

# A Multilevel Investigation and Qualitative Exploration of Factors Contributing to Change Commitment

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<b>Table of Contents</b>	
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Change Commitment</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>HR practices as reinforcement strategies of change</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>The immediate supervisor</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>METHOD</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Organization and sample</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Procedure</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Measures</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Data analysis</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>RESULTS</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Qualitative results</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Quantitative results</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Limitations and suggestions for future research</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Practical Implications</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Appendix A: Interview guide</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Appendix B: Qualitative data. Tables</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Appendix C. Qualitative results. Categories</b>	<b>52</b>

### **Abstract**

Research in organizational change has suggested that employees' support is needed to succeed in implementing change. This study investigated change commitment, which reflects this support and includes affective, continuance and normative change commitment. The study explored the impact of factors such as Human Resource practices and the role of the immediate supervisor on change commitment, based on the model of institutionalizing change interventions described by Armenakis, Harris, & Feild (1999). The aim was to provide empirical support for specific relations in this model and simultaneously contribute knowledge about the role of these factors. Data was gathered through interviews and questionnaires and analyzed by means of qualitative content analysis and multilevel linear regression. Participants were 34 leaders and 213 subordinates from a large Norwegian government organization. The study found that some HR practices contributed to change commitment among employees. Furthermore, the immediate supervisor organizational citizenship behavior proved important solely for affective change commitment. In addition, groups differed significantly only in this form of change commitment. Qualitative research investigated categories such as immediate supervisor attributes and their facilitating function during change. Further research should explore additional HR practices and supervisor attributes and test the model for institutionalizing change interventions in other contexts.

## **Introduction**

Organizational change is a phenomenon that takes place in the course of every organization's existence, with the purpose of keeping up with the changing economy, markets and technology (Furnham, 1997; Mack, Nelson, & Quick, 1998). In order to be able to cope with a change implementation, organizations should be aware of employee attitudes towards the change. They should also be aware of the kind of tools that foster favorable attitudes and behaviors towards the change.

Human Resource (HR) practices may be a tool for facilitating change. They might evoke willingness or obligation in employees to support change attempts, which is also called change commitment. Change commitment refers to the relationship between employees and goals of the change attempts. It is thought to be important for the successful change implementation (Conway & Monks, 2008; Cunningham, 2006). To my knowledge few scholars have tried to relate HR practices to change and study them together (Conway & Monks, 2008), even though organizational change is a natural phenomenon for organizations to undergo. Furthermore, the immediate supervisor's role might also lead to change commitment among employees. Successful change attempts might depend on the supervisors' willingness and ability to implement HR practices (Holt, Self, Thal Jr, & Lo, 2003). Their behavior, support and attitudes towards the change might also be decisive when organizations change.

In this paper, HR practices and the role of the supervisor will be studied to find out to what extent they contribute to change commitment. For this purpose relationships as defined within the constraints of the model of institutionalizing change interventions by Armenakis, Harris, and Field (1999) will be investigated. This will be carried out with the help of qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys, while the data will be analyzed with qualitative content analysis and multilevel linear modeling.

## **Organizational change**

When change decisions are to be implemented, they should be compatible with the superordinate organizational strategy (Dannemiller & Jacobs, 1992). Not only are organizational changes challenges themselves, they are also challenges for the existing procedures and structure (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005). Researchers point to a constellation of reasons why a change can fail, such as the inability to follow through on the change plan throughout the whole change

process until complete institutionalization is reached (Armenakis et al., 1999). Second, the difficulty related to the change implementation process might also be a reason for the failure (Dannemiller & Jacobs, 1992). Third, assumptions that only the introduction phase is sufficient, could result in omitting the rest of the stages (Armenakis et al., 1999). Fourth, organizations tend to implement changes on a whim for the sake of a favorable image. Fifth, negative reactions and resistance to change might also be a hindrance (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005).

The model for institutionalizing change interventions depicts three temporal stages: readiness, adoption and institutionalization (see Figure 1). This study is based on this model, because it assumes that permanence of the change institutionalization is only accomplishable to a certain degree (Armenakis et al., 1999). Moreover, Holt et al. (2003) said that it is a comprehensive model encompassing factors, which have been emphasized by scholars separately. One of its main theoretical building blocks is the model of Lewin (as cited in Armenakis et al. (1999), describing organizational changes as three stages of, respectively, unfreezing, moving and refreezing. This model was criticized for leaving out the uncertainty taking place during the implementation phase (Mack et al., 1998). On the other hand, the model for institutionalizing change interventions considers the mental preparedness of the employees before change implementation. This preparedness increases the odds for change acceptance, or adoption, which refers to the second stage of change implementation. The third stage takes place once readiness is ensured. It reflects the degree of commitment to the new organizational structure. The last stage implies consolidating new routines, procedures and structure (Armenakis et al. 1999). Change institutionalization can be facilitated with the help of *the change message* and *reinforcement strategies*, which are two other aspects included in the model (Holt et al., 2003).

A crucial element for fostering change commitment is the change message. All strategies used for change implementation can be thought of as conveying a message to the members of the organization. The change message provides stability, certainty, as well as information regarding the extent to which the change is necessary and appropriate, and the degree to which the organization can cope with it. Furthermore, the change agent and their attributes can impact the change implementation. Anyone who conveys the change message has such a role (Armenakis et al., 1999).

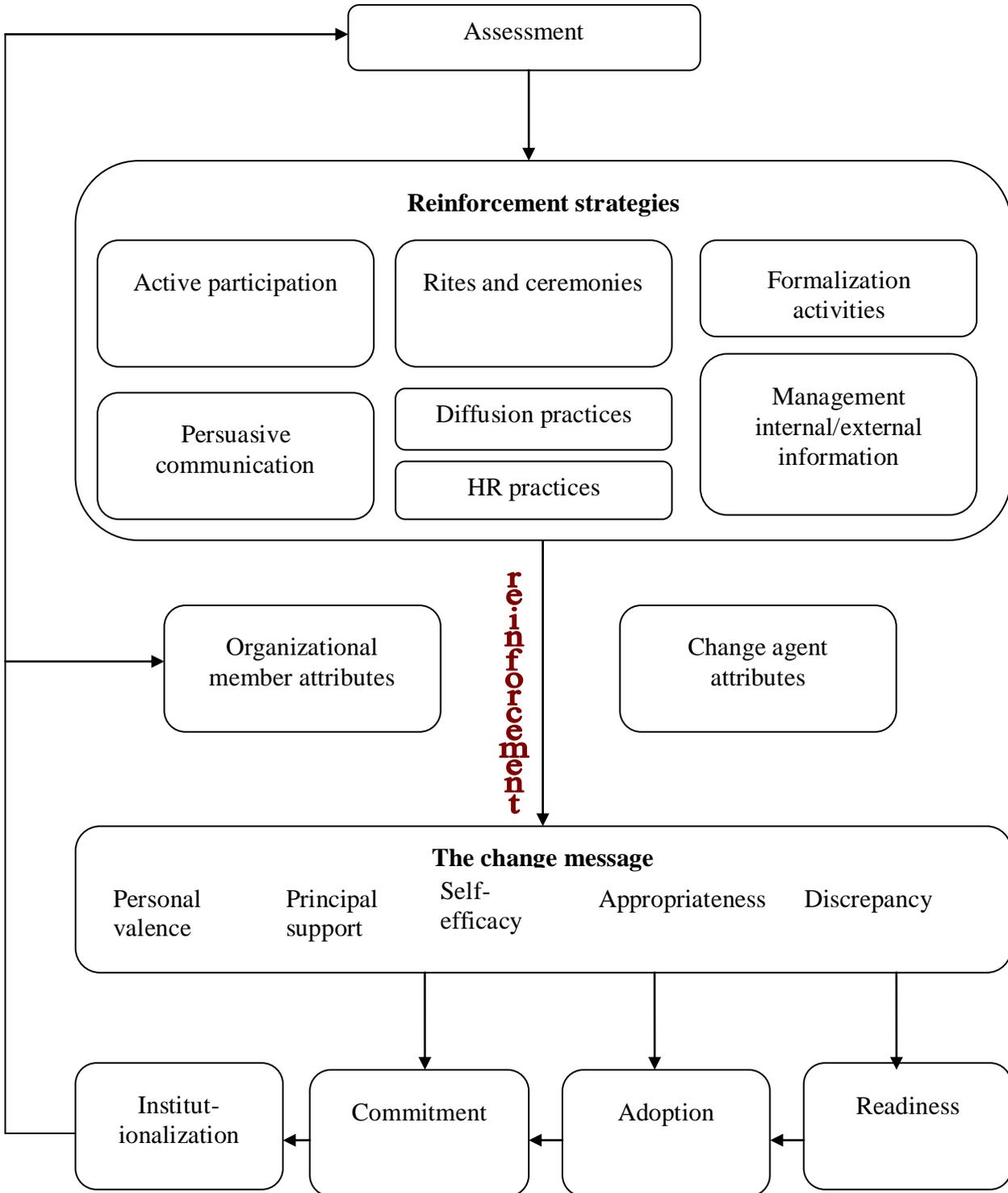


Figure 1. The model of institutionalizing change interventions (Armenakis, Harris & Field, 1999)

This paper will focus upon the stage of change institutionalization from the model of institutionalizing change intervention. This implies studying relations such as the role of the HR practices and change agent's attributes on change commitment (see Figure 2). HR practices are selected because they might be a tool for implementing change (Ulrich & Lake, 1990). On the other hand supervisors are entitled to implement HR practices (Purcell, 2003). It is therefore important to what extent this applies to change situations.

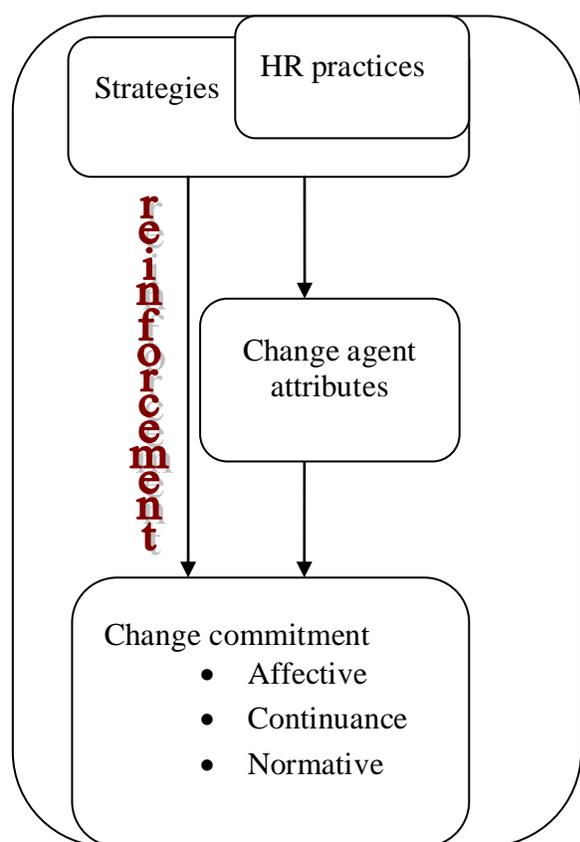


Figure 2: Relationships explored in the paper

a construct conceptually and empirically discernible from constructs like readiness or openness to change (Herold, Fedor, & Caldwell, 2007; Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002).

Change commitment refers to more than just positive attitudes and acceptance of the change (Herold et al., 2007). It is a more reliable measurement compared to organizational commitment when it comes to more precise predictions about the employees' support for a given organizational change (Parish, Cadwallader, & Busch, 2008). Change commitment gives more

### Change Commitment

The process of change requires understanding and embracement on the part of all organizational members (Dannemiller & Jacobs, 1992). However, organizational changes evoke a lot of uncertainty, fears (Amiot, Terry, Jimmieson, & Callan, 2006) and stress (Mack et al., 1998). Change commitment may reflect employees' reactions towards a change implementation (Conway & Monks, 2008). It is defined as "a mindset that binds individuals to a course of action deemed necessary for the successful implementation of a change initiative" (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002, p.475). Change commitment is the psychological bond between the individual and the organizational goals of

change (Cunningham, 2006), and a crucial factor when it comes to the successful change implementation (Armenakis et al., 1999). It is

information of whether new routines and procedures have been consolidated (Armenakis et al. 1999).

The construct of commitment encompasses affective, normative and continuance commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1996; Chen & Wang, 2007). These three forms of commitment are not equal, as they incorporate different processes (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). In the case of change commitment, each of them implies different motivation factors as to why an employee should commit to organizational change. When employees are high on affective commitment it indicates that they are willing to support change because they see its benefits. If employees have developed continuance change commitment, they are able to recognize the costs of failing to support the change. If employees score high on normative commitment to change, they have internalized certain norms, and as a result of that they are likely to commit to change (Conway & Monks, 2008). As a consequence, the combination of these three forms of commitment can predict change (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002).

Commitment could be directed both towards the supervisor and the organization (Armenakis et al., 1999; (Chen & Wang, 2007). The change, the supervisor and the organization can be objects of commitment, and together with the three types of commitment they depict a general model of workplace commitment (Chen & Wang, 2007).

### **HR practices as reinforcement strategies of change**

The model for institutionalizing change interventions points out *seven strategies* which help convey the change message (see Figure 1). These are active participation, persuasive communication, management of internal/external information, HR practices, formalization activities, rites and ceremonies, and diffusion practices. HR practices will be focused upon in this paper, because they are an important reinforcement tool. They also symbolize organizational support and bring about the desired behavior (Armenakis et al., 1999). Successful change implementation requires that the HR practices fit the change strategies (Ulrich & Lake, 1990). In addition, the practices should be compatible with one another and strong for producing the necessary impact (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007). The desired type of work-related behavior can be brought about with the help of HR practices (Boselie, Dietz, & Boon, 2005). They can influence employees' motivation and experiences (Boselie et al., 2005) and might be crucial for the fostering of the three forms of change commitment (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). Moreover, they appeared important for bringing about affective change commitment (Conway & Monks,

2008).

The paper will focus on the framework of categories of HR practices that has been outlined by Ulrich & Lake (1990) which distinguishes the practices selection, development, appraisal, reward, organizational design, and communication. This framework is based on earlier research and encompasses many HR practices, studied previously in isolation. Such a framework facilitates the ongoing assessment of the HR practices and their holistic examination. The categories selection and development refer to generating competences. In addition, appraisal and reward reinforce competences within an organization. And finally, organizational design and communication sustain competences (Ulrich & Lake, 1990). HR practices can make employees feel capable of coping with the change. Furthermore, through their usage organizational support can be demonstrated to the employees. Moreover, employees may come easily to terms with the change as they would be more able to justify its implementation, which can be done with the implementation of HR practices. Thus employees can also perceive that there are benefits as a result of the change attempt.

The category *selection* entails hiring, firing, promotion, demotion, (Armenakis et al., 1999) outplacing and staffing (Ulrich & Lake, 1990). Needs analysis is often deployed for deriving selection criteria, on the basis of which employees might be selected for promotion, demotion or firing (Armenakis et al., 1999). Further, *development* refers to training for the purpose of gaining new skills. Training may also be conducted on the basis of certain needs within the organization. Development could foster commitment in employees (Ulrich & Lake, 1990). Furthermore, if supervisors are trained they are more likely to implement HR practices (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007). One can entitle employees themselves to administer training interventions, simultaneously acknowledging them and making them set an example. This in its turn would have a positive effect on change implementation (Armenakis et al., 1999).

*Appraisal* ensures adoption of a desired behavior. One may be appraised by their own peers or supervisor (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004). Appraisal entails providing feedback. It should be timely, specific and on the performance of the employee in terms of whether standards were met. It guides individuals during organizational change and makes them adapt. It also has an impact on whether supervisors implement HR strategies (McGovern, Gratton, Hope-Hailey, Stiles, & Truss, 1997). The category related to appraisal is *reward*. It reinforces people's ability to see the intrinsic value of their job. It determines criteria for receiving rewards, whether financial or non-

financial benefits should be used (Ulrich & Lake, 1990). Reward can refer to the compensation received on a regular basis, incentives that are on a more variable basis, or benefits (Armenakis et al., 1999). It should be available in order to have the desired effect. The availability of a reward is likely to lead to increased employee motivation to meet the performance standards. Reward should also be based on performance and should be administered within a certain amount of time. It should also be visible to many employees. To what extent it can be lost, to what extent it sustains the organizational culture and for how long it is available in the organization can also be decisive if something is perceived as a reward (Ulrich & Lake, 1990). Reward was shown to be positively related to affective change commitment (Conway & Monks, 2008). Reward is also thought to induce continuance commitment (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002).

In addition, *organizational design* pertains to the shape of the organization's decision making authority and governance system. This relates to the roles that can be found in an organization, and to what extent one is assigned control and accountability. The extent of autonomy is also an aspect of organizational design (Ulrich & Lake, 1990). Employees who enjoy autonomy at the workplace are more likely to support change (Hornung & Rousseau, 2007). Furthermore, *communication* is related to the information channels within an organization, how the flow of information should be, who is going to report to whom, what activities it should encompass and how it should flow more effectively (Ulrich & Lake, 1990). Communication appeared decisive for the employees' affective commitment in a study by Conway and Monks (2008). Employees were also more likely to be committed when they were satisfied with networking, when they were sufficiently involved and perceived that the communication was good (Purcell, 2003). Employees should be informed and given the opportunity to express their concerns and comments. Communication and involvement imply respecting the employees.

We can assume that HR practices could be used for change facilitation since they can influence employees' competences, motivation and behavior. Thus, the first research questions and hypothesis can be formulated:

*Research question 1:* Is change facilitated through implementing HR practices?

*Research question 2:* Do experienced HR practices help the change agent cope with the change situation?

*Hypothesis 1.* Satisfaction with HR practices (career opportunities, autonomy, communication, training, staffing and reward) is related to employee's change commitment.

### **The immediate supervisor**

This paper addresses also the role of managers at the lowest rung within an organization, because researchers claim that they are responsible for the actual implementation of each human resource practice, (e.g. Purcell, 2003; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007). Supervisors communicate different messages through the implementation of HR practices (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004). They can take the role of change agents during change (Armenakis et al., 1999). In the course of its historic development their role retained core practices related to the control of employee performance (Hales, 2005). Supervisors implement, enact, lead and control at work (Purcell, 2003). However, they are not assigned as much authority as accountability, because they are entitled to decision making on routine matters (Hales (2005). This would mean that supervisors might not have a wide decisional field.

When it comes to successful change implementation, it depends on supervisors' willingness (Holt, Self, Thal Jr, & Lo, 2003) and personal motivation to administer HR practices (McGovern et al., 1997; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007). Furthermore, many organizations do not have clear guidelines as to how to delegate these responsibilities further down the line. It depends also on the opportunities an organization creates for supervisors, resulting from work overload and accounting systems (McGovern et al., 1997). As a consequence, HR practices might be applied to a different extent (McGovern et al., 1997; Purcell, 2003).

In change situations people in charge are required to fulfill multiple roles. Managers make attempts to implement the change and at the same time keep the organization going. They help their subordinates accept and implement the changes in the field they work (Balogun, 2003). Supervisors are also required to handle resistance exhibited by their subordinates (Ford, Ford, & D'Amelio, 2008). As change agents, supervisors can be blamed for unsuccessful change attempts. This results from the failure to apply the necessary knowledge in change management. In addition, by not showing appreciation for small victories, failure to communicate the change vision and not taking into account fairness issues, supervisors might contribute to the failure of change efforts (Herold et al. 2007). They also contribute to resistance to change through communication breakdown such as the failure to call for action and bad relationships with their

employees, such as a history of broken agreements and a lack of trust. They could contribute to resistance to change, because they tend to misinterpret their employees' concerns for their own job as resistance to change (Ford et al., 2008). It is likely that the change management itself addresses issues that are not directly related to facilitating the change process. Furthermore, the impact of change on the supervisors, their expectation of an outcome (Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996) and the extent to which the change will impact their division (Caldwell, Herold, & Fedor, 2004), are also among the issues that are to be considered. It has also been recommended that supervisors influence employees' affective and normative commitment, respectively by involving their subordinates or fostering their internal locus of control (Chen & Wang, 2007). It might also be important for them to take into account their subordinates individual differences such as self-monitoring (Armenakis et al., 1999) or self-efficacy (Herold et al., 2007). One might assume that supervisors need guidelines as to what they should emphasize during change implementation.

Except being change agents, managers are also said to be victims of change (Giangreco & Peccei, 2005). Supervisors may themselves exhibit resistance to change. It depends, however, on the extent to which they are involved in the change planning. In addition, their perception of cost/benefit related to the change attempt, might also be important (Ford et al., 2008). This allows for the assumption that the supervisors' attitudes and reactions towards the change might be important for the reactions of their subordinates. However, the model in focus does not consider change agents being a subject to change (Armenakis et al., 1999). Nevertheless, research points to the fact that supervisors also face the task of changing themselves (Balogun, 2003).

Next, supervisor attributes such as credibility and trust inspiration should be stressed (Armenakis et al., 1999). Moreover, quality of the relations turned out to influence commitment to organizational strategies, employee acceptance and involvement (Parish et al. 2008). Others speculate that emphasis on the relationship between supervisor/organization and employee fosters affective commitment (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). The model of institutionalizing change interventions describes these to be the most important antecedents triggered by the supervisor in an effective change implementation. However, others claim that behavior is also important for the level of employee satisfaction (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007). As it was pointed out above calling for action and providing employees with information might be of importance. Moreover, providing support for employees might also be decisive (Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, & Rhoades, 2002). Supervisors should be also visible, so that the HR

practices would have an impact (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007). Besides, leadership on the part of the supervisors (Purcell 2003) is decisive as to the way the employees perform (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007). The quality of leadership influenced employee commitment towards the organization and their job. If content with the leadership of the supervisor, employees are also likely to be satisfied with involvement, which in its turn would foster greater organizational commitment (Purcell, 2003; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007).

Since research suggests that supervisors' role is important for attitudinal and behavioral employee factors, it could be assumed that their role might also be important for employee change commitment. Thus, a second and a third research question can be formulated:

*Research question 3:* What is the role of the supervisor during change implementation?

*Research question 4:* Which supervisor attributes help the supervisor cope with the change situation?

It can be hypothesized that:

*Hypothesis 2:* Perceived leadership behavior and supervisor support have an impact on employees' change commitment.

Since literature stresses the importance of supervisor visibility, behavior and attitudes, the current research will further embark on a more specific exploration of these attributes. Thus affective organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior will be addressed. Affective organizational commitment refers to the employees' involvement and identification with an organization. It has been related to the desire on the part of an employee to remain in an organization and work hard for it. It can be experienced to a different extent (Allen & Meyer, 1990). In addition, it has been suggested that this attitude could also lead to organizational citizenship behavior (Arnold et al., 2005; Organ (1988) as cited in Allen & Meyer (1996). People committed to the organization are likely to exert more effort for the organization. (Meyer, Paunonen, Gellatly, Goffin, & Jackson, 1989) found in a study with first-line managers, that they were more likely to report exercising above average performance if they scored high on affective organizational commitment. Organizational citizenship behavior refers to the willingness to exert effort without pursuing recognition or reward. It is an exemplary behavior meant to contribute to the success of the organization one is a member of (Organ (1988) as cited in LePine, Erez, &

Johnson (2002). Organizational citizenship behavior is also reflected in showing conscientiousness at work. According to Arnold et al. (2005) this type of behavior includes helping one's colleagues and doing more than the job description requires. Furthermore, it also accounts for being involved and participating in matters concerning the organization. It also refers to behaving in a polite and thoughtful manner in order to avoid inter-personal conflicts. Moreover, organizational citizenship behavior includes one's motivation to tolerate unfavorable conditions. It can be assumed that supervisors' identification with the organization, and willingness to exert extra effort for the organization, would be of importance during change implementation. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that:

*Hypothesis 3:* Supervisors' demonstration of organizational citizenship behavior and affective organizational commitment will have an impact on employees' change commitment.

## **Method**

### **Organization and sample**

The study was based on a large governmental organization which implemented a large scale change in January 2008, of which all 6000 employees were affected. The change aimed to establish a new structure with large and competent units that perform in a more effective way and to improve the communication with the customers. In order to accomplish this without laying off people, employees were invited to apply for a similar or higher position than the one they filled before the change. The organization was structured in two administrative levels: the directorate and offices. The latter referred to large organizational units encompassing all functional areas, situated in five regions. The regions consisted of divisions. Another part of the change was the establishment of a suborganization, which was to provide phone consultation to its customers. The suborganization was not belonging to a specific region, and was accountable directly to the highest organ within the organization.

Employees were involved in the change planning through participation in workshops and seminars, which took place before the change implementation. Forums and informational meetings were held. Each region and division was to decide on adjustments and changes that were to be implemented. Information and updates about the change and the future way of work were regularly published on the organization's intranet. A phone number was established to

provide answers to the employees' inquiries regarding the forthcoming change. All supervisors were to carry out conversations with their employees, in order to find out on which positions they could be employed according to their own motivation and competences. Leaders started to work in the new organization in August/September 2007. Their employees followed some months later. The final organizational structure was implemented in the beginning of January 2008.

My contact person was an employee at the directorate. He chose the first 20 supervisors and their groups from two of the regions and made sure that they received memos about the study. I selected 14 additional supervisors with his assistance. In total employees belonging to three regions were surveyed. Overall 34 teams participated, of which 213 subordinates (56 percent of the whole sample) filled out a questionnaire. Subordinate respondents were 120 women and 93 men, at an average age of 46 years ( $M = 46.6$ ,  $SD=10.48$ ), ranging between 24 and 68. Employees' average tenure amounted to 18 years ( $M = 18.02$ ,  $SD = 11.90$ ). Furthermore, 34 first-line managers were surveyed, 20 men and 14 women. Their average age was also 46 years ( $M = 46.26$ ,  $SD = 7.97$ ), ranging between 31 and 62 years. Average supervisor tenure was 19 years ( $M=19.68$ ,  $SD=11.59$ ). The supervisor tenure ranged between 3 months and 42 years.

The teams for which first-line managers were in charge were located at the lowest rung of the organization. Team work was not traditional, but some groups had practiced it to some extent. For example, teamwork was practiced in the regional divisions under study, but not in the suborganization.

## **Procedure**

The study was performed in two phases. In the first phase, qualitative interviews of 20 first-line managers were conducted, while in the second electronic questionnaires were distributed.

*Phase 1.* The study involved individual interviews of 20 supervisors and 4 additional informants from two regions. The interviews with the supervisors varied between 30 minutes and 1 hour. They were conducted in the supervisors' offices or in meeting rooms. Ten supervisors were drawn from the regional offices, while the other ten were selected from the suborganization. The interviews were semi-structured, and consisted of two parts (see Interview Guide in Appendix A). First the focus was set on the leaders' experience of the change process, while the second part emphasized the role of the supervisor during the change process. The questions were related to the HR practices the supervisors experienced during the change, and HR practices they

implemented in the same period (2 years). In addition, they were asked about reactions among their subordinates at the time of the change implementation and how these developed in the course of the change (see Appendix B, Table 3). After the interviews, the immediate supervisors were asked to fill out a questionnaire. The interviews with the four additional informants were less structured and based on information gained in the supervisor interviews. All interviews were tape recorded.

*Phase 2:* All members of the 34 teams for which the immediate supervisors were responsible were sent electronic questionnaires by e-mail. Respondents to the employee questionnaire were coded so that they could be identified by department and team. Each received a personalized e-mail with a link.

## Measures

The scales were first translated into Norwegian, and then a native speaker of American English translated them back to English. Discrepancies were discussed and the most suitable options were selected. All of the items were measured on a Likert scale from 1 to 7, from strongly disagree to strongly agree or from strongly dissatisfied to strongly satisfied.

**Independent variables at the group level.** Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) was measured with the scale by Godard (2000), which included seven items, such as “You help others with their work related problems”. Cronbach’s alpha equaled .78, which was quite high regarding the small number of respondents ( $N=34$ ).

Organizational commitment was measured with the scale developed by Allen and Meyer (1990), which consisted of eight items of the type: “I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization”. Four of the items within the scale were negatively worded and were recoded for the analysis and reliability testing. Cronbach’s alpha was minimally acceptable ( $\alpha=.67$ ).

**Control variables on the group level.** Questions regarding leadership experience, tenure and age were also included.

**Independent variables at the employee level.** The satisfaction with Human Resource practices was measured with the six scales career opportunities, autonomy, communication, training, staffing and reward, developed by Conway and Monks (2008). The purpose of these scales was to investigate the opinion of the employees on the HR practices implemented during the change. These items were slightly adjusted for the use in a state agency.

The career opportunities scale consisted of seven items such as “The opportunities you have in your job to make full use of your skills and abilities” ( $\alpha = .90$ ). The autonomy scale consisted of four items such as “The opportunities that you have to choose your own job assignments” ( $\alpha = .93$ ). The communication scale included five items like “The information provided to you about how the organization is performing” ( $\alpha = .85$ ). The training scale also encompassed five items such as “The amount of training that you receive” ( $\alpha = .84$ ). Staffing was made up of four items; a sample item reads as follows: “The materials and equipment needed to perform your job” ( $\alpha = .65$ ). The reward scale in Conway and Monks (2008) consisted originally of two items. Three new items were added due to the low reliability shown in Conway and Monks (2008). A sample item reads as follows “The extent to which you receiving recognition and praise reflects how well you perform your job” ( $\alpha = .84$ ).

Furthermore, perceived supervisor support (PSS) (Cole, Bruch, & Vogel, 2006) and perceived leadership behavior (PLB) (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007) were measured. The perceived supervisor support scale consisted of 4 items, such as “Management provides intensive support in order to help me accomplish important priorities”. The perceived leadership behavior included five items, such as “How good do you feel managers here are at keeping everyone up to date with proposed changes?”. The coefficient alphas of these two scales were quite high .91 and .93 respectively ( $N=213$ ).

**Control variables on individual level.** Tenure and gender were included as control variables.

**Dependent measures on the employee level.** The dependent variable in this study, commitment to change, was explored with three scales developed by Herscovitch and Meyer (2002). The first one was labeled affective commitment to change and was measured by a scale including items such as “I believe in the value of this change”. The second referred to continuance change commitment and was gauged by items such as “I feel pressure to go along with this change”. The third scale pertained to normative commitment to change, which was measured with items like: “I would feel guilty about opposing this change”. The coefficient alphas for these scales were respectively .93, .89 and .76 ( $N=213$ ).

Table 1. Means, standard deviations and correlations of first level independent and dependent variables (N=213)

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
E. tenure	18.02	11.90													
E. gender	1.56	.50	.02												
Career Opportunities	4.40	1.17	-.09	-.02	(.90)										
Autonomy	4.87	1.37	-.16*	-.1	.61***	(.93)									
Comm.	4.48	.99	-.05	-.06	.57***	.38***	(.85)								
Training	4.38	1.17	.05	.01	.53***	.28***	.51***	(.84)							
Staffing	4.79	1.03	.01	-.01	.53***	.60***	.54***	.48***	(.65)						
Reward	4.23	1.09	.02	-.01	.71***	.45***	.54***	.50***	.46***	(.84)					
PSS	4.34	1.34	.02	-.01	.59***	.36***	.58***	.55***	.48***	.68***	(.91)				
PLB	5.06	1.24	-.06	-.09	.54***	.37***	.55***	.44***	.44***	.59***	.62***	(.93)			
AC2C	4.40	1.24	-.10	.03	.18**	.27***	.29***	.16*	.18**	.16*	.15*	.19**	(.93)		
CC2C	4.75	1.25	.15*	.17*	-.31***	-.29***	-.25***	-.19**	-.19**	-.20**	-.22**	-.14*	-.29***	(.89)	
NC2C	4.66	.88	-.05	.04	.05	.14*	.08	.06	.05	.06	.10	.06	.29***	.09	(.76)

Note: \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001. Coefficient alphas are on the diagonal. E. tenure = Employee tenure, E. gender = Employee gender, Comm = communication, PSS = perceived supervisor support, PLB = perceived leadership behavior, AC2C = affective commitment to change, CC2C = continuance commitment to change, NC2C = normative commitment to change

Table 2. Means, standard deviations and correlations of second level independent variables (N=34)

Variables level 2	M	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5
Leadership experience	7.41	7.44					
Leadership tenure	19.68	11.59	.71***				
Leadership gender	1.41	.50	-.21	-.02			
OCB	6.22	.45	-.15	.02	.22	(.78)	
AOC	4.81	.70	.33†	.28	-.16	.30†	(.67)

Note: †p<.10, \*\*\*p<.001. Coefficient alphas of the two scales are in brackets. AOC = Affective organizational commitment, OCB = organizational citizenship behavior.

## Data analysis

The qualitative interviews with the immediate supervisors were analyzed with the help of summarizing content analysis. This type of analysis was chosen because it reduced a large amount of text to a few categories. Flick (2009) claimed that this method provides clarity and less ambiguity. With the aim to gain an insight into supervisors' subjective experience, a pattern of categories were produced and used across all cases. The methodology was not bound to any particular theory, which made it easier to categorize the text according to the model of institutionalizing change interventions. The interviews were transcribed in Norwegian, and then summarized and coded in English. Analytical units were defined as meaningful statements expressing opinions and experiences related to the change situation. Categories were created gradually by juxtaposing the summarized text units which were pertaining to the same object of speech (Mayring, 2000). The units of analysis were rephrased on a higher abstract level. Then they were united under a common code. Those text units that provided similar meaning were deleted. After the categories were created, they were checked against the material (Flick, 2009).

To analyze the survey data, the study applied multilevel regression analysis. The data was hierarchically structured, that is, employees were nested in groups. In this case we could assume that the individual observations were somewhat correlated, as they were affected by the group context (Hox, 2002). Employees within a group can exhibit correlated responses, which cannot be considered in other statistical tests. By using multilevel regression analysis, there is no danger of obtaining small standard errors and false significant effects, as it is the case with regression analysis. Multilevel analysis provides explanations at the proper level without aggregating or disaggregating the results to lower or higher levels (Hox, 2002).

The responses from the leaders on the leadership questionnaire were matched against the responses on the team members' questionnaires. The file contained data on the individual level and on the group level. Missing data was not an issue, due to the electronic format of the questionnaire.

Three multilevel regressions one for each dependent variable were conducted. The models showed the percentage of unexplained variance ( $\sigma^2$ ) at the employee and supervisor level. The goal of the analysis was to obtain the percentage of explained variance by the independent variables. First the null model was tested with no predictors from any level. Second, controls at the employee level such as tenure and gender were added. In the third model, the employee level

predictors, pertaining to the six HR practices, perceived supervisor support and leadership behavior were analyzed. The fourth model included controls at the second level pertaining to supervisor experience, gender and tenure. Finally, in the fifth model the second level predictors organizational citizenship behavior and affective change commitment were added. Thus the final model encompassed all the controls and predictors from all levels.

## **Results**

### **Qualitative results**

The goal of the qualitative interviews was to gain insight into supervisors' experiences and their opinions on the change. Categories were derived such as attributes of the supervisors, the HR practices they experienced, and those that they administered during the change (see Appendix B and C for full description of the categories).

The first topics explored in the qualitative analysis pertained to *the way in which change was facilitated and the role of the supervisor*. During the initial stages of the change supervisors stated that they were present, supported their own team, made sure it performed the way it was supposed to, they clarified strategy and roles with their subordinates, with the emphasis on stabilizing and improving the conditions in which their subordinates worked. They facilitated the change implementation through communication, motivation, team building, decision making, autonomy, feedback, reward and recognition, and training.

Supervisors were aware of the employees' reactions. They actively communicated the positive aspects of their employees' job to convince them to work in another way. They supported their employees and tried to lower the negative attitudes through communication. Further, supervisors saw team building as a necessity for a good functioning of the team. They fostered this through social activities. In addition, more experienced supervisors protected their employees by making decisions themselves, without sending many trivial matters upwards in the system. Qualitative data also showed that in some cases employees were free to choose the type of topic they wanted to work with. Furthermore, feedback procedures such as the yearly employee interview were also utilized. Otherwise employees in the regions received feedback based on productivity. One exception was the suborganization, where they had a couple of formalized feedback tools (see Appendix B and C). Further, there were no routines for rewards. However, supervisors tried to reward their subordinates. Supervisors facilitated for their

employees' life situation by letting them attend burials, for example. When it came to developmental opportunities, the supervisors could approve of their employees attending courses according to organizational strategy and individual motivation. In the course of the change implementation, employee reactions became more positive. Overall employees became more productive, structured, goal oriented, calm and constructive. It can be concluded with regard to the first and the third research questions that change was facilitated through implementing HR practices and it was the supervisor who facilitated change through applying these (see Appendix B, Table 2).

Second, qualitative data evidenced that *HR practices such as selection, communication, organizational design, training, reward and feedback helped supervisors cope with the change situation* (see Appendix B, Table 1). Former supervisors could remain in their positions, while former consultants were free to apply for higher level positions. Two-day seminars were held, while in one of the regions leadership groups were organized. Some of the supervisors stated that they had contacted people in the central HR department. However, supervisors seemed generally dissatisfied with development opportunities during the adoption phase. Internally arranged basic training on all systems tailored especially for new supervisors became available more than a year after the change was implemented.

With the change, supervisors attained additional administrative tasks, which were experienced as confusing and tiresome. Supervisors did not get any directions as to how to exercise their role. They had to figure out things such as administrative systems by themselves. They lacked confidence as a result of inadequacies related to the administrative part and from their own inexperience. Thus their attempts to help their subordinates were sometimes unsuccessful. They relied on their own leader, who was in some cases only available once a week, or on their own colleagues. Communication with their own leader was satisfactory to some, but not to others. However, the expectations for more communication or support were low as the change affected everyone in the organization. Supervisors took the initiative of shaping the workplace according to their own understanding, when they lacked the support. Their confidence in their own role depended somewhat on the HR practices.

There were no formal rewards given, as there were no routines for assigning rewards. A few supervisors stated that they enjoyed the advantage of flexible work time or considered salary and challenging tasks as rewards. Supervisors received praise and feedback from their own

supervisors, or from their own subordinates. Therefore, when it comes to the second research question, it can be concluded that the experienced HR practices by the supervisors facilitated their HR practice implementation to some extent.

Finally, *change agents' attributes might have been important for their facilitating role* (see Appendix B, Table 1). Most supervisors saw the change as an opportunity and were satisfied with their own position. Half of the informants were inexperienced when it came to the supervisor role, as they got the position of supervisor at the moment of the change implementation, having previously been consultants or in charge of the professional field. Previous experience was considered as a plus during the change. Even though supervisors differed in this respect, they all needed support due to the lack of routines. They were positive towards the change despite the difficulty and the lack of predictability. This attitude facilitated conveying the change message and changing the initially negative attitudes of their subordinates. They were creative when it came to motivating and rewarding, and were attentive to their employees' needs.

### **Quantitative results**

The quantitative analysis aimed at investigating the impact of the predictor variables at the employee level (HR practices, perceived supervisor support and perceived leadership behavior) and predictors at the supervisor level (organizational citizenship behavior and affective organizational commitment) on affective, continuous and normative change commitment.

**Affective commitment to change as a dependent variable.** The intercept only model demonstrated significant differences between employees and between groups (see Table 3). Eighty three percent of the variance could be found at the subordinate level, while 17 % was due to the grouping structure within the organization.

The Model with predictors on subordinate level explained 9 % of the variance at the lowest level. In addition, 37 % of the between-group variance was explained. Further, there were two HR practices that significantly related to affective commitment: autonomy and communication (see Table 3). Subordinates were more likely to exhibit affective commitment if they enjoyed sufficient autonomy at the work place. Affective commitment resulted also from satisfaction with communication within the organization. Hypothesis 1 was partially supported for affective commitment to change, since only two of the studied six HR practices demonstrated

significant relationship with the dependent variable. Hypothesis 2 was not supported, as neither PSS nor PLB showed a significant relationship with affective change commitment.

The model with predictors on group level explained 66 % of the variance at the group level. Furthermore, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) related significantly to employees' affective change commitment. It can be inferred that this leadership factor could lead to affective commitment among employees. Hypothesis 3 was also partially supported for affective commitment to change. Moreover, slope examination indicated that five groups were dissatisfied with HR practices and supervisor attributes had limited impact. Three of the five supervisors started gaining experience as supervisors at the moment of change implementation. Moreover, three groups showed a tendency for being more than somewhat satisfied with HR practices and also perceiving greater supervisor support and leadership behavior. These supervisors had reported experience of more than 2 years. The overall variance explained by the model was 18 %. The model demonstrated a good fit to the data, as the general fit index Akaike's Information Criterion (AIC), based on the condition that models being compared fit the same data set, decreased (Hox, 2002) (see Table 3).

**Continuance commitment to change as a dependent variable.** The differences on group level were small and non-significant (see Table 4). The variance on group level and the predictors on group level were, therefore, not considered in further models. The data were however, analyzed with multilevel analysis for the purpose of consistency in the applied methods. The model corresponds to multiple regression, as variables were only considered at the employee level. The intercept only model explained 2.3 % of the variance at the group level. The residual variance at employee level was significant.

The model with predictors on the first level accounted for 16 % within-group variance in continuance commitment. Negative significant relationships were obtained between continuance change commitment and career opportunities and autonomy. Moreover, the likelihood of exhibiting continuance change commitment varied according to employee gender. Since gender was coded 1 (=men) and 2 (=women), it followed men were less likely to show continuance change commitment. The results evidenced for the partial support of Hypothesis 1 for continuance commitment to change. Hypothesis 2 was not supported.

Table 3. Results of multilevel analysis predicting affective commitment to change

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Fixed effects	Est. (SE)	Est. (SE)	Est. (SE)	Est. (SE)	Est. (SE)
Intercept	4.39 (.12)***	4.39 (.12) ***	4.40 (.10)***	4.40 (.09)***	4.39 (.09)***
<i>Controls level 1</i>					
Employee tenure		-.01 (.01)	-.01 (.01)	-.01 (.01)	-.01 (.01)
Employee gender		.09 (.16)	.16 (.16)	.19 (.16)	.19 (.16)
<i>Predictors level 1</i>					
Career opportunities			-.12 (.11)	-.12 (.11)	-.15 (.11)
Autonomy			.24 (.09)**	.24 (.09)**	.29 (.09)***
Communication			.33 (.11)**	.34 (.11)**	.37 (.11)***
Training			.04 (.09)	.03 (.09)	.01 (.09)
Staffing			-.12 (.11)	-.08 (.11)	-.08 (.11)
Reward			-.04 (.12)	-.05 (.12)	-.07 (.12)
PSS			-.03 (.09)	-.03 (.09)	-.04 (.09)
PLB			.07 (.09)	.07 (.09)	.09 (.09)
<i>Controls level 2</i>					
Leadership XP				-.01 (.02)	.00 (.02)
Leadership tenure				-.01 (.01)	-.01 (.01)
Gender				-.14 (.22)	-.25 (.21)
<i>Predictors level 2</i>					
OCB					.54 (.25)*
AOC					-.12 (.16)
Random effects					
$\sigma^2$ level 1	1.28 (.14)***	1.26 (.13)***	1.17 (.12)***	1.17 (.12)***	1.18 (.13)***
$\sigma^2$ level 2	.26 (.12)*	.27 (.12)*	.17 (.09)†	.14 (.09)	.09 (.08)
Total unexplained $\sigma^2$	1.55	1.53	1.34	1.31	1.26
AIC	691	692	685	688	688

Note. †p<.10, \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001. PSS = perceived supervisor support, PLB = perceived leadership behavior, XP = experience, OCB = organizational citizenship behavior, AOC = affective organizational commitment. AIC= Akaike's Information Criterion, a general fit-index.

**Normative commitment to change as dependent variable.** As in the case of continuance change commitment there were no differences between groups in normative change

commitment. Again, the analysis considered only the variables at the employee level (see Table 5). The model with no predictors showed that the differences between individuals within groups in normative commitment were significant, but not very large. They were tantamount to  $\sigma^2 = .78$ . The model with first level predictors explained 4 % of the employee level variance in normative commitment. In this case, only the regression coefficient of autonomy demonstrated positive significant relationship with normative commitment to change. This suggested that if employees

*Table 4. Results of multilevel analysis predicting continuance change commitment.*

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Fixed effects	Est. (SE)	Est. (SE)	Est. (SE)
Intercept	4.76 (.09)***	4.75 (.09)***	4.75 (.09)***
<i>Controls level 1</i>			
Employee tenure		.02 (.01)*	.01 (.01)
Employee gender		.40 (.17)*	.36 (.16)*
<i>Predictors level 1</i>			
Career opportunities			-.21 (.12)†
Autonomy			-.15 (.08)†
Communication			-.17 (.11)
Training			.05 (.09)
Staffing			.09 (.11)
Reward			.07 (.12)
PSS			-.10 (.09)
PLB			.08 (.09)
<i>Random effects</i>			
$\sigma^2$ level 1	1.53 (.16)***	1.48 (.15)***	1.27 (.13)***
Total unexplained	1.56	1.58	1.30
AIC	705	700	687

Note: †p<.10, \*p<.05, \*\*\*p<.001. PSS = perceived supervisor support, PLB = perceived leadership behavior, AIC = Akaike's Information Criterion, a general fit-index.

enjoyed autonomy at the work place, they were likely to feel obliged to support the change. This meant that hypothesis 1 was partially supported. However, hypothesis 2 was not supported. The models did not fit the data well, as the general fit-index (AIC) increased (see Table 5).

The residuals were examined and appeared to be normally and linearly distributed. There were no extreme outliers either.

*Table 5. Results of multilevel analysis predicting normative commitment*

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Fixed effects	Est. (SE)	Est. (SE)	Est. (SE)
<i>Intercept</i>	4.66 (.06)***	4.66 (.06)***	4.66 (.06)***
<i>Control variables level 1</i>			
Employee tenure		-.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)
Employee gender		.07 (.12)	.10 (.12)
<i>Predictor variables level 1</i>			
Career opportunities			-.11 (.09)
Autonomy			.15 (.06)*
Communication			.06 (.09)
Training			.04 (.07)
Staffing			-.10 (.08)
Reward			-.01 (.09)
PSS			.07 (.07)
PLB			-.01 (.07)
Random effects			
$\sigma^2$ level 1	.78 (.08)***	.78 (.08)***	.75 (.07)***
AIC	557	560	568

Note: \* $p < .05$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ . PSS = perceived supervisor support, PLB = perceived leadership behavior. AIC = Akaike's Information Criterion.

## Discussion

This study provided some empirical support for the relationships between HR practices, the role of the supervisor and change commitment based on the model for institutionalizing

change interventions (Armenakis et al., 1999). The results partially supported hypothesis 1 and failed to support hypothesis 2. In other words, some of the HR practices demonstrated significant relationships with the three forms of change commitment. However, neither PSS nor PLB had an influence on the three forms of commitment. Nevertheless, HR practices, PSS and PLB accounted for a large percentage of the within-group variance. These variables accounted, in addition, for only one third of the variance at group level, only in the case of affective commitment. Furthermore, hypothesis 3 was also partially supported, thus finding influence by supervisor OCB only on affective change commitment. OCB and AOC explained two thirds of the between-group variance only in the case of affective change commitment. Significant differences between the groups were found only in the latter case. In addition, qualitative results showed that supervisors had a facilitating function during change implementation. They used and experienced HR practices. Supervisor attributes were also of importance during the change implementation.

The current research focused on the stage of change institutionalization in the model of institutionalizing change interventions. This stage reflects the degree of change commitment among the employees. Quantitative results evidenced for the presence of change commitment, which is a crucial element for change implementation according to Dannemiller and Jacobs (1992). The largest proportion of the variance in the three forms of commitment was due to individual differences. However, only affective change commitment was in part defined by group belongingness. These findings confirmed the existence of differences between the three forms of change commitment (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). The results also suggested that change institutionalization can be achieved through the combination of these three forms (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002).

The qualitative data indicated that there were HR practices used by supervisors both for implementing change and for carrying out the daily work, which pertained to the first and the third research questions in this study. However, the quantitative data provided partial support for the hypothesized influence of satisfaction with HR practices on change commitment. Thus, it can be concluded that some HR practices were important for the change commitment. These findings were in line with the important role of the supervisors in implementing HR practices (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007), and were partially consistent with earlier claims regarding the function of HR practices (Armenakis et al., 1999; Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). Nevertheless, it can be inferred

that HR practices were used as a tool for fostering affective change commitment as it has been indicated earlier (Conway & Monks, 2008). In addition, some HR practices had an impact on continuance change commitment, which was especially strong for women. Also in the case of normative change commitment they seemed to have an influence, but to a limited extent. Thus it can be inferred that there was a reduced need to reciprocate on the part of the employees (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002).

Qualitative data showed that there were no routines for some of the strategies, nor was there extensive training, therefore supervisors were implementing the HR practices according to their own consideration. So, regardless of their importance not all HR practices led to change commitment, probably because supervisors both from the suborganization and the regional divisions might have implemented HR practices to a different extent and with a different outcome (McGovern et al., 1997; Purcell, 2003). This might have resulted in the quantitative finding that individuals differed in the three components of commitment and groups differed in affective change commitment as a result of the satisfaction with HR practices.

Furthermore, the more employees were satisfied with communication, the more likely it was that they and their group showed greater willingness to support change efforts. Qualitative data also suggested that communication was implemented in the starting phase. These results were consistent with earlier findings (Conway & Monks, 2008). It could be argued that supervisors demonstrated respect through communication (Purcell, 1999). It did not, however, turn out significant in the analyses of either of the other two forms of commitment.

Autonomy also proved to be important for generating change commitment. If employees enjoyed autonomy in the work place, they were less likely to perceive the costs of not supporting the change. However, autonomy would lead both to the willingness and the obligation to support change. In the case of the regional divisions, supervisors stated that they let their employees choose the topic and the manner in which they wanted to work. The results were consistent with earlier research (Hornung & Rousseau, 2007; Parish et al., 2008). Autonomy was considered an advantage by some of the employees, as the qualitative results suggested. However not every employee enjoyed being able to choose the work tasks. Employees could also choose the type of training themselves. However, training did not prove to be important for change commitment, contrary to earlier research (Conway & Monks, 2008), even though the authors of the model in focus, claimed this to be a crucial strategy (Armenakis et al., 1999).

In addition, this study found that dissatisfaction with career opportunities was likely to lead to continuance change commitment. Furthermore, the groups differed in affective commitment as a result of these opportunities, as the quantitative data suggested. The qualitative data did not provide information on the existence of career opportunities. Hence, it can be argued that the lack of benefits related to promotion led to continuance change commitment, as Herscovitch and Meyer (2002) assumed. The quantitative data evidenced for women to be more likely to exhibit continuance commitment if they were dissatisfied with career opportunities. Career opportunities were not significantly correlated with affective commitment, as Conway & Monks (2008) found evidence for. However, the supervisors described some of their employees as being dissatisfied with their low status positions. However, dissatisfaction with one's own position could be reflected to some extent also by staffing, which failed to relate to change commitment, counter to earlier findings (Conway & Monks, 2008). In the suborganization, supervisors stated that development opportunities were limited; employees could only change their field of work. The employees in the regional divisions seemed to be more satisfied with the developmental opportunities, as they could develop in their position.

Qualitative data found that routines for rewarding employees in the organization were not introduced. Supervisors thought that rewarding was necessary and applied this according to employees' performance and private life. Reward was another of the HR practices in which individuals and groups differed, as quantitative data pointed to. The idea of rewards varied a lot, from the interest on the part of the supervisor, assigning challenging tasks, or getting a day off, to doing social activities. Reward failed to significantly relate to change commitment. However, earlier research has found reward to be important for affective commitment to change (Conway & Monks, 2008). Others assumed that it was decisive for continuance change commitment (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). An HR practice explored in the qualitative analysis, which was related to reward was feedback. Supervisors were interviewed on how they provided feedback to their subordinates. The qualitative data showed that feedback was based on performance and had the purpose of showing the employees the right way to work. Routines and tools for feedback were available (See Appendix B, Table 2 and Appendix C).

The quantitative data further suggested that employees' perceptions of supervisor attributes such as support and behavior did not have an impact on change commitment. Individuals and groups differed due to these perceived supervisor attributes. Following is the

assumption that behavior and support of the supervisors was decisive for the between-group differences in affective change commitment. Furthermore, this assumption is supported by the significant effect of supervisor measured OCB on affective change commitment in employees. Supervisors exhibited behaviors which were consistent with the definition of OCB. They indicated that it was necessary to spend time with their employees and prepare them for the future. Research pointed out that such actions would lead to change commitment (Herold et al. 2007). Supervisors were available, which was in line with earlier findings (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007). They clarified roles and strategy, which might be compatible with the communication of a vision (Herold et al. 2007). They motivated, tried to improve working conditions and ensured team building. One could assume that they tried to change their employees, which was described as one of their roles during change (Balogun, 2003). These behaviors might be related to involvement, conscientiousness and helpfulness on the part of the supervisors, thought to be related to OCB (Arnold et al., 2005). Supervisors also made decisions when there were no routines available for that, in order to ensure their employees' well-being and flow of work. They also had the task of keeping the organization going, in line with what was found earlier (Balogun, 2003). Exerting extra effort, was also seen as an OCB (Arnold et al., 2005), which might also account for the significant relationship of OCB to affective change commitment. Supervisors ensured the successful transition of the organization, which was beyond their job description requirements. The findings from the current research were consistent with earlier research (Purcell, 2003; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007), that the behavior of the supervisor was decisive for employees' organizational commitment. The latter in its turn is considered to be a part of a framework including commitment towards supervisor and change. This allows for making the inference that supervisors' behavior had influence on change commitment.

Moreover, quantitative data suggested also that OCB and AOC contributed to the differences between groups in affective change commitment. Groups differed neither in continuance change commitment nor in normative change commitment. So it can be concluded that only differences on group level in affective commitment resulted from supervisor attributes such as OCB and AOC. Thus if a supervisor demonstrated OCB, then the employees in their group would be more likely to show willingness to support the change. Moreover, even though AOC did not relate significantly to affective change commitment, it accounted for the differences among groups. Since earlier research has suggested that AOC leads to demonstration of OCB

(Arnold et al., 2005), it can be assumed that AOC might have had an influence on the supervisors' behavior. The supervisors might have set an example of being change facilitators. It can also be concluded that the more supervisors were emotionally committed to the organization, the more they demonstrated OCB. This, in its turn, evoked change commitment among their employees and facilitated change implementation.

Next, it can be argued that a wide range of supervisor attributes such as background, confidence, positive attitude towards their own position and the change, were important for supervisors' facilitating role, as the third research question implied. This can be considered as an extension of the claims made by Armenakis et al. (1999) that only credibility, trust inspiration and the relationship between employee and supervisor had an impact on change commitment. Supervisors gained confidence with experience, which in its turn led to supervisors making more decisions, helping their employees and implement HR practices. The qualitative data supported the quantitative by providing an account of the different ways in which supervisors felt and implemented the HR practices. It can be assumed that the supervisors' motivation can be important, as it was proven earlier to be related to willingness to implement HR practices (McGovern et al., 1997; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007). Supervisors were motivated to perform additional tasks for the successful change implementation, helped their employees and were mindful of their reactions. It can also be assumed, that these data can provide support both for the AOC and OCB, which respectively refer to willingness and motivation to stay in an organization and work hard for its success (LePine et al., 2002). Seeing their supervisor being new on the job, going through difficult situations, facilitating and persisting might have had some influence employees to embrace the change. However, the current study also showed that the supervisor behavior that employees perceived did not correspond to the supervisor perception of their own behavior. This could be attributed to the fact that employees could not see the supervisors' effort during the change (see Appendix C).

Furthermore, supervisors were both change agents and change victims, as has been pointed out by earlier research (Giangreco & Peccei, 2005). However, the model of institutionalizing change interventions does not account for the latter. Supervisors had to change by facing a new role or integrating new tasks in their role. They stated that they experienced poor communication as a result of the chaotic situation in the adoption stage. They did not receive sufficient support or training in the starting phase, nor did they receive rewards for their work.

Training and reward are according to Purcell and Hutchinson (2007) important for the HR implementation. Therefore, it can be assumed that the experienced HR practices on the part of the supervisor might have been important in the acquiring of their attributes such as organizational commitment, confidence and behavior for example.

### **Limitations and suggestions for future research**

The results provided empirical support for some of the relationships depicted in the model of institutionalizing change interventions (see Figure 2). The model includes many variables difficult to consider in one study. The quantitative part allowed for studying only one reinforcement strategy (HR practices) and a few supervisor attributes (supervisor support, behavior and organizational commitment). Future research should explore a greater number of the phases and relations of the model. In addition, the role of the other reinforcement strategies and the change message should be taken into account.

The qualitative part provided deep insights in the practice of work and change. However, it did not allow for making reliable inferences regarding the influence of the HR practices experienced by the supervisors on their role in the change. Neither was it possible to draw firm conclusions about the impact of their attributes on this role. The extent to which the HR practices helped the supervisor cope with the change situation and which of their attributes could be important in change implementation should be further explored in a quantitative manner. Future research needs also to extend the range of factors related to the supervisor's role in order to find out which attributes might be of greatest importance in a change situation.

Another limitation refers to the fact that quantitative and qualitative data did not map completely onto one another. The supervisors were interviewed regarding selection, development, appraisal, reward, organizational design and communication. Their subordinates, however, were surveyed on aspects of HR categories, such as career opportunities, autonomy, communication, training, staffing and reward. This could have contributed to a slightly discrepant picture of the situation under study. Future research should better develop or adjust quantitative scales to the constructs and relationships in the model of institutionalizing change interventions. The usage of compatible scales and questions should be ensured, when both supervisors and their subordinates are studied.

In addition, the relations in the study were explored in a single governmental organization which limits the generalizability of the results to other workplaces. Governmental organizations

are characterized by a specific structure and decision making authority system, which are different from those of non-governmental and private organizations. The organization in the study deals with specific tasks, which also contributes to its distinctiveness. Moreover, the sample consisted of employees who resided in only one regional division and the sub organization, which had different structures and routines. The model of institutionalizing change interventions should be tested in different organizations with different structures and decision making authorities to test its applicability to other types of organizations and other types of samples.

Finally, the cross-sectional nature of the study limited the exploration to a current state, and thus could not provide a thorough exploration of the development of attitudes and reactions over time. Data collection took place almost two years after the change. Many attitudes and reactions had already settled. This might have also contributed to a slightly inaccurate picture of the situation. Future research should also emphasize the longitudinal investigation of the factors in the model. This would lead to richer information regarding the reactions occurring before, during and after a change implementation.

### **Practical Implications**

The paper puts forward a couple of practical implications for organizations which face change implementation. Results suggested that the application of HR practices was important during change, thus employees would be convinced that a given organizational change is worth supporting. However, not all HR practices demonstrated a direct effect on change commitment. Therefore, recommendations based on this study will focus on communication, autonomy and career opportunities. Organizations should ensure communication between a supervisor and employee during change. There should be a dialog between the employee and the organization. The employee should feel heard. Autonomy is also desirable, wherever possible. If organizations grant their employees autonomy, then they are likely to be willing or obliged to support the change. However, if employees' autonomy is confined, then they are likely to acknowledge the costs of not supporting the change effort. Further, if an organization limits the career opportunities, then the employees are likely to support the change, but only due to perceiving the costs that would arise if they declined to do so.

Moreover, the role of the supervisors should not be underestimated. If employees perceive their organizational citizenship behavior they are likely to commit to a change. Supervisors

channel the HR practices down to their subordinates and should be given the opportunity and support to apply them. Supervisors should also be encouraged to support their subordinates, show concern and relate to them. This could be a step towards fostering affective change commitment as it was demonstrated by the study. Furthermore, although subjecting supervisors to HR practices during change, difficult as it might be, it might provide them with support and directions as to how to act, and further increase their commitment towards the organization and maybe to the change intervention itself. Finally, fostering self-reflection about one's own behavior might turn out crucial for change attempts.

### **Conclusion**

Both qualitative and quantitative data provided support for a selection of relationships based on the model of institutionalizing change interventions (Armenakis et al., 1999). Only affective change commitment demonstrated significant relationships with the predictors both at the employee level (HR practices, perceived supervisor support and perceived leadership behavior) and at the group level (supervisor's affective organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior).

Qualitative results showed that HR practices were used in order to implement change. Quantitative results, evidenced further that change commitment was fostered with the help of HR practices. In addition, perceived supervisor support and behavior also turned out to be important. Furthermore, other supervisor attributes such as affective organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior were decisive when it came to affective change commitment. It was important to point out the role of the supervisor during change implementation, because HR practices and other strategies reached the employees through their supervisors in most cases.

The study was conducted in a single Norwegian governmental organization and investigated specific relations based on the model of institutionalizing change interventions. Future research should determine to what extent this model could be applicable to other contexts. It could prove useful for future organizational change implementation, because it emphasizes factors influencing change commitment, which in turn is considered an important ingredient during change implementation.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Interview guide

Includes a list of the questions used in the supervisor interview.

#### The supervisor during the change.

1. What were your attitudes and reactions when you were assigned this position? To what extent are you satisfied with your current position?
2. HR practices
  - How did you experience your selection?
  - How did you have to change your role?
    - To what extent were you confident in your role? To what extent was there clarity about your tasks?
    - To what extent did you perceive senior management support?
  - How was the communication about your tasks and obligations?
  - What kind of training did you receive?
    - What kind of other options did you have for development?
  - Did you receive any appraisal/feedback?
  - Did you receive any reward since you were assigned this position?
  - To what extent do you perceive that you have an influence upwards in the organization?

#### Supervisor as a facilitator during change.

How did you implement the change?

1. What were the attitudes and reactions among the team members?
2. HR practices
  - Were your employees content with the positions they occupied?
  - How did you make sure that they were performing successfully?
    - What are your perceptions regarding team work in your team?
    - What are your perceptions of satisfaction among employees and team development?
    - What challenges did you experience?
  - How did you encourage adoption and institutionalization?
  - What were the developing opportunities for the employees?
    - What were the routines for employee development?
    - Were the employees happy with the development opportunities?
  - Did the employees receive any appraisal/feedback?

## Appendix B: Qualitative data. Tables

This appendix presents categorized information derived from the interviews with the supervisors.

*Table 1. Supervisors' attributes and experienced HR practices*

Subcategories	Examples
<b>Category: Background</b>	
Experience	<p>"I have education in economics and leadership, this background plus the years I have functioned as a supervisor"(S21)<sup>1</sup></p> <p>"I was not acquainted with the job of a leader, it was a new situation for me "</p> <p>(S23)</p> <p>"I have a background as a lawyer, worked as a consultant before" S26</p> <p>"Earlier I had professional responsibility" (S34)</p>
Change planning participation	"I participated on a superordinate level deciding how to adjust certain tasks"(26)
Higher education	<p>"There was an offer in the organization for education in advance in leadership and organizational theory" during the first year of occupying the position (S15)</p> <p>"I have an education in economics and leadership..."(S21)</p>
<b>Category: Attitude towards current position</b>	
Difficulties	"It was demanding" (S25)
Excitement	"There are many exciting work tasks" (S28)
Satisfaction	<p>"I am content with some things, and discontent with others. When it becomes too difficult I start looking for other jobs" (S21)</p> <p>"I am happy with content and responsibility" (S33)</p> <p>"I am content with my current position" (S27)</p>
New position	"I was not acquainted with the job of a leader" (S23)
Room for improvement	"There are always things, which you wish they were different" (S18)
<b>Category: Attitudes towards the change</b>	
Opportunity	change created new opportunities for the team (S22), opportunity for inexperienced supervisors to try out something new (S 5, 7, 14), for getting more new tasks and new work fields (S9, 10, 27); for gaining knowledge (S27, 33,), valuable experience (S27, 28),

<sup>1</sup> S1- S34 refers to supervisors who participated in the study

	for laying proposals (S 16, 22, 23, 26).
Difficulty	Change was a “difficult hill” (S25).
Loss	Some lost good colleagues (S9) “Resources to other divisions were not transferred “(S3). “Competence is not very well preserved in the (...) field” (S1).
Tedium	“when the first six months are taken into consideration, I felt it was boring, I had expected that more would take place. We were busy with the daily work, but not with the change itself” (S27)

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**Category: New aspects of the position**

Double role	“One spends more time being administrator than being a leader, one has many more things to follow up, which one didn’t have before” (S21)
Lack of role knowledge	“In the beginning there was no mandate, no role distribution, task distribution ... unclarified things related to that” (S30)
Transition	“It was great transition ... from a consultant to a supervisor, I hadn’t thought much about that before that, I was not very prepared for this, at the same time there was large scale change taking place... challenge” (S26)

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**Category: Confidence**

Confidence from experience	“I didn’t bother much about the leadership role, it was not difficult .. I sneaked into decision making authority as much as it was possible in order to avoid trivial matters being sent above in the system” (S30)
No confidence from routines	“I was not confident in own role, needed strict directions and mandate”(S 30)
No confidence from experience	“I was not very confident in my role, I was not acquainted with the job as a leader” (S23)
Need for support	“I should have had some toolbox and some aid, when I started and I still do from time to time now” (S24)

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**Category: Influence**

Perceptions of influence in <i>Suborganization</i> <sup>2</sup>	I have “Relatively big influence” (S22). “In (the suborganization) there are very good opportunities for influencing internal matters and this is satisfying to see” (S21)
Perceptions of lack of influence in <i>the regions</i> <sup>3</sup>	“The organization is large, the lowest level leader has very little influence, has to carry out what the others say” (S26).

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<sup>2</sup> Suborganization refers to entity, that is not attached to the regional divisions and that provides on the phone consultation

	<p>“I am allowed to come up with viewpoints and discuss. I contact my leader if I have strong opinions. She has a great opportunity for influence” (S34)</p> <p>“Sometimes” others engage in “vehement discussions which could result in sending proposals upwards” (S25)</p> <p>“I contributed myself to shape the workplace together with the other supervisors”(S23)</p>
Influence on workplace	<p>“The team determined the frame. I don’t do the detail navigation and task delegation, I share the competence they have. I started discussing opportunities for this in 2008. In 2009 it was implemented.”(S33)</p>

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**Category: Training**

Lack of training	<p>“I have not received any training, before we didn’t have any time in advance, where we could work as leaders” (S 24)</p> <p>“There has been little continuity and focus on leadership development”(S21)</p>
Courses for middle management	<p>Courses/gatherings on a national level in January 2008 were available only to the upper level leadership. Four first-line managers were invited to share their concerns on the second national seminar in 2008 (I2).</p>
National conference for new supervisors	<p>“The course now ... should have been implemented as we started in order to become more confident in directions and ... discussions” (S21)</p> <p>“Eventually, there was an offer which came in the spring of 2009”(S33)</p> <p>“Emphasis was placed on training”(I3) Topics were related to common understanding for the goal, fostering of common strategies and values”(S29).</p>
<i>Region 1</i> : Short introduction for supervisors	<p>There was a short introduction in February. It was an overview over the transition from being a coworker to being a leader, to having a leadership role. Practical things such as fields of responsibility, subordinates’ tracking were also addressed (I1)<sup>4</sup></p>

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<sup>3</sup> Regions pertains to the divisions studied in the regional offices

<sup>4</sup> I refers to the four additional informants described in the procedure section in the paper

Leadership groups	“In order for one not to be alone as a leader of a group, the most important field is a leadership group.” Their middle manager is also participating. “The most important processes take place there. All leadership groups and all leaders received a contact person from us, who worked with leadership development and leadership support, offered them more leadership development... ” (I1)
<i>Region 2</i> : Professional development seminars	“Two-day seminars were arranged in relation to the coworker survey.... In the summer follow up – sick leave and administration”( I3). “We have had leadership as topic, have provided training in tools and administrative matters” (I3)
Central competence plan	“It is possible to apply for taking some external course, it is possible to tailor what they want, in the winter they can apply for courses, everyone gets the course they want. ... There are 350 courses, without counting the external ones” (I3).
<i>Suborganization</i> – seminars	”In 2009 there were 4 gatherings, in 2008 there were three. The first gathering took place 5-6th of March 2008, it included all leaders in the suborganization...” (I4)
Professional network	“Supervisors meet up once a month, work in order to have an active line, laying proposals and working out a mandate” (I4).

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**Category: Communication and support**

Satisfaction	“The communication was good, sometimes everyone had so much to do that they drowned in work”(S 28)
Lack	“In the beginning ... got commonly addressed e-mails. (there was) not so close communication as I had hoped for” (S32)
Understanding	“I couldn’t receive support when I was wondering about something because it was not clarified, because he did not not have any information about that either, I didn’t expect that either” (S27)
Support from leader and colleagues	“we have seen her (the leader) a little bit too seldom... if the boss had been present there would not have been such a good cooperation... we (inexperienced colleagues) have used one another in many ways”(S23)

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**Category: Feedback**

From immediate leader	“He is a leader who is good at (...) providing feedback” (S27)
From colleagues	“Feedback - positive and negative from the boss, from the coworker survey, from colleagues” (S26)
From subordinates	“no feedback on leadership performance itself. ... yearly coworker <sup>5</sup> conversation, then I receive feedback on leadership performance”(S30)
	“There are routines – weekly meetings with one’s own leader” (S16)
Personal evaluation	“Personal evaluation (...) have not received anything else” (S20)

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**Category: Reward**

“I have not received any reward, there are no routines either” (S 24)

“Reward does not result in money”(S 22)

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<sup>5</sup> Coworker refers to subordinate. It is used on the basis of the equity principle in Norwegian society

Table 2. Category Supervisors as facilitators

Subcategories	Examples
<b>Category Initial Facilitation</b>	
Presence	<p>”One thing I have attempted to be aware of, and this is to be real and present, is that it actually means something to me”(S22)</p> <p>”...I was there every day...” (S25)</p>
Improving the conditions	<p>“In a way, I helped my coworkers with their tasks, it was impossible to find out where things belonged, this was not something the coworkers would have a hard time with...”(S 24)</p>
Ensure performance	<p>“first-line managers deliver in the moment of truth, they don’t deliver tomorrow, but now (...)I don’t know how I made sure that both things (change implementation and current work) were done at the same time, we had no other choice” (S22)</p>
Clarify strategy	<p>“We had heavy discussions on each employee’s role”(S33)</p>
Team support	<p>”I haven’t done anything in order to make it go fine. It was important not to inflate, to make things smooth in the daily work ”(S 30) “We had an open tone, clarified the problem (...) we saw whether it could be handled. If we couldn’t cope with it, we agreed that that was the way it was” (S33).</p>
<b>Category: Communication</b>	
Equal information distribution	<p>”It is a challenge (...) about information so that these who are sitting here don’t receive more information than those who are sitting elsewhere. I try to summon up meetings in advance ” (S31)</p>
Conveying subordinates’ desires	<p>“I am active when suggestions appear, take them seriously and send them off upwards and try to follow up and give feedback on this”(S21)</p>
Countering negativity	<p>”This is the only thing I have done, made them come along, told them about the future and had the idea in my life”(S22)</p>
<b>Category: Motivating</b>	
Emphasis on employee qualities	<p>“The switchboard is also a profession, they (employees) have to be good too, people don’t see that, I have to stress as something positive all the way” (S15)</p>
<b>Category: Team building</b>	
Socializing	<p>”...social things in the leisure time, most of them join in...”(S15)</p> <p>”they feel good together, I buy chocolate and bring some to meetings, from time to time”(S25)</p> <p>“I am conscious about creating social safety,(...)well being is required for professional trust in one another.... Meetings and lunch together”(S29)</p>

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**Category Decision making**

Exercising authority	”All possible matters were sent upwards in the organization, no one knew what kind of mandate they had, (...) it bottled up. We knew that this would be a classical problem (...) I sneaked into decision making authority as much as I dared in order to avoid trivial matters being sent upwards” (S 30)
Authority perception	<p>“To the extent that decisions had to be made, I made them (...) If my decisions contradicted something later, I had to change them” (34)</p> <p>”I had my own solutions and asked if it was ok, afterwards I did this”(S27)</p> <p>“In the beginning I was insecure as to the breadth of the decision making authority”(S17).</p>

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**Category: Development**

<i>Regions</i> – opportunities	”they have had many competence opportunities”(S26)
Challenging work tasks	”they can work within many different fields, they can take a look at anything, in theory (...) can join in the finding of topics and become better at this, especially lawyers can get to work with trials” (S 28)
Local/External courses	“Most of the courses are ”internal with external lecturers from law firms, accountant firms. Some of them are arranged externally.” (S 29)
Competence plans and need evaluation	Courses” are attended ”according to need. (...) Those who are skilled are sent to courses ”(S27)”...common competence plan for the whole Region 2”(S26)
Mentoring	“Shoulder to shoulder (training) (...) was as much as useful ”(S26)
Higher education	”Some have started higher education in accounting, they have some master studies at BI for the first time in the autumn”(S 28)
Meetings	Locally they make an arena for lawyers from different parts of the region. They meet up monthly(S 33)
<i>Suborganization</i>	”in the course of the last two years, there were regular competence measures in most of the fields, and two of the subordinates changed their field of work completely”(S23)
Change of work field	”no programs or routines which were introduced from the beginning”(S24).
Limitation	<p>The developmental procedures are ”maybe a little limited actually”(S 20)</p> <p>”Holistic measures directed towards the different fields of work, (...) there haven’t been very much”(S 24)</p>
Individual competence efforts	<p>”... own plan, show consideration to it and have the opportunity for receiving training, these who want to” (S 18)</p> <p>“the initiative comes from each coworker, in order to apply, I approve” (S 30)</p>
Encouragement to participate	”people are being encouraged to apply, it is important to support these who want to”(S 28)

Developmental conversation “they have the conversations, if there is anyone who wants to develop in specific cases”(S 18)

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**Category: Feedback**

Formal feedback When the “yearly coworker conversation is” carried out “then personal feedback” is given (S 30)

*Suborganization* “tool 1” Uses “”tool 1” three times a year as a temperature gauge of how things go, it should be used more. We have introduced “tool 1” for the coworkers to listen to one another” (S 22)

Trial program A trial project “coworker follow up, where one can make an appointment with each consultant and have a close dialog on this. It is voluntary, five have signed up for participation”(S 24)  
 “It has been difficult to give feedback on production, therefore “tool 1” have been even more important, it has been one of a few opportunities” (S 24).

Feedback taboo “Before it was not possible to comment the effort on the basis of the number of conversations (...) couldn’t address the individual (...) Now one knows what one should talk about, it is much simpler”(S 21)

Informal feedback “I am generous with feedback”(S 15) “I try to give feedback when and where it feels natural” (S16)

*Regions: Result-based* feedback “There is much production that takes place within the group, then I make use of conversations with every single coworker, about a specific work performance, about production and quality”(S 30)

Collectively and individually “I try to give feedback, (...), much collectively, and individually, as often as I think it is sufficient ... ”(S 31)

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**Category: Reward and recognition**

Lack of routines “There are no routines for reward, they can get half day off, we have a little bit of fun, we pay it ourselves. It is limited to what extent you can reward” (S 25)

Variability “Praise, access to competence are the best ways” (S15)  
 “I have had some who were tired, then they got a day off. (...) I am flexible with time off, vacations, doctors, flexitime. There are not so many ways in which to reward ”(S 27).  
 “We go skiing, bowling...”(S 29)

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Table 3. Categories – transition, change reactions, team development and newly vs non-newly employed subordinates

Subcategories	Examples
<b>Category: Transition</b>	
Lack of transition	”Everyone would do everything at the same time from 2nd of January 2008. Suddenly there was a completely new structure, no transition”(S 30)
Chaos	“...the starting phase was chaotic”(S 23)
Perceived change-related incapacities	“I was not able as a leader to offer them the data systems (...), unable to refer to routines from the directorate”(S 33)
Fire extinguishing	“there was a ”greater focus on (...) problem solution, conversations one wondered what to do with, how we were organized, goal achievement of efficiency, everyone knew what they were to do, but there were lots of hindrances in the way, it was like fire extinguishing”(S 24)
Keeping the organization going	“Time passes much more in operating (of the team/organization)”(S 16)
Expectations for planning	“...the reorganization was not very well thought through.”(S 21)
Understanding	” ...Insatiable need for information, because the changes we made maybe were not the largest in history, but reasonably large...”(S 22)
<b>Category: Change reactions</b>	
<i>Regions</i>	
Initial rejection	”Those who worked in this way wanted to continue with it, these who worked in the county (...) offices – wanted to continue in their own way. There were conflicts(...) acknowledged that it is possible to work in both ways” (S 28)
Unconfidence	The coworkers were ”as unconfident”(S 33)
Narrow professional field	”... one had larger professional groups earlier – accountant environments , lawyer environments which functioned well, this was what they were unhappy with”(S 26)
Excitement	“Some were excited, as to how it would be and the size (of the organization)” (S 29)
<i>Suborganization</i>	
Excitement	”...One was looking forward and was wondering how good it would be. (...) Were a little excited about how it became, they became many more....” (S 22)
Unwillingness	
Satisfaction	”They thought it was terrible, wanted to resign” (S 19) ”I had 6-7 people who worked there from before, who knew what that was about. It was ok with them”(S 21) ”There were many in my group who wanted to work in the suborganization”(S 23)

Occupation with routines    ”They were a bit concerned with how it would be with routines, work plans, (...) (there was) uncertainty about time off, flexitime, (they wanted to) control this.”  
(S 22)

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**Category: Team development**

Acceptance                      There is ”acceptance for the reorganization by most of them, it’s not a topic any longer”(S 25)

Improvement                    ”They are more confident and more loyal to routines than before. ... there is much less problem focusing now” (S 22)

    ”they have become much more structured. (...) I have talked (...) about goal setting”(S 24)

Team feeling                    “Team work is easy.” There is a “Team spirit, (..)good relationship to everyone. The group is open, including and positive” (S 32)

(Regions – greater,  
Suborganization lesser)      ”In the suborganization (...) there is not so much team work in itself, the different teams don’t have much in common than a common leader”(S 21)

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**Category: Longer vs shorter tenure**

Desire for Competence      “... competence maintenance, those who have the necessity for this come from before (...) The competence level is high (...) the new (coworkers) would be satisfied with it”(S 16)

greater                            ”Those I knew from before, had wished to work with these tasks, others who did not have this job as a first choice – were allocated, they had not worked with these tasks at all (...) they were optimistic and positive, did not bear the

lesser                              frustrations like the others because they were new and learned new things” (S 33)

    ”I try to get more competence so that they could enter other roles (...) Many elderly over the age of 60 do not want anything (new)”(S 15)

Elderly employees              Employees with longer tenure were skeptical towards the team concept (S 34)

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### Appendix C. **Qualitative results. Categories**

In this appendix full information from the interviews will be presented.

**Category Change agent's attributes and HR practices.** The category change agent's attributes contains attitudes toward the new leadership role, the way it has changed, the background of the immediate supervisor, support the person has received during the change, confidence in their role in the beginning and their influence upwards. In addition, HR practices implemented for supervisors will be also described.

**Background.** Half of the current leaders were new, or had only two years of leadership experience. In the whole sample this ranged from 2 years (S24, 28, 32 - 34)<sup>6</sup>, S27 – 8 years, S29 – 10, to 30 years (S19, 30). Some of the new supervisors occupied a sort of leadership position and had dealt with responsibility of a professional field earlier (S15, 29, 33, 34). Those without leadership experience were previously either lawyers (S20, 26, 28, 33) or consultants. Some of the current supervisors were representatives before the change (S26). Some participated in the change planning and negotiating (S22, 26, 28). And entered the process late (S26), because of being on a sick leave (S20) or being employed later (S15, 25). Some had leadership experience from other organizations (S16, 20). Educational background was also relied upon by the new supervisors (S15, 17, 21). Earlier experience in the organization was also considered (an) advantage (S15).

**Attitude towards current position.** Most of them expressed satisfaction with their current positions (S 1, 4, 15 - 18, 21 - 27, 29, 31 - 34). The position was considered better (S19), because of the cross professional groups (S31), and because the subordinates were skillful. It was nevertheless demanding (S29, 33). Some supervisors said they tended to start looking for other jobs, when it became too demanding (S21). It was exciting, different and challenging, on the other hand (S28). It was experienced as strange due to their inexperience and the newness of the organization (S23). Others said that they were looking forward to being there (S15). However, there were many employees for one person (S31). There were also things that required improvement (S18, 21, 27).

**Attitude towards the change.** Most of the leaders expressed a positive attitude towards the change (S 2, 16, 22, 23, 26-28, 31, 32, 33). The daily work was made simpler by merging three state agencies and different professions (S2, 31). Some stated that change created new opportunities for the team (S22). It was an opportunity for inexperienced supervisors to try out something new (S5, 7, 14) and build up something new (S13, 14). It was a test (S14). More experienced leaders attained new tasks and fields of responsibilities (S9, 10, 27). It brought knowledge to others (S27, 33) and was a valuable experience (S27, 28).

The change created room for laying proposals (S16, 22, 23, 26). It became easier to communicate. There was a short way to the top (S16, 22). Some were satisfied with the change process and the results (S22). It was difficult (S25). Others felt they had an advantage because of their knowledge as to how things should be done (S21). It, however, led to more clarified task distribution in the state – internally and externally (S12). It brought about specialization that was necessary (S3). There were, on the other hand, fewer alternatives for supervisors for changing their own work field (S11). Others experienced loss of many good colleagues (S9). For more experienced leaders the change did not have much meaning (S6). Resources to other divisions had not been transferred (S3). Moreover, competence was not very well preserved in certain fields (S1). Some thought it was boring. There was expectation for more to take place. Supervisors were busy with the daily work, not with the change. They should have been busy with the change (S27).

**Organizational design.** The leadership position changed significantly. There were additional administrative tasks because the administrative body was extracted from the workplace (S8, 19, 22, 23, 29). Supervisors found themselves in a double role as both as leaders and administrators, as they got more explicit professional responsibility for the group's results. (S29). There was not enough time for leading, because of the administrative aspect (S 19, 20, 21, 28 34). One was assigned tasks at the expense of the subordinates (S21). Some were more interested in the professional aspect and thus feared an increasing of the administrative one (S32). The supervisor's field of responsibility became much wider and more time-consuming (S19, 29, 32). Additional tasks included distant

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<sup>6</sup> S 1-34 refers to supervisors

leadership and tracking the employee (S 23, 32,33, I2). The extra administrative aspect led to difficulties (S25) and chaos (S24). More experienced supervisors said they took challenges that were interesting for them (S22).

*Transition.* Those with a consultant background had to endure a great transition (S28). It was a challenge (S18, 24). Most of the new leaders had not fully comprehended what the leadership role implied when they applied for such positions (I2). Some were not very well prepared (S26, I2). A lot was new (S 17, 26). Some became supervisors for their own previous colleagues (S18). Others felt pressured by plenty of demands both from below and above (S17).

*Support.* There was a necessity for guidance and directions both from inexperienced (S24, 33) and experienced supervisors (S30). The challenges of both groups were similar (I2)<sup>7</sup>. Mostly in terms of personnel matters (S24, 32, 34). There occurred a feeling of being in a vacuum because of the lack of routines (S33). New leaders felt they did not have any control (S18). Some were insecure about the breadth of the decision making field (S17). All supervisors had to find out things by themselves, which took a lot of time, and was as a challenge (S 17, 20, 24, 25, 33). Some missed having a mentor, but had a distant leader (S17). There was lack of clarity as to whom to address for directions and support (S22, 24). Yet others felt they were alone with their group first three quarters (S32), or lacked support (S33). Others on the other hand did not have much hard time (S15). Supervisors became confident gradually (S17).

Most of the participants stated that their leader was available (S 18, 19, 26), called back when they could, or the distance was so small that they could easily communicate (S20, 27, 31, 32, 30). Others on the other hand felt that their leader was not present enough, was working in another town and travelled once a week (S 17, 23, 24,28). They felt that they received less support (S17, 21). Sometimes supervisors' own leader was explicit, clear about expectations, was supportive and demanding (S26).

In addition, many participants stated that they consulted their colleagues (S 17, 18, 20, 23, 26, 28, 33), even though they worked in other towns (S25). They learned from their own and others' mistakes and experience (S23). In some cases some of the participants stated that they had contact persons for certain fields in the directorate (S 17, 21,33, 34). They lacked, however, clarity as to the sources of directions and support (S22, 24).

*Influence as a result of the new role.* There was a different degree of influence upwards in the two organizational entities under study. After the change the suborganization consisted of 3 rungs. This resulted in a feeling of being entitled to more influence (S16, 22). Two supervisors, who participated in the change planning process, stated that they had influence (S 15, 22, 26). Employees from the whole country had a say. One supervisor stated that they were not accustomed to such a level of participation (S8). This led to slower decision making (S8). However, others expressed being entitled to little influence, due to an absent leader (S24). The absence of a leader led to great distance from the decision making body (S24). Otherwise, they felt able to lay a proposal and this to be heard and taken into account (S16). Others, less experienced, stated that they could rely on their leaders to lay proposals, thus there were greater chances to be heard (S18). Some stated that they had laid proposals, that were successfully implemented (S20, 21) or received (S15). It was a challenge to find the right people to talk to (S15). Some stated that they had more influence as representatives, than as first line managers (S17). It was satisfactory to see proposed changes implemented about internal things (S21). Otherwise, bureaucracy made it difficult to change other aspects of the organization (S21). And added, that being heard depends on oneself. Many were skeptical, however, as to the extent to which this proposal would be heard (S23), or stated they had no influence in reducing the amount of requirements towards their group (S10). Some more experienced stated that they had initiated meeting routines – with regional units they currently cooperated with (S16). Others could contact their leaders if they had a suggestion or objection. Some relied on the decisions of the leadership (S 18, 23, 31, 32).

In the division, supervisors also felt they had influence (S27, 34) but to a lesser extent (S25, 29, 30). There were much more rungs above the immediate supervisors. Others stated that current leaders became much more authorized, implemented and enforced decisions faster. Supervisors worked according to these decisions (S6, 26). The space for action had become narrower (S1). There was less openness about their plans (S6). Discussions and reliance on one's own leader was the way to lay a proposal or express an objection towards something (S28, 34). Discussions and colleagues' support increased the probability for it being considered (S25). Some of the leaders stated that they had suggestions that were implemented (S26, 34). Others felt more influential as a result of having occupied a leadership role at a higher level earlier and having made contacts then (S31). Because of having been a representative earlier could also lead to increased influence upwards (S26). Others in the same division stated that they could not raise the salary of their employees, because they did not have influence on this (S 28). The

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<sup>7</sup> I refers to the four additional informants, mentioned in the procedure section

organization was said not to be open for input from the outside (S5). Since the change implementation, good and open communication became challenging (S 2).

Supervisors also stated that it was up to them as to the way of shaping their work place during the change (S23, 33), as the immediate leader was absent most of the time (S23). Some were creative and came up with new ways to solve their tasks or manage their teams. One stated that he delegated tasks to his team in such a way that he did not need exercise any control of detail. He trusted his team and let them do the work, while they determined the frame (S33). Others (S34) also stated that that was their way of distributing tasks, thus making the team responsible. In addition, leaders who were producing good results were likely to be given space to try out new things (S33). They state that as a result of that, their decisions were also likely to be heard (S33) in the division.

**Confidence in one's own role.** There was a strong tendency for experienced leaders to express greater confidence in (...)own role (S 16, 19, 20, 27, 30, 31). The chaotic situation was not a hinder to them, even when they lacked knowledge about routines (S22, 25, 31). However, some stated that it was difficult to support their own subordinates as a result of the lack of knowledge (S 19). There was uncertainty regarding tasks that were outside of supervisors' field of responsibility. They did not know who worked with these tasks, which was thought to be natural (S27). Some were confident as a result of participation in the change planning (S22, 26, 28), but felt uncertainty as to the details (S 15, 18- 22, 26, 28). Unconfidence arised as a result both of the lack of inexperience (S23) and lack of routines and directions (S30). Otherwise, confidence in the professional field characterized some of the inexperienced (S26, 28). The inexperienced leaders stated that they were not confident in their own role (S24, 34), due to the lack of routines (S33) and the administrative aspect (S 32).

Experienced supervisors did not know what to expect because previous tasks had disappeared (S27). Professional responsibility became different (S8, 19). Despite the fact that some said that it was most challenging for some of the new ones (S 15, 21, 22), others who were experienced stated that they lacked knowledge as to how to handle the administrative part (S25, 27). This was experienced as demanding (S33), boring and irritating (S29). Some state that they did not have any knowledge as to what their role would include (S24, 26, 30), while others had a rough idea (S25, 34). They were supposed to keep the organization going (S 16) and implement change at the same time (S22). They had to also think about strategy, which was not their job (S21). There was a lack of solid frame, role description which he could refer to (S30). The tasks and salary conditions were clarified one year after some were employed (S5).

Serving the subordinates was difficult during the change implementation (S27). Leaders were unable to help their subordinates by using the systems (S33). Frustration was the consequence of the new systems (S34). It took long time for handling them (S25, 33). It was also time consuming to figure out routines (S21). Simple procedures took long time (S19, 22, 23). They spent time on unnecessary things from today's point of view (S33). Some described it as "fire extinguishing" because of the many things appearing unexpectedly (S 21, 23, 27, 29, 32), which piled up (S27, 32). There was lack of predictability (S19, 32). It was not possible to plan the day. It was demanding and tiresome (S24). One supervisor had to gain knowledge in the field of responsibility of their subordinates and also make sure that their own immediate manager grasped the idea of the supervisor's field of work (S29). Those who lacked that knowledge had to prove themselves and emphasize their own strengths (S16). Leadership culture lacked during change implementation, because the organization had to be kept going (S27).

**Training and development.** Most of the supervisors said that they did not receive any training during the first year (S 17, 20, 22 - 27, 30, 31). There was no planning process around first line managers (S24). Neither was there any long term strategy (S21). It was not possible to try out the new role in advance (S24). No training was available on the new systems either (S17, 31, 33). Supervisors stated that they used feedback as a way of learning (S26), or some occasional inputs (S 23). Other inexperienced supervisors said that they had development opportunities (S18). Some of the experienced leaders stated that they wouldn't attend if there were any (S20, 30). Many learned things by themselves (S 20, 25, 31), from their own mistakes (S23). It was important to find out yourself which was the best way of leading (S21, 32). It was a steep learning curve for new leaders (S20, 25, 33). Some felt that there were good chances for development as a leader (S18). Supervisors were dissatisfied with the training (S26, 31), while others were both satisfied and dissatisfied (S17). In some cases, they currently could not make time for participation (S16, 34). Inexperienced supervisors missed having a mentor in order to learn things more directly, for example body language. Soft skills were only mentioned. There was also opportunity to become part of a small leadership group (S17).

Supervisors expressed a need for training in communication as a whole (S31) and work environment law and rights (S 20).

*Development opportunities at a national level.* Courses/gatherings on a national level in January 2008 were available only to the upper level management. They were arranged by the directorate twice a year and based on a theory that suited the state agency, such as administrative, relational and cultural leadership (I2).

The first meeting touched upon challenges, current situation, leadership experience, cooperation, by sharpening different fields of responsibility and mutual learning. On the second conference, which took place in October 2008, 4 first-line managers were invited to share their experience and concerns (I2, 3).

The first conference for both experienced and inexperienced first-line managers took place in 2009 (S 15, 17, I2). It was set up 1,5 years after the change implementation (S20, 21, 29). It was a two-day seminar meant both from middle and first-line managers. Communication, team-building and tracking of the subordinate(s?) was taken up. Later gatherings took up particular topics such as leaders' needs and desires (S29).

There was a one-day program on distant leadership as well (I2). There were two modules. There were arranged 5 gatherings for 30 leaders on each gathering. Module 2 was held over two days in the autumn. It was implemented in 2009, instead of 2008.

*Development opportunities in Region 1.* Region 1 devised its own program for new leaders, including both central and local measures (I2). There was a short introduction in February. It was a wide overview over the transition from being a coworker to being a leader. It was about the leadership role and reflection around it. In addition, practical things were also addressed, such as fields of responsibility, tracking of subordinates, development conversation, continuous dialog with the subordinates, providing feedback, salary policies and tracking of those on a sick leave. Both administrative and leadership execution tasks were addressed (I1).

Large scale gatherings were not appropriate with regard to money and time. As a consequence it was decided to implement efforts on a group level, because the most important processes took place in the leadership groups. Leaders were allowed to express their needs with regard to leader development. They established leadership groups, among which also for first-line managers in order to enhance cooperation. Groups and leaders had a contact person at the HR department at the region (I1).

There were leadership development seminars, which encompassed leaders from a whole region, twice a year (S32). In addition, there were small seminars on professional development, which became available in 2009 (S32, 33). There were also professionally related courses in the department (S34). In addition, courses on work environment were arranged in 2009(S30).

*Development opportunities in Region 2.* In addition to the national gatherings, there were organized regional ones twice a year (S29). Emphasis was placed on training to a greater extent (I3). Common understanding for the goal, fostering of common strategies and values were addressed (S29).

Supervisors were trained in the coworker survey in 2009. Thus they could find out what kind of efforts they could undertake in order to improve the group functioning. This tool led to a decrease in sick leave and to an increase in productivity according to some of the informants (I3).

There were also leadership development seminars and divisional gatherings (S29). Lectures and seminars on coaching for one division were arranged by supervisors' own manager. Some of the supervisors stated that the fewer participants in such an endeavor, the better (S26)

There were two two-day seminars last summer on administration. Plan conference on strategy was arranged in autumn. It involved many leaders discussing and presenting their opinion. Leaders occupied different positions and were placed in the company of others from different levels (I3)

A central competence plan was in use, which consisted of 350 courses. First-line managers had the opportunity to apply for a course in the autumn which could be tailored according to their needs. There are external courses in addition and master's studies over 6 semesters. There is also opportunity to attend studies providing theory on work-related topics such as organizational theory, leadership, which could be extended according to participant's needs. There was also training in new systems – one day's course (I3).

*Development opportunities in the suborganization.* There were 8 gatherings for leaders in 2008, while in 2009 there were four. The first gathering took place in the beginning of March 2008, which was meant for all leaders in the suborganization. Topics such as recruitment, tools for planning, procedures, routines, tools for tracking (tool 1)<sup>8</sup> and administrative matters were discussed. There was a leadership gathering in October 2008 on service and user orientation, leadership development and exchange of experience. In addition, leadership role, how to work in the leadership group and the difficult conversation were addressed (I4).

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<sup>8</sup> Tool used by supervisors and their subordinates for listening to the phone consultation provided by the consultants

The organization introduced professional network for all the supervisors across the regions. They arranged the so called video conferences. The suborganization advised, in addition, with external organizations on work mode. Moreover, external organizations arranged courses on coaching, conversational techniques (I4). When it comes to the tracking tool (tool 1) supervisors did not get any training or coaching. They were to use information from it in the conversation with their subordinates (I4). In 2008 they made common routines for implementation. Supervisors could refer to two contact people.

**Communication.** Many stated that they were content with the communication with their leader (S 16, 20,22, 27, 28, 29,30, 31),others were not (S21). They often did not receive answers, because there was an uncertainty within the whole organization (S21). Supervisors were uncertain as to whether they would receive an answer from those inquired (S22, 24). Some hoped for a closer communication with their leader (S24, 28, 32). They had nevertheless, the opportunity to discuss matters with them (S32). In addition, some felt that the communication with their own leader was easily flowing, like-mindedness (S30). Supervisors received commonly addressed e-mails. They received a lot of information from them (S32) and felt well informed, as they could not expect anything more (S26). Much of the information some received was not clarified (S27). Some received information in advance, because of participation in the change planning (S26). Some expressed understanding for the scope of the change, information demand and chaos that occurred (S22, 24, 26, 28, 32). The change concerned everyone in the organization, including their leaders, so they stated that they did not expect their leader to show consideration for their problems (S 21, 27, 31, 32). Supervisors, however, trusted the leader (S 18, 27, 29), they were open and honest, despite differing viewpoints (S 27, 29) In some cases the divisional leader lacked the knowledge about the supervisor's field of responsibility (S29). Many were assigned new leaders themselves (S27). Others stated that currently the leaders on top were aware of the communication flow towards the employees on the lowest rungs (S16). Moreover, information meetings were held (S 16, 21). It was up to each division to create routines (S21). In addition, attitudes of top leaders were important, who were good at expressing them (S27).

**Feedback.** Immediate supervisors expressed satisfaction with their leaders' feedback (S 27, 29). They received both positive (S32) and negative feedback (S26). Feedback from one's own leader was based on results. (S26).

Formal feedback was given through the yearly employee interview (S 16 -18, 28, 30). Topics like group functioning, progress, perceptions of supervisors in the forums, perceptions by employees were addressed (S32) . Some stated that there was no leadership appraisal related to the change process. (S 21, 22). Neither was there anything specific about the supervisor (S 21). There was awareness that something should be improved, but at the same time also lack of knowledge as to what (S 21). Some stated they were not followed up because of their experience and good results. According to some supervisors, however, what was visible was not a reliable measure of performance (S27). Conversations did not take place very often (S32), nor have they been adopted very well in the particular division. Others stated that they received feedback at first, but later on and currently were not receiving (S31). Others chose not to have any (S16). Employee interview took place once a year (S17, 20, 27). However, some leaders were interviewed only during the first year after the change (S23). Some had direct contact with sectional leader, (S31).Otherwise most of them met their leader once a week.

Feedback was received from one's own colleagues (S 16) and through the behavior of their subordinates, through meetings and conversations with them (S23). Employee survey could also be a source of feedback. It measured the group performance and well being, which some of the leaders perceived as a measure of themselves (S21, 26). It concerned the whole organization, but it also contained a couple of items on leadership (S22) and the results the group produced (S24). This survey could lead to diagnosing improvement areas within the group and suggesting group wise efforts (S26, 30). Some received feedback during the employee interview with their subordinates (S17). In addition, measurement of work environment status was also made (S16).

**Reward.** Almost none of the immediate supervisors received reward (S 16, 24, 26, 30, 31, 32). There were no such routines. There was no opportunity for monetary reward in the state agency (S17, 22). One can get their salary raised (S28, 31), more spacious work conditions (S22) or post cards (S17), flowers (S17), training, flexible work time – for example work overtime or work from home (S28), but seldom vacations and leaves (S22).

Many received praise and acknowledgement (S21, 22, 28). Others had the opportunity for working on exciting tasks or greater responsibility (S27). Salary was also seen as reward (S20, 23, 27), as well as interest by one's own leader (S27). Some disliked being patted on the shoulder (S27). Others got the opportunity to take an exam (S 18).

**Selection.** Internal selection, vacancies were announced internally. One could either continue working in their own position, or apply for a new position (S 26). Most of the new leaders worked as officers before applying for a leadership position. Some of them worked as lawyers, while others were regular consultants. The gap between the interview and position taking concerned all employees in the organization (S22). Selection was experienced as a tidy and exciting process (S 23, 27).

## **Category 2 Leaders as facilitators**

**Initial facilitation.** Many of the supervisors stated that they had a facilitating role during the process of change (S18, 23, 24). They were present (S22, 25). They had to make sure that their team was providing the services they were responsible for. They had no choice (S22). They ensured that their team received the information and support they needed in order to perform their jobs properly (S24). They spent time clarifying the work methods and each employee's role (S33, 34). They agreed on strategy with their subordinates (S34). They agreed on disagreeing on certain things, and on acceptance of things they could not change (S33). Supervisors experienced that the sole helping the employees was positive (S18). Sometimes supervisors had to be on the phone helping their employees (S19), because the employees were unable to answer the inquires (S24). Practical matters had to be solved. Despite the clarity of the duties of the team (S22), it was difficult. There was a general willingness to perform well. However, the organization was not ready, and it could not function well (S24). Some supervisors tried to delegate certain tasks in the beginning (S27), while others initiated cooperation between the employees within the group (S29). Still others said that no special efforts for making things work were made. It was important not to inflate, but make things work in practice (S30). Supervisors provided solutions for both parts with the purpose of lowering the negativity (S33, 26). It was performed both daily and in meetings (S33). There were attempts to establish solid frames (S16).

Later on supervisors emphasized placing demands and setting goals (S24, S26). It took few months to reach this point (S24).

**Motivating.** Motivating was difficult in the beginning (S34), nevertheless supervisors tried to motivate their subordinates (S18, 28, S34). Emphasis was placed on the importance of the jobs each employee did and their competence, making them more committed (S15, 16,23). That was especially necessary where the job was seen as of low status (S16). Supervisors tried to convince their employees about their capability to work in different ways (S28, 32) and about their own fields of responsibility according to competence (S21). Others set expectations (S16). Some supervisors still tried to improve performance through communication (S25). There was openness (S15, 22, 34) and problem clarification (S19, 34 ). Subordinates were prepared for difficulties (S22), encouraged to find solutions and be constructive (S22, 27). Supervisors emphasized knowledge and skills as an expected consequence (S27).

**Communication.** The beginning was marked with frequent meetings (S30). Supervisors were available (S15, 18, 19), listening and finding solutions to problems (S15). They were doing their jobs (S15) Supervisors made sure information was distributed equally, especially to the subordinates at a distance. They also made sure that everyone was present at the meetings. (S31). In some cases it was difficult to set up a system for meeting in the beginning. Meetings in the suborganization had no professional focus (S20, 21). Supervisors were conscious and occupied with making time for seeing and talking with everyone regularly, not only on work related topics (S25).

Part of the supervisors' job was conveying their subordinates desires and demands upwards in the system, and updating them on development of these (S19, 21). It was not always easy, because it took long time (S21). It was difficult to track (S21) and there was uncertainty as to whom to contact (S21, 22, 24). Nevertheless, supervisors tried to show their subordinates that they were taken seriously (S23).

In some cases there was not much to be done for the negative attitudes (S19, 20), some leaders just let their subordinates be frustrated (S20). Others carried out conversations during the process (S16, 20, 26, 31). **Supervisors'** own attitude was important (S18, 22, 24). Supervisors were positive (S 18), open and honest (S 34). They tried to avoid fostering negative mood, pity and frustration (S20, 26, 28). In some cases, employees were to reflect around what they were satisfied with (S 16). Supervisors focused on the positive aspects in the discussions and conversations (S15, 21, 22). They were carried out individually (S15, 16, 21), every two weeks (S16, 23, 25). Supervisors exhausted frustrating topics so they would not be taken up again (S25). Others had mostly collective conversations, which also included the obligatory conversations. Some met with their group and those whom it cooperated with, in order to map the needs (S18).

In other cases the focus was set on task completion (S22, 30). Some were cautious about comparing current and past organization structure (S22). Others used conversations as means of support more frequently before the change (S 18, 21, 22, 26).

**Team building.** Supervisors realized the need to foster mutual trust (S25), to show care and interest for the employee (S16, 20, 25) and understanding for the situation (S19, 20). Some started with a party, group meetings, ski tours (S33), group dinner (S29) and other social activities (S17). They emphasized social safety within the group (S29) or getting to know one another (S15, 16). They tried to foster team spirit (S26, 31, 32) and used much time on employees in the first place (S26). In some cases, the mood of the employees did not require efforts to start working (S30), it was positive (S15). While in other cases there was no social introduction (S21). **Some leaders just** tried to get to know their subordinates (S15, 16, 26).

**Decision making.** Supervisors made decisions as much as it was possible, which minimized the flow of trivial questions going upwards in the system (S30, S33). Bottling up was described as a problem. Thus supervisors were protecting and facilitating their subordinates. Others stated that they made decisions, which they had to change later on, after certain matters became clear (S34). Sometimes solutions were presented to one's own leader and *then implemented* (S27). Many leaders were not confident in certain matters in the beginning and had to refer to their colleagues and leaders (S20). Some did not make any if they were uncertain about them (S17). The breadth of the decision field was not clear. Advice was sought regarding personnel matters (S17).

**Development.** There were many developmental efforts meant for the subordinates (S25, 26, 29). There was training in the professional fields (S25). There was a competence catalogue issued twice a year and a yearly common competency plan (S26). This was on an individual level (S27). Some leaders are interested in introducing competence gain on a group level (S34). There were courses arranged for employees. Their attendance was usually approved by the supervisor, as long as they were motivated to attend (S25, 27, 29, 30, 34). It depended also on the employee's individual competence needs (S26, 28, 32) and on the future strategy. Employees were also encouraged to attend courses (S28), different than the ones enlisted in the catalogue or even when they did not need it. Some courses were described as demanding and time-consuming (S29).

During the first year, courses were implemented immediately (S26, 28). According to some there were few (S34). There was also shoulder to shoulder training (S25, 26). Currently, in some cases, the new employees were assigned mentors (S26).

Courses could be arranged internally and could be attended by all the group members (S28, 29). It required convincing the organization for spending resources on these (S31). There could be internal or external lecturers holding the courses. In addition, courses could be arranged externally, which made it more complicated for the subordinates to attend. They could be arranged by private firms (S29, 30). Moreover, there could be courses arranged at a regional or a national level, where there was limitation as to the number of places available. Courses depended, however, on the budget. Unions, which the subordinates were members of, could also initiate courses (S30). Some leaders could also suggest course arranging if that was necessary (S30, 33). Some supervisors said that it was possible to take courses or degrees at universities and colleges (S28, 31, 33). For working with papers, exams and lectures in some cases time off could be granted (S28). However, in region 1, a leader stated that it was difficult finding time for development, because the group was pressured for results (S31). Furthermore, there were also monthly meetings for the lawyers from different parts of the region. There were such meetings for the accountants too. In addition, there were professional discussions. The immediate supervisor was often not responsible for developmental procedures. But they would welcome improvement in arranging of courses. Finally, course implementation is approved by regional leaders (S30).

Development was also possible through work with cases and professional challenges (S29, 32). There were many developmental opportunities because of the exciting tasks (S27). Some subordinates complained about the narrow field of work (S29). They had, however influence on the manner in which they worked (S27). They could work on what they saw exciting (S27, 29). They could work in different areas (S28). They could come up with proposals which could be discussed. They were allowed to observe trials (S28, 29). They might be given the opportunity to present a case in front of their colleagues, if they had worked on it for a long time. Some received more tasks as a result of others' resignation (S28). It takes time for some to learn how to work in the field which results in perception of monotony. Supervisors were aware of their subordinates' competence and how it should be combined (S34) on the basis of the tasks they were assigned (S27, 29, 34). They trusted their subordinates when it came to their duties (S34). That's why some were conscious of providing new tasks (S27) and made sure they assigned responsibility to the motivated employees (S27, 28). They could work towards new fields of work (S27).

Nevertheless, some were dissatisfied with the development opportunities (S31). While in other cases subordinates were satisfied (S26).

**The suborganization.** In this organization the employees were rushed into work when the change was implemented. There was no time for training (S18, 22). Being a phone consultant did not require much training (S16) and there was a limitation as to the expanding of the competence range (S18, 20, 22). Employees had, however,

plenty of opportunities for improvement on the basis of the current competencies (S20). There were plenty and regular developmental opportunities (S22, 23). For those who were willing to attend (S18).

In some cases, there was a group responsible for the professional development of the subordinates. It mapped out the needs and defined the developmental procedures (S24). These services were available all the time. General efforts were directed towards the different professional fields (S22, 24). There were obligatory courses (S21). The organization had introduced an individual competence plan (S18, 22). However, there had not been much of individual efforts. There were large scale meetings some of which had addressed the service term (S24). There was shoulder to shoulder training as well. There were eight competence days at the employees' disposal. This was, however, very time consuming (S22).

There were seminars arranged by the directorate and electronic mail courses. Supervisors sent (a) few employees to courses who later trained the rest of the team. The state agency arranged courses on "service" which were open for everyone. There were regular professional courses in the agency with internal/external lecturers, which also created an opportunity for discussing particular matters they were interested in. There were also external courses. Most of the employees could join whenever they wanted, they had to plan when to do that. Not many were usually rejected (S17). The new training programs took 6 weeks. The necessary competence was gained over a couple of months (S16).

In some cases, supervisors actively tried to establish routines around development (S15). Some encouraged their employees to gain more competence (S15, 21). There was openness about the opportunity to change one's professional field (S15, 18, 20, 21, 23). Supervisors made attempts to provide extra tasks so that employees' competence would increase (S15). It depended on the employees' motivation (S20, 21). There was a desire for more varied tasks and in depth case processing (S23). There were discussions on employees taking over more tasks and fields of responsibility (I4). In some cases there was an opportunity for exchange for a couple of days or a week (S23).

Supervisors used the developmental conversation, through which employees tended to find out about opportunities and future plans (S20, 21). Supervisors also stated their own expectations towards the employee (S20). There were counselors, who could also provide employees with the opportunity for professional development (S21).

**Feedback.** Feedback was important for the development and performance of the employees (S22). It was important for them to be seen (S16, 24, 30). Therefore immediate supervisors emphasized positive feedback (S28, 30). It could have had a motivational function (S24). Subordinates received formal and informal feedback.

Tools like the yearly employee interview took up employees' plans, work experiences and requirements (S17, 23, 27, 30). One discussed the employee's achievements and how they were doing at present. In the regions, supervisors stated that the job the employees did was not measurable (S27, 28). They helped their customers, cooperated and found solutions to problems (S27). There were different basis for employee evaluation (S28). There was no general evaluating of the group (S27). Some supervisors did not follow up their employees (S27). Others tracked them and provided feedback on the basis of tasks they had been assigned (S26). Regular conversations with their employees were carried out. There were no routines about that, however, supervisors were conscious about giving specific feedback. Positive feedback felt good (S28).

Feedback was provided collectively and individually (S16, 34, 31). In some cases the supervisors could make the results visible (S27), which would not lead to competition, because groups with similar work field(s) could be found in another town (S34). However, in the 3 rung suborganization there were discussions as to whether the results could be used at a group level (S17). The usage of statistics was difficult and said to be a taboo (S21, 24). The groups did not know how they were doing compared to other groups. The purpose of this was preventing competition (S16).

There was, however, a new trial program which gave supervisors the opportunity for providing feedback individually (S21, 24). It was implemented for about 10 months ago. Those who participated chose to do so. Their number ranged from 4 (S17), 5 (S24), to 9 (S18), 12 (S16) to the whole group. Supervisors would rather that the rest of the subordinates signed in, because these employees currently received very little feedback (S16, 18, 24). Supervisors provided feedback on information such as number of conversations, number of pauses, accessibility on the phone, in general whether employees followed through on their plan (S16, 24). This procedure took place once a month (S18). The rest of the employees' information was not to be used (S17). They could be followed up and inquired. They were described as loyal by the supervisors (S17). Some of the leaders expressed that there was still an old way of thinking when it came to feedback (S17, 22). Others experienced technical problems which hindered the proper usage of the tool (S17).

Supervisors also listened to the way subordinates carried out conversations with the customers (S17, 23, 24). This tool was more important (S24). In addition, employees listened to one another too (S22). This way they

exchanged competence. There were no written results (S22). Then the conversations performed were discussed (S18). This took place three (S21, 22), four times a year (S16).

Supervisors tried to provide feedback as often as possible (S15, 16). There were conversations on particular performance, mainly on production and quality (S30). It was, at the same time, difficult to know what their employees did when they were sitting in their cubicles. This made it challenging to find opportunities for providing feedback (S24). It was also difficult to know, however, what was the appropriate feedback for each employee (S33). Others provided professional discussion on almost all tasks (S32). They took up things as they occurred (S32, 34). It was also done by sending e-mails (S20).

**Reward and Recognition.** There were no routines for reward in the state agency (S16, 18, 25, 26, 27). The frame for this was very narrow (S20, 27, 30). Some would have liked to have such routines (S26). There was no opportunity for monetary reward (S17, 27, 31). Supervisors did not dispose with any budget on that (S25). Some had not done anything about rewarding (S16). Others resorted to praise (S15, 18, 24, 31, 34), which was not easy (S18). It was also difficult to find out who deserved a reward. One ought to have done something extra, so that they would be acknowledged in front of the group. Supervisors had an idea and the ability to justify it, but they had not applied it (S25). Others did not praise their subordinates because they stated they were not good at that (S27).

Employees were provided with acknowledgement in individual conversations (S17, 29, 30). Supervisors tried to make comments as much as possible (S30), and acknowledge them (S20, 23). It contributed to positive and meaningful experience (S16, 30). It was also done collectively (S17, 27, 29). They made visible the good job each employee did (S26, 27).

Some had been creative as to reinforcing employee performance by giving away movie tickets a couple of times (S26), having chocolate at meetings (S25). Supervisors based reward on the employees particular performance. Some stated that it was more about generosity, than it was about reward (S22). Some tried to facilitate their employees according to their life situation. They tried to fulfill their employees' desires, granting days off for attending burials (S17, 34), or a couple of hours off (S27, 28, 29, 30, 33), passing on a conversation (S17). The personnel policy was said to be spacious (S33). Some granted employees the opportunity for flexible work schedule when the employee was especially good and had certain needs, for example, small children (S15, 22, 27, 28). This was not done at the expense of the others (S15). They granted them freedom, on account that it would not be misused (S28). Employees could get the opportunity to participate in different events (S22). Some organized parties (S30, 31), brought cake (S31, 34) or fruit to work (S15), went skiing (S29), had dinner together (S26), arranged social activities (S15, 25, 29), or went bowling together (S29). Supervisors made sure that they were together in the coffee break and created a pleasant atmosphere (S17). Some employees had the opportunity to make presentations or attend trials. In some cases training could be used as a reward (S17), while in others it could not (S27). Supervisors could nevertheless create opportunities for their subordinates. They trusted them and provided them with tasks (S29). Reward could also be defined as supervisor involvement, help and feedback (S27).

Employees could be recommended for a raise (S15, 17, 20, 23, 27, 29), although it was challenging (S27, 28). It was a difficult topic, especially when one wanted to grant the whole team (S33). Some supervisors stated on the other hand, that monetary reward would lead to envy and dissatisfaction (S23), and it would not be wise. Others said that one should be careful when one rewards the employees. One might foster competition and lose sight of the whole, to which the state agency referred. One should be cautious with this. Reward could lead to misunderstandings which would develop in a negative way (S32). It would be hazardous rewarding for winning trials / or impact on the cases (S28).

### **Category 3 Transition, reactions, team development and age**

**Transition.** The change process was described as chaotic (S 13, 18, 23). The organization was being built up anew (S 19, 23, 33). There was no transition (S 13, 19, 21), but immediate implementation (S 19). Everyone was thrown into the situation (S 24). Initially, there was a lack of routines (S 31) and premises for task solution, rules, clarity about whom to contact (S 18), frame and mandate (S 24, 30, 33). Such a large organization needed much time for settling (S 18, 23,). There were still things to be adjusted, two years after the implementation (S 23). It took too much time before supervisors felt they had a common ground for meetings (S29). The road was built while they were walking (S 18, 21).

Things were not different in January 2008. There was plenty to be put in order (S 32). Plenty of systems did not function (S 18, 22, 33) and were not adjusted to the organization (S33). It took some time before it started to function (S22). Small things were malfunctioning (S 19). Many practical problems occurred (S 19). That disrupted

and interfered with the work flow in the beginning (S 22, 27). Duties did not correspond to the opportunities for performance (S22, 24). Employees lacked what they needed for a good work performance (S 19). The initial chaos resulted in disappointment (S22, 25). Programs and systems they used were not considered to a great extent (S21). Some state that it was not thought out well enough (S11, 13, 21), others wanted to have more planning in advance (S 1321, 27). Still others expected a lot of confusion, insecurity, dissatisfaction, withdrawal, information demand and aggression (S 22). Supervisors expected that something more would come up immediately (S 27). Things settled gradually (S 21, 24). Few of the supervisors expressed awareness of the scope of the change (S 21, 22, 24, 26). Others stated they were not able to do so (S 18). Even for those who participated in the change planning it was ungraspable as to what kind of things would appear along the process of implementing change (S 22, 26).

**Reactions.** On the basis of their own desires and background employees were assigned membership to different groups within the organization. Some of the subordinates occupied their first choice positions, while others did not. This created conflicts, negative attitude, frustration and demotivation (S 33). According to some supervisors, there was little interaction with regard to finding the best fitting position for employees (S 10). In most of the cases employees expressed their frustration to their supervisors. According to the supervisors a very small percentage according to their supervisors left. In few cases the whole group got their first choice positions (S 34), while in most of the groups there was a certain percentage that was dissatisfied (S 24, 31). Leaders used conversations (S 31, 33), sometimes they started working immediately (S 19, 21, 22). Some of the subordinates were new for their roles especially in the suborganization (S 24).

*Reactions in the regions.* In the regions, within the groups there were many different reactions and attitudes in the beginning (S 26- 29). There were reactions as a result of dissatisfaction with the position and with the change. Some thought it had been better the way it was (S 26, 29). There were employees who did not want the change initially (S 26- 28). There was lack of understanding as to why it was taking place, since it was functioning very well up until the moment of change implementation (S 26). Change in itself was enough to be disliked (S 27). Even employees on high professional levels were as unconfident (S 33). In other cases, the subordinates were not very skeptical (S 29). They had difficulties as accepting the new way of working (S 25, 28). Others were very excited about the future organizational structure. They were looking forward to the change (S 29, 31). But the beginning was unsuccessful (S 30, 33). This led to irritation, demotivation and frustration for a long time (S 33). They could not do much about that but accept it and hope that things would change (S 25). Attitudes of employees changed after the first employee survey. Initial negativism led to unfavourable personal relationships in the beginning. For some the professional environment is too narrow (S 26-28). Others were occupied with way tasks were to be carried out, others with the work environment (S 29).

Those unhappy with their positions became satisfied gradually (S 31) and understood the purpose of the change (S 27). Others got their first choice positions and were satisfied (S 27-30). Some employees had had better salaries before the change (S 28) and quit. In addition, some supervisors dealt with employees who wanted to continue working in their own way, which led to internal conflicts (S 28). Employees could not see the work around the change, which could have contributed to their high expectations (S 27). These negative attitudes had now settled, which could be seen as by the number of applicants for positions in the group. Some still longed for the time before the change. Things had not settled completely though. Subordinates were satisfied and accepted the new ways. There was relief among some employees because they got a leader who was accessible (S 25). In other cases, newly employed supervisors experienced negative attitudes (S 16).

*Reactions in the suborganization.* In the suborganization, there were mixed feelings and reactions as well. One supervisor stated that problematic employees were transferred to the suborganization (S 10). Some employees were looking forward and harbored high hopes, but became frustrated because nothing happened in the very beginning (S 22, 23). Systems did not function (S 21). Simple procedures took long time (S 23). There were complaints and frustration (S 20, 23). The new subordinates were trained and started work the first day (S 21).

In the beginning some employees did not want to work there at all (S 17-19). They missed working with previous tasks (S 14, 16). They had a right to go back to a position in the region a year after the change implementation (S 18). However, after the summer they changed their attitudes (S 19). They were provided with challenges and additional tasks which made them realize that they liked it there (S 17). Attitudes and reactions were not positive (S 18) and motivation was fluctuating (S 24). Being a phone service officer was not satisfactory in the beginning (S 16, 20). There was lack of other opportunities, however (S 15, 23, 24). In few cases, there were enduring problems with employees and these problems were difficult to fix (S 15). Others were satisfied as a whole (S 21, 23), while in other cases there was some percentage in the group who were satisfied (S 15, 17). Supervisors admitted, that there might as well be some who still wanted to work something else (S 23, 24).

Here employees were also occupied with routines, plans and practical matters. There was uncertainty and lack of clarity around flexible work time and leaves (S 22). They were willing to do a good job (S 24). They endured, understood and liked their job. They were loyal. They were tired at some point (S 15). Others showed understanding for supervisors' attempts to help in the beginning (S 24).

**Team development.** Some employees became creative (S 22, 33). Others too few (S 28). Where team work was taking place, there was understanding for common goals (S 34). There was team spirit (S 27, 31, 32), good mood (S 15, 21, 28), good relationships. Team work (S 32). well-being (S 15, 25, 33), harmony (S 25), unity and synch (S 15, 20), good work environment (S 15, 17, 22, 24), motivation for working in the new way, different attitude (S 32, 33), openness (S 28, 32), satisfaction (S 17, 21) and inclusion (S 32).

They also improved when it came to the results they produced (S 21). Employees had accepted the consequences of the change. Things have had started settling. Now there was more room for planning (S 25). They became more structured (S 23), more responsible about their own time, being available and dutiful. They managed to find time for meetings (S 21). They exerted more goal oriented efforts (S 29), were professionally more confident (S 18, 22- 24, 29), calmer and stronger (S 29). Good work routines were introduced (S 22, 24), Employees became more aware of how the organization functioned. They were less focused on problems (S 22). They found solutions to problems themselves (S 22). Employees showed responsibility for the manner of tasks solution (S 33, 34). The frames had become more solid (S 18, 24, 28). Subordinates were skilled and did a good job (S 24). They became more constructive (S 23). However, those who did not come up with suggestions were not very satisfied (S 27).

Employees cooperated more. There were professional and team challenges. The doors stayed more open as a result of team work. Employees were excited about their own tasks (S 33). There was dialogue and expression of needs (S 32). Employees dared visit their supervisor (S 15, 28). They should still improve in producing in shorter time (S 25). There were some conflicts, but not on a personal basis (S 25). Subordinates got to know one another (S 20), became closer (S 15) and more similar (S 20). They were getting used to the new culture (S 20). There was a high level of sick leave, however (S 21, 22), which was the same before the change (S 22). There is some percentage of the employees who were still dissatisfied and who have settled so far (S 24).

**Tenure and age.** In few cases there was a difference between old and new team subordinates. The newly employed were less likely to complain about lack of development and too little work in the suborganization. They did not experience the frustrations at the beginning, therefore they were optimistic and positive (S 33). While the old ones were more likely to miss occupying their earlier positions (S 16). In the regions it was also not very common to work in teams. However, some of the supervisors strived to achieve this (S 33). In this respect, it was easier for newly employed people to get used to working in a team to a greater extent compared to those earlier employed (S 34). In other cases, it was challenging to motivate elderly employees for learning new things (S 15).