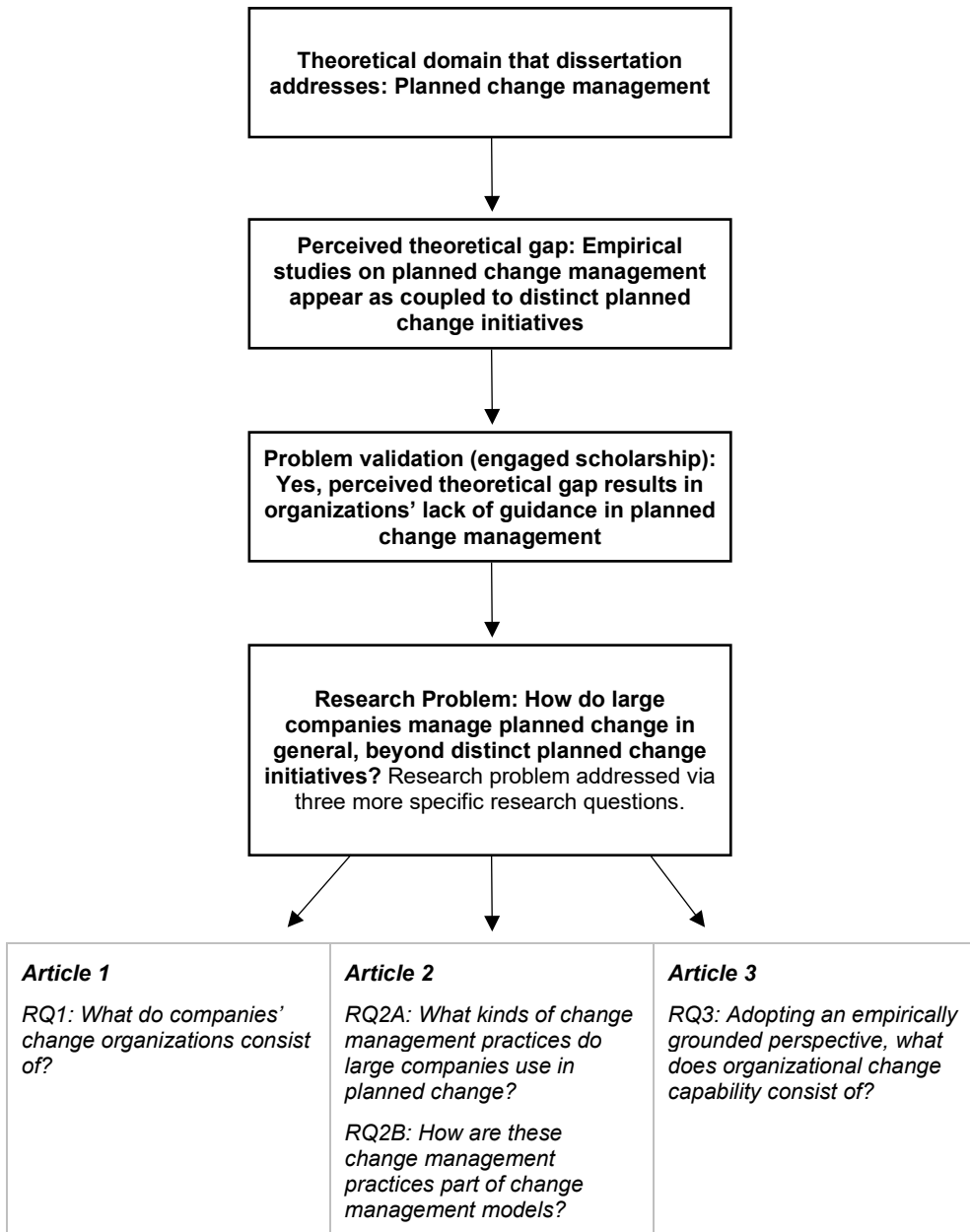


Figure 1. From theoretical gap to, research problem, to research gaps leading to the research questions of this dissertation. Research questions are addresses by three articles that this dissertation consists of.

The three more specific research gaps are explained more detailed in Chapter 2 as regards their theoretical gap, and they are researched in the three articles that this dissertation consists of. Each research gap and each article thus contribute to this

dissertation's overall research agenda regarding how large companies manage planned change beyond distinct planned change initiatives.

1.6 Research design

This section briefly describes the research design of the dissertation. A more thorough description is provided in Chapter 3.

This research is built on a critical realist paradigm. Critical realism sees that the world is real as it exists independently of our perceptions and beliefs but acknowledges that our understanding of the world is socially constructed (as suggested by Hoddy 2019, p. 113). As the researcher has a practitioner background in change management, they cannot be fully “detached” from the field of study. The researcher's role is examined more detailed in section 3.8.

Engaged scholarship (Van de Ven 2007, van Marrewijk & Dessign 2019, Franklin 2022, Fitzgerald et al. 2010) is a participative form of research for obtaining the advice and perspectives of key stakeholders (researchers, users, clients, sponsors, and practitioners) to understand a complex social problem (Van de Ven 2007, p. 9). Central to an engaged scholarship perspective is to close the gap between theory and practice, i.e., researchers and practitioners. Although this dissertation does not orthodoxically follow engaged scholarship, it is applied in many stages of the research. As described in 1.4., the validation of the research problem was done via an engaged scholarship approach.

Within the research problem of how companies manage planned organizational change, first, the literature on planned change management was carefully studied with a broader aim to discover “what is going on” vis-à-vis large organizations' planned change management. Consequently, more specific research questions are addressed, covered by this dissertation's three articles (see section 1.5.). As suggested by Strauss and Corbin (2008, p. 12), the research questions then guided the choices of the methodological approach that was used to conduct the research.

Following this dissertation's research topic and the three more specific research questions that emerged, the research design is built around a qualitative multiple case study. A qualitative approach is a process of gathering and examining data to elicit meaning, gain knowledge, and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss 2008, p. 1). This dissertation followed the tenets of qualitative research, where the activities of collecting and analyzing data, developing and modifying theory, elaborating or refocusing the research questions, and identifying and dealing with validity threats are usually ongoing simultaneously, each influencing all the others (Maxwell 2009). As inductive approaches focus on theory building (instead of testing it), new theory is built from cases and data (Eisenhardt & Graebner 2007).

With the purpose of studying planned change management in an empirical setting, the participants (studied cases) are large companies from the “top 100 largest companies in Finland,” representing 11 industries. For these organizations, changes happen at a rapid pace – most of the case companies have planned change project/program portfolios ranging from tens to over a hundred planned change projects/programs. Hence, from a practical perspective, increasing the companies’ efficiency and capability in managing planned change would likely result in positive outcomes such as timely realized business cases, better staff satisfaction and retention rates, competitive advantage via faster implementations, and many other beneficial results. Therefore, participating organizations showed vast interest in participating in the study and in developing their own knowledge of managing planned organizational change.

This dissertation’s empirical study is structured around a qualitative multiple case study methodology (Yin 1994, Eisenhardt 1989, Eisenhardt & Graebner 2007). A multiple case design enables the researcher to “maximize what we can learn” (Stake 1995, p. 4) from divergent cases. As the studied case companies represent different industries, the research design leaves room for exploring the possibilities for comparison and analytic generalization (Yin 1994) between industries. A total of 33 informants were interviewed, representing individuals who had knowledge and responsibility regarding planned change management in their respective organizations. Informants’ organizational level varied from executive board of the company to specialist, representing functions such as change management, human resources (HR), strategy, general management or project management office.

This dissertation shifts the lens of study from specific change initiatives to researching how large companies empirically approach planned change management in general – not coupled to precise planned change initiatives. This dissertation studies large companies’ planned change management with “a snapshot” view, describing how studied case companies approach planned change at a certain moment. Although acknowledging that other methodological options provide possibilities to discover companies’ planned change management via, e.g., a longer time span, this research is set on what is visible in 11 large companies at the moment of study. With 11 case companies, it was considered that a longitudinal study would have been too wide given a doctoral dissertation’s temporally limited scope.

1.7 Scope of research

In this dissertation, the research problem of how large companies manage planned change is addressed via three research questions. Consequently, it deserves recognition that the research problem – planned change management in large

organizations – entails research questions beyond those addressed within the scope of this dissertation.

This dissertation studies large companies in Finland. Small or medium-sized organizations are not included in the scope of this study. All companies have headquarters in Finland, although most involved case companies also operate outside of Finland.

A total of 33 informants are included in a qualitative multiple case study design, and relevant informants from all case companies are incorporated. In the scope of this dissertation, interviews were conducted with at least two informants per case company.

The scope of research and case companies are more thoroughly presented in Chapter 3, “Research design and methods.”

1.8 Structure of the dissertation

This dissertation is structured as follows. After this introduction chapter, a summary of the most important literature regarding this dissertation’s subject is presented in Chapter 2. The aim is to familiarize readers with the most important theoretical discussions that this dissertation addresses. Thereupon, the research design and methodological approach are introduced in Chapter 3 regarding both the dissertation and the individual articles. The aim is to clarify and explain methodological choices made and to showcase how the research progressed from research questions to findings. Following, in Chapter 4, the three articles are summarized for the reader to get an overview of the three articles included in this dissertation. Furthermore, the three articles’ contributions are introduced. In Chapter 5, this dissertation’s contributions are discussed, and an empirically grounded framework for developing organizational change capability in planned change management is presented. Limitations and further research directions are also discussed, followed by references and appendices. Copies of original publications of all three articles can be found in the last section of this dissertation.

2 Literature on organizational change

The purpose of this chapter is to frame the theoretical setting of this dissertation. The main concepts are examined, and this dissertation's research is positioned in terms of the theoretical discussions it addresses. This chapter begins by introducing organizational change – the overarching theme of this dissertation – and explaining common academic approaches to the subject matter. Continuing, developments in planned organizational change are detailed, as per this dissertation's focus. Following, theories on networks, teams, and individuals in planned change are introduced, thus representing the research gap in article 1. Consequently, change management practices (CMPs) and CMPs as parts of change management models are introduced, representing the research gap in article 2. To finish, research on organizational change capability, representing the research gap in article 3, is displayed. In summary, Figure 2 displays this dissertation's theoretical framework.

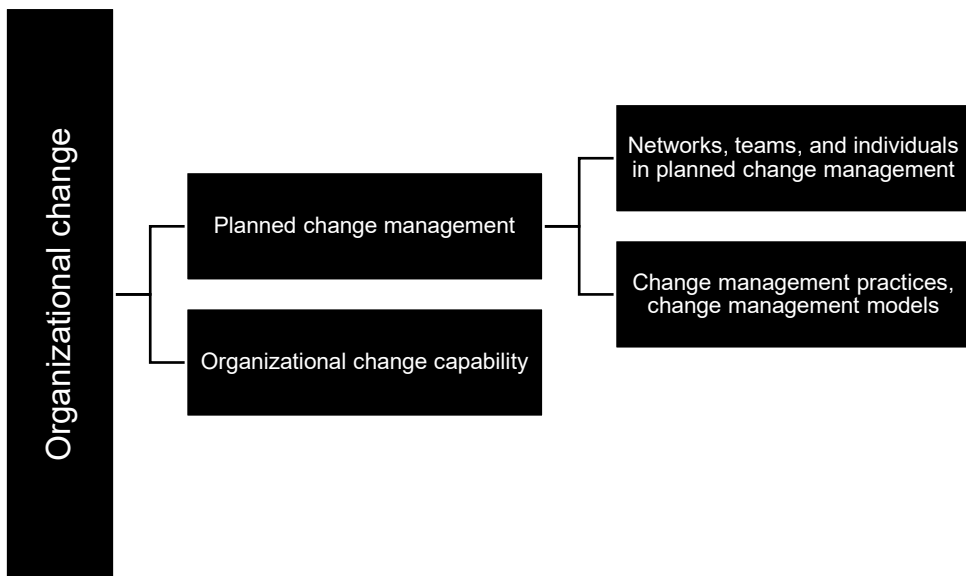


Figure 2. The theoretical framework of this dissertation.

2.1 Organizational change

Organizational change can be approached from varying angles. This section explores well-known academic literature to organizational change within the remit of a dissertation's scope.

Broadly speaking, in the study of organizational change, two distinct paradigms can be distinguished: the variance perspective (Mohr 1982, Van de Ven & Poole 2005) and the process perspective (Pettigrew 1997, Langley 1999). Variance theories focus on explaining why change occurs by identifying causal determinants, treating organizational change as a relationship between variables. These theories focus on identifying what causes change and assume that change outcomes can be explained by a set of predictor variables that vary across organizational units or time (Mohr 1982). The process perspective, in turn, looks at organizational change as an ongoing sequence of events, actions, and interactions unfolding over time. Within this perspective, temporality is core. Rather than asking what causes change, process theorists ask how change occurs (Pettigrew 1997, Langley 1999). These two approaches frame the study of organizational change from different perspectives, as change is contextualized differently. However, scholars including Van de Ven and Poole (2005) argue that the two are complementary explanatory logics instead of competing paradigms – thus, a combination of both perspectives is needed to gain a holistic perspective on organizational change. Accordingly, the study of organizational change has moved toward epistemological pluralism and pragmatism, shifting its interest toward studying process/temporality and emergence, while promoting methodological diversity (Langley et al. 2013).

An established typology to organizational change views it via the lenses of the rate of occurrence of change, the scale of change, and how change comes about (By 2005), as detailed next.

First, change can be linked to its rate of occurrence, with the main approaches being episodic change and continuous change (Weick & Quinn 1999). Yet, as By (2005, p. 371) notes, different authors employ different terminology when describing these approaches.

The phrase “episodic change” is used to categorize organizational change that is infrequent and discontinuous. The presumption is that episodic change occurs during periods of divergence when organizations are moving away from their equilibrium conditions. This form of change is labelled as “episodic” because it tends to occur in distinct periods during which shifts are precipitated by external events such as technology change or internal events such as change in key personnel (Weick & Quinn 1999, p. 365). As an example of episodic change, the punctuated equilibrium model (Romanelli & Tushman 1994) characterizes organizations as evolving through somewhat long periods of stability (i.e., equilibrium periods) as their basic patterns of activity. These, in turn, are punctuated by relatively short bursts of

fundamental change (i.e., revolutionary periods), which substantively disrupt established activity patterns and install the basis for new equilibrium periods. Gersick (1991, p. 12) states that the interrelationship of these two modes (equilibrium and revolution) is possible through the construct of a consistent underlying order or deep structure, persisting and limiting change during equilibrium periods, and disassembling, reconfiguring, and enforcing transformation during revolutionary punctuation. When considering episodic approaches to organizational change, it is important to understand how and why episodes of stability and revolution take turns and when. Weick and Quinn (1999, p. 369) note that in the rendering of episodes, three important linked processes are inertia, the triggering of change, and replacement. Thus, for different organizations, episodic change occurs with distinctive timespans and features.

From an opposite angle to episodic change, advocates of the continuous model of change argue that, to survive, organizations must develop the ability to change themselves continuously (Burnes 2004, p. 890). The phrase “continuous change” is used to classify organizational change that tends to be ongoing, evolving, and cumulative (Weick & Quinn 1999, p. 375). Incremental change can be seen as a process whereby individual parts of an organization deal incrementally and separately with “one problem and one goal at a time” (Burnes 2004, p. 889). Change does not happen in distinct episodes, and the idea of “stability” does not apply, since change happens all the time. Nevertheless, incremental change can also be transformative by nature. A grounding notion is that small continuous adjustments, created simultaneously across units, can accumulate and create larger change (Weick & Quinn 1999). What is more, incremental changes can have benefits such as being less costly than large change programs, and they can also be executed in a pre-emptive manner (Balogun and Hope Hailey 1999, p. 62). If an organization undergoes small, incremental changes continuously, “big bang” transformations may not be needed as often. Balogun and Hope Hailey (1999, pp. 81–82) also state that organizations are equipped with varying abilities to manage change both incrementally and via larger events of change. Thus, it is worth noting that organizations can also actively choose how they approach change by the rate of its occurrence: deliberately choosing to change episodically or via continuous, incremental approaches.

Second, change can be approached by its scale, where an established basic classification suggests dividing change into first-order and second-order change (Bartunek & Moch 1987). First-order change refers to incremental modifications in an established framework, while second-order change considers alterations to the framework itself. In addition, Bartunek and Moch (1987) suggest third-order change when the organizational members have the capacity to adjust the framework as change unfolds. Furthermore, another distinction regarding the scale of change is by

dividing organizational change into “transformational” and “transitional” change. However, the separation of the terms is all but straightforward, and “transition” and “transformation” are often used interchangeably (Hölscher et al. 2018).

Transformational change in organizations involves radical changes in how members perceive, think, and behave at work (Cummings & Worley 1997). Transformational change happens in response to the external environment directly affecting the organization’s mission, strategy, leadership, and culture (Burke & Litwin 1992); in other words, it is initiated by external factors, it is large-scale, and it affects the organization as a whole (or at least most parts of it). Transition (or transaction as called by Burke & Litwin 1992), in turn, can be described as a process in which a previously established structure that composes the system is modified or even relinquished, and new forms of structure may emerge (Amado & Ambrose 2001, pp. 2–3). Here, change takes place in an existing system, and the focus is on modifying this actual structure. Transition, by essence, is an individual (internal) psychological process by which people come to terms with new situations (Amado & Ambrose 2001, Bridges 1991).

Especially when concept definitions do not appear solidly unanimous, differences between the transitional and transformational may largely stem from the different research communities concerned with either transition or transformation, suggest Hölscher et al. (2018, p. 2). Whatever the case, considering transformational change as large and external, and transitional change as more restricted and internal, may serve as a rather established way of distinguishing between the two.

Third, an established way to approach change is by looking at its origins. Here, emergent and planned change are two main approaches (By 2005, Bamford & Forrester 2003, Burnes 1996 and 2004), but a contingency approach is also discussed (Dunphy & Stace 1993, Kunisch et al. 2023).

The emergent model to change sees change as a continuous process where organizations seek to align and re-align themselves with an unpredictable, many-faceted and rapidly-changing environment (Burnes 1996, p. 11). From emergent approaches, the processualist approach to studies of change is perhaps most visible (e.g., Pettigrew 1985, Pettigrew et al. 2001, Van de Ven 2007 and 2018, Van de Ven & Poole 1995, Dawson 2003, Langley et al. 2013).

In emergent approaches of change, the unpredictable nature of change is emphasized, and change is viewed as a process that develops through the relationship of a multitude of variables within an organisation (By 2005). Here, it is essential to view change as a process unfolding through the interplay of multiple variables (context, political processes, and consultation) within an organization. Furthermore, an important aspect is that change is viewed as a process of learning and not just a method of changing organizational structures and practices (Burnes 1996, p. 13). The emergent approach stresses that change is an open-ended and continuous process

of adaptation to changing conditions and circumstances (Burnes 1994, Livne-Tarandach & Bartunek 2009). With change, organizations learn since they are “encoding inferences from history into routines that guide behaviour” (Levitt & March 1988). The emergent approach accepts that actions need to be re-tailored as change progresses. As the future is unknown, plans may not be prescribed beforehand, but approaches need to be of a more iterative manner – the change strategy can even be seen as a somewhat structured chaos (Brown & Eisenhardt 1998, pp. 7–12). Overall, change does not happen because of formal planning, it is far more complex than a mere “project plan in a manager’s office” (Balogun & Hope Hailey 1999, p. 3).

Emergent approaches began to arise after the 1980s. Pettigrew (1985, p. 15) critiques much of the organizational development research done before the 1980s by stating that it is “ahistorical, acontextual, and aprocessual.” Indeed, Pettigrew (1985) suggested focusing on “changing” instead of “change.” Organizational change, for Pettigrew, is an emerging (continuous) process and not something that can be prescribed in phases and schedules. Dawson (2003), another proponent of a processual approach, continues by stating that pre-planned recipes and detailed plans for change do not work, but flexibility and adaptation are needed. Dawson (2003, p. 1) states that “the context within which change occurs, the substance of the change in question, and the political behaviour of individuals and groups, all interact over time in the shaping and reshaping of organizational processes of change.” These three elements (context, substance, and politics of change) together form the basis of the processualist approach to change. To add, Langley et al. (2013) emphasize that processual studies in organizational change should holistically consider the context of time (temporality) and ontological assumptions of the world (consisting of “things” or “processes”). Process studies can thus account for multiple factors related to the process of change. To categorize process studies, Van de Ven and Poole (1995, p. 514) divide process theories of change into four categories: lifecycle theories, teleological theories, dialectical theories, and evolutionary theory, further promoting variation within process studies of change. The processualist approach to organizational change is a popular framework among proponents of the emergent approach to organizational change. Overall, emergent change tends to see change as driven from the bottom up instead of from the top down. The process can be more informal than in planned change, and responsibility more devolved. Managers are not the only ones promoting change, although they should aim to foster a culture willing to change and provide clear vision (Burnes 1996, p. 11).

The contingency approach to change states that while organizations face different situations, they must adapt and vary their change strategies accordingly (Burnes 1996, p. 11). Contingency approaches essentially advocate that the structure of an organization is dependent (“contingent”) on the situational variables it faces,

and for success, organizations need to align their structures with the particular contingencies they face (ibid., p. 15). Dunphy and Stace (1993) view the contingency model's advantages as being situational and well-fitting to turbulent times in the business environment. Furthermore, the model explains organizational change from a behavioral viewpoint, where managers should make decisions that account for specific circumstances, focusing on the most directly relevant and intervening with the most appropriate actions (Graetz & Smith 2010). As the model considers both the style of change and the style of management for particular changes, it offers several alternatives. However, Dunphy and Stace (1993, p. 7) suggest that for most organizations undergoing transformational change at the corporate level, a directive management style is needed to begin the process of repositioning the organization, suggesting that there are preferred ways of managing change. But, Dunphy and Stace continue, once a basis for organizational renewal is in place, there is a choice to be made regarding the usage of both directive and consultative strategies that are needed to keep up the momentum of change.

Kunisch et al. (2023) offer the thought that "a contingency perspective simply means there is no one best way of leading a business" (p. 2). Thus, the search for a best fit is limited by the impossibility of modelling all the contingent variables and the difficulty of predicting their connections and causal relations (Graetz & Smith 2010), as a large number of variables affect each other in a maze of interrelations. However, Kunisch et al. (2023) do argue that different types of corporate change programs are launched under different circumstances, and thus, different ways of managing change should be preferred. Their study concluded that companies launch efficiency-oriented programs in situations of poor performance and new leadership, and when facing high levels of strategic complexity. On the other hand, companies seem to launch growth-oriented programs when the market situations are bouncy, when companies have prior experience (typically an earlier efficiency program), and when companies have been underperforming. Hence, contingency leads to different choices in what types of changes are undertaken.

In summary, the previous three perspectives approach organizational change from varying perspectives: via the rate of occurrence of change, the scale of change, and how change comes about.

With the last approach to organizational change to be introduced in this section, planned organizational change approaches change via frameworks, steps, phases, and systems. Although the world of planned organizational change is diverse and complex, and studies have resulted both from academic and practice-based research (Rosenbaum et al. 2018, p. 289), a common characteristic of planned change is the nature of organizational change as something intentional.

As this dissertation is set into the realm of planned organizational change management, the main developments on planned change are examined in the next section of the dissertation in more detail.

2.2 Planned change management

This section explains the main developments of planned organizational change, as this dissertation views organizational change via the management of planned change.

To begin, change management arose as a formal topic of study via approaches on planned change (Burnes 1996, p. 11). The origins of planned organizational change are often traced back to Kurt Lewin (1947). Lewin was interested in studying group behavior, social conflict, and especially how intergroup challenges could be solved. Studied challenges were multi-faceted, and as Burnes (2004, p. 981) affirms, to understand Lewin is to understand that his ideas on field theory, group dynamics, action research, and the three-step model of change should be treated jointly. Lewin believed that each element supports and reinforces the others and should be considered together. Burnes (2004, p. 985) reiterates that these four concepts together form an integrated approach to analyzing, understanding, and bringing about change at the group, organizational, and societal levels. Thus, all of them are necessary to understand Lewin's (1947) seminal three-step model of planned change. To understand Lewin, it is also important to understand his background studying complex social problems in minorities (and himself a minority as an American Jew after World War Two).

First, field theory was created by Lewin to study child behavior. It can be considered a metatheory, meaning a theory from which other theories and methods can be drawn (Burnes, 2020). The main idea behind field theory is that everything about a person and their environment must be taken into account (Wheeler 2008, p. 1640, Bargal 2006 p. 373), as behavior is a function of both person and environment. In this manner, Lewin positions individuals as something not isolated, but in constant interaction with their surroundings. Second, Lewin's approach emphasizes the importance of group dynamics and social action in change – research requires the cooperation of individuals. Group decisions are deemed superior to individual ones since resistance to change is likely to be smaller if decisions have been made jointly (Lewin 1947, Bargal 2006). Third, Lewin's model is based on action research, which was developed to improve intergroup relations in several American communities (Lewin 1946). Action research states that an effective approach to solving social problems (and managing change) must involve a rational, systematic analysis and study of the issues in question (Burnes 1996, p. 12, Bargal 2006, p. 369). Research involves activity, such as training and workshops, and Lewin (1946) involves both

practitioners and researchers in his approach. Action research is iterative, as action leads to further findings, which then lead to further action.

Lewin (1947, p. 147) states that planned change usually emerges from a vague “idea,” but to become real (to be able to steer action), something has to be developed; this development can be called a “plan.” To achieve successful change, Lewin suggests three main stages (the three-step model):

1. Unfreezing the present situation
2. Changing to the desired, new situation
3. Refreezing the present situation

What is important in Lewin’s approach is that plans are not fixed, but they can (and should) be altered and iterated as change progresses (pp. 147–148). In the refreezing stage, Lewin emphasizes the fact that democratic group decision-making has the effect of sustaining behavioral change (Burnes 2007).

Continuing, it is obvious that since Lewin, planned change approaches have evolved a great deal in the past 70 years, advocating various ways of managing change. As Lewin’s three steps can be seen as somewhat broad (Burnes 1996), further developments of planned organizational change management models differ, as follows.

Organizational development (OD) is often discussed in parallel with planned change. Here, Porras and Silvers (1991, pp. 52–55) divide change interventions into two main types: OD (organizational development) and OT (organizational transformation). Burnes (2004, p. 987) states that OD had become the standard-bearer for Kurt Lewin’s (1947) pioneering work on behavioral science in general, and that it can be seen as an approach to planned change in particular.

The concept of OD is defined by Porras and Silvers (1991, p. 54) as

1. a set of behavioral science theories, values, strategies, and techniques
2. aimed at the *planned* change of organizational work settings
3. intending to generate alpha, beta, and/or gamma cognition change in individual organizational members, leading to behavioral change and thus
4. creating a better fit between the organization’s capabilities and its current environmental demands, or
5. promoting changes that help the organization to better fit predicted future environments.

OD concentrates on work-setting changes that produce appreciable (not radical) changes in individual employees' cognitions as well as behaviors. OT, on the other hand, is primarily directed at creating a new vision for the organization.

Looking more closely at planned change models that evolved after Lewin, some planned change models tend to be of a conceptual and structural nature, offering more of an overall framework within which change takes place. From the more conceptual frameworks, Hayes (2002) suggests a change management model with seven steps, also containing feedback loops and iterations. On the other hand, more specific approaches can be seen as guides for, e.g., change practitioners in organizations. Indeed, the change management literature is replete with prescriptive models, largely directed at senior managers and executives, advising them how to best implement planned organizational change (Stouten et al. 2018, p. 753). Planned organizational change models (POCMs) in this category advocate more distinct practices and actions to perform. As examples, Bullock and Batten (1985) propose four stages in change, and Bridges (2003) identifies specific action points that need to be considered for each of the three recognized phases in planned change (ending, neutral zone, and new beginning). To continue, Taffinder (1998) identifies an eight-step "action list" to be followed in change. Not to mention Kotter's (1996) eight-step model, which is extremely well known among scholars and practitioners. Practitioners and change leaders in organizations often lean to these types of more specific approaches when faced with the management of planned change initiatives.

Continuing, POCMs can also be more systemic in nature. Senge et al. (1999) consider larger settings (systems) as well as their individual parts. In these approaches, systems must work in synchronization to achieve optimal results in planned change management. From another angle, models can also focus on distinct types of change (e.g., Dunphy et al. 2003, organizational change toward sustainability), as different types of change may require different types of approaches. From an individual's perspective, in turn, Kübler-Ross (1969) presented the famous "Change Curve," focusing on stages that individuals go through when faced with changes. As the original model focused on stages that individuals face while grieving, Kübler-Ross' (1969) work has widely impacted the understanding of individuals in planned change.

Furthermore, in addition to the more academic models, practitioner-based models of change management proliferate in organizational practices. Peters and Waterman (1982) introduced the "7S" model of planned organizational change, and their approach is still widely cited over 40 years since its publication. Prosci (2003) has popularized the "ADKAR" model, which suggests that individuals in successful change must progress through the five phases introduced in the model (awareness, desire, knowledge, ability, and reinforcement). To add, The Association of Change Management Professionals (ACMP) has developed a comprehensive model for

change management (2019). Practitioner-based models also gain popularity by offering practitioners possibilities to certify themselves in the usage of distinct models, such as the ADKAR or ACMP.

With planned change management models, approaches are plentiful, and the beforementioned examples illustrate that from the three-step model made famous by Lewin (1947), models of planned organizational change have evolved in many respects. Within a myriad of planned change management models, Rosenbaum et al. (2018, p. 297) propose a classification of planned organizational change models based on how they have evolved since Lewin’s (1947) three-step model. They suggest that POCMs can be based on governance, structure, or practice, and that models can be categorized by their approach to change: change as a project, change as a response to resistance, and change as an interpretive process.

Table 1. Planned organizational change models as evolved from Lewin’s (1947) three-step model, categorized by their approach to change. Adapted from Rosenbaum et al. (2018).

Change as a project	Change as a response to resistance	Change as an interpretive process
ACMP standard for Change Management (2019)	ADKAR model (Prosci Ltd 2003)	Transitional phase model (Bridges 2003)
Change formula (Beckhard & Harris 1977, 1987)	Management of transition model (Carnall 1990)	Causal model (Burke and Litwin 1992)
Phases of planned change (Bullock & Batten 1985)	Change Curve (Kübler-Ross 1969)	Sustainability change matrix (Dunphy et al. 2003)
Eight-step model (Kotter 1996)	Systemic model (Senge et al. 1999)	Congruence model (Nadler & Tushman 1980, 1997)
Transformation trajectories model (Taffinder 1998)		
7-S model (Peters & Waterman 1982)		

What makes approaches to planned change more popular than other approaches, e.g., emergent and contingency approaches? Lewin and the planned change approach began to receive criticism already in the 1980s. Burnes (2004) states that given Lewin’s model’s group-based, consensual, and relatively slow nature, judgment was set toward the model’s appropriateness and efficacy. Criticism of planned organizational change approaches can also be directed toward its emphasis on incremental and small-scale change and its inapplicability to situations that require rapid and radical transformational change (Burnes 1996, p. 13). Going through distinct steps, or phases, takes time. Furthermore, planned change may be ignoring

situations where more directive approaches would be required, such as when a crisis requiring rapid and major change does not allow for widespread involvement or consultation (Burnes 1996, p. 13). Planned approaches to change presume that common agreements can be reached and that all the parties involved in a particular change project have a willingness and interest in implementing it. This presumption may ignore matters such as organizational conflict and politics, which are relatively common in all organizational life. Consequently, the planned approach to change assumes that all organizational actors are willing to work toward a common goal without disagreements (Bamford & Forrester 2003) and that organizational actors will respond enthusiastically and uniformly to their “leader’s call to arms” (Graetz & Smith 2010, p. 137). These factors might not often be true, as organizations seldom work in harmony. As a last viewpoint, By (2005) adds that it is also worth noting that organizational change by nature can be more of an open-ended and continuous process than strictly managed via timetables, objectives, and methods. This critique resembles Dawson’s (2003) processualist view of change (emerging as opposed to organizational change being planned), as Dawson does not see the planned change model as a good fit in an increasingly dynamic and uncertain business environment. Planned change thus also attracts criticism of its approaches on how change can be managed.

Going back and looking at the main critiques regarding the emergent model of change, emergent change has been challenged (Burnes 1996, Bamford & Forrester 2003, By 2005) for its vague definitions and concepts, and for the notion that approaches seem to focus on distrust of planned change approaches instead of offering consistent alternatives. Notwithstanding, emergent approaches are far from unanimous in their suggestions on how organizational change should be approached. When it comes to contingency models – since organizations are unique, they will never face exactly the same contingencies – consequently, all organizations have “a best solution for them,” and this solution differs for each organization. Burnes (1996) notes that with the contingency approach, there is no one best model of change for all, but the approach advocates for the notion that there might be one best model for each (organization facing a change) in a particular time. It can be said that the contingency approach does not offer a real choice: instead, it seeks to replace one set of prescriptions with another (Burnes 2004). Contingency approaches have not, to date, gained as much agenda in research as the planned and emergent approaches to organizational change, respectively. This may be due to a lack of tangibility in suggested approaches. To conclude, Livne-Tarandach and Bartunek (2009, p. 3), in turn, suggest that the most effective approach might not be a specific approach, but rather a combination. They suggest that, for example, considering the dichotomy of emergent and planned change, a suitable approach is likely to be one that connects planned and emergent change, not one that opposes the two.

Planned organizational change has been, and still is, in the interest of many scholars and practitioners. One reason for this might be that the planned model for change is one that is best suited to relatively stable and predictable situations where change can be driven from the top down (Burnes 1996, p. 16). Thus, the “rational philosophy” encompassing planned change is the most popular philosophy for leaders seeking to impose a direction upon an organization (Graetz & Smith 2010, p. 141). As leaders and managerial roles are often in charge of planned change in organizations (Karasvirta & Teerikangas 2022), these actors need guides, models, and frameworks to support change management. Here, planned change approaches may be easier to implement, as opposed to emergent approaches, which do not advocate top-down strategies as straightforwardly. Planned change management models may provide easier prescriptions to follow.

In conclusion, this section introduced planned organizational change, which is this dissertation’s focus. Next, theoretical discussions regarding this dissertation’s three more specific research questions are introduced.

2.3 Networks, teams, and individuals in planned change

When studying planned change, the researcher noticed that organizational actors are frequently discussed. Consequently, the first research question focuses on “who” is dedicated to the management of planned change within organizations. As planned organizational change literature offers frameworks, schemes, and models on how to conduct planned organizational change, the role of actors is important. Theories and empirical studies on planned change management have studied actors from different perspectives. In broad summary, three types of actors operating at different levels of analysis appear most important: networks, teams, and individuals. Next, extant literature on planned organizational change is examined via these three lenses.

2.3.1 Networks dedicated to planned change management

Starting with networks dedicated to planned change management, these bear roles of active responsibility in implementing planned change (Tenkasi & Chesmore 2003). When looking at 15 classic planned change management models (POCMs) suggested by Rosenbaum et al. (2018), two only mention change networks. To this end, Peters and Waterman (1982) emphasize that if there are no support networks for champions, no innovation or change will happen. Networks therefore bear a crucial role in delivering change successfully. Senge et al. (1999), in turn, acknowledge that to deliver change, networks of committed people are needed. On another end, three models suggest building specific networks with individuals

actively facilitating organizational change. The ACMP (Association of Change Management Professionals, 2019) distinguishes the possibility of building sponsor networks and change agent networks. Dunphy et al. (2003), in turn, state that change agents need to operate in networks, given that networks are more impactful than individual change agents. All the while, Beckhard and Harris (1977/1987) distinguish between two types of network structures: the “diagonal slice,” suggesting a team of a representative sample across all organizational areas, and the “kitchen cabinet,” composed of the executives’ close collaborators. However, change networks bearing an active role in executing planned change are discussed in only three of the 15 well-known planned organizational change models (POCMs) suggested by Rosenbaum et al. (2018).

Setting these findings into a wider perspective in the study of planned change, there are a few papers discussing change networks. Mohrman et al. (2003) have studied different social networks’ roles in planned change, finding that the usage of existing organizational networks and the establishing of new networks facilitates planned change. To add, the density of strong ties between change implementation and change recipient networks facilitates the implementation of large-scale planned organizational change (Tenkasi & Chesmore 2003). All the while, Bartunek’s (2003) work on “change agent groups” in organizational change in the education sector discusses the power of networks in change, though not labeling the “change agent group” as a change network per se. More recently, Caldwell and Dyer (2020) studied a change network that emerged and was created for the implementation of a large-scale programmatic change in the telecommunication industry, using internal consultant teams. Furthermore, Austin et al. (2024) studied how organizational change networks promote systemic change in higher education. Despite these individual advances on network-type actors facilitating change, it deserves mention that networks actively dedicated and purposefully set in place for delivering planned change are not plentifully represented in extant academic literature.

2.3.2 Teams dedicated to planned change management

Moving forward toward change teams, they are mentioned in some POCMs. For example, Carnall (1990) mentions implementation teams and change project management teams briefly. Also, Senge et al. (1999) discuss change teams by mentioning pilot groups in change implementation. Taffinder (1998), in turn, associates the “change team” with the senior management leading the change. Yet, these three models do not go into deeper description.

Going further, some planned organizational change models discuss change teams in more depth. From these, the ACMP (2019) describes change teams as groups of individuals working together, listing out several change management activities that

a change team can bear responsibility for. Bridges (2003), in turn, suggests temporary “transition monitoring teams” to help in the transition. All the while, Dunphy et al. (2003) suggest giving responsibility to business units and staff charged with the specific responsibility of organizational change. Their model also suggests establishing a change coordination team. In their classic work, Peters and Waterman (1982) suggest “chunking,” where task forces are considered as efficient means to solve problems and implement changes. Temporary project teams and project centers are deemed suitable regarding large-scale projects that need more administration. “Skunk work” teams are considered informal teams. Kotter (1996), in turn, discusses in detail the creation of a winning coalition: a well formulated team to make the planned change happen. Beckhard and Harris (1977/1987) state that it is often necessary to create temporary systems, meaning also teams, to accomplish change. These are called transition management structures, composed of various roles. The six aforementioned models all discuss change teams by connecting their role to a specific change/transformation initiative, the composition of the change team varying by team and by model. None of the studied models appear to treat change teams as a permanent part of the organization. Instead, change teams are created for temporary purposes and do not seem to exist “in the meantime” (Bridges 2003, Beckhard & Harris 1977/1987).

Previous empirical research regarding teams and change has, for example, studied how teams are affected by and adapt to change (Koseoglu et al. 2017), as well as how teams themselves change (Trainer et al. 2020, Johnson et al. 2013). Pearce and Sims (2002) have studied how different leadership styles predict the effectiveness of change management teams, and recently Ni et al. (2025) have studied the effect of mindfulness on employee openness in organizational change. In addition, change teams are also discussed from the perspective of change implementation teams (Higgins et al. 2012, Theberge et al. 2006). However, with these approaches, teams with the task of change are considered temporary, coexisting with a specific change initiative.

2.3.3 Individuals dedicated to planned change management

Last, with individual roles dedicated to change, all but two of Rosenbaum et al.’s (2018) 15 studied POCMs, namely, Kübler-Ross (1969) and Lewin (1947), discuss individual active change roles. Taking a closer look, three categories in relation to individual roles are identified.

To begin, in many planned change models, the role of managers and leaders is emphasized (ACMP 2019, Bridges 2003, Senge et al. 1999, Peters & Waterman 1982, Nadler & Tushman 1980/1997, Taffinder 1998, Prosci 2003, Kotter 1996, Carnall 1990, Beckhard & Harris 1977/1987). When discussing individuals, it thus

seems that most POCMs associate the change role with individuals in management or leadership positions. It must be noted that depending on the model, managerial responsibilities around planned change do vary depending on the level of the manager. There are differences from line managers to senior executives, with some models discussing managers on a more general level, while other models cover different managerial roles and levels in more detail (Senge et al. 1999, Kotter 1996). Regardless of the detailed roles and organizational level, most planned organizational change models present managers and leaders as bearing active roles vis-à-vis planned change.

Secondly, in addition to managerial roles, in nine of the models on Rosenbaum et al.'s (2018) list, other individual roles are also mentioned. Four planned organizational change models utilize the term "change agent" to describe an individual who is actively responsible for change (ACMP 2019, Bullock & Batten 1985, Taffinder 1998, Dunphy et al. 2003). Across these planned change models, many approaches and meanings are associated with the role of change agents. For example, Taffinder (1998) discusses change agents as managers, while Dunphy et al. (2003) consider various levels and roles for change agents. Furthermore, change agents seem to have distinct roles and tasks at different levels of the organization, while the descriptions of change agent roles and skills vary by model.

With other non-managerial individual change roles, the ACMP (2019), for example, lists multiple distinctive active roles such as those of the change management practitioner and change management lead. Product champions and executive champions are suggested by Peters and Waterman (1982), while Taffinder (1998) mentions champions and program coordinators. In turn, Carnall (1990) suggests a project management strategy with a change project management team consisting of different roles such as steering group, project manager, working parties, staff, and management consultants. Additional supporting individual roles include the sponsor (ACMP 2019, Taffinder 1998) or godfather (Peters & Waterman 1982) of a planned change initiative. In addition, Senge et al. (1999) mention coaches and mentors. Bridges (2003), Senge et al. (1999), and Carnall (1990) all discuss the usage of external consultants.

Thirdly, three models in Rosenbaum et al.'s (2018) list of classic POCMs merely mention individuals' roles. For example, Burke and Litwin (1992) include individuals inside the "structure" variable of their model. Bullock and Batten (1985), in turn, briefly mention change agents and consultants, but the model does not discuss these roles in more detail. In the Prosci (2003) model, change management teams using the suggested planned change model can consist of various active individuals.

Looking beyond these classic models of planned change, Kanter (1999) acknowledges a variety of important individual roles in change, mentioning change

agents, champions, and collaboration ambassadors. However, while the role of individuals has been researched from many angles, it appears that change recipient and managerial roles are the most prevalent, while the role of active employees as well as management consultants is also visible. First, individuals amid organizational change have been widely researched as change recipients regarding the individual's reactions toward change (Khaw et al. 2022, Oreg et al. 2018, Oreg et al. 2011), response and resistance to change (Szabla 2007, Piderit 2000), positivity and organizational change (Avey et al. 2008), and the individual's emotions amid change (Castillo et al. 2018, Vince and Broussine 1996). Throughout empirical studies, the individual seems to be the subject to change, the one progressing through the "Change Curve" (Kübler-Ross 1969). Many studies of the individual's roles in planned change treat individuals as change recipients.

Furthermore, there is a dichotomy between the roles of managers versus employee participation in planned change, with the latter perspective gaining importance over the years. Research has focused on, e.g., employee participation in organizational change (Coyle-Shapiro 1999), actors in organizational change (MacAulay et al. 2010), and employee readiness and participation in organizational change (Cunningham et al. 2002). It is acknowledged that managing planned change depends on the participation of individuals at different organizational levels (Woiceshyn et al. 2020). Employee/individual active participation in organizational change can occur via numerous roles, although the importance of managers is often prioritized in the literature as compared with "low-power actors" (Hyde 2018) or frontline employees (Woiceshyn et al. 2020). With active roles that individuals have in planned change, it is worth considering that team members may be able to withhold multiple memberships. For example, they can be members of an implementation team and simultaneously be part of a group that is affected by change (Higgins et al. 2012, Raineri 2011).

The term "agent" is widely used in the literature, often coupled with active individuals implementing change. Endrejat et al. (2021) define change agents as individuals who make a deliberate effort to improve a system's functioning, while Westover (2010) defines the change agent's job as "developing a climate for planned change by overcoming resistances and rallying forces for positive growth". Kanter (1999), in turn, describes agents as "leaders of the future" (p. 11). Jones (1969), in turn, describes agents in planned organizational change as change agents, change catalysts, and pacemakers. These definitions of the change agents' role are not precise, and all three can encompass groups, social constructions, behavioral units, or individuals. Additionally, Caldwell (2003) involves four types of change agents as leaders, managers, teams, and consultants, critiquing "traditional" change models that often depict change agents as heroic figures driving transformation. He takes a more nuanced view in studying "agency" instead of "agents," emphasizing that

agency is not just about individual actions but is deeply embedded in organizational contexts and power dynamics. As a term, “change agent” thus appears all but straightforward.

In addition to change agents, management consultants are recognized in previous research. External management consultants and their roles regarding organizational change have been researched from countless angles, such as the dual roles of change consultants with organizational change and their respective consultancy firms (Shaw 2019), power and symbolic roles that consultants carry (Kaarst-Brown 1999), consultant-client relationships and knowledge transfer in change processes (Martinez et al. 2016), and many other advances. External consultants seem to play an important role as individuals in planned change management.

In sum, research on individual roles in planned change has been researched via many angles, with managerial roles and change recipients having the most visible presence. Roles such as change agents and external consultants are covered in previous literature, while research on employee participation is gaining importance.

In synthesis, networks, teams, and individuals dedicated to planned change management are mentioned, yet not thoroughly covered in prior theories and empirical studies of planned change. Although there are individual advances on network-type actors facilitating change, networks actively dedicated and purposefully set in place for delivering planned change are scarce in extant academic literature. Regarding teams with the task of planned change management, they seem to be considered as temporary, coexisting with distinct (planned) change initiatives. With individual roles in planned change, managerial and leadership roles dominate the research agenda. Within these shortfalls in extant planned change literature lies the research gap for article 1. The first article of this dissertation focuses on networks, teams, and individuals dedicated to planned change management in organizations. These networks, teams, and individuals are later referred to as “change organizations” per article 1.

2.4 Change management practices

When studying theories of planned change, the researcher next focused on the question of “what” organizations do in planned change management. It was soon noticed that discussions are fragmented and terms are multiple: from change management practices (Raineri 2011, Jansson 2013) to change management strategies (Philips and Klein 2023) to change management principles (Stouten et al. 2018). Here, the researcher made the deliberate decision to narrow the scope of study to one specific branch of literature, to fit a dissertations purpose. Consequently, the second research question studies change management practices (CMPs) that organizations utilize in planned change management. As organizations approach

planned change management, the literature suggests multiple change management practices that can be utilized, but empirical multi-industry studies are not plentiful. To explain the research gaps leading to the second article of this dissertation, first, the definition of change management practice is discussed. Then, studies on change management practices are introduced. Consequently, research gaps are examined.

CMPs "...include a variety of organizational interventions that, when executed properly and in consistency with internal and external organizational events, facilitate the enactment of organizational change processes" (Raineri 2011, p. 266). Change management practices are important, since organizations' use of change management practices impacts the outcomes of organizational change programs (Raineri 2011). Thus, studies on organizational change management practices are in the interest of both scholars and practitioners (Jansson 2013) since they reveal what organizations concretely do when facing change.

When discussing change management practices, it is important to distinguish CMPs from practice theory. In management studies, practice theory offers a lens through which organizational phenomena can be examined. It focuses on understanding how routine activities and decisions (Feldman & Pentland 2003), day-to-day behaviors, and interactions (Orlikowski 2000) shape organizational life and strategy. The approach emphasizes the agency of practitioners and the dynamic nature of organizational processes (Feldman & Orlikowski 2011). Change management practices, in turn, are focused on interventions utilized in organizational change management (Raineri 2011).

The definition of change management practice is similar to other concepts such as "change management strategy" or "change management principle." To this end, Phillips and Klein (2023) define a change management strategy as "a process or action from a model or framework," presenting a definition quite similar to "change management practices." However, there is a difference. Phillips and Klein (2023) identify change management strategies as consisting of organizational imperatives, such as "create a vision for the change that aligns with the organization's mission." Similarly, Stouten et al. (2018) propose ten "change management principles," for example, to "develop and communicate a compelling change vision" (p. 775). Both principles and strategies thus seem to differ from practices via characteristics associated with directiveness. Namely, change management practices are not imperative like strategies or principles; i.e., they do not command to do something. Rather, change management practices group an array of activities under one umbrella (e.g., "communication practices"). Although acknowledging that the concepts of change management strategy, principle, and practice are somewhat similar and that boundaries may be blurry at times, for this dissertation's scope, change management practices are chosen as the lens of study.

Taking a closer look at prior research, numerous change management practices have been identified. Examples of studies on specific change management practices are, e.g., studies on communication practices in change (Mansoor et al. 2023, Shrivastava et al. 2022, DuFrene & Lehman 2014), training practices in change (Ferrari 2023, Kim et al. 2019, Wallace 1991), and change leadership practices (Onia et al. 2021, Haake et al. 2014, Rowland & Higgs 2008, Herold et al. 2008). All the beforementioned research focuses on single change management practices.

All the while, CMP studies have also focused on multiple change management practices (e.g., communication AND training AND leadership practices). These studies mostly examine CMPs in specific industries, with only a few studies spanning across multiple industries.

To begin with single industry studies, Yamakawa et al. (2012) studied organizations from the finance industry, with results showing that the firms with a higher use of change management practices achieved higher levels of Information Technology Infrastructure Library compliance. Change management practices most frequently used by Yamakawa et al.'s (2012) case organizations were the formulation of a powerful guiding coalition, the creation of a vision, the creation of short-term wins and communication of the vision, with the CMPs of the study being adapted from Kotter (1996). Continuing, Higdon (2016) found change management practices that integrated facility management leaders' use for successful management in outsourcing initiatives. Four clusters of change management practices were identified: communication, data and scope, training and education, and process and procedures. Lines and Smithwick (2019), in turn, studied change management practices in the electrical contractors' industry. Their study identified seven high-ranking change management practices: change agent effectiveness, a realistic timescale, change-related training, senior leadership commitment, performance benchmarks, sufficient resources, and effective change message communication. Maali et al. (2020) identified seven key change management practices, and of these, their study showed that key change management practices most related to successful change in the AEC (architecture, engineering, and construction) industry were identified as change agent effectiveness, measured benchmarks, a realistic timeframe, and communicated benefits. Furthermore, also in the AEC industry, Aldossari et al. (2021) propose five change management practices linked to successful adaptation of alternative project delivery methods: adoption of a realistic timeframe, effective change agents, workload adjustments, senior-leadership commitment, and sufficient change-related training. Moving to a logistics industry point of view, Sopa (2022) has identified the most important practices of change management enabling successful change as diagnosis and compatibility, communication, leadership, and compensation and incentives. Finally, Ajani (2022) revealed that change management practices such as communication, education and

training, (HR) resource and capability, reward and reinforcement, and leadership have significant effects on job satisfaction, job security, employee participative decision-making, and employee commitment in the fast-food industry in Nigeria. All these recent advances show interest in understanding how multiple change management practices can be identified within specific industries and what industry-specific CMPs might be preferred.

To continue, looking at scarce multi-industry studies covering several change management practices, Clarke and Garside (1997) studied both literature and multiple industries' companies in aiming to build a "best practice change management model" for organizations. Clarke and Garside identified the best general practices that organizations utilize in change management and then further grouped these into five distinct areas: commitment, social and cultural aspects, communication, tools and methodology, and interactions.

To date, it appears that Raineri (2011) has studied change management practices with perhaps the widest empirical sample across industries. In their study, Raineri identified 11 change management practices, which they separate into "preparation" phase CMPs and "implementation" phase CMPs. The preparation phase includes the following CMPs: diagnosis and analysis of the organizational system and its environment; identification of change needs; development of a new organizational vision; development of a detailed plan of how change will be implemented (including ambitious but realistic objectives, stages to be achieved, and the timing necessary to coordinate the change project); understanding and consideration of the needs and interests of relevant individuals and groups (to anticipate their intentions and reactions, persuade them to support the change process, and diminish potential resistances to the process); creation of a sense of urgency among employees (to generate a state of motivation and expectations that facilitate the process, sometimes by generating reactions of dissatisfaction with the status quo); and spreading a feeling of change necessity among stakeholders.

On the other hand, the implementation phase includes the following CMPs: facilitation of communication during the change process (which allows different stakeholders to understand what, when, and why the organization is changing, facilitating the acceptance and adaptation of new circumstances); leadership during the change implementation stage (employees need to perceive that their leaders are actively involved and committed to the change process); formal and/or informal training and coaching in order to teach employees the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out the new tasks; and the alignment of compensation and incentive systems with the new objectives defined in the change plan (in order to consolidate the change implementation process). Raineri (2011) studied four distinct sets of change management practices (diagnosis and alignment, communication, leadership, and compensation and incentives), with an extensive sample of 90

organizations in Chile, making their study one of the most comprehensive empirical approaches studying CMPs.

In summary, a twofold analysis emerges. First, looking at recent empirical advances on CMPs, most suggested change management practices are:

1. Leadership-related practices (Clarke & Garside 1997, Raineri 2011, Yamakawa et al. 2012, Lines & Smithwick 2019, Maali et al. 2020, Aldossari et al. 2021, Sopa 2022, Ajani 2022),
2. Formal and/or informal training and coaching practices (Clarke & Garside 1997, Raineri 2011, Higdon 2016, Lines & Smithwick 2019, Maali et al. 2020, Aldossari et al. 2021, Ajani 2022) and
3. Communication-related practices (Clarke & Garside 1997, Raineri 2011, Yamakawa et al. 2012, Higdon 2016, Maali et al. 2020, Sopa 2022, Ajani 2022).

Second, regarding the preference of what CMPs change strategists more frequently use than others, only Raineri's (2011) and Yamakawa's (2012) studies distinguish between "preparation" and "implementation" stage CMPs and advocate a preference between these. Both Raineri (2011) and Yamakawa et al. (2012) suggest that during organizational change management, firms more frequently use practices related to the change "preparation" stage in comparison to practices related to the change "implementation" stage. However, this notion of preference does not appear supported because, when looking at the list of the most suggested CMPs above, all three most preferred CMPs are from Raineri's "implementation" phase change management practices. Based on these findings from extant literature, more research on CMP usage across industries may be needed to further investigate what CMPs are preferred by organizations when managing change, as current suggestions seem contradictory.

Furthermore, although previous studies display multiple change management practices used in organizations, a missing viewpoint stemming from recent empirical research on change management practices surfaces. It appears that in empirical approaches to change management practices, these practices are seldom discussed collectively or as part of larger settings, e.g., change management models or frameworks, although studies recognize that multiple CMPs are used in empirical settings. From scarce studies combining change management practices and change management models, Pollack and Pollack (2014) studied change management practices via Kotter's (1996) eight-step model, in an empirical setting. Similarly, also Chappell (2016) studied Kotter's model and CMPs in empiric settings. As both Pollack and Pollack (2014) and Chappell (2016) used a predetermined change management model with set CMPs (Kotter 1996), other CMPs or change

management models were not studied. Apart from these two approaches, empirical studies combining change management practices and change management models are not abundant. Consequently, the lack of empirical studies linking change management practices to change management models is a shortcoming of current change management practice studies, which is addressed in this dissertation's second article.

In synthesis, empirical multi-industry studies on change management practices appear scarce, warranting more research. Furthermore, empirical change management practice studies appear to lack a connection with change management model, as empirical studies of CMPs in change management models seem absent. Additionally, based on findings from extant literature, current suggestions on the preference of CMP usage seem contradictory. The need for this dissertation's research lies within these shortcomings in extant CMP literature.

2.5 Organizational change capability

After studying the “who” (networks, teams and individuals dedicated to planned change management) and the “what” (change management practices used in planned change management), the researcher considered that it would be useful to take a more holistic approach. After studying contemporary approaches to organizational change management and planned change management, the topic of organizational change capability (OCC) surfaced. As a relatively new topic of study, OCC appeared as both interesting and relevant for this dissertation's research problem of how large companies manage planned change. Consequently, the third research question addresses the concept and definition of organizational change capability (OCC). To explain the research gap leading to the third article of this dissertation, first, research on organizational change capability is examined (2.5.1). Second, extant definitions of OCC are introduced (2.5.2), upon which a typology of OCC is developed. Third, this section (2.5.3) discusses two juxtaposed terms: organizational change capacity and organizational change capability.

2.5.1 Research on organizational change capability

For one, looking at organizational change capability, sets of capabilities resembling OCC can be identified from previous literature. To this end, in an early contribution to the field, Beckhard and Harris (1987) discuss “reshaping capabilities,” which involve the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the organization to carry out the necessary requirements for successful change implementation. Although Beckhard and Harris do not label “reshaping capabilities” as a change capability, the capabilities listed could be considered as change capabilities, as they deal with the

requirements for change implementation. In turn, in their pioneering work including 243 cases of corporate change, Turner and Crawford (1998) identify capabilities that organizations possess for managing effective change. These corporate capabilities are composed of competences that, when grouped together, formulate a capability. The five core capabilities identified by Turner and Crawford are further split into two main groups: reshaping capabilities (allowing an organization to change effectively) and operational capabilities (providing the basis for current performance and results). Both Beckhard and Harris (1987) and Turner and Crawford (1998) study organizations' clusters of capabilities needed in change but do not name these capabilities as "organizational change capability," nor do they define the concept of OCC. Moving on, the dynamic capabilities approach (Teece et al. 1997) was developed to address the issue of how firms achieve competitive advantage amid rapid change. Although Teece et al. (1997, p. 516) define dynamic capability as, "the firm's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competences to address rapidly changing environments," dynamic capability and organizational change capability are not synonyms per se. OCC can be considered as one dynamic capability (instead of resource-based) among others.

For another, Balogun and Hope Hailey (1999) distinguish between change capabilities needed for different change types, i.e., "big bang" change (e.g., change that is implemented at once) and incremental change (e.g., change that is implemented in smaller parts). What Balogun and Hope Hailey (1999) note is that during organizational change (whether "big bang" or incremental), change capabilities need to exist at three levels: individual, managerial, and organizational. The authors distinguish between different capabilities coupled with different types of change, and with various change capabilities needed at different organizational levels. Waldersee, Griffiths, and Lai (2003) follow the same line of thought, stating that different types of organizations may possess distinct sets of change capabilities, some of which dispose the organization to dynamic flexibility and adaptability; then, there are capabilities that incline an organization to change through resources such as expertise. Since different organizations may have various forms and structures, a simplistic distinction between operational versus reshaping capabilities, as suggested by Turner and Crawford (1998), may not be enough (Waldersee et al. 2003). They assert that with change capability, the types of organizations ("mechanistic" or "organic", *ibid.* p. 68) need to be considered. In summary, Balogun and Hope Hailey (1999) and Waldersee et al. (2003) thus see flexibility in organizational change capabilities, as an organization's change capability depends both on the organization and on the type of change it is facing. However, in these approaches, organizational change capability is not defined as a concept.

With advances utilizing the concept of organizational change capability, Sanchez-Medina (2020), in turn, studied organizational change capability in

artisanal businesses in Mexico. Sanchez-Medina's study is important since it empirically studies how organizational change capability could benefit artisanal businesses. Sanchez-Medina (2020, p. 415) acknowledges that "OCC is still a confusing term; it requires more empirical research that shows its relation to other constructs"; however, their paper does not offer definitions for sharpening the concept of OCC. In recent approaches, Al Habusi et al. (2025) study the mediating role of organizational change capability and financial resilience in AI innovation and the circular economy. Although OCC is discussed, their paper focuses on artificial intelligence, not organizational change capability as such. Vanhengel et al. (2025), in turn, introduce a measurement scale designed to assess the organizational change capability (OCC) of public organizations, especially in a military setting. As their objective is to create a robust and valid scale to measure OCC in public organizations (p. 6), their work is not primarily focused towards exploring the concept of OCC.

Furthermore, shifting the lens from capabilities to the organization itself, Jones and Recardo (2013, p. 115) define a change-capable organization as one "whose members are continually engaged in building their knowledge of the challenges and opportunities of their industry in parallel with their change management skills" while having an organizational culture that sees change as vital to its health. Jones and Recardo discuss a change-capable organization as an end-state, but not "organizational change capability" and what it consists of.

In conclusion, organizational change capabilities in change can be approached via sets of capabilities (Beckhard & Harris 1987, Turner & Crawford 1998) and/or as organizational features (a change-capable organization, Jones & Recardo 2013). The organization's capability in change can fluctuate based on its situation and structure (Balogun & Hope Hailey 1999, Waldersee et al. 2003). OCC can be considered as a specific dynamic capability (Teece et al. 1997) among other dynamic capabilities. Thus, examination lenses abound. Although all the previous approaches have studied organizations' capabilities in change, however, these studies do not propose definitions regarding the concept of OCC.

2.5.2 Extant definitions of organizational change capability

Next, extant research discussing the definition of organizational change capability is presented. It deserves mention that as this is a limited area of literature, only a few approaches could be identified. From these, this dissertation suggests dividing existing OCC concept definitions into two categories based on their emphasis. Definitions in the first category consider the concept as bearing a fixed character, while definitions in the second category view it as being of an evolving character. This typology is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The extant literature's definitions given to the concept of organizational change capability (OCC). Table from article 3 (Karasvirta 2025).

Source	Definition of OCC	Emphasis	Character
McGuinness and Morgan (2005)	OCC consists of a suitable foundation for constant change, the ability to shape it, and the energy to sustain it.	OCC determines an organization's effectiveness in implementing incessant change and with change, implementing its strategy. OCC is viewed as a more permanent capability for implementing continuous change and strategy.	Fixed
Supriharyanti and Sukoco (2023)	OCC is the repetitive, patterned, and routine ability of an organization, consisting of learning ability, change process capability, and changing context ability to deliberately move from a present state to the desired future state.	OCC as a routine ability with learning, process, and context capabilities to transition from the present to a desired state. Focuses on routinized actions and conscious movement to achieve future states amidst continuous environmental change.	Fixed
Albrecht and Roughsedge (2023)	OCC as the availability of systems, processes, resources, policies, and procedures that prime organizations to be ready for change.	OCC as an organization's deliberate, purposeful, and preemptive investment in building the organizational and system-level resources that will enable the successful navigation of current and future change.	Fixed
Cao and Le (2024)	OCC as a holistic competence to identify internal change needs, seize opportunities, and respond effectively for development.	Emphasizes organizational development, recognition of opportunities, and effective response.	Evolving
Montreuil (2022)	OCC is the actions that an individual or organization takes on in their capacity to realize this potential.	Hierarchical development; progression from capacity to competency as organizational maturity increases. OCC is seen as a process with phases.	Evolving

First, starting with definitions of organizational change capability that view it as fixed in nature, OCC can be described as determining an organization's effectiveness in implementing incessant change and, via change, implementing its strategy (McGuinness and Morgan 2005, p. 1307, p. 1310). McGuinness and Morgan state

that organizational change capability is built on three components: a suitable foundation for constant change, the ability to shape it, and the energy to sustain it (ibid, p. 1313). Here, organizational change capability is defined as a more permanent organizational capability for implementing strategy and change. In this approach, having “a suitable foundation” is key, yet action is needed (i.e., shaping change and energy to sustain change). Consequently, Supriharyanti and Sukoco (2023, p. 55) also define OCC as “the repetitive, patterned and routine ability of an organization, consisting of learning ability, change process capability and changing context ability to deliberately move from a present state to the desired future state (change) in the face of continuous environmental change.” Here, the concept of capability is associated with a set of routines (“routine ability”), forming patterns of actions. Although organizational change capability allows the organization to move from one state to another, the capability itself is more stagnant and based on repetitive action (routines). Furthermore, Albrecht and Roughsedge (2023, p. 393) define OCC as the availability of systems, processes, resources, policies, and procedures that prime organizations to be ready for change. However, their definition posits that purposeful action needs to be aimed at building these resources that will, ultimately, enable successful change. Thus, the emphasis of this definition is not set to the availability of resources enabling change, but on actions leading to securing and developing these resources. In summary, although McGuinness and Morgan (2005), Supriharyanti and Sukoco (2023), and Albrecht and Roughsedge (2023) see change as an ongoing process, their definitions of organizational change capability view OCC from a more static perspective – organizational change capability is a somewhat stable capability that the organization either has or does not have. OCC is based on suitable foundations for implementing change, routine abilities, and developing suitable resources for change.

Second, OCC can also be viewed as bearing an evolving character. From this approach, Cao and Le (2024, p. 159) define organizational capability for change as a holistic competence of an organization to recognize internal aspects needed to be changed, to realize new opportunities to be seized, and to respond effectively to changing situations for organizational development. The approach is all but stagnant, as organizations need to continuously develop, recognizing aspects to be changed and developing their capability in change. Furthermore, Montreuil (2022) states that the development of organizational change capability is a process where there is an organizational state before and after the development of change capability. Montreuil (2022) thus treats change capacity, change capability, and change competency as different process phases; they offer a maturity framework where organizations develop their change capability as a process. Combined, these definitions of OCC (Cao and Le 2024, Montreuil 2022) do not consider organizational change capability as a fixed state, but as a state that constantly evolves. According to these authors,

organizational change capability is flux, and the definitions of the concept of OCC come close to the concept of dynamic capability (Teece et al. 1997).

Taking a closer look at the development of capabilities, it deserves mention that Montreuil (2022) views development from capacity to competency as a process. Cao and Le (2024), in turn, view OCC as “a holistic competence.” Furthermore, although Turner and Crawford (1998) do not define organizational change capability, they state that change capabilities consist of lower-level competencies. Thus, all three approaches position “capability” and “competence” differently in their respective conceptual hierarchies, although they all assume that change capability evolves and builds as a process. In summary, based on these authors’ work, it appears that conceptual hierarchies vary depending on the approach to organizational change capability.

Summarizing this section, the five existing definitions for the concept of “organizational change capability” (Cao & Le 2024, Montreuil 2022, McGuinness & Morgan 2005, Supriharyanti & Sukoco 2023, Albrecht & Roughsedge 2023) represent extant scarce literature on the concept definition of OCC. In doing so, they view OCC as either emphasizing fixed or evolving characteristics (Table 2).

2.5.3 Organizational Change Capability and Organizational Change Capacity

As a much-used concept in organizational change capability literature is that of “organizational change capacity,” this dissertation briefly addresses the differences between organizational change capability and organizational change capacity. In some recent approaches on organizational change capability, authors such as Supriharyanti et al. (2023), Cao and Le (2024), and Talaja et al. (2023) refer to sets of previous studies on “organizational change capacity” as studies on “organizational change capability,” utilizing these terms interchangeably. Indeed, as change capacity and change capability sometimes appear to be treated as synonyms (Albrecht & Roughsedge 2023, p. 393), this assumption needs to be considered.

Definitions on organizational change capacity consider how many resources the organization can invest in a proposed change. These are viewed both in terms of financial and human resources, including how much time managers can devote to the change (Balogun & Hope Hailey 1999, p. 83). Similarly, Albrecht and Roughsedge (2023, p. 393) state that change capacity in part focuses on the immediate availability of additional resources required for the implementation of distinct changes. Montreuil (2022) concludes that change capacity is a latent ability to manage all types of change and that, consequently, the organization has the resources to change but still needs to manage these resources strategically and dynamically to achieve a set target. These approaches to organizational change

capacity emphasize the organization's resources and their efficient usage. They focus on what the organization "has." From another angle, Meyer and Stensaker (2006, p. 218) define change capacity as a state in which organizations can implement large-scale changes without compromising daily operations or subsequent change processes. They consider that organizations that have a capacity for change must have the ability (e.g., resources and capabilities) to change the organization successfully, but they must also have the capability to maintain daily operations and implement subsequent change processes (ibid.). Additionally, Montreuil (2022) sees change capacity as a state, as it is "the latent abilities of an individual or an organization which are called to be developed to unfold the full potential" (ibid., p. 1187), suggesting that there is a need to progress to a state to further realize the "full potential." Furthermore, Ulrich and Lake (1990) define a company as having a "change capacity" when it succeeds in learning how to reduce the time for going through a planned change process (i.e., current state – plan for change – transition management/changing – results). These perspectives view organizational change capacity as an organizational condition, a state that the organization has reached. They focus on where the organization "is." Soparnot (2011, p. 642), in turn, defines change capacity as "the ability of the company to produce solutions (content) that respond to environmental evolution (external context) and/or organizational evolution (internal context) and to implement these change processes successfully within the company (process)." Soparnot (2011) thus associates organizational change capacity with an end-to-end ability from production and implementation, considering both the external and internal environments.

Based on the above approaches, organizational change capacity can be defined in relation to available resources, latent abilities, and the realization of potential (Balogun & Hope Hailey 1999, Albrecht & Roughsedge 2023, Montreuil 2022). It can be viewed as an organizational state (Meyer & Stensaker 2006, Ulrich & Lake 1990) and as an ability (Soparnot 2011). In sum, organizational change capacity consists of the resources, organizational states, abilities, and potential for an organization to succeed in change. It discusses what the organization "has" and where the organization "is," which leads to the following question: What is the difference between organizational change capacity and organizational change capability?

The answer might lie in what the organization "does."

Indeed, Montreuil (2022, p. 1189) defines organizational change capability as "the actions that an individual or an organization takes on their capacity to realize this potential." This view is in line with Albrecht and Roughsedge (2023, p. 393), who argue that change capability differs from change capacity as it is focused on an organization's "deliberate, purposeful, and preemptive investment in building the organizational and system-level resources that will enable the successful navigation

of current and future change.” In their definition, although emphasizing routinized abilities, Supriharyanti and Sukoco (2023) also discuss conscious action for moving from one state to another, desired state. Herein lies an important distinction between the concepts of organizational change capacity and organizational change capability, namely, action. Change capacity comes to life – as a change capability – via purposeful activity. Thus, it is argued here that a distinction between the concepts of organizational change capacity and organizational change capability can be made via action and activity. Capacity is organizational potential (resources and state), while capability mobilizes this potential in change.

To summarize the literature review on organizational change capability, for one, previous approaches have researched organizations’ capabilities in change (Beckhard & Harris 1987, Turner & Crawford 1998, Balogun & Hope Hailey 1999, Waldersee et al. 2003), but they do not propose definitions regarding the concept of OCC. For another, extant definitions of “organizational change capability” (Cao & Le 2024, Montreuil 2022, McGuinness & Morgan 2005, Supriharyanti & Sukoco 2023, Albrecht & Roughsedge 2023) emphasize either its fixed or evolving characteristics (Table 2). Third, the concept of organizational change capability has yet to achieve an uncontested definition, and adjacent concepts such as “organizational change capacity” further challenge the clarity of concept definition.

Looking at current definitions of organizational change capability, they originate from the literature. Consequently, one specific feature seems to be missing. Namely, empirically grounded approaches to defining the concept of organizational change capability appear to be lacking. Consequently, this dissertation’s research gap lies in replenishing the definition of organizational change capability from an empirical viewpoint.

2.6 Synthesis

The review of prior theory within the scope of this dissertation leads to the following summary.

Organizational change can be approached from a multitude of angles (see section 2.1). Approaches to managing planned organizational change have significantly evolved since Lewin (1947), as section 2.2 details. All the while, there are elements in previous literature that have remained less attended to.

First, in planned organizational change literature, networks, teams, and individuals dedicated to planned change management seem to be underrepresented, as explained in section 2.3. The first article of this dissertation studies change organizations in planned change, addressing this gap in extant literature.

Second, regarding change management practices, empirical multi-industry studies are scarce. In extant literature, CMPs are seldom discussed collectively or as

parts of larger settings, e.g., planned change management models. Preference in change management practice usage appears as conflicting in extant CMP literature, as section 2.4 summarizes. Article 2 addresses these knowledge gaps.

Third and finally, looking at prior research on organizational change capability, the concept has yet to achieve an uncontested definition. Furthermore, the concept of OCC lacks empirical grounding, as detailed in section 2.5. The third article addresses this knowledge gap.

To conclude, the prevailing rich field of research on planned organizational change provides a theory-filled starting point for this dissertation, while also presenting focused and relevant research gaps in existing knowledge on how organizations approach planned change management. Table 3 summarizes research questions and knowledge gaps in extant theory that this dissertation addresses.

Table 3. This dissertation’s research questions. Main knowledge gaps in extant theory, which the research questions of this dissertation begin to address via three articles.

Research questions	<i>Article 1</i>	<i>Article 2</i>	<i>Article 3</i>
	<i>RQ1: What do companies’ change organizations consist of?</i>	<i>RQ2A: What kinds of change management practices do large companies use in planned change?</i> <i>RQ2B: How are these change management practices part of change management models?</i>	<i>RQ3: Adopting an empirically grounded perspective, what does organizational change capability consist of?</i>
Gaps in extant theory	In planned organizational change models, change organizations (networks, teams, and individuals dedicated to planned change management) appear underrepresented.	From an empirical perspective, studies on CMPs have seldom been carried out across industries. Furthermore, change management practices (CMPs) have been researched mainly as independent practices, not jointly or as parts of change management models. Preference over CMP usage appears as conflicting in extant research.	The concept of organizational change capability (OCC) lacks preciseness. Empirically grounded definitions are missing, as prior research is conceptual.

3 Research design and methods

This chapter of the dissertation explains the research design and methods of the dissertation and its three articles. The guiding research paradigm (critical realism) is described, followed by an introduction to engaged scholarship, which is applied in this dissertation's research. Thereafter, the research design based on a qualitative multiple case study is presented, and the studied case companies are introduced. Following, the means of data collection are described, and data analysis is illustrated regarding the three articles in this dissertation. To conclude, questions of validity, reliability, and ethical considerations are addressed.

3.1 Research paradigm

In studying how large organizations manage planned change, this dissertation adopts a critical realist paradigm. Accordingly, the world and objects of study are real as they exist independently of perceptions and beliefs, but it is acknowledged that our understanding of the world is socially constructed (Hoddy 2019, p. 113). Reality can be studied and understood through scientific inquiry, relying on empirical evidence to understand and explain phenomena (Morgenthau 1967, Waltz 1979, Griffiths 1992), but knowledge is always affected by individual perceptions. Critical realism assumes a world that is observable and existing regardless of our viewpoints but sees that this reality is complex and stratified, consisting of layers (domains). The empirical domain consists of our experiences and observations; the actual domain includes all events and phenomena that occur whether anyone observes them; and the real domain contains the underlying structures, mechanisms, powers, and tendencies that generate events (Bhaskar 1975). Critical realism thus acknowledges subjectivity. The researcher recognizes their individual perceptions about the studied topic (see section 3.8.4 on Ethical Considerations) and accepts that in the scope of a dissertation, as in all research endeavors, there are research topics that will remain to be pursued (see section 5.3 on Limitations and Further Research Directions).

3.2 Engaged scholarship

Engaged scholarship is a participative form of research considering the perspectives of key stakeholders (researchers, users, clients, sponsors, and practitioners) to understand and address complex social problems (Van de Ven 2007, p. 9). Through the engaged scholarship method, academics can establish a reciprocal relationship with the expert community while adhering to the standards of quality scholarship (van Marrewijk & Dessign 2019). Engaged scholarship has been promoted in many fields such as social sustainability sciences (Franklin 2022), education (Fitzgerald et al. 2010), and organization and management studies (Van de Ven 2007).

As engaged scholarship is a participative form of research for obtaining the advice and perspectives of key stakeholders (researchers, users, clients, sponsors, and practitioners), the central thinking is the involvement of stakeholders in each step of the research process, which Van de Ven (2007, 2018) lays out as the following:

1. Ground the research problem and question being examined in the real world.
2. Develop plausible alternative theories to address the research question.
3. Design and conduct research to empirically evaluate the alternative models.
4. Apply the research findings to resolve the research question about the problem.

Although Van de Ven highlights all these steps as important and that sufficient time and effort should be allocated to each, they do not state that the steps should be executed in the particular order presented here (1–4) or that they could be repeated only once – the process can be iterative. This dissertation’s approach follows engaged scholarship in involving stakeholders *to some extent* in each of the four stages proposed by Van de Ven (2007, 2018), but not taking an orthodoxic stance on following the engaged scholarship process with every detail in all stages. As the researcher has an organizational change management practitioner background, the approach to research overall seeks to consider both theory and practice in parallel: acknowledging what the researcher already knows from practice but being conscious of one’s viewpoints and seeking to conduct research from a neutral standpoint. Here, the researcher’s access “to the field” and the touchstone of the researcher’s own experience proved to be a valuable enabler of a potentially successful research endeavor (Strauss & Corbin 1990, pp. 35–36). Looking at the four stages of the research process involving engaged scholarship (Van de Ven 2007, 2018), this dissertation’s research was approached as the following.

As described in the previous sections, this dissertation's research began with a broader aim to discover how large companies manage planned change. Here, the literature and empirical studies on planned change management were first carefully studied, and a theoretical gap was perceived, with planned change approaches appearing to be coupled mainly to distinct change initiatives. However, to validate the research problem, the researcher had to assess whether the perceived theoretical gap is also practically significant, in the sense that it should be seen as a research problem to pursue in the first place. In this dissertation's context, engaged scholarship was a critical method for validating the research problem leading to more specific research questions (see section 1.5, Figure 1). Using an engaged scholarship approach, the research problem of this dissertation was grounded "in the real world" with the support of tens of discussions with practitioners and executives. This was the first stage of applying an engaged scholarship approach (Van de Ven 2007, 2018). Consequently, the research problem of how large companies manage planned change was confirmed to be a contemporary research problem stemming both from theories of planned change and from practical relevance and need.

Regarding the second stage of the engaged scholarship approach, Van de Ven (2007, 2018) suggests developing plausible alternative theories to address the research question. Looking at previous literature and empirical studies, theories and models on planned change management were discovered during this dissertation's research process. Going back to extant theories on planned change management, there seems to be a lack of knowledge on how organizations approach planned change management in general (see Chapter 2 of this dissertation for specific research gaps in extant literature). Plausible "alternative theories" to address the research problem of how large companies manage planned change were not discovered. Thus, three more specific research questions were formulated.

This dissertation's research process was designed and conducted to empirically study different ways in which case companies approach planned change management. This is in line with Van de Ven's (2007, 2018) suggestions on the third stage of the engaged scholarship research process. This dissertation's research design, a qualitative multiple case study, enables bringing forth case companies' approaches to the studied research questions, i.e., change organizations, change management practices, and organizational change capability in companies' planned change management. Hereby, this dissertation offers divergent ways to approach planned change management and, consequently, begins to offer explanations regarding how large companies manage planned change (see Chapter 5, the "Contributions" section of this dissertation). In addition, at this stage of the research process, key stakeholders (researchers, users, clients, sponsors, and practitioners, Van de Ven 2007) were included in the study as informants – as subjects of study.

Finally, stage four in the engaged scholarship research process consists of applying the findings to resolve research questions of the problem (Van de Ven 2007, 2018). This is done both from a theoretical perspective (extending present theories) and from a practical perspective (adding to the practice of planned organizational change management). Theoretical contributions are introduced in section 4 (regarding individual articles) and summarized again in section 5. From a practical perspective, findings of this dissertation have been applied “in the field” together with practitioners and executives in various planned organizational change management and organizational change capability development initiatives. Hereby, the researcher has gained initial observations of how this dissertation’s findings can be applied for the benefit of organizations developing their capabilities in planned change management. The application of this dissertation’s findings in resolving research questions are discussed in the “Contributions” section of this dissertation, where both theoretical and practical implications are detailed.

Figure 3 illustrates how engaged scholarship is applied in this dissertation’s research process.

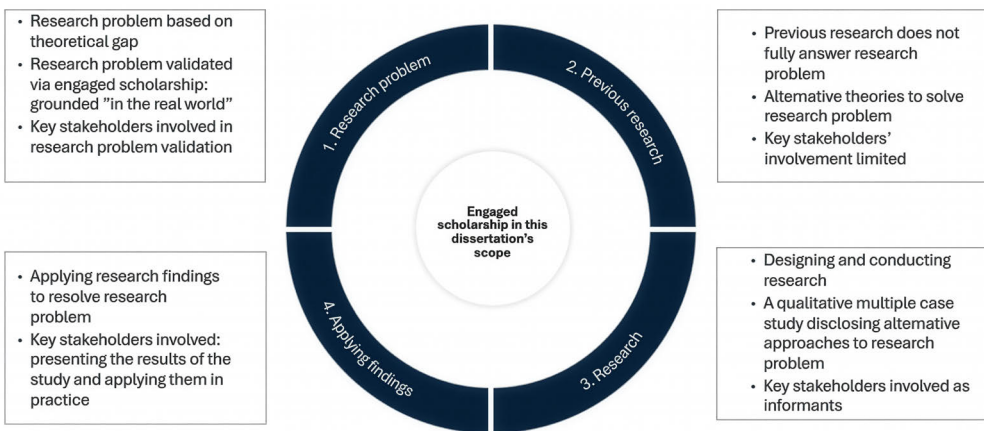


Figure 3. The application of engaged scholarship in this dissertation’s research process.

In summary, the engaged scholarship approach has been applied in this dissertation, although the method is not followed orthodoxically. Engaged scholarship bears importance especially regarding the first stage, which grounds this dissertation’s research problem in “the real world.” Key stakeholder participation, however, was not active in stage 2, where previous research was examined. In stage 3, key stakeholders were involved as subjects of study via informant roles. As the engaged scholarship circle closes with the last, fourth stage of the approach, findings are applied to resolve the research problem both from a theoretical and from a

practical perspective. Here, key stakeholders are involved as they are applying new information acquired via this dissertation's study.

3.3 Qualitative research

As the researcher approached the subject of study, they were faced with the question of how to embark on a research journey where the data gathered would provide relevant insights into the research at hand, both for the dissertation as a whole and for all subsequent research questions of the three articles. One of the most important phases of the research was the careful selection of a suitable approach "for getting from here to there" (Yin 1994, p. 19). Hereby, the research design was approached based on the open-ended nature of the research questions regarding "who," "what," and "how," grounding in a critical realist research paradigm. As suggested by Strauss and Corbin (2008, p. 12), the research questions guided the selection of the methodological approach used to conduct the research.

Qualitative research is suitable when searching for complex interrelationships among matters (Stake 1995, p. 37), looking at "happenings" instead of "causes." Quantitative approaches would not best serve in giving rich and detailed answers to the questions of "who," "what," and "how." Qualitative research acknowledges particularity and context, often favoring an inductive approach that usually relies on multiple sources of information (van Maanen 1998, Yin 1994). When deliberating research strategies and reading both qualitative and quantitative articles on organizational change management, the researcher felt that conducting a quantitative study might incorporate undesirable risks of leaving too many unanswered questions about the particularity of cases and would not take into holistic notion the contextuality or the uniqueness of the research cases. Pondering between a qualitative approach versus a quantitative one, the latter revealed risks of missing out on something meaningful. To truly "maximize what we can learn" (Stake 1995, p. 4) and avoid overseeing important explanations, for this dissertation, a qualitative approach was chosen. In this dissertation's scope, a qualitative approach provides a powerful method in the creation of knowledge in management scholarship (Bartunek et al. 2006, Bansal & Corley 2011) and provides a suitable medium for addressing the research questions presented.

Regarding the research problem of how large companies manage planned change and the three more specific research questions that this dissertation addresses, despite a plethora of prior research, empirically grounded knowledge is limited (see Chapter 2). Therefore, an inductive approach has been selected. Inductive approaches focus on theory building (instead of testing it), as new theory is built from cases and data (Eisenhardt & Graebner 2007). Thus, an inductive approach was adopted, where theory emerges via the research process (Eisenhardt et al. 2016).

Induction provides event data for explanations and theorizing. Inductive theory building from cases with rich empirical data ideally produces theory that is accurate, interesting, and testable (Eisenhardt & Graebner 2007). Abduction is also used, especially with the first two articles' (1 and 2) data analysis, when moving from empirical observations toward understanding wider structures and mechanisms (Danermark et al. 2002) by considering previous theoretical lenses. For qualitative research and critical realism, abduction is important since it promotes moving from surface-level observations to develop deeper understanding of the studied phenomena.

A qualitative approach is a process of examining data to elicit meaning, gain knowledge, and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss 2008, p. 1). Calling the approach “qualitative” or “inductive” may not be focal, as pointed out by Eisenhardt et al. (2016), but it is important to acknowledge the emphasis on the process: building theory from data.

3.4 Multiple case study design

This dissertation adopted a multiple case study research design. In a broader perspective, the case study inquiry can be considered a comprehensive research strategy itself, not merely a data collection tactic or a design feature. Case studies rely on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion (Yin 1994). Case studies give weight to the rich real-world context where reality happens (Eisenhardt & Graebner 2007); case studies are a scientific approach that attempts to ground theoretical concepts in reality (Stuart et al. 2002). Although definitions are many, case study research may be best defined as a research method that involves investigating one or a small number of social entities or situations (cases) about which data are collected using multiple sources of data and developing a holistic description through a research process (Easton 2010, p. 119). Case studies are particularly well-suited for a critical realism research paradigm (ibid., p. 119). Since studying how large companies manage planned change, this dissertation approaches the research questions using real-life examples as units for analysis, namely case companies from the field.

Since seeking to obtain information from a wider audience compared to a single case, a multiple case study approach (Yin 1994, Eisenhardt & Graebner 2007) was adopted, with individual companies as cases. Multiple cases can fortify the base for theory-building (Yin 1994) and provide more robust, generalizable, and testable theory than single case studies (Eisenhardt & Graebner 2007). Following suggestions from distinguished qualitative case study scholars such as Yin (1994), Eisenhardt (1989) and Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007), the dissertation's empirical study was thus structured around a qualitative multiple case study methodology.

Taking a closer look, the first article can be considered an embedded multiple case design (Yin 1994) since multiple cases (companies) are studied; within those companies, there were multiple levels of analysis (Eisenhardt 1989), i.e., change networks, change teams, and individual change roles. Overall, there was emphasis on the structured and careful execution of methodology (see section 3.8.2, “Validity”).

3.5 Studied case companies

Inductive theory building relies on theoretical sampling (Glaser & Strauss 1967), where cases are selected based on the perception that their ability is “to illuminate and extend relationships among constructs” (Eisenhardt & Graebner 2007, p. 27). When building theory instead of testing it, cases are selected by the perception of how they could bring novel information to the research questions at hand. Hence, the studied cases were selected based on some grounding principles.

Firstly, since the focus was on studying multiple case companies, large Finnish companies were approached. Furthermore, a multiple case design enables the researcher to “maximize what we can learn” (Stake 1995, p. 4). Secondly, the cases studied represent different industries. One aspect was to explore the possibilities for comparison and analytic generalization (Yin 1994) between industries. Thirdly, it was expected that the country’s largest companies, if any, would consider planned change management as important and would, hence, possibly develop their organizing, practices, and capabilities accordingly. That is why companies from the “top 100 largest companies in Finland” were approached. This list is formed according to annual income and personnel number, based on the Finnish Asiakastiето, i.e., customer information ranking.

Accordingly, the studied case companies are large companies with over 1000 to over 20,000 employees and an annual income ranging from 250 million euros to almost 50 billion euros. They represent different industries. Thirteen companies were originally invited to join the study, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, two companies withdrew their participation before the first informant interviews were held. As Eisenhardt (1989) affirms, between 4 and 10 cases can provide a starting point for theory building, so 11 cases were regarded as sufficient for this dissertation’s study.

In summary, the research design consists of 11 case companies representing different industries: infrastructure and construction, telecommunications, food and consumer goods, transportation, energy, facility services, chemistry, finance and insurance, private healthcare, retail, and gaming and gambling (see Table 4).

Table 4. Case companies, industries represented, number of informants interviewed per case company, and informants' organizational roles. Roles: Executive Board of the company, Director (not in the executive board), Manager (leads other people), Specialist (does not lead other people). Please note that the third article's sample differs from the two first articles' samples: case companies and informants involved in the third article's sample are marked with an asterisk (*) in Table 4 (10 case companies, 15 informants).

Company	Industry	Number of informants interviewed and organizational roles
A*	Infrastructure and construction	3: Executive Board Members (*informants interviewed for the third article of this dissertation: 1 Executive Board Member)
B*	Telecommunications	3: Executive Board Member*, Director*, Specialist*
C*	Food and consumer goods	4: Director (2), Specialist (2) (*informants interviewed for the third article of this dissertation: 1 Director, 1 Specialist)
D*	Transportation	2: Manager*, Specialist
E*	Energy	3: Director, Specialist (2) (*informants interviewed for the third article of this dissertation: 1 Specialist)
F*	Facility services	3: Executive Board Member, Director, Specialist*
G*	Chemistry	2: Director*, Specialist
H*	Finance and insurance	6: Director (2), Manager (2), Specialist (2) (*informants interviewed for the third article of this dissertation: 1 Director, 1 Manager, 1 Specialist)
I	Private healthcare	2: Executive Board Members
J*	Retail	3: Executive Board Member, Manager*, Specialist
K*	Gaming and gambling	2: Manager*, Specialist

Next, all case companies are briefly introduced. As multiple-page descriptions per case company would perhaps not be feasible for a dissertation, the aim is nevertheless to provide the reader with basic knowledge about the companies studied in this dissertation.

Company A is a large company working in the infrastructure and construction industry, specializing in designing, building, and maintaining transport and energy infrastructure. In 2020, the company's revenue for the year exceeded 500 million euros, and there were approximately 2000 employees. Within recent years, Company A has faced planned changes regarding ownership and company structure, as well as

significantly digitalizing its operations. Efficiency and measurability have been key targets regarding change initiatives. Company culture can be described as engineer-like, valuing number-oriented and purposeful action.

Company B is among the largest Nordic telecommunications and digital services companies. It provides a wide range of services, including mobile and fixed network services, digital services, and ICT solutions. In 2020, Company B's revenue exceeded 1.8 billion euros, and they employed over 5000 people. Regarding planned change, Company B has invested much in digital transformation, sustainability initiatives, and especially mergers and acquisitions. Additionally, developing their internal operating model has been a key target. Company B's culture can be characterized as constantly seeking innovation, although still operating in traditional business areas of telecommunications.

Company C represents food and consumer goods. In 2020, the company's revenue exceeded 1 billion euros, with over 8000 employees. Company C has undergone many planned changes: the sales and acquisitions of various parts of the company, new product segments due to changing customer preferences, innovation and sustainability changes, and digital transformation. Furthermore, as the company exports many of its products, the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath have been challenging. The company has long roots and traditions, which sometimes makes change challenging as "old" and "new" worlds collide, for example in mergers and acquisitions and in expanding to new products/markets.

Company D is a large transportation industry company. In 2020, the company faced unprecedented challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which significantly impacted the industry worldwide. As informants describe, although change initiatives related to fleet modernization, sustainability, and digitality had been "business as usual" for many years, COVID-19 was, for their industry, something never previously experienced. In 2020, company D's revenue exceeded 800 million euros, which is a significant decrease from previous years. The company employed over 6000 people. Although many planned changes have been undertaken in recent years, the company was more in "survival mode" due to the global pandemic and related uncertainty.

Company E is a large energy sector company operating across Northern Europe. Its strategy is aimed at a cleaner energy future, and sustainability is visible via many planned changes executed by company E. In 2020, Company E's revenue was almost 50 billion euros, and the company employed almost 20,000 people. The numbers show that Company E's operational scale is significant. In the energy sector, as well as in other industries, many planned changes are related to digital transformation. Thus, Company E's recent planned changes have involved digitalization, as well as multiple mergers and acquisitions and product development toward carbon neutral

energy. The vision of the company, built around sustainability, strongly guides the organization's culture and actions.

Company F is a facility services provider offering a wide range of services including cleaning, catering, technical services, and facility management. The annual revenue in 2020 exceeded 400 million euros, and Company F employed around 8000 people. Recent planned changes have been heavily linked to a renewed strategic direction: parts of the organization have been sold and key offerings further sharpened and developed. Additionally, digital transformation and sustainability changes have been on the agenda. The organization's operations are labor-intensive, reflecting its culture and methods. Furthermore, being part of a large global organization, a "them (global) versus us (local)" mentality is somewhat visible in the organization. In this case study, only Finnish operations (the Finnish company) were studied.

Company G, a chemical company, develops chemical solutions for water-intensive industries, including pulp and paper, oil and gas, and water treatment. In 2020, its revenue was around 2.4 billion euros, with around 5000 employees. Recent planned change initiatives have focused on mergers and acquisitions, operational efficiency, digital transformation, and sustainability. The company is a relatively "traditional" engineer-led company, with many developments related to R&D and product/service innovations. Although operational efficiency has been a key target, tangible means to improve actions and culture are difficult to grasp, as described by informants.

Company H is among Finland's largest finance and insurance companies. In 2020, Company H's revenue was around 250 million euros, and they employed almost 3400 people. As a mutual company, H is owned by its clients, leading to multiple subsidiaries across a large geographical area. This results in a complex organizational and decision-making structure, affecting development and planned change management. Significant planned changes have recently been related to an expansion of product portfolios, digitalization of services, and sustainability.

Company I represents private healthcare and social care services, as a rapidly growing company operating in Finland and Northern Europe. It had a revenue of one billion euros, with over 22,000 employees and private practitioners in 2020. In recent years, the company has expanded its services and facilities, focusing on organic growth and acquisitions. Other recent planned changes are related to digital transformation and corporate responsibility. Company I's culture promotes innovativeness, and the company has developed several healthcare services and products.

Company J acts in retail, with a reach also in Finland's neighboring countries. As a major Finnish retailing cooperative, Company J reported a revenue of over 11 billion euros and employed approximately 40,000 people in 2020. Like Company H,

Company J works within a large geographical reach and a complex organizational structure. In recent years, it has expanded its service offerings, including developing its supermarket chains. Other planned changes have been related to digitalization and sustainability initiatives. For Company J, operational efficiency has been an important change initiative, with a focus on, e.g., supply chain and logistics efficiency.

Company K is in the gaming and gambling industry. In a highly regulated competitive environment, the company's gross gaming revenue was over one billion euros in 2020, with over 1500 employees. The company faced significant challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as many arcades and gaming halls were closed. In recent years, Company K has undergone a major merger with two other companies. Planned change initiatives regarding responsible gaming have been multiple, and digital transformation includes many concrete changes undertaken and still to be managed. As gaming and gambling are increasingly moving toward digital spaces, the company's overall operating model is changing.

With these descriptions of participating case companies and the landscapes they are operating in, the reader gets an overview of the studied cases.

3.6 Data Collection

In qualitative multiple case study research, interviews are the most effective method of data collection because they allow for in-depth exploration of participants' experiences, perceptions, and contextual understanding (Yin 2018). Interviews enable researchers to gather detailed, first-hand accounts from individuals who are directly involved in the cases under investigation (Creswell & Poth 2018). Deliberating on the most suitable means of data collection, it was thus deemed that interviews would be useful in gathering detailed information from informants. However, following Yin's (1994, p. 80) notion of no single data source being superior to others, multiple data sources were utilized to allow for triangulation. Interviews can be triangulated with other sources of data, such as documents and observations, to improve credibility and validity (Patton 2015), and to ensure a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of the researched phenomena.

All data were collected by this dissertation's author. Sources of data consisted of

1. recorded semi-structured informant interviews of an open-ended nature (Yin 1994), also containing close-ended questions,
2. companies' documentation (with most companies but not with all) such as organizational charts, change practice/process/program descriptions, policies, scorecards, key performance indicator (KPI) charts, and project portfolio materials,

3. secondary sources such as company internet pages, and
4. archival records such as old surveys about personnel satisfaction were exhibited by some of the informants.

Throughout the research, the interview data were the main source of information, since documents (sources 2 and 4) were labeled confidential and not physically given to the researcher. The researcher made notes on documents discussed and presented to them, but they were not given copies of the documents. Thus, data were collected primarily via recorded semi-structured informant interviews of an open-ended nature (Yin 1994), also containing close-ended questions. The strength of this method is that it is highly flexible (Easton 2010). In interviews, the aim was to collect the informants' experiences and viewpoints via pre-defined interview themes and supporting questions guiding the discussions. One key advantage of interviews is the ability to probe deeper into responses and explore emerging themes that may not have been anticipated at the outset (Bryman 2016). Researchers can ask follow-up questions, clarify ambiguous responses, and adapt their questioning based on the interviewee's insights. As advocated by Gioia et al. (2012, p. 19), the researcher "got in there and got their hands dirty – madly making notes on what the informants are telling." Informants were guided to discuss specific themes (the research questions), and the researcher's role was to make notes and seek clarification, where needed.

Although the researcher acknowledges that data from informant interviews are always somewhat "partial, incomplete, and always being retold and remembered" (Jackson & Mazzei 2013, p. 263), in general, people in organizations "know what they are trying to do and can explain their thoughts, intentions, and actions" (Gioia et al. 2012, p. 17). Accepting these pre-conditions, 33 informants across 11 case companies (see Table 4) were interviewed. The interviews were organized over a period of eight months (January–August 2020). The first third of the interviews were held face to face, yet due to the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020, two-thirds of the interviews were held via video meeting tools. As video meeting tools such as Teams, Zoom, and Google Meet were already widely used in the case companies, video interviews did not differ much compared to live interviews. Interview durations varied between a minimum of 1.5 hours to over 3 hours, depending on the time that informants were willing and able to allocate for the researcher. With three informants, the interview was split into two sessions owing to time constraints.

Of the informants, 29 were interviewed individually, while 4 of the informants from the same company (company H) were interviewed in pairs per informant requests due to their tight work schedules. Individual informant interviews were preferred, but time constraints forced the researcher to oblige the informant schedules and organize the two requested pair interviews, since otherwise the data set would have been four interviews fewer. Company H, with the two paired

interviews, resulted in six informants being interviewed, which is the largest number of informants per case company in this dissertation.

As Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) affirm, using numerous informants from different levels and/or functions of the organization provides data from a wider angle. Informants were selected to represent professionals best placed to help the researcher understand each case (Stake 1995), i.e., individuals with knowledge of their company's planned change management. With Raineri's (2011) distinction on change strategists (responsible for conducting organizational change) and change receptors (impacted by change interventions), the informants interviewed for this article represent the change strategist group. Informants are thus responsible for planning and executing change management, although in some cases, informants can be part of both groups (strategists and receptors) simultaneously.

Following Stake's (1995) suggestions of informant selection, informants were professionals best placed to help understand each case company. Informants are responsible for change in their organizations, representing functions such as change management, HR, strategy, general management or project management office. Informants' organizational levels vary from the executive board of the company to a specialist level. The organizational levels of the informants can be seen in Table 4.

Based on a pre-study on LinkedIn and on the companies' webpages, the researcher had planned whom to consider a primary contact in the case companies. Primarily, the first-targeted informants were executives (executive board level or director level) who had the term "change," "transformation," "development," or "strategy" in their respective titles. Following Glaser and Strauss (1967) on theoretical sampling, all collection of data and informants to be interviewed cannot be planned in advance, so at the beginning of data collection, the final number of informants was not known.

With the recruitment of informants, two alternative approaches were utilized:

- 1) approaching a previous contact inside the company by e-mail or
- 2) approaching a previously unknown key decision-maker via e-mail.

In companies where the researcher did not have previous contacts and no change- or transformation-related decision-makers could be identified from secondary sources, HR executives were approached. Since the researcher had been discussing with many practitioners and executives "from the field" during the first parts of the research process, it became evident that with many companies, HR was a good starting point when seeking persons responsible for planned change management. After the initial contacts were begun or the first interviews with targeted persons were held, a "snowball method" within the case companies was utilized for further recruitment of informants. In this technique, the primary contact person or

interviewed informant provided a reference to (an)other person(s) who could be interviewed, i.e., persons responsible for planned change management in their respective companies. By having internal staff refer the researcher to the best informants to interview, trust was established rapidly, and people were very cooperative and helpful. The informant–researcher affiliations are presented in more detail in Appendix 1.

At least two informants per company were interviewed, while some companies identified up to six informants who were responsible for their organization’s planned change management. The informant size per company diverged since companies varied in structure, personnel number, and roles related to change management. It can also be that the companies with more maturity in change management have more roles dedicated to the matter, thus identifying more informants suitable for interviewing. Consequently, it is important to note that some case companies provided more data than others because more informants were interviewed. However, as at least two informants per case company were involved – informants best positioned to detail needed information on planned change management – valid information could be obtained.

The informants’ organizational ranks vary by case company, ranging from the executive board level (8 informants in total) to the director level (8 informants in total), the manager level (4 informants in total), and the specialist level (13 informants in total). The reader is advised to refer to Table 4 for details. It must be noted that for the third article on organizational change capabilities, the research design of this article consists of only 10 case companies across different industries (due to time constraints, company I was not able to participate in the study of the third research question, leading to the third article of this thesis). Of these 10 companies, 15 informants are studied. Thus, the sample of participating case companies and informants in article 3 is smaller than in articles 1 and 2. The reasons for the smaller sample size were related to time constraints, as not all informants had time to allocate to discussing organizational change capability. In Table 4, the case companies and informants involved in the third article’s sample are marked with an asterisk (*).

In informant interviews, building rapport and establishing the relationship between researcher and informant bears a meaningful role. Here, interviewers are critically important instruments (Pratt 2020). Informants were generally cooperative (Stake 1995) and open to this dissertation’s inquiry. In an ideal situation, rapport formation is usually successful when the informant is relaxed and reassured of their role and confidentiality (Dundon & Ryan 2010). Here, the relationship between researcher and informant plays an important role. Concerning senior managers as informants, rapport building can also be more affected by practical matters, such as time constraints, or managers having knowledge of sensitive information that

involves their roles personally (Laurila 1997). Nevertheless, all informants welcomed the researcher openly, and people were cooperative and outspoken.

When research is built on empirical data, the research process includes not only data gathering but also adjusting data collection in real time, adapting to changing circumstances or requirements (Eisenhardt et al. 2016, Glaser & Strauss 1967). Thus, interview questions can further be adjusted as the research advances (Glaser & Strauss 1967, Gioia et al. 2012, Pratt et al. 2020). The informant interviews involved both close-ended and open-ended questions. An example of close-ended questioning is asking all informants if their company has “formal change management roles” or “formal change management practices.” To these types of questions, straightforward “yes” or “no” answers could be obtained.

When beginning the inquiry, the researcher started with open-ended questions but soon noticed a need for close-ended questions to obtain the information needed regarding the research agenda. Open-ended questions, such as “could you walk me through who are in charge of managing planned change in your organization” or “please tell me about how your company manages planned change” provided descriptive and detail-rich answers. However, the explanations seemed to reflect the informant’s individual perceptions about the subject matter. Therefore, during the first interviews, it was noticed that close-ended questions were also needed. As Pratt et al. (2020) affirm, inductive researchers usually start more broadly to discover “what is going on” in the context of the study, but if one stays at a very general and descriptive level with interview questions, the data are likely to be a mile long and an inch deep. Instead, qualitative researchers must often tweak and hone questions in the moment of data collection, following the insights as they emerge in conversation with informants.

Consequently, close-ended questions such as whether an organization has “a formal organization for managing planned change” or “formal change management practices” resulted in unequivocal “yes” or “no” answers and discussions. For the validity of data collection, it was important to stress to informants, for example, that formal planned change management practices or change organizations are practices or organizations that are, e.g., identified and documented by multiple change strategists in the company (as opposed to practices and organizations that the informant supposes might exist). This definition helped informants in framing the discussions. Thus, some definitions had to be elaborated and explained. Furthermore, the topic of organizational change capability was made more accessible for informants via discussing individual change capability at first, since the topic of OCC was not easy to approach for many. Many informants found it useful to first discuss their viewpoints on individuals’ change capabilities and moving toward organizational change capability.

At the beginning of the research, open-ended conversations were lengthy, and a vast number of themes were covered, but as research progressed, emerging patterns helped shape questions regarding emerging theory (Glaser & Strauss 1967). Examples of themes covered in lengthy discussions were planned change management metrics and KPIs, well-executed planned changes, and lessons learned. The streamlining of questions and interview themes helped the informants focus most discussions on the main themes of change organizations, change management practices, and organizational change capability.

In sum, having the most topic-suitable roles and functions in the informant pool and by interviewing multiple informants from the same case companies, the informants' answers to close-ended questions proved consistent, and open-ended questions provided the researcher with deep insights into the case companies' planned change management. How did the researcher know that enough data were collected? The question is important since premature "departure from the field" may result in data that are only partly analyzed and therefore fail to elevate obvious categorizations to a more abstract theoretical level Suddaby (2006). After 33 informants were studied, the researcher noticed that conversations began to resemble one another. In the last interviews, especially with case companies with more than two or three informants, it was noted that no significant new insights emerged, e.g., theoretical saturation had been reached (Glaser & Strauss 1967). Thus, after conducting the last interviews with informants, no new data needed to be collected for this dissertation's scope as saturation had been achieved – regarding this research's context. The data resulted in more than 55 hours of recorded interview material and approximately 150 pages of notes and documentation. This material provided the basis for the next step, data analysis.

3.7 Data analysis

Data analysis differed across the three articles since the research questions differed. For these reasons, this section describes how data were analyzed regarding all three research questions of this dissertation. Figure 4 introduces the main phases of the data analysis process in the first and second articles of this dissertation, where research questions 1, 2A, and 2B were addressed.

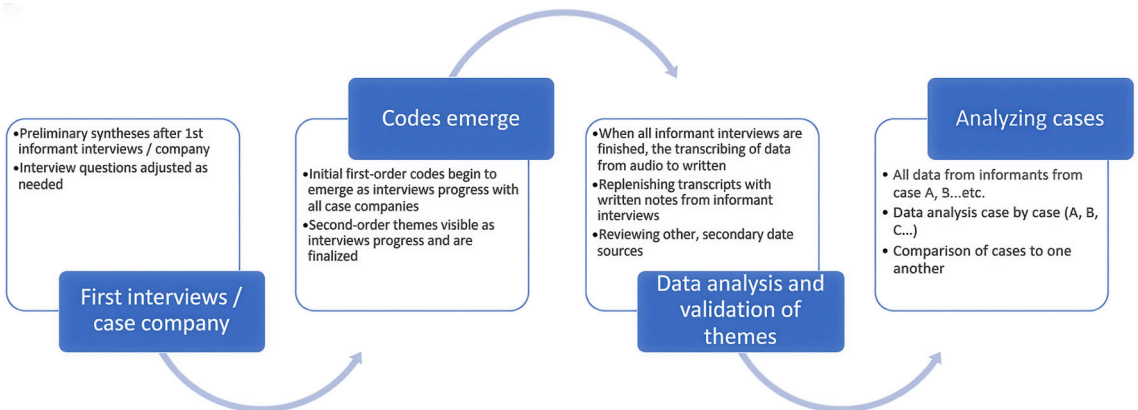


Figure 4. Data analysis process' main phases in articles 1 and 2.

3.7.1 RQ1: What do companies' change organizations consist of?

All interviews were recorded and after a first informant interview per company, an initial synthesis about the interview was made by the first author, reviewing the notes and the recording (as per Figure 4). This synthesis was reviewed before interviewing the next informant from the same case company. The synthesis provided initial observations and helped the researcher to see if some subjects were left unclear or missing. For instance, if an informant was unsure or did not exactly know about change roles in other units, which can be fairly common in large companies, the researcher made note of the matter and sought clarification from the next informant from the same company. As the first research question was studied together with another researcher, the researchers discussed the syntheses jointly as informant interviews progressed.

When beginning with data examination (while still conducting interviews, see Figure 4), based on the emerging findings, researchers jointly started to formulate an initial analytical framework with different categories and initial coding (resembling first-order coding, Gioia et al. 2012). As the research progressed, the classification and coding were adjusted accordingly – themes, narratives, and dimensions (akin to second-order themes, *ibid.*) emerged early on. The role of the second author in examining the collected data enabled a closer look at the data “from outside” without being involved in the first coding exercise. Since the second author had not been interviewing informants, it was the data that were central – the perceptions were not linked to informants or interview situations. The process of data analysis initially began while data were collected, following an inductive approach (Eisenhardt et al. 2016, Maxwell 2009, Eisenhardt & Graebner 2007).

After all interviews were conducted, the whole dataset was analyzed. Since all the individual interviews were recorded, discussions could be transcribed from the audio to a written transcript and timestamped accordingly. Transcribing individual informant interviews was the first round of data analysis done by the first author. The process was lengthy, taking several months and involving listening and re-listening to recordings and carefully documenting what had been discussed.

In the next round of analysis, the first author proceeded by reviewing their personal notes regarding informant interviews, comparing data with the audio transcripts and adding to the transcribed information. As the researcher made notes throughout all the interviews, they made observations in written form. These observations, comments, and notes enriched the interview transcripts, further adding details and clarifying the data. The step of combining audio transcripts with the researcher's personal notes was important for refining the data into a more robust, thick description.

After transcribing all the informant interviews and reviewing the interview notes, the researcher continued to the third round of data analysis by reviewing notes on other data sources (e.g., documentation such as organizational charts, change process/program descriptions, policies, scorecards, KPI charts, and project portfolio materials). By comparing these notes on other data sources, the interview transcripts were replenished once more. Here, e.g., notes on organizational charts were reviewed to make sense of planned change management roles described by informants in the interviews: positioning those roles into the case companies' contexts was guided by documentation such as the companies' organizational charts. Other data sources did not bring much novel information but helped the researcher to validate that information in the informant interviews and the researcher's notes were coherent and that things were understood correctly.

As a result of these three data analysis rounds, the individual transcripts were enriched. Multiple sources enhance the quality of research, as they enable the triangulation of data (Stake 1995, Yin 1994). At this stage of the analysis, categories resembling second-order themes (Gioia et al. 2012) had been ratified by researchers as a joint effort (see Figure 4).

Continuing with the data, the two authors jointly proceeded with the analysis from individual informants to individual case companies. Interviews were disassembled one company (case) at a time, starting with data from company A, then data from company B, and continuing on a case-by-case basis. This allowed for comparisons and validations within a case company, and the formulation of perceptions at a case level. Following Yin's (1994) suggestions, the authors first wanted to understand change organizations within one case – thus, cases were analyzed separately. As a central dimension in building theory from case studies is replication logic (Eisenhardt 1989), each case is a separate analytical unit.

Thereupon, cases were contrasted to one another. Comparison of the cases presented interesting findings regarding similarities, differences and patterns (correspondences) between cases. The authors looked for “meaning” (Stake 1995). At the cross-case level, focus was set on explanation-building (Yin 1994). This analysis led to the threefold typology regarding change organizations via change networks, change teams, and individual change roles presented in the first article of this dissertation. In addition, interrelations between dimensions were discovered. Considering the inductive nature of our research design and data analysis, it is at this stage that literature was once more revisited with more directed questions about how change networks, teams, and individuals are presented in extant research on planned organizational change. As an example, as permanent change teams were discovered in the empirical study, they were examined from the planned change management literature – but they were not to be found.

3.7.2 RQ2A: What kinds of change management practices do large companies use in planned change and RQ2B: How are these change management practices part of change management models?

As with the first article, all informant interviews were recorded. After the first informant from a company was interviewed, the researcher reviewed their notes and the recording, making an initial synthesis about the interview. This synthesis was reconsidered before interviewing the next informant from the same case company. The synthesis was valuable in providing preliminary observations and guiding the researcher to see if any topics were unclear.

Since case company data were analyzed during the study and syntheses were made after each informant interview, emerging themes such as change management practices mentioned by informants could be seen from the interview material already at this stage (resembling first-order concepts, Gioia et al. 2012), while still conducting informant interviews. As further interviews progressed, following Glaser and Strauss’ suggestions (1967), codes were discovered through examination of the data, and more themes emerged. For example, it was noticed that case companies were not discussing one change management model; instead, several case companies appeared to have multiple change management models (incorporating varying change management practices) in parallel usage. When the informant interviews and research further progressed, emerging themes were concurrently adjusted and further validated (resembling second-order themes, Gioia et al. 2012.). The analysis was conducted while working back and forth between the data and the emerging strategies (Strauss & Corbin 1990, p. 56), as was the data analysis regarding the first article. Categories and findings emerged based on collected data. Hence, initial

analysis was done already while still collecting data, but a conclusive data analysis was conducted only after all data was collected.

Consequently, as with this dissertation's first article, after all interviews were performed, comprehensive data analysis was conducted in three rounds, similar to the first article. The first round of data analysis included the transcribing of interviews from audio recordings to written transcripts with corresponding timestamps. In the second round of analysis, the researcher reviewed their notes from informant interviews, contrasting notes to the recorded information and replenishing transcripts accordingly. This round strengthened observations made in the first round. In the third round of data analysis, the researcher reviewed their notes related to other data sources (documentation such as organizational charts, change process/program descriptions, policies, scorecards, KPI charts, and project portfolio materials) and included relevant data from transcripts. No major additions to the master data were made after the third round. Due to these three data analysis rounds, the individual transcripts were detailed, abundant, and conclusive.

With the informant data analyzed and shifting focus from informants to the case level, a central dimension in building theory from case studies is replication logic (Eisenhardt 1989, Yin 1994), where each case is a separate analytical unit. Consequently, the focus of data analysis was set from individual informants to individual case companies. Analysis was done case company by case company, where data were examined by first reviewing all data from company A, then all data from company B, etc. As Yin (1994, p. 49) proposes, the researcher first sought to understand change management practices within one case.

Thereupon, cases were compared to one another, focusing on explanation-building (Yin 1994). This comparison presented the researcher with important findings between cases, such as differences in the number of identified change management practices, variance in the existing change management models, and links between these two themes. After all the aforementioned phases of data analysis were meticulously executed, similarly to the data analysis for article 1, the researcher was equipped with consistent results.

In sum, the data analysis process occurred via loops among the case data, emerging findings, and later, extant literature (Eisenhardt & Graebner 2007, p. 25). Thus, literature on change management practices was revisited after the data analysis phase and especially Raineri's (2011) and Yamakawa et al.'s (2012) studies were re-examined regarding preferences in suggested CMPs. The researcher compared their empirically grounded categorizations and multiple case study results to CMPs suggested by previous studies. This analysis led to findings and conclusions presented in the second article of this dissertation. For instance, change management practices and change management models could be approached via certain categorizations.

3.7.3 RQ3: What does organizational change capability consist of (from an empirical point of view)?

The data analysis of the third article differed from the two previous, as the research question (i.e., what organizational change capability is from an organization's viewpoint) required different means to analyze the data. Regarding data analysis, a well-established framework was sought that provides "a systematic approach to new concept development and grounded theory articulation that is designed to bring 'qualitative rigor' to the conduct and presentation of inductive research" (Gioia et al. 2012, p. 15). Although acknowledging that other approaches may also have been suitable, the "Gioia methodology" was selected to be used for data analysis in this research's context. As the topic of study (organizational change capability) itself is relatively ambiguous, it was deemed to be beneficial in having a conceptual and analytical guideline for data analysis.

The data were analyzed as next described.

First, after each informant interview, an initial synthesis about the interview was made, reviewing the researcher's notes. The synthesis provided initial observations and helped the researcher see if some subjects were left unclear or missing, or if interview questions needed to be adjusted. For instance, after the first informant interviews, it became a good strategy to first discuss individual change capability with the informants and to then delve into the topic of organizational change capability.

Second, following the Gioia approach (Gioia et al. 2012), an initial, tentative analytical framework was gradually formulated while conducting interviews. Here, initial observations could be put into first-order codes. Informants were generally enthusiastic to speak about organizational change capability, so such first-order codes were plenty. The researcher kept drafting long lists, where first-order codes were grouped and further regrouped as more data were collected. As further interviews progressed, following Glaser and Strauss' suggestions (1967), first-order codes were discovered through examination of the data. As the research and data collection progressed, the classification and coding of data were adjusted accordingly – emerging higher-order themes were beginning to surface (i.e., second-order themes, Gioia et al. 2012).

After all interviews were performed, data analysis was conducted in three rounds, similarly as with articles 1 and 2. The first round of data analysis included transcribing interviews from audio recordings to written transcripts with corresponding timestamps. Here, numerous new first-order codes (Gioia et al. 2012) were discovered and listed. In the second round of analysis, the researcher reviewed their notes from informant interviews, contrasting notes to the recorded information and replenishing transcripts accordingly. This round strengthened observations made in the first round, and additional new first-order codes (Gioia et al. 2012) were

discovered. In the third round of data analysis, the researcher reviewed their notes related to other data sources (documentation such as organizational charts, change process/program descriptions, policies, scorecards, KPI charts, and project portfolio materials) and included relevant data to transcripts. No major additions to the master data were made after the third round, nor were additional first-order codes (Gioia et al. 2012) discovered, since other data sources did not cover the concept of organizational change capability as such but provided background information, e.g., about the companies and informants.

During these three data analysis rounds, all collected data were reviewed. At this stage of the data analysis process, second-order themes (Gioia et al. 2012) emerged, as grouped first-order concepts appeared to form patterns. In the process of discovering second-order themes, aggregate dimensions were also gradually identified. The analysis occurred by working back and forth between the data and the emerging themes (Strauss & Corbin 1990, p. 56). As Gioia et al. (2012, p. 21) affirm, there is some value in the “semi-ignorance” of the literature: “not knowing the literature in great detail, because knowing the literature intimately too early puts blinders on and leads to prior hypothesis bias (confirmation bias).” Thus, it was only after the aggregate dimensions had been identified that the researcher returned to their notes and revisited literature on organizational change capability to see to how the findings related to existing literature, and whether new concepts were emerging. This review of existing literature reinforced the view regarding the inductively discovered aggregate dimensions, which were not present in extant literature. In summary, data analysis occurred via loops among the case data, emerging findings, and later, extant literature (as also suggested by Eisenhardt & Graebner 2007, p. 25).

The data analysis for article 3 was a lengthy and immersive process. As coding, re-coding, analysis, and re-analysis occurred in loops, the researcher was truly “inside” the data, knowing it inside out. For a researcher, this type of engagement is extremely rewarding yet time-consuming.

In the Gioia approach, findings are presented in the order of the data structure. Based on this analysis and presentation, a framework is crafted. The data structure and analysis are presented in Figure 2 of article 3, and they follow Gioia et al.’s (2012) suggestion of providing a graphical representation of how the researcher progressed from raw data to first-order codes, second-order themes, and aggregate dimensions in conducting the analysis. As a result of the research, article 3 suggests an empirically grounded model of organizational change capability.

3.8 The researcher’s note

Although there are differences in establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research, there is general agreement about the kinds of things that need to be made transparent

when conducting a trustworthy qualitative study. Qualitative researchers should answer the following questions (see Pratt 2008, p. 503): Why was this study done? Why was this study done in this context? What is the author studying and why? And how did the author conduct the study and analyze the data? These questions are addressed in this dissertation's "Introduction" and "Research design and methods" sections.

To conclude this section of the dissertation, questions of sampling, validity, reliability, and ethical considerations are addressed.

3.8.1 Sampling

With multiple case research, there is a strong base for theory building, since multiple cases allow comparisons and replication that leads to better generalizable theory. Theory building from multiple cases usually enables more vigorous, generalizable, and testable theory in comparison to single-case research (Eisenhardt & Graebner 2007). Thus, sampling is a critical step in multiple case studies, and great effort was put into not only the selection of case companies in this dissertation's scope but also into the selection of suitable informants.

With inductive studies, two aspects affect the quality of the study: the number of cases and the diversity of cases (Heit 2000, pp. 576–579). Between 4 and 10 cases can provide a starting point for theory building, so 11 cases were seen as sufficient for this dissertation's study (Eisenhardt 1989). Furthermore, as all 11 case companies represent different industries, diversity among case companies is also considered. As this dissertation focuses on large companies, all case companies were selected to represent Finland's biggest companies. Section 3.5 describes participating case companies' profiles and reveals that they are all large Finnish companies representing different industries. To add, participating informants' profiles are described, and the logic of choosing informants to be included in the study is disclosed.

It must be noted that participating case companies showed sincere interest in developing their own approach to managing planned organizational change. It may be that if studying more reluctant or neutral organizations, results would differ since the participants' attitudes would differ. However, for this dissertation, participating companies showed a genuine interest in the topic of study. In general, it might be challenging to involve reluctant participants in research projects. In addition, what must be noted is that answers and explanations always reflect the informants' individual perceptions about the subject matter. As all informants represent change strategists rather than change recipients (Raineri 2011), this affects the data obtained from the informants. With a different set of informants, there is always the possibility that findings would somewhat differ. However, Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007)

state that it is important to remember that the aim of inductive multiple case research is to develop theory – not to test it. This makes theoretical sampling (cases and informants selected because of their suitability to offer theoretical insight) applicable and, thus, this dissertation’s sampling strategy fit for purpose.

3.8.2 Validity

Validity in qualitative research, particularly in multiple case studies, is crucial for ensuring the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. Theory building from cases is often challenging for less-seasoned researchers because they are less adept than experienced researchers at shifting among levels of abstraction and construct definitions (Eisenhardt 2021). Consequently, in this dissertation’s study, emphasis was put on the careful selection of structured methods.

Construct validity refers to establishing the correct operational measures for the concepts being studied, i.e., the research questions (Yin 1994, p. 33). First, as Van de Ven (2007, p. 12) suggests, an engaged scholarship approach should ground the research problem (i.e., concept of study) in a reality that is relevant to an intended research audience in the scholarly and professional communities. Consequently, the research problem of how large companies manage planned change arose from a theoretical gap in extant knowledge and was further validated by practitioners. This dissertation’s main concepts have been defined starting from the “Introduction” chapter, and different approaches to concepts (such as varying definitions of organizational change capability) are examined. Second, for Van de Ven (2007), one key criterion for amplifying construct validity is that the theoretical model should be expressed clearly and logically. The “Literature on organizational change” chapter (Chapter 2) of this dissertation explains in more depth the reasoning behind the selection of distinct constructs as topics of study, e.g., because they address a certain knowledge gap in extant research.

Furthermore, the reasoning for conducting a qualitative, multiple case study and for utilizing the selected data analysis methods is made with great consideration. Once again, the selection of methods and measures has been done based on the research questions, as they are guiding the methodological approach used to conduct the research (Strauss and Corbin 2008, p. 12). The design and conduct of the research are done by applying the standards and methods of scientific communities, believed to produce a truthful solution (Van de Ven 2007, p. 12). Findings and results, new constructs, and themes are grounded in the empirical data obtained from this dissertation’s research (Eisenhardt et al. 2016), as demonstrated in the “Discussion” chapter (Chapter 5) of the dissertation.

Internal validity in qualitative research refers to the accuracy and truthfulness of the findings. First, one key method to fortify internal validity is triangulation (Stake

1995, Yin 1994), where multiple sources of data, such as interviews, observations, and document analysis, are used to cross-verify the findings. This helps to ensure that the results are not biased by a single data source. This dissertation consists of multiple data sources, such as recorded semi-structured informant interviews; companies' documentation, such as organizational charts, change practice/process/program descriptions, policies, scorecards, key performance indicator (KPI) charts, and project portfolio materials; secondary sources such as company internet pages; and archival records such as old surveys about personnel satisfaction were exhibited by some of the informants. As multiple data sources are used in this dissertation's research, the process of data analysis occurred in loops where data from audio, transcript, and notes were verified to be consistent in their information. While case studies can indeed contain many data sources (such as interviews, archival data, survey data, ethnographies, and observations), Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) note that interviews often become a central data source – especially when cases explore more complex phenomena, such as how large companies approach planned change management. This was the case also with this dissertation's research. Furthermore, both Yin (1994) and Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) suggest that challenges concerning interview data are best reduced by data collection approaches that limit bias, such as involving multiple sources of evidence and having diverse perspectives among informed participants. Both techniques have been applied in this dissertation.

Furthermore, it must be noted that in the first article (studying the research question of change organizations in planned change), the role of the second author was valuable, as they could examine the collected data and look at it “from the outside.” Since the second author had not been interviewing informants, it was the data that were central – the perceptions were in no manner linked to informants or interview situations. By having two distinct sets of eyes looking at the data, internal validity was augmented.

Another means in building internal validity are rich, thick descriptions (Stake 1995, p. 102). This refers to providing detailed descriptions of the cases and the context in which the study is conducted, allowing readers to understand the cases and, thus, enhancing the credibility of the findings. First, section 3.5 gives the reader an overview of the studied case companies and interviewed informants. Furthermore, stories about the studied case companies' planned change management appear in all three articles, and quotes of informants have been used to enrich the narrative provided by the participating case companies and informants. Yet, as this dissertation studies 11 companies, it would be an impossible task to explain and elaborate on all of the cases in detail. With a single case study, the case could be introduced with much more depth, and longer narratives could be included. In this dissertation's scope, the researcher has tried to do their utmost to provide the reader with full

descriptions on case companies and to share vivid stories from informants. When it comes to descriptions, whether thick or thin, critical realists accept that there are differences between the empirical, the actual, and the real, and that data are collected from people as well as from, and about, material things. As a result, they accept that any explanations are necessarily fundamentally interpretivist in character (Easton 2010, p. 124). Hence, descriptions are always interpretations of the researcher – aiming to objectively and truthfully convey the case companies’ and informants’ experiences.

External validity (Yin 1994, p. 33) refers to the study results’ generalizability to other settings, populations, and times. The findings of the research should also be generalizable in the sense that they impact advancing science and enlightening practice in a profession (Van de Ven 2007, p.12). In this dissertation, the findings replenish existing theory and give practical implications. Overall, emergent theories should also be internally coherent and parsimonious (Eisenhardt et al. 2016). However, case studies, as in this dissertation, do not seek statistical generalizations rather, they aim for analytical generalization (Yin 1994), where the study’s findings are applicable to broader real-world situations, such as other large companies’ planned change management. In qualitative multiple case studies, external validity can be enhanced through purposive sampling, where cases are selected so they are representative of the phenomenon being studied. This ensures that the findings are relevant to a broader context. In this dissertation, theoretical sampling (Glaser & Strauss 1967), where cases are selected based on the perception that their ability is “to illuminate and extend relationships among constructs” (Eisenhardt & Graebner 2007, p. 27), was used as a guiding principle, as previous sections describe. When building theory instead of testing it, cases are selected by the perception of how they could bring novel information to the research questions at hand. Hence, the studied cases were selected based on some grounding principles, as explained in the previous sections (3.5, 3.8.1) where case companies and sampling logic are introduced.

Cross-case analysis, another method for enhancing the robustness and generalizability of the research findings (Yin 1994), involves comparing and contrasting findings from multiple case studies to identify patterns, similarities, and differences. This helps establish the generalizability of the findings. This dissertation has focused on explanation building. Here, the data analysis process entailed building an explanation about each studied case and revising it as new data are collected and analyzed. As the sections on data analysis explain (3.7.), the process occurs in loops: through initial synthesis toward final conclusions. Cross-case synthesis, another method suggested by Yin (1994) to increase generalizability, was also utilized. This involves aggregating findings from individual cases to draw broader conclusions. Both Stake (1995) and Yin (1994) emphasize the importance of maintaining the integrity of each case while synthesizing the data, to ensure that

the unique context of each case is considered. This was secured by first analyzing the data case by case and then moving toward explanation building and cross-case synthesis, as section 3.7 on data analysis explains.

3.8.3 Reliability

The question of reliability refers to minimizing errors and biases in the study, referring to the consistency and dependability of the findings and the coherence of the study (Van de Ven 2007). If another researcher should follow the exact same procedures, would they arrive at the same conclusions? As the engaged scholarship approach advocates, the design and conduct of the research should apply the standards and methods that a scientific community believes will produce a truthful solution (Van de Ven 2007, p. 12). In this dissertation, the design and execution of the study has been done with great care and transparency. In qualitative studies, especially grounding from an engaged scholarship approach, reliability cannot be solely measured by replicability of procedure. Therefore, it is important to maintain detailed records of the research process. This allows other researchers to see the research flow and to follow the same steps. However, it is good to note that as theory emerges from data *as a process*, Eisenhardt et al. (2016) state that qualitative studies include data gathering and adjusting data collection in real time to fit emerging understanding and opportunities. This means that the research approach is tweaked and honed during the research. Nevertheless, a case study protocol, as advised by Yin (1994), was made to guide the researcher and remind them what the study is about (ibid., pp. 63–74). This protocol served as documentation on important steps to be followed and ensured consistency of the approach.

The study protocol has the following sections:

- Research problem and research questions (what needs to be studied via the qualitative multiple case study)
- List of case companies and their basic information
- Non-disclosure agreements, where needed
- List of informants to be interviewed by the case company and their basic information, timetable for interviews
- Interview protocol
- Practicalities, such as time constraints, etc.
- Assurance of confidentiality
- Short introduction of the study, re-cap (sent via e-mail before the informant interviews)

- Themes per research question, and supporting questions for each theme (more support questions were added as research progressed, as explained in the “Data collection” section)
- Data collection templates
- Excel sheets for interview data per case company and per informant
- Excel sheets per research question: different cells for different themes
- Sheets for cross-case comparison
- Visual illustration templates

The protocol was followed throughout the study. Informant interviews have been documented both in audio and in written transcripts, with matching timestamps. Notes, syntheses, received documents, and all versions of documentation/iterations have been archived. All documents, both audio and written, have been saved digitally, and data are protected according to research protocol.

In demonstrating rigor, this dissertation openly tries to disclose “the actual strategies used for collecting, coding, analyzing, and presenting data” (Glaser & Strauss 1967, p. 224). The grounding notion has been to describe all steps in the research, justify choices made, and to include as much “showing” of the data as ethically possible (Pratt et al. 2020). In a dissertation’s scope, this means that the researcher cannot describe “everything” in detail, or the dissertation would be a thousand pages long. However, the researcher shares relevant information with the reader and demonstrates trustworthiness via disclosing sufficient insights, so that the audience understands how the research has been carried out and can assess its trustworthiness and quality.

Looking at validity, reliability, and quality in engaged scholarship (Van de Ven 2007, p. 12), this dissertation considers trustworthiness from multiple angles dedicated to the matter – both throughout the dissertation and in section 3.8.

3.8.4 Ethical considerations

When researching organizational change management with a background as both a change management practitioner and as a PhD researcher, it might be impossible for the researcher to separate practitioner and researcher identities. With a practitioner’s understanding of the researched topic, it is impossible to be completely unbiased – if such a thing even exists. Although consciously aware of the researcher’s role in all interactions with informants, it is not possible to completely set aside knowledge of organizational change management because of the researcher’s experience in the field. While working in organizational change management and simultaneously researching the topic, the feedback loop between practice and academia was constant

throughout the research of this dissertation. Thus, a “clean” separation between researcher and change management practitioner is impossible. However, as Stake (1995, p. 43) affirms, an ongoing interpretive role of the researcher is prominent in qualitative case study. Thus, the researcher does not need to be invisible – but they do have to be clear and specific about their role in the research.

A central part of the research process has been reflexivity, where the researcher continuously reflected on their own biases and assumptions and their influence on the research process. Reflexivity is a central component of qualitative research and is essential for ensuring transparency, rigor, and epistemological clarity in the research process. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue, the qualitative researcher acts as the “human instrument,” meaning that personal values, experiences, and interpretive lenses inevitably shape data generation and interpretation. Thus, these must be acknowledged and managed accordingly to ensure transparency and rigor.

Instead of previous experience being a deficit, the researcher’s background and experience from change management in practice gave multiple advantages when working with case companies. First, having experience in the field, the researcher knew beforehand what types of roles to contact inside organizations (i.e., who are typically responsible for change management and/or could lead to persons responsible for managing planned change). Second, rapport building was relatively easy since speaking the same language as the informants – metaphorically but also literally (English and Finnish). And third, trust was easily established since the researcher was seen also having business understanding.

All in all, it deserves recognition that although these two identities – researcher and practitioner – cannot be fully separated from each other, they were consciously considered throughout this dissertation’s research process, and careful self-reflection was made on an ongoing basis. Regular discussions with the doctoral dissertation’s supervisor, intensive study sessions with fellow PhD students, vivid discussions in research seminars and academic conferences provided the researcher with important venues for reflection. Therefore, this dissertation’s research was carried out by a PhD researcher – not a practitioner. As Van de Ven (2007, p. 4) states, the purpose of practical knowledge is knowing how to deal with the specific situations encountered in a particular case (e.g., organizational change management). The purpose of scientific knowledge, however, is knowing how to see specific situations as instances of a more general case, and how these can be used to explain how matters work or how they can be understood. In sum, taking advantage of understanding specific situations as a practitioner, this dissertation’s researcher seeks to explain, generalize, and theorize as a PhD researcher.

4 Summary of articles

This chapter presents a short summary of the three articles that constitute this dissertation and presents their contributions. This chapter's summaries focus only on introducing the three articles' research gaps, questions and key findings, given that relevant theoretical background was examined in Chapter 2 and the methodology guiding the articles was introduced in Chapter 3. Contributions of all three articles are introduced. Furthermore, the three articles are presented in full in the second part of this dissertation.

4.1 Change Organizations in Planned Change – A Closer Look

4.1.1 Summary

In the research problem of how large organizations manage planned change, change organizations, i.e., organizations dedicated to change, play a focal role. Despite a plethora of frameworks and processes in planned organizational change models, the role of change organizations remains rarely explored. Planned organizational change models (POCMs) are comprised of different steps/phases/variables through which organizational change is approached. Building on Lewin's (1947) work, POCMs have undergone significant development in the past half century (Rosenbaum et al. 2018), offering numerous frameworks for managing planned organizational change. Despite these advances, in the bulk of this work, the role of change organizations has received scarce attention.

The first article addresses this theoretical gap in understanding. The research question guiding this article is:

What do companies' change organizations consist of?

Given the lack of prior research on change organizations in the pursuit of planned change, an inductive approach (Glaser & Strauss 1967, Eisenhardt et al. 2016) was

adopted via a multiple case design (Yin 1994, Eisenhardt 1989) studying 11 large Finnish companies via 33 interviews.

Focusing on change organizations means analyzing organizations *within* organizations. Although it can be debated if there is such a thing as stability, this study considers organizations and change organizations as somewhat stable and routinized, consisting of “things” instead of “processes” (Tsoukas & Chia 2002). The focus is set on the factual and the tangible, taking a “snapshot” view as a focal point. This means that in this study, organizations (and change organizations) are not processes or social constructions. Instead, organizations are examined from a “formal arrangements” (Nadler & Tushman 1980) perspective, where organization and job design are mainly “...explicitly designed and specified, usually in writing” – while simultaneously acknowledging the fact that informal arrangements exist and that organizations do develop and change continuously. This study investigates organizations by what is visible at the moment of study.

Building on an analysis of 15 established planned organizational change models, prior literature was examined via three levels of analysis regarding change organizations:

1. Change networks, i.e., networks dedicated to change
2. Change teams, i.e., teams dedicated to change
3. Individual roles dedicated to change

The results from extant planned organizational change literature suggests the following: Change networks are recognized but rarely studied in extant POCM literature. Regarding teams, some of the planned organizational change models discuss change teams, but with varying terminology. Individual active change roles, however, are given more weight as they appear in most of the classic models on planned change. Taking a closer look, it is often managers and leaders who are held primarily responsible for planned change. Other active individual roles vary by approach, with role titles bearing a multiplicity of meanings.

Moving to the findings of this study’s empirical multiple case study, results disclose that five of the eleven case companies studied have formal networks dedicated to change. Change networks vary via three dimensions: breadth of the agenda from broad to narrow; clarity of roles from clear roles/tasks to unclear roles/tasks; and composition of the network. With change teams, five case companies identify a total of eight teams with the primary task of executing planned change. The nature of change teams varies along three dimensions: permanence of the team, from permanent to temporary; scope of the mandate, from wider change mandate to specific change initiative(s); and primary orientation of tasks, from consultative to operative. When it comes to individual roles in planned change management, all case

companies recognize the presence of individual roles for conducting change. These roles vary substantially within four different dimensions: priority of roles, from full-time roles to change being a task conducted on top of one's daily tasks; formality of roles, from formal roles to informal roles; organizational level, from executive to specialist roles; and origin of the roles, from internal to external roles.

This study's findings posit that although all studied case companies bear some component(s) of change organizations, these vary substantially. To this end, findings bear three contributions.

4.1.2 Contributions

First, while prior research in the field of planned organizational change is abundant, a review of the field led to the observation that there is little guidance for planned change organizations. As a first contribution to literature on planned organizational change, this study suggests a typology of change organizations to facilitate further approaches on this subject. Based on a literature review (grounded on Rosenbaum et al.'s 2018 categorization of classic planned organizational change models) and a multiple case study of 11 case companies, change organizations are defined as change networks, change teams, and individual roles dedicated to the management of planned change. Empirically, these change organizations are identified in case companies of the study, and they differ via several dimensions (see Figure 5).

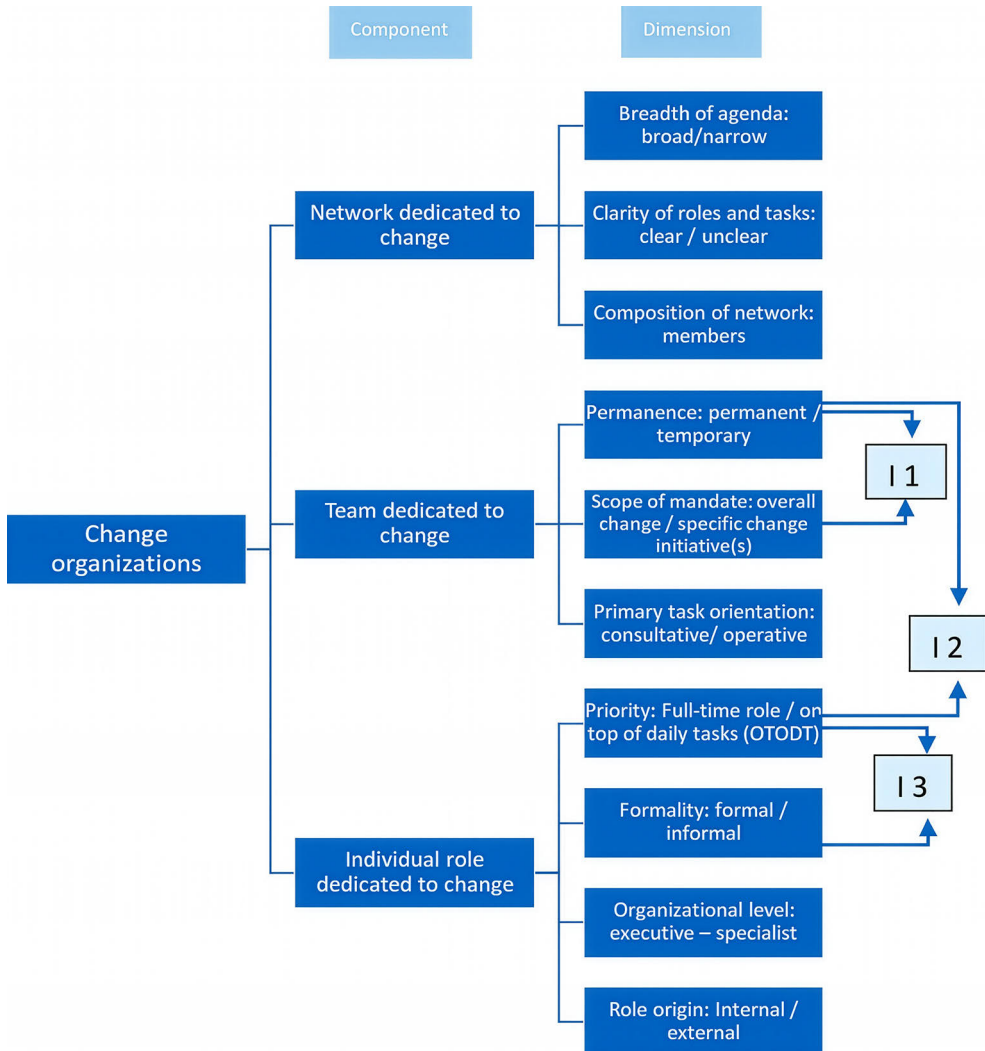


Figure 5. Change organizations. Components of change organizations: networks, teams, and individuals. Dimensions of components. Interrelations (I) between dimensions are shown with arrows. (Figure from first article, Karasvirta & Teerikangas 2022)

The study further contributes to an appreciation of change organizations by revealing three interrelations (I1–I3) found within and across the dimensions of change organizations:

1. The change team’s permanence and scope of mandate are interrelated. If a change team is set as a permanent part of the organization versus being set up for a fixed time (temporary), the scope of mandate is different.

When the scope of mandate is wide, permanent change teams are preferred.

2. The priority of individual change roles and permanence of change teams are interrelated. If an individual change role is full-time, the role is most likely situated in a permanent change team. When companies prefer on top of daily tasks (OTODT) change roles, this study's results indicate that these roles do not seem to be in permanent change teams.
3. Interrelation 3 suggests that if an individual's role is formal (i.e., having tasks set, KPIs, targets, etc.), it is most likely to be a full-time role. Thus, the formality and priority of individual change roles are interrelated. Furthermore, in such a case, this type of role is likely located in a permanent change organization, Interrelation 2.

Consequently, beyond offering a typology, this article suggests that planned organizational change management models should also consider change organizations (networks, teams, and individuals dedicated to planned change management) from a more systemic view, as its dimensions are interrelated.

As a second contribution, this article adds to theories of planned organizational change by pointing out the role of change organizations, which are currently inadequately represented in contrast to what the study's empirical data suggest. Beyond positing that change organizations can be conceptualized as change networks, teams, and individuals, the article offers distinct contributions to each of these sub-areas of the literature on planned change management, as detailed next.

Change networks actively involved in executing change are discussed, beyond mention, in only three of the reviewed planned organizational change models (ACMP 2019, Dunphy et al. 2003, Beckhard & Harris 1977/1987). The role of change networks seems to be underrepresented in the planned organizational change models.

In contrast, the evidence from this article's case study suggests that change networks play an active yet divergent role in planned organizational change. The notion of change networks being primarily dedicated to particular change initiatives seems to be coherent with the literature on planned organizational change models, but what differs is the frequency of networks: almost half of the case companies identified change networks. Thus, change networks appear to be present more in practice than in the literature.

Regarding change teams, six of the analyzed planned organizational change models discuss change teams with more than a mere mention (ACMP 2019, Bridges 2003, Dunphy et al. 2003, Peters & Waterman 1982, Kotter 1996, Beckhard & Harris 1977/1987). These models all consider change teams to be related to specific change

initiatives, treating change teams as temporary. Although permanent change teams are not discussed in the POCM literature, this study shows that companies do operate via permanent change teams. What is notable is the fact that most of the change teams identified in case companies (7/8 teams) were defined as permanent rather than temporary. Contrasted with the literature on planned organizational change models, which mostly discusses temporary change teams, this study's empirical evidence suggests that these types of temporary change teams actually make an exception. This contribution adds an important element to planned change management studies by pointing out that permanent change teams' roles seem to differ in literature and in practice and that permanent change teams should be investigated in planned change management theory.

Concerning individual change roles, most of the analyzed planned organizational change models emphasize the role of managers and leaders (ACMP 2019, Bridges 2003, Senge et al. 1999, Peters & Waterman 1982, Nadler & Tushman 1980/1997, Taffinder 1998, Prosci 2003, Kotter 1996, Carnall 1990, Beckhard & Harris 1977/1987). Based on prior research, it seems that the responsibility for planned change often rests with managers and leaders. All case companies of this study aligned with this notion, as managerial and leadership roles are central in planned change. Yet, these managerial change roles tend to be vaguely defined in practice.

When looking at other individual change roles in the POCM literature, some of Carnall's (1990) "change project management team's" different roles (e.g., steering group, project manager, working parties, staff, management consultants) could be found in all studied companies, since Carnall's definition encompasses a variety of individual roles – both internally and externally resourced. Change roles like the ACMP's (2019) "change management practitioner" and "change management lead" could be found internally in three case companies. In many cases, external consultants in companies occupied specialist roles close to these definitions. The role of "sponsor" (ACMP 2019, Taffinder 1998) surfaced in four case companies, all being internal roles. Senge et al. (1999) mention "coaches" and "mentors." In this case study, coaches were mentioned by seven case companies, but "mentors" were not mentioned by any of the informants. "Change agents" (ACMP 2019, Bullock & Batten 1985, Taffinder 1998, Dunphy et al. 2003) were named in five companies. As change agents in planned organizational change models have varying roles and tasks in the literature, the roles also vary in practice. Additionally, Bridges (2003), Senge et al. (1999), Bullock and Batten (1985), and Carnall (1990) mention external consultants. In this case study, all 11 case companies utilized external consultants. Compared to planned organizational change models, external consultants seem to be represented forcefully in this study's context.

The findings regarding individual change roles show that although managerial roles are important, many of the existing models on planned organizational change

appear to overlook other active roles and dimensions of active individual change roles. As the planned organizational change literature views change organizations as temporary, this study contributes to planned change management theory by pointing out that permanent full-time individual roles dedicated to change appear to be missing from the literature. This study's findings suggest that examining active individual change roles from a temporary standpoint may not be enough, as in practice, permanent individual change roles in companies thrive. Additionally, emphasizing the managerial perspective ("high-power actors," Hyde 2018) may bear the risk of missing other important change roles.

Third, a framework is developed for the evaluation of the maturity of a company's change organization. This article suggests a maturity model, which is based on the developed change organization typology (change organizations as change networks, change teams, and individuals dedicated to planned change management). This model places the studied case companies in different categories (high, medium, low) based on the frequency of networks, teams, and individuals dedicated to planned change, providing a starting point for organizations for self-diagnosis. From a practitioner perspective, the study's results and maturity model can be used as a practical benchmark for developing change organizations.

Going forward, this article's findings are a call for further research on change organizations and their role in planned organizational change.

4.2 Large Companies' Change Management Practices: A Multi-industry Study

4.2.1 Summary

Within the larger study of companies' planned organizational change management, this study focuses on organizational change management practices (Clarke & Garside 1997, Raineri 2011, Jansson 2013) in planned change management. Change management practices are important, since how organizations use change management practices has an impact on the outcomes of organizational change programs (Raineri 2011). Studies on organizational change practices are in the interest of both scholars and practitioners (Jansson 2013).

Recent empirical research on change management practices has predominantly focused on specific industries and particular change initiatives (Ajani 2022, Sopa 2022, Aldossari et al. 2021, Maali et al. 2020, Lines & Smithwick 2019, Higdon 2016, Yamakawa et al. 2012), with relatively few studies spanning multiple industries (Raineri 2011, Clarke & Garside 1997). As a result, there is limited empirically grounded knowledge about the use of change management practices (CMPs) across various industries. Furthermore, extant studies describe CMPs

independently, and very few previous empirical studies on change management practices link CMPs to change management models. In addition, some studies argue that change management practices in the preparation phase are preferred over those in the implementation phase (Raineri 2011, Yamakawa et al. 2012), though these conclusions are not supported unanimously. In conclusion, there appear to be several aspects related to change management practices further warranting research to widen our understanding. This dissertation's second article addresses these gaps in extant knowledge via the following research questions:

What kinds of change management practices do large companies use in the management of planned change?

And, consequently:

How are these change management practices part of change management models?

To answer these questions, a qualitative multiple case research design (Yin 1994, Stake 1995) is adopted, studying 11 large companies from Finland via 33 interviews with managers, executives, and specialists involved in planned change management.

The findings from this study show that substantial variation exists in companies' change management practices. At one end, company B identifies 13 change management practices used by the company; at another end, company G identifies only two. Thus, maturity in CMP usage varies a great deal. Most companies, e.g., 8 out of 11, identify between four to eight change management practices in their planned change management.

Furthermore, this study shows that in the studied organizations, CMPs are used jointly, sequenced and structured within change management models. Of the study's 11 case companies, 5 identify change management practices as part of change management models. Within the companies identifying change management models, there are differences in model numbers, contents, and usage. This study suggests that companies that use change management models also identify greater numbers of change management practices being used in planned change management.

Regarding change management practices (CMPs) in planned change management, this article makes three contributions to previous literature.

4.2.2 Contributions

First, this article adds to current scarce research offering empirical multi-industry approaches to change management practices, which are currently not plentiful. This

study widens the scope of investigation to encompass multiple CMPs that a variety of organizations are utilizing in planned change management, providing empirically grounded insights replenishing studies on CMPs.

As for CMPs identified in most case companies, this study’s results were partly in line with previous empirical studies on CMPs. The CMPs most often suggested in extant literature in both single- and multi-industry settings are leadership-related practices (Clarke & Garside 1997, Raineri 2011, Yamakawa et al. 2012, Lines & Smithwick 2019, Maali et al. 2020, Aldossari et al. 2021, Sopa 2022, Ajani 2022), formal and/or informal training and coaching practices (Clarke & Garside 1997, Raineri 2011, Higdon 2016, Lines & Smithwick 2019, Maali et al. 2020, Aldossari et al. 2021, Ajani 2022), and communication-related practices (Clarke & Garside 1997, Raineri 2011, Yamakawa et al. 2012, Higdon 2016, Maali et al. 2020, Sopa 2022, Ajani 2022).

In this study, however, case companies’ most frequently used change management practices are linked to planning-related change management practices (as also suggested by Raineri 2011, Higdon 2016, Lines & Smithwick 2019, Maali et al. 2020, Aldossari et al. 2021), communication-related practices (as suggested by Clarke & Garside 1997, Raineri 2011, Yamakawa et al. 2012, Higdon 2016, Maali et al. 2020, Sopa 2022, Ajani 2022), and formal and/or informal training and coaching practices (as suggested by Clarke & Garside 1997, Raineri 2011, Higdon 2016, Lines & Smithwick 2019, Maali et al. 2020, Aldossari et al. 2021, Ajani 2022). Table 5 illustrates the most suggested CMPs in previous CMP studies, and those most used by this study’s case companies.

Table 5. Change management practices (CMPs) most suggested in CMP literature and CMPs preferred by this dissertation’s case companies. Table from article 2 (Karasvirta 2023).

CMPs most often suggested in extant literature (from both single- and multi-industry CMP studies)	CMPs preferred in case companies
<i>Leadership-related practices</i>	<i>Planning-related change management practices</i> (mentioned by 10/11 of case companies)
<i>Formal and/or informal training and coaching practices</i>	<i>Communication-related practices</i> (mentioned by 10/11 of case companies)
<i>Communication-related practices</i>	<i>Formal and/or informal training and coaching practices</i> (mentioned by 7/11 of case companies)

However, although leadership practices seem to be the single most recognized change management practice in previous empirical CMP studies, this study

somewhat challenges this result, since only a small majority (6/11) of case companies' informants identified using leadership practices linked to the management of planned change. Leadership practices are only ranked 4th as the three abovementioned change management practices (planning, communication and training) are substantially more utilized by this study's case companies. The result is surprising since in planned change management literature, managers are often the ones given primary active roles in planned change management (ACMP 2019, Bridges 2003, Senge et al. 1999, Peters & Waterman 1982, Nadler & Tushman 1980/1997, Taffinder 1998, Prosci 2003, Kotter 1996, Carnall 1990, Beckhard & Harris 1977/1987). This study's discovery, however, complies with the findings from Karasvirta and Teerikangas (2022), where managerial roles were deemed important in managing planned change in empiric settings, but existing practices to support managers in planned change management were limited.

From other change management practices previously identified in the literature, five companies discuss diagnosis and analysis practices regarding change management (Raineri 2011, Sopa 2022), and three companies describe change management practices linked to the needs and interests of relevant individuals and groups (Raineri 2011, Clarke & Garside 1997). Change agent usage (Aldossari et al. 2021, Maali et al. 2020, Lines & Smithwick 2019) is identified and discussed in detail by five case companies, encouraging the notion that although not used by the majority of this study's case companies, change agent usage is indeed an important practice used for the management of planned change initiatives.

Surprisingly, none of the interviewed case companies brought up change management practices linked to the development of a new organizational vision, as suggested by Raineri (2011) and Yamakawa et al. (2012). In addition, the efficient usage of HR resources as a change management practice (suggested by Ajani 2022) was not brought up by any of the case companies, although the role of human resources (HR) in change management is brought up by several informants in five companies, and some of the informants themselves work in HR. The role of HR is much discussed but not established in case companies' planned change management practices.

Furthermore, this study brings forth a change management practice that is not represented in the empirical literature on change management practices but is brought up by informants from three companies (B, E, and F). Namely, stakeholder management is brought up as an important part of planned change management practices. The aim of stakeholder management is, firstly, to assure that all relevant internal stakeholders, especially middle managers, are mapped, and second, that change in these groups is managed. None of the previous empirical approaches on change management practices seem to cover stakeholder analysis and stakeholder management practices, although the wider literature on change management

discusses the subject (see, e.g., Jones & Recardo 2013). To promote incorporating stakeholder management practices as parts of change management practice studies, more empirical research is needed. One interesting angle of inquiry could be found from the project management literature (e.g., van Offenbeek & Vos 2016, Mok et al. 2015, Aaltonen 2011, Walker et al. 2008), where stakeholder management and stakeholder analysis have been studied especially in relation to change projects. This study's results are a call for more empirical research on stakeholder management practices in the context of change management practices in managing planned change.

As a second contribution, this article studies change management practices as part of change management models. Change management models were identified by the case companies themselves, without the researcher trying to spot Kotter's (1996), Peters and Waterman's (1982), or any other existing models from the case companies.

Previous empirical CMP research has focused on isolated change management practices. This includes studies on communication practices in change by Mansoor et al. (2023), Shrivastava et al. (2022), and DuFrene and Lehman (2014); training practices in change by Ferrari (2023), Kim et al. (2019), and Wallace (1991); and change leadership practices by Onia et al. (2021), Haake et al. (2014), Rowland and Higgs (2008), and Herold et al. (2008). Extant literature lacks linking CMPs to change management models, except for studies concerning distinct change management practices in distinct change management models (e.g., Pollack & Pollack 2014 and Chappell 2016 studying Kotter's model and CMPs in empiric settings).

This study validates that in empirical settings, CMPs are used jointly, sequenced, and structured – as change management models. An important observation of this dissertation is demonstrating that the companies identifying change management models also mention using more change management practices. This result might suggest that when change management is more structured (e.g., following a framework such as a change management model), change management practices are utilized more frequently. The results of this study show that if a case company has a multitude of change management practices, these are likely parts of change management models. And, consequently, if a case company identifies having change management models, multiple change management practices are part of that model (at least six practices, based on this study). Thus, the use of change management practices and models affects one another. To conceptually make this connection, the case organizations can be grouped into a “CMP Matrix.” This matrix has four categories based on a) the companies' frequency of planned change management practices and b) change management models used by the companies. These categories are:

1. Practice-filled change management models (change management models that contain a vast array of CMPs)
2. Multiple practices but few models (a multitude of CMPs but not structured as change management models)
3. Independent practices (few CMPs, no change management models)
4. Change management models with only few practices

The CMP Matrix, presented in Figure 6, can contribute to further studies of change management practices in planned change management models by providing a useful tool for grouping organizations.

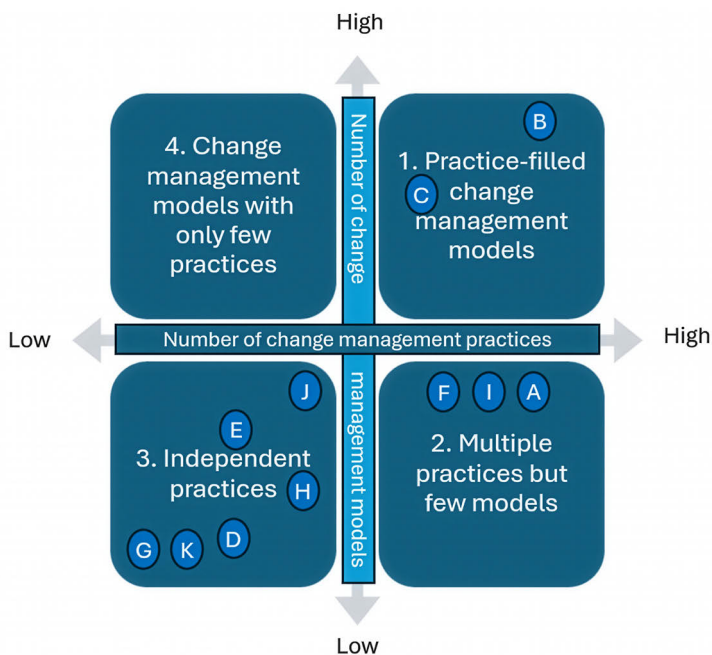


Figure 6. The CMP Matrix. Case companies' planned change management practices and change management models. Four groups are identified based on frequency of planned change management practices and models. (Figure from the second article, Karasvirta 2023)

The first group, “Practice-filled change management models,” entails case companies B and C. These case companies identify the largest number of change management practices (8 and 13), and these practices are used systematically in multiple change management models. In these companies, planned change management appears rather systematic, as a wide number of CMPs are used and are structured into models. The second group, “Multiple practices but few models,” hosts

companies A, F, and I. All these companies identify having between six to eight change management practices in use, but they identify only singular change management models being used for specific planned change management. These companies would have good opportunities to develop themselves further in planned change management by utilizing existing change management practices to build more change management models or by scaling current planned change management models to facilitate change management with additional types of change in the company. The third group, containing most of this study's case companies (D, E, G, H, J, and K) is home to companies identifying a fewer number of change management practices being used (between two to seven), but case companies do not have change management models that these practices would be a part of. However, these "Independent practices" case companies differ substantially from one another. As company G and K have only a few change management practices and no change management models, companies E, H, and J have multiple change management practices used systematically – though not embedded in models. These case companies could structure their change management practices into one or several models with reasonable effort, relocating themselves, for instance, to group number two quite rapidly. The last group, "Change management models with only few practices," was left empty in this study. The results show that if a case company has a multitude of change management practices, they are likely to be part of change management models. And, consequently, if a case company discusses having change management models, multiple change management practices are part of that model (at least six practices, based on this study – company I's change management model). Hence, this box was left empty.

Following Yin's (1994, pp. 31–32) suggestions, if two or more cases are shown to support the same theory, replication may be claimed and analytical generalizations made to some extent. As this article's aim is to build empirically grounded theory, the CMP Matrix can be utilized as one starting point for further studies on change management practices in planned change management models. This article's results are a call for a more systematic linkage between change management practices and change management models.

As a third contribution, this article's results challenge some existing CMP studies. This study's results do not comply with Raineri's (2011) or Yamakawa et al.'s (2012) suggestions of "preparation" phase CMPs being favored over "implementation" phase practices. This study's results, in turn, suggest that change strategists favor "implementation" phase practices over "preparation" phase practices in the management of planned change in their respective companies. With this observation, it is evident that more research on the topic is needed on preferences related to change management practice usage in multi-industry empirical settings.

From a practitioner perspective, the study's results can be used as a practical benchmark for developing change management practices in organizations.

4.3 Organizational Change Capability: Toward a Conceptual and Empirical Definition

4.3.1 Summary

The third article of this dissertation studies organizational change capability (OCC), an important enabler in how large companies manage planned change. Organizational change capability is one of the most prevalent research areas in the organizational change management literature (Kircovali & Cemberci 2020). For organizations to survive and thrive within the context of constant change, it is important that they build and maintain change capability (Albrecht & Roughsedge 2023). Also, change capability is of importance because capability provides the basis for effective action; “when you develop capability in [managing] change, your knowledge on what to do enables you to focus on the most important things; you use your skills and resources more efficiently” (Turner & Crawford 1998, p. 9). It is argued that OCC should be seen as a primary ability of organizations (Montreuil 2022).

However, research on OCC is scarce. Multiple advances (e.g., Beckhard & Harris 1987, Turner & Crawford 1998, Balogun & Hope Hailey 1999, Waldersee et al. 2003, Sanchez-Medina 2020, Al Halbusi et al. 2025, Vanhegen et al. 2025) study organizational capabilities in change but do not propose definitions on the concept of OCC per se. From another angle, looking at recent literature focusing on OCC (Cao & Le 2024, Albrecht & Roughsedge 2023, Supriharyanti & Sukoco 2023, McGuinness & Morgan 2005, Montreuil 2022), few advances exist. Notwithstanding, paucity in precise definitions and categorizations regarding organizational change capability prevails. Moreover, in literature discussing organizational change capability, organizational change capacity and capability sometimes appear to be treated as synonyms (Albrecht & Roughsedge 2023, p. 393), further amplifying the lack of conceptual clarity.

As research on the concept of organizational change capability remains conceptual, previous definitions omit empirical perspectives, i.e., the organizations’ points of view. Thus, we still do not seem to know much about how organizations themselves approach the concept of organizational change capability. This is the knowledge gap that is addressed via the research question of article 3:

Adopting an empirically grounded perspective, what does organizational change capability consist of?

In this study, the concept of organizational change capability is approached first by summarizing the literature about the concept and, second, via a multiple case

study involving 15 informants who are dedicated to organizational change management in their respective organizations. With the lack of prior research on organizational change capability, an inductive theory-building approach is selected, where theory emerges as a process (Glaser & Strauss 1967, Eisenhardt et al. 2016, Gioia et al. 2012). The Gioia methodology is utilized for data analysis.

The findings reveal that empirically, organizational change capability can be linked to distinct clusters of capabilities. This article contributes to extant theories on organizational change capability by suggesting that the concept definition of OCC lacks preciseness, and that concept definition has predominantly been done via conceptual approaches. The dissertation attempts to begin addressing these gaps in knowledge and, by doing so, makes the following three contributions.

4.3.2 Contributions

As a first contribution, based on a review of the literature, this article divides extant definitions of organizational change capability into definitions looking at OCC from an evolving perspective (Cao & Le 2024, Montreuil 2022) and from a fixed perspective (Albrecht & Roughsedge 2023, Supriharyanti & Sukoco 2023, McGuinness & Morgan 2005). This division is presented in section 2.5 (Table 2) of this dissertation. As these approaches view OCC from varying angles, this division may be useful for further much-needed research on the concept of OCC.

Second, this article contributes to the literature on OCC by being the first study, to the author's knowledge, to approach the definition of organizational change capability empirically from the organizations' perspective. Consequently, based on the conducted multiple case study involving 15 informants across 10 industries, this dissertation identifies an empirically grounded model of organizational change capability. In the model, organizational change capability can be addressed via four clusters of capabilities: skilled resources and a culture supporting individuals in change; a functioning framework; change-enabling processes and coordination; and two-way systems. However, the four identified clusters of capabilities are not isolated but linked to each other. The empirically grounded model of organizational change capability is illustrated in Figure 7.

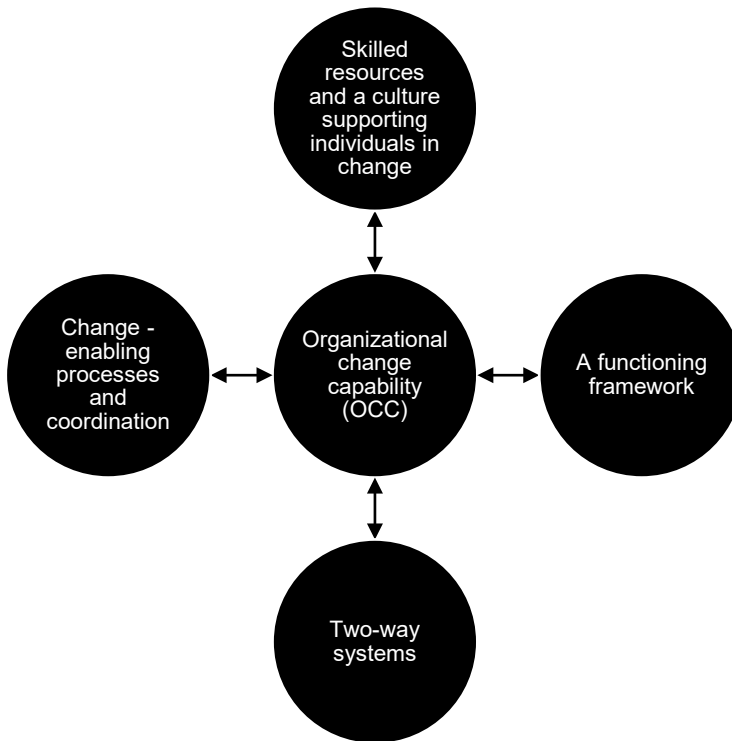


Figure 7. The empirically grounded model of organizational change capability. (Figure from third article, Karasvirta 2025)

As capability clusters affect one another, they enable organizational change capability together. For one, as capabilities linked to the cluster of “Skilled resources and a culture supporting individuals in change” are mentioned by most informants in the multiple case study (10/15), this capability cluster appears to be linked to other capability clusters. From one angle, culture supports individuals in change, for instance, by enabling open communication and facilitating dialogue (“Two-way systems”). From another angle, tools, processes, and methods utilized for the systematic management of change (“Change-enabling processes and coordination”) are linked to skilled resources, as they include frameworks, approaches, practices, and tools to enable individual capabilities. Here, especially training processes are the focus, since the individuals of the organization need to gain know-how and thus become “skilled resources.”

Additionally, the cluster capability of “A functioning framework” is linked to all other capability clusters. Individuals possessing needed skills and adequate resourcing (“Skilled resources and a culture supporting individuals in change”) are imperial, but they need a functioning framework as an enabler. As informants further elaborate, the organization’s structure (“A functioning framework”) also affects

“Two-way systems” by facilitating or challenging communication efforts. More streamlined organizational structures with lower hierarchy facilitate communication and dialogue. Furthermore, to be functional, the organization also needs capabilities such as efficient decision-making processes (“Change-enabling processes and coordination”). Consequently, other capability clusters enable “A functioning framework.”

Next, with “Change-enabling processes and coordination,” decision-making processes are key in organizational change capability. How decisions are made, whether more hierarchical and top-down or via more inclusive decision-making practices, is linked to organizational culture (“Skilled resources and a culture supporting individuals in change”). Decision-making is affected by culture, and culture is shaped by decision-making. Decision-making processes are also linked to “Two-way systems” as some organizations seek to foster inclusive decision-making, utilizing participative communication practices and shared involvement. Regarding “A functioning framework,” informants recommend that decision-making be functional, which means making clear decisions and advancing matters intentionally. Clear focus and strategic direction appear as the focal point.

These examples aim to demonstrate that capability clusters are linked, feeding into and enabling each other. This study reveals interconnection between all capability clusters, but further research is needed to study these connections more precisely.

As a third contribution to the discussion of organizational change capability, this article adds to the concept empirically via the perspective of the organizations themselves, which is a much-needed extension toward a more inclusive understanding. This study’s findings lead toward a new definition of organizational change capability, combining previous OCC studies and this empirical study’s results. As this study has demonstrated, the scarcity of established definitions of organizational change capability suggests a need to further validate the concept of OCC from an empirical viewpoint, with more precise and inclusive definitions. Concepts are of utmost importance, as they provide ways of talking about and arriving at shared understandings among professionals (Corbin & Strauss 2008, p. 8). Consequently, building both on extant definitions of OCC (see Table 2 in section 2.5) and this study’s theorizing, a new definition of organizational change capability is proposed as:

Deliberate organizational actions and developments at all organizational levels, aiming to actualize the organization’s potential (capacity) in change.

This definition of OCC is based on four principles. First, this proposed definition of organizational change capability is built on purposeful doing. Actions are

deliberate and calculated and do not appear as arbitrary. Organizational change capability is not looked at via resources nor organizational state (vs. organizational change capacity), but via emphasizing deliberate action. Second, as this study divides extant definitions of OCC into definitions with a more fixed perspective (Albrecht & Roughsedge 2023, Supriharyanti & Sukoco 2023, McGuinness & Morgan 2005) and an evolving perspective (Cao & Le 2024, Montreuil 2022), this article suggests a definition representing a perspective where evolution is emphasized. The organization must constantly develop itself and act to achieve success in constant change. It must “recognize internal aspects needed to be changed, realize new opportunities to be seized and respond effectively to changing situations for organizational development” (Cao & Le 2024, p. 159). This definition relates to both Montreuil’s (2022) and Cao and Le’s (2024) definitions of OCC, where development is the focus. Furthermore, looking at the case study results, the notion of OCC as evolving appears as central. The four capability clusters (skilled resources and a culture supporting individuals in change; a functioning framework; change-enabling processes and coordination; and two-way systems) must continuously evolve, and the multiple case study’s results convey that conscious action is taken to develop these capabilities in the organization’s context. As an example, with the first capability cluster (“Skilled resources and a culture supporting individuals in change”), the organization must deliberately develop individuals for the organization to be change-capable. Capability is not stagnant, as new changes are undertaken, and with these, new requirements for capability arise. In a similar manner, culture is developed deliberately and proactively. Third, this article’s definition of OCC includes all organizational levels. Results from the multiple case study suggest that building blocks or organizational change capability emphasize considering the whole organization throughout – from the grassroots level (Multi-level actions, Shared involvement) to managers (Building on individual capabilities, Decision-making) to culture (Supportive culture, Strategic focus and direction). With the previous few definitions of organizational change capability, all organizational levels have not been visible. This article’s empirically grounded model of organizational change capability suggests that these be added. Fourth, the suggested definition of organizational change capability distinguishes between capacity and capability as it takes the stance that capability is needed to enable potential (capacity). As capacity is latent (Montreuil 2022), it needs to be mobilized to achieve change. Deliberate action thus needs to be taken. For an organization to be change-capable – to “actualize the organization’s potential (capacity) in change” – the four capability clusters from this dissertation’s empirically grounded model on organizational change capability should be considered.

From a practitioner perspective, the results of this study provide organizations with much-needed guidance to better assess and develop their capabilities in change.

Ideally, this leads to better choices regarding organizational change; more fit-for-purpose strategies and less “...examples of organizations which either implemented inappropriate change designs, or attempted change designs that were too sophisticated for their levels of change competence” (Balogun & Hope Hailey 1999, p. 79).

To conclude this chapter, all three articles from this dissertation have briefly been summarized and their contributions have been presented. Next, the “Discussion” chapter examines the contributions of the dissertation, discusses limitations and suggests further research directions.

5 Discussion

This chapter commences by discussing the contributions of this dissertation both to theory and to practice. When studying organizational change theory in an empirical setting, this research takes on the challenge of the “double hurdle of scholarly quality and practical relevance” as it seeks to increase scientific knowledge while also contributing to practice and policy making (Pettigrew et al. 2001, p. 697). However, as Pettigrew et al. (2001, p. 705) call for, engagement between scholars and practitioners should be on a high level – thus, a grounding notion of this dissertation has been to produce relevant contributions overarching both literature and practice.

After this dissertation’s contributions are discussed, the limitations of the dissertation are considered, followed by a suggested future research agenda.

5.1 Theoretical contributions

5.1.1 Empirical approaches to planned change management in large organizations

This dissertation has focused on how large companies manage planned change. As extant literature reveals, previous empirical approaches appear mainly coupled with specific planned change initiatives, such as studies examining planned change management in mergers and acquisitions (Harikkala-Laihininen 2022, Li et al. 2021, Boling et al. 2017, Reddy et al. 2016, Eriksson & Sundgren 2007), studies focused on managing change in IT system implementations (Gupta et al. 2018, Okumus et al. 2017, Iveroth 2011, Collette et al. 2007, Huq et al. 2007, Martin & Huq 2007, Pries & Stone 2004), studies focused on planned change related to hybrid work/workplace changes (Hasbi & Van Marrewijk 2024), circular economy change (Re et al. 2024) or digital transformation (Chang & Cheng 2025). All the beforementioned empirical studies focus on planned change management in specific contexts, related to a distinct change type and/or case organization. Previous approaches do not seem to reveal how organizations approach planned change management in general, apart from distinct planned change initiatives.

Consequently, in this dissertation, the research problem of how large companies manage planned change has been addressed. As a contribution to theories on planned change management, this dissertation adds an empirically grounded approach on how large companies manage planned change in general, beyond distinct change initiatives. The research was conducted via three more specific research questions studied via three articles, based on an empirical multiple case study of 11 large Finnish companies. As this dissertation provides a snapshot across 11 industries, it offers a multi-industry perspective on planned organizational change management. In doing so, this dissertation adds to the planned organizational change management literature by providing empirically grounded viewpoints on how large companies manage planned change in general, regardless of the planned change initiative or type.

As regards more specific theoretical contributions, this dissertation contributes to theorizing on planned change management, the literature on change management practices as well as theorizing on organizational change capability. These are shortly summarized next.

5.1.2 Actors/organizations in planned change management

This dissertation contributes to extant planned change literature by suggesting that change organizations are important elements in planned organizational change management, though they have been underrepresented to some extent in this literature. This was the focus of the first article of this dissertation, studying what companies' planned change organizations, e.g., networks, teams, and individuals dedicated to planned change management, consist of. Regarding change organizations, this dissertation makes two theoretical contributions. As a first contribution to literature on planned organizational change, this dissertation suggests a typology of change organizations to facilitate further approaches on this subject. As a second contribution, this dissertation adds to theories of planned organizational change by pointing out the role of change organizations, which are currently inadequately represented in contrast to what the article one's empirical data suggests. Beyond positing that change organizations can be conceptualized as change networks, teams, and individuals, this dissertation offers distinct contributions to each of these sub-areas of the literature on planned change management. A more thorough coverage of this contribution is available in section 4.1.2.

5.1.3 Change management practices

Regarding change management practices (CMPs), this dissertation makes three contributions to the previous literature. First, this dissertation adds to current scarce

research offering empirical multi-industry approaches to change management practices, which are currently not plentiful. This study widens the scope of investigation to encompass multiple CMPs that a variety of organizations are utilizing in planned change management, providing empirically grounded insights replenishing studies on CMPs and challenging some existing assumptions. As a second contribution, this dissertation studies change management practices in change management models, where previous empirical CMP research has focused on isolated change management practices. Third, this dissertation suggests that the implementation phase change management practices are favored over preparation phase practices, partly contradicting previous CMP studies. A more thorough coverage of this contribution is available in section 4.2.2.

5.1.4 Organizational change capability

Looking at organizational change capability, this dissertation makes three contributions to extant literature. As a first contribution, based on a review of the literature, this dissertation divides extant definitions of organizational change capability into definitions looking at OCC from evolving and fixed perspectives. As these approaches view OCC from varying angles, this division may be useful for further much-needed research on the concept of OCC. Second, this dissertation contributes to the literature on OCC by being the first study, to the author's knowledge, to approach the definition of organizational change capability empirically from the organizations' perspective. Consequently, this dissertation identifies an empirically grounded model of organizational change capability, where OCC is addressed via four clusters of capabilities. Third, this study's findings lead toward a new definition of organizational change capability, combining previous OCC studies and the empirical study's results. A more thorough coverage of this contribution is available in section 4.3.2.

In summary, this dissertation's main contributions to extant theorizing on planned organizational change management, change management practices and organizational change capability are summarized Figure 8.

RP: How do large companies manage planned organizational change in general, beyond distinct planned change initiatives?

Contribution: an empirically grounded approach on how large companies manage planned change beyond distinct change initiatives.

Article and research question (RQ)	Key findings	Contributions
<p>Article 1: RQ1. What do companies' change organizations consist of?</p>	<p>1) Networks, teams, and individual roles linked to the management of planned change appear somewhat underrepresented in extant planned change management literature. In practice, however, change organizations seem to hold a visible and active role in planned change management, although the planned organizational change model (POCM) literature does not fully recognize this role.</p> <p>2) Change organizations can be defined as networks, teams, and individuals dedicated to planned change management. These categories have further dimensions and share interrelations.</p> <p>3) The role of permanent change teams (and permanent, full-time individuals within these teams) is discovered. These types of teams are not visible in POCM literature.</p> <p>4) External consultants are more present in practice than in the POCM literature.</p>	<p>1) Defining a typology for studying change organizations consisting of networks, teams, and individuals dedicated to planned change management. Identifying dimensions and interrelations between components of change organizations.</p> <p>2) Pinpointing that POCMs should recognize change organizations' overall role in the management of planned change. Although not visible in all extant planned change management literature, this study suggests that in practice, the role of change organizations is meaningful. This study points out that permanent full-time individual roles and permanent teams dedicated to planned change management appear to be missing from the literature.</p>
<p>Article 2: RQ2A. What kinds of change management practices do large companies use in planned change? RQ2B. How are these change management practices part of change management models?</p>	<p>1) Previous change management practices (CMP) studies show that studies on CMPs have seldom been carried out across industries. Furthermore, from an empirical perspective, CMPs have been researched mainly as independent practices, not jointly or as parts of change management models.</p> <p>2) Previous empirical studies emphasize leadership-related practices, yet only a small majority of this study's case companies bring these forth in their planned change management.</p> <p>3) CMPs linked to the preparation phase of change seem to be emphasized in previous studies.</p> <p>4) Companies identifying change management models also identify greater numbers of change management practices being used in managing planned change.</p>	<p>1) Adding to current scarce research offering empirical multi-industry approaches on change management practices. The results somewhat differ from previous CMP studies, as this study's results suggest some variation in most utilized CMPs when compared to suggestions from extant studies.</p> <p>2) Showing that change management practices are part of change management models. As previous empirical CMP research has been focused on distinct change management practices, this study shows that in the studied organizations, CMPs are used jointly, sequenced and structured within change management models. From studied cases, a "CMP Matrix" is presented as a typology, where the studied organizations are grouped into four categories based on a) companies' frequency of change management practices and b) the change management models companies identify using.</p> <p>3) Results suggest that the implementation phase change management practices are favored over preparation phase practices.</p>
<p>Article 3: RQ3. What does organizational change capability consist of (from an empirical point of view)?</p>	<p>1) A review of the literature shows that organizational change capability (OCC) is a blurry concept that does not yet hold established definitions.</p> <p>2) OCC has been defined conceptually; the voice of the organizations is missing in concept definition.</p> <p>3) The study suggests that OCC can be empirically approached via four capability clusters.</p>	<p>1) Dividing existing approaches of OCC into evolving and fixed perspectives of the concept.</p> <p>2) Being the first article to explore the concept of organizational change capability (OCC) from the organizations' point of view. Discovering four capability clusters resulting in an empirically grounded model of organizational change capability.</p> <p>3) A new definition of the concept of OCC is introduced, combining previous OCC studies and the empirical study's results.</p>

Figure 8. This dissertation's articles' main contributions to extant theories of planned organizational change management, change management practices and organizational change capability literature.

Although research questions constitute distinct themes (change organizations, change management practices, organizational change capability), the three questions are related to each other. First, the “who”, studied in the first article, is linked to the “what”, studied in the second article. Planned change management theories and approaches discuss the “who” by identifying functions and roles that are dedicated to planned change management. Article 1 reveals how these roles are present in case companies. Change management practices and models, studied in article 2, entail activity that is conducted in planned change management by these actors. Hereby, change organizations (who) are linked to change management practices and planned change management models (what), and both are discussed in this dissertation’s research. Second, organizational change capability, studied in the third article, can be considered as an overarching theme for both the “who” and the “what,” since capability involves actions (Dosi et al. 2000) and, thus, actors. In the empirically grounded model of organizational change capability, introduced in this dissertation’s third article, OCC is addressed via four clusters of capabilities. In all these capability clusters, actors (who) and action (what) are present. In the research problem of how large companies manage planned change, all three themes are interrelated.

In a broader perspective, this dissertation’s positioning within the ongoing evolution in theorizing on organizational change deserves consideration. On the one hand, there is a school of thought arguing for a shift away from prescriptive theoretical models, such as classic planned change management models. To this end, authors, such like Tsoukas and Chia (2002) see change as an ongoing process (organizational becoming) of human sensemaking and action. Organizations do not simply experience change, but they are continuously being constituted and reconstituted by it. As By (2005) notes, organizational change by nature can be more of an open-ended and continuous process than strictly managed via timetables, objectives, and methods. Similarly, Dawson (2003) does not see planned change models as a good fit in an increasingly dynamic and uncertain business environment. Criticism of planned organizational change approaches can also be directed toward its emphasis on incremental and relatively slow change and its inapplicability to situations that require rapid and radical transformational change (Burnes 2004, Burnes 1996, p. 13). However, the need for speedy change can be fairly common in modern organizational life.

In parallel, on the other hand, organizational change scholarship has shifted from prescriptive, linear models (e.g., Lewin 1947, Kotter 1996) toward more analytically grounded, empirically supported frameworks. Newer approaches aim to bridge the gap between theory and practice, ensuring that change initiatives are both theoretically valid and practically applicable. Integration of scholarly research with management practices for creating effective change management strategies is called out for (Stouten et al. 2018), and empirical studies abound. This movement reflects a broader trend in management research toward evidence-based practice, which advocates integrating

scientific research, practitioner expertise, stakeholder perspectives, and contextual factors in decision-making (Rousseau 2006). Rooted in empirical research on change readiness, leadership, implementation science, and employee attitudes, evidence-based practice offers a systematic, context-sensitive alternative to traditional prescriptive models (Rousseau 2006, Weber et al. 2024). Evidence-based approaches on change management are highly called for, challenging the more traditional prescriptive approaches to managing change. Consequently, searching for one “right” approach to change might be pointless (Smits & Bowden 2015), as organizational realities constantly shift. As organizations face increasingly complex transformations – including digitalization, hybrid work, and sustainability transitions – the demand for research-informed, empirically grounded theory of managing change can be expected to continue growing.

To conclude, planned organizational change has been, and still is, in the interest of many scholars and practitioners. The “rational philosophy” encompassing planned change is the most popular philosophy for leaders seeking to impose a direction upon an organization (Graetz & Smith 2010, p. 141). As leaders and managerial roles are often in charge of planned change in organizations (Karasvirta & Teerikangas 2022), these actors need guides, models, and frameworks to support change management. Here, planned change approaches may seem more straightforward to implement as they may provide easier prescriptions to follow. However, the ongoing evolution in theorizing on organizational change brings about novel perspectives challenging old recommendations.

5.2 Contributions to practice

For practitioners and organizations, this dissertation offers numerous avenues for developing their capabilities in planned change management, regardless of change initiatives pursued. Ideally, this leads to better choices regarding organizational change; more fit-for-purpose strategies and less “...examples of organizations which either implemented inappropriate change designs, or attempted change designs that were too sophisticated for their levels of change competence” (Balogun & Hope Hailey 1999, p. 79). As organizations seek to develop their capabilities in change, an empirically grounded understanding is much welcomed in this endeavor.

Applying an engaged scholarship approach (Van de Ven 2007, 2018), this section completes the circle by connecting the dissertation’s results back “to the field.” As many executives and practitioners validated in the beginning of this study (see section 1.4), the theme of developing an organization’s planned change management might not be an easy task, as most extant approaches are coupled with distinct planned change initiatives. It might be challenging to know how and where organizations should begin. Consequently, based on the findings of this dissertation,

an empirically grounded framework for developing organizational change capability in planned change management is presented in Figure 9.

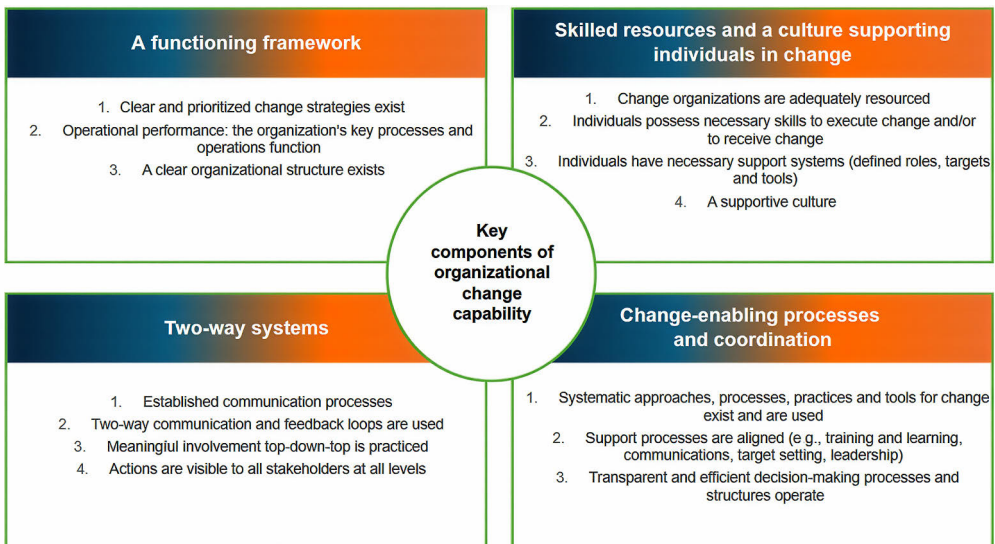


Figure 9. An empirically grounded framework for developing organizational change capability in planned change management.

The four capability clusters of organizational change capability (Figure 9) have been adapted from this dissertation's study of organizational change capability (article 3). Next, their descriptions and suggested usage for practitioners and/or executives is briefly explained. As a disclaimer, the intent is to describe a diagnostic practical framework and not to cover advice on how and toward which direction to develop an organization's capability clusters of organizational change capability (illustrated in Figure 7).

First, practitioners would need to look at the "who," i.e., the first research question of this dissertation, located in the top-right corner of Figure 9. Consequently, practitioners and/or executives in organizations should evaluate their change organizations' maturity and decide on further developments where needed. For these purposes, this dissertation's first article suggests a maturity model, which is based on the change organization typology developed in the first article (change organizations as change networks, change teams, and individuals dedicated to planned change management). This model places the studied case companies in different categories (high, medium, low) based on the frequency of networks, teams, and individuals dedicated to planned change, providing a starting point for organizations for self-diagnosis.

However, while ensuring that necessary roles exist and are resourced, organizations also need to continuously develop skills and individuals' capabilities

to augment the organization's change capability as a whole. In addition, individuals need proper support systems (i.e., defined roles, targets, and tools, per article 1 of this dissertation) to succeed in their tasks. Furthermore, building a culture that supports individuals in change is imperative. Culture supports and enables continuous development and learning, building an organization's change capability.

Second, the question of "what," connected to the research questions of article 2, should be considered by practitioners. As organizational actors in planned change management (networks, teams, and individuals) can be assessed, this dissertation also suggests examining *what they do*, e.g., change management practices and processes used. From Figure 9, the bottom half of the figure illustrates the "what," entailing "Two-way systems" and "Change-enabling processes and coordination."

In Figure 9, first, "Two-way systems" involve communication and involvement-related practices and processes that are deemed an essential component of organizational change capability by both the change management practice literature and this dissertation's multiple case study. Therefore, the practitioner and/or executive should carefully assess their organization's communication practices, resources, and feedback loops and/or establish these to build a strong culture of communication. Furthermore, shared involvement for all organizational levels is extremely important in building organizational change capability: if only the managerial level is engaged, the organization will never be fully change-capable. Therefore, practitioners and/or executives should ensure that stakeholders at all levels are considered, and both communication and involvement are transparent at all levels.

Second, "Change-enabling processes and coordination" refer to systematic approaches, processes, and tools for change. In the second article of this dissertation, studied companies discuss specific planned change management practices and models. Models, practices, and tools are an important part of the "what" since if these do not exist, the "who" dedicated to the execution of planned change will soon face challenges as they will not know which processes, practices, and tools they are expected to use in change management. Furthermore, an important factor is to assess whether supporting processes (such as training and learning, communications, target setting, and incentives, etc.) are aligned with the change. As change management practices entail many practices linked to these supporting processes, misalignment leads to challenges. As an example, if an organization seeks to change X, but manager Z's leadership incentives are aligned with preserving the status quo, the leadership, target setting, and incentive processes are not aligned with the change. This leads to a decrease in change capability. Furthermore, an essential part of organizational change capability is decision-making, as mentioned by many informants in article 3 of this dissertation. As decision-making should be efficient, transparency and predictivity should also be constructed as parts of processes and practices.

Looking at this dissertation's study, it seems that when organizations have dedicated resources for planned change management, the number of used change management practices and change management models is larger, as per article 2. It is thus important for organizations to acknowledge the links between "who" and "what". Following the suggestions from Clarke and Garside (1997, p. 538), the benefits of empirically exploring change management practices also include many practical advantages such as giving exposure to best practice in change management, providing organizations measures to audit and benchmark themselves and identifying priority areas where to target improvements. Thus, for a more detailed description on what are most utilized change management practices in large companies and how they are parts of change management models, practitioners are advised to look at article 2 for guidance. This dissertation's findings can be used to benchmark change management practices, serving as a starting point for organizations to analyze and develop their own change management practices, also as parts of change management models.

Furthermore, looking at the "what," models (processes) can "provide a useful structure for woolly concepts because they focus on the main elements, ignoring the lesser important elements or detail of a concept" (Clarke & Garside 1997, p. 538). Indeed, more structured models could facilitate planned change management a great deal. Throughout the study, case companies' aspirations toward more systematic change management became evident, as the below quotation illustrates.

"We really should have a structured model on how to do these [change management practices] to lead systematically and to follow these. Having this model would be wonderful." – Informant 2, Company K

It should be considered that some differences in change management practice and model usage between case companies may likely be due to divergent company strategies, which in turn are affecting the types of planned changes executed in the companies. These changes therefore affect how change management practices and models are used. As Clarke and Garside (1997, p. 542) note, it is difficult to assess the relative weight of the best change management practices: "Although all practices can equally contribute to successful change management, in reality there are likely to be some practices which have greater leverage than others, and so should be carried out first." It is difficult to single out which practice may be of more importance than another. Thus, it might be challenging to provide universal "best practices for change" since both context and human action differ in organizations; thus, particularity is omnipresent (Jansson 2013).

It is also worth noting that the usage of change management models bears significance since change resistance at an individual level can often be directed

toward how the change process is taking place and not toward the change itself (Balogun & Hope Hailey 1999). If organizations learn to build better change management models encompassing appropriate change management practices, it is likely that the management on planned change may become smoother.

With the “who” and the “what,” the interdependency is visible, as without actors, there is no action and vice versa. Thus, it is likely that organizations having more mature change organizations would also have more structures for change management practices and change management models. And vice versa: if an organization has rich change management practices and models, it would likely have resources (change organizations) to deliver the activities. Here, organizational capability can be seen as an overarching theme, encompassing both actors and action and making the two greater than their sum. The more actors and action are intertwined, the more likely the formulation of a holistic capability in change.

The last section of the empirically grounded framework for developing organizational change capability in planned change management (Figure 9) is “A functioning framework.” This refers to the organization’s change strategies, key processes, operating models, and organizational structure. These are important components of organizational change capability, surfacing from this dissertation’s third article. As these components were discovered via article 3’s empirical research but not further addressed in the scope of this dissertation, it is advised to seek further practical guidance on how to assess these components from the literature regarding change strategies, key processes, operating models, and organizational structure.

From a practitioner perspective, the problem of how large companies approach planned change management is a challenging topic. Per the last stage of the engaged scholarship approach (Van de Ven 2007, Figure 3 in section 3.2), research findings should be applied to resolve the research problem from both theoretical and practical perspectives. Here, stakeholders have been involved in addressing the research problem with new information acquired via this dissertation’s study. This has been done by introducing Figure 9, the empirically grounded framework for developing organizational change capability in planned change management, to a handful of large organizations not involved in this dissertation’s research. Initial results applying this model to develop organizational change capability in planned change appear promising, but more testing is required to validate the model’s effectiveness.

As this dissertation suggests, approaching the problem of how large companies manage planned change via the three themes of change organizations, change management practices, and organizational change capability provides a good starting point to both assess and develop planned change management in organizations. These themes have been made accessible through the empirically grounded framework for developing organizational change capability in planned change

management (Figure 9). Using this approach, planned change management may be developed in organizations – beyond specific change initiatives.

5.3 Limitations and further research directions

As in all research, this dissertation and its articles bear limitations. To begin with, it must be noted that since the studied sample consisted of organizations representing large Finnish companies (in a stable, developed, democratic economy), generalizations to “all large companies” and across all geographies cannot be made. Nevertheless, some degree of generalization with similar well-developed democratic economies, particularly in Northern Europe, is feasible. Further, each case company represents a different industry, operating in a different environment. Thus, industry-specific generalizations cannot be made. Acknowledging that the data for this dissertation were collected in 2020 and that “generalizations are hard to sustain over time, and they are even tougher to uphold across international, institutional, and cultural borders” (Pettigrew et al. 2001, p. 697), this dissertation seems to provide a fair number of findings and contributions to allow contemporary insights.

Next, case companies and their informants in this dissertation view organizational change mainly as projects (O’Donovan 2018) and change management through the lens of planned change approaches (Rosenbaum et al. 2018); thus, they mainly consider change organizations, change management practices, change management models, and organizational change capability as associated with the management of planned change initiatives. It is therefore worth noting that results and contributions may not be generalized to encompass all organizational change management and all types of change (e.g., emergent change, Burnes 1996, 2004; or a contingency approach, Dunphy & Stace 1993).

The number of individual informants involved in this dissertation was 33. It is possible that the findings might have slightly varied with a larger number of informants involved, or if informants would have represented a distinct organizational level, e.g., top management or specialists. As the informants now represent four levels: executive board, directors, managers and specialists, further interesting research avenues may be pursued by focusing on, e.g., only one group.

Furthermore, this dissertation provides a descriptive (static) snapshot of planned organizational change management in studied case companies. Thus, focusing on what is currently visible does not reveal how processes might unfold over time, e.g., how change and organizations develop and evolve, nor does this dissertation consider matters such as decision-making, power, or authority (e.g., Pfeffer 1981) in planned change management. Planned approaches to change seem to presume that common agreements can be reached and that all the parties involved in a particular change project have a willingness and interest in implementing it. This presumption

may ignore matters such as organizational conflict and politics. Consequently, the planned approach to change assumes that all organizational actors are willing to work toward a common goal without disagreements (Bamford & Forrester 2003). As such, this dissertation does not provide explanations of causality but illustrates “how things are.” For example, from a processualist angle (e.g., Pettigrew et al. 2001, Langley et al. 2013), beforementioned themes would be approachable. As organizations increasingly operate in environments characterized by complexity and continuous transformation, the process perspective could provide a richer understanding of how change is experienced, constructed, and sustained in real time.

It is the researcher’s sincere hope that more empirical studies on how organizations manage planned organizational change are further conducted. New advances may challenge current assumptions and test this dissertation’s findings and contributions. As Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007, p. 25) affirm, theory building from cases produces new theory from data, and deductive theory testing can complete the cycle by using data to test theory. As this dissertation provides one snapshot, it does not provide the whole picture.

As this dissertation studies planned change management via three research questions, it deserves recognition that the research problem – planned change management in large organizations – entails research questions beyond those addressed within the scope of this dissertation. Thus, the selected research questions (change organizations, change management practices, and organizational change capability) do not claim to address the research problem holistically. Further research is needed to formulate a more comprehensive picture, as the puzzle of how organizations manage planned change contains more than three pieces.

This dissertation’s empirically grounded framework for developing organizational change capability in planned change management (Figure 9) would benefit from further studies in empirical settings. The researcher has experimented with the framework in organizations, but proper research studying how the framework is used would need to be conducted in empirical settings to validate the framework’s usefulness in developing organizations’ planned change management.

Regarding change organizations, the conducted literature review highlights that networks, teams, and individual roles dedicated to change are not adequately represented in prior research. In practice however, companies do have change organizations in place, although variation exists. Future research could look at planned organizational change models from a wider angle or through a different sample of planned change models to further explore the role of change organizations in planned change. Moreover, future advances on the subject matter could test and develop the proposed typology (i.e., change organizations as networks, teams, and individuals) and identified interrelations. The identified interrelations show preferences in how companies are organized in relation to certain changes, but they

do not reveal what the link to the outcome (e.g., success or failure) in change might be. This provides interesting avenues for future research.

One particularly interesting avenue for further research would be linking change organizations to change agency literature (Caldwell 2003), where agency might be examined combining individual actions to organizational contexts and power dynamics (Pettigrew 1985, Pfeffer 1981). In this context, both the “who” and the “what” could be examined jointly. Additionally, further research on change networks and their role in planned organizational change is needed. With change teams, this dissertation suggests that permanent change teams in planned organizational change deserve further investigation, as their role appears absent in extant literature.

Regarding individual change roles, the first article shows that with formal roles, tasks and responsibilities are more clearly defined and can be separated between consultative and operational roles. In contrast, with informal individual roles especially at the managerial and leadership levels, we still do not know much about the tasks assigned to these roles and where they are in the consultative-operational dimension. To appreciate the assigned tasks on a consultative – operative – dimension, more research is warranted. On a general note, greater attention to employees and other stakeholders is important to provide balance in understanding change’s richness and complexity (Stouten et al. 2018, p. 778).

Interestingly, during informant interviews on change organizations, the role of development and of the project management office (PMO) were brought up by informants from time to time. Therefore, further research on organizational development and PMO functions, departments, teams, and individuals/practitioners and their role(s) in planned organizational change would be important for widening our understanding of differences and commonalities regarding roles, tasks, and mandates.

It is the researcher’s sincere hope that more empirical studies on change management practices in planned change are further conducted. As Raineri (2011) suggests, to further fill the gap between the more conceptually oriented and the more case-oriented practitioner literature of change management practices, more empiric research is needed in general. As multi-industry case studies on CMPs are scarce, it is suggested that these be conducted. An interesting angle would be studying CMPs from the viewpoint of change recipients and change strategists (Raineri 2011). These studies could reveal interesting dichotomies between perceived CMP usage from various perspectives, i.e., those in charge of executing change and those receiving change. This would promote further understanding of which CMPs are preferred/efficient by both groups of individuals, guiding CMP usage selection and preference in planned change initiatives.

Furthermore, although this study’s case companies show substantial variation in the identification of CMPs, the results do not tell why this is the case nor reveal outcomes of planned change initiatives. A further angle of study would be looking

at the case companies' successes and failures in planned change and examining whether change management practice and change management model usage explains success or failure.

The link between change management practices and change management models should be further studied. In further empirical studies, the CMP Matrix introduced in this dissertation's second article can serve as a useful tool in classifying organizations based on their CMP usage and change management models. Furthermore, leadership practices should be further studied, as extant studies on CMPs position these practices as preferred, but this dissertation's results do not comply with this suggestion.

Although the wider literature on change management discusses the subject (Jones and Recardo 2013), more empirical research is needed to promote incorporating stakeholder management practices *as part of change management practice studies*. As Stouten et al. (2018, p. 779) suggest, organizational change is likely more readily implemented when it targets multiple stakeholder needs in its goals and interventions. One interesting angle of inquiry could be found from the project management literature (e.g., van Offenbeek & Vos 2016, Mok et al. 2015, Aaltonen 2011, Walker et al. 2008), where stakeholder management and stakeholder analysis have been studied especially in relation to change projects.

For a researcher, it was somewhat surprising that some case companies had so few change management practices, and that fewer than half the case companies identified using change management models. As participants were some of the economy's largest companies, this was not foreseen. More research is warranted to answer questions related to why large companies appear to have little structured change management models in use.

As the topic of organizational change capability is relatively novel, future research directions are plentiful. What is especially missing from the field is more empirical research – not only on the concept of OCC but also for testing current OCC approaches and measures “in the field.” Another interesting research direction would be to study the relationships between the four clusters of organizational change capability identified in this dissertation's third article.

From an empirical point, the identified four clusters of organizational change capability could further be studied, for example following Albrecht and Roughsedge's (2023) aspirations for measuring organizational change capability in organizations. As OCC studies are beginning to raise more and more interest, further research directions are indeed plentiful.

Although this dissertation acknowledges that planned change management has been researched extensively, further avenues for studies are plentiful. As change prevails and organizations continuously seek to build their capabilities in change, more research is needed. In the words of Heraclitus, nothing is constant but change.

Abbreviations

POCM	Planned Organizational Change Model
CMP	Change Management Practice
OCC	Organizational Change Capability

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APPENDIX 1, Information regarding informant affiliations

In this dissertation's context, all the interviewed informants from different organizational levels can be divided into three groups regarding their relationship with the researcher:

1. The researcher and informant were already connected and had met before (in a context not related to this study).
2. The researcher and the informant were introduced via someone who knew both the researcher and the informant.
3. The researcher and informant had no previous common contact whatsoever.

With group 1, one company fell into this category. The researcher knew all informants (from the same company) beforehand since they performed work as a change management practitioner in the respective company during the study. This facilitated building a trusting and honest atmosphere and made it possible to discuss sensitive topics very openly. Since this group knew the researcher beforehand, personal introductions were left out of the interviews, and discussion about change organizations could start immediately.

With group 2, seven primary contacts (persons that were first contacted in the company) were reached by the researcher's and contact person's mutual connection, who made introductions. Having a trusted person presenting on behalf of the researcher helped the recruitment of informants a great deal. It must be noted that a total of 17 informants fell into this category after utilizing a snowball method, where the informant introduces the researcher to the next informants.

Three companies and persons were in group 3, meaning that the researcher approached primary contacts as "cold contacts" after doing thorough background research of the companies and suitable roles to be approached for the study. All three unknown contacts agreed to join the study. These three cold-contacted informants then introduced further informants to the researcher, making the next informants

from these companies eligible for group 2 (researcher and informant introduced by a common acquaintance).

The interviews started with practical matters such as introductions, non-disclosure agreements (only one company proceeded to have an NDA), and articulating the purpose of the interview. Next was a short briefing of the research and objectives. The agenda and structure of the interview (themes to be covered) were sent to all informants beforehand via e-mail for the informants to be able to prepare for discussions. Notes were taken, and all interviews were recorded with the informants' consent. When conducting interviews, the chosen technique was more about facilitating discussion with open-end questions than having a courtroom technique with strict, fact-based questions. The researcher took on the role of an active listener, allowing conversation to flow somewhat freely, posing elaborating questions and making sure that all interview themes and sub-questions were nevertheless covered and questions answered before finishing the interviews.



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