

# ‘Change management’ a necessity that needs a reorientation

## Introducing an alternative way of managing the forces of change and continuity **1**

Operational excellence is about balancing the forces of change and continuity. Most organizations simply cannot sustain excellent performance unless they are capable of integrating change management with operational management. The ability to change and to continue is a paradoxical one, and is in many respects, the ultimate competitive advantage in today’s business environment. As a discipline of its own, change management is seen as a necessity to deal with the costly, and annoying evil that change is for a lot of organizations. Consequently, the most distinguishing aspect of change management seems to be the pre-planned and episodically way in which it handles change, to be as sure as possible that things stay within the programmed timeframe and budget. In the corporate world today, change management is a wide-spread practice and, archaic and traditional structures are history. However, if we want organizations and people to be more flexible, and adaptable, we are in need of a ‘management of change’ that is in itself more flexible, and adaptable. Therefore, this paper discusses the implications of change management, what makes it inflexible and why it is that we needed ‘change management’ for realizing change. In the second part the paper introduces ‘change management’ from an alternative, non-managerial logic, and stresses the role of management as an active participating stakeholder. The paper illustrates how change management could be re-oriented into the near future: not constrained by a traditional managerial logic, hierarchical boundaries and how to meaningful engage with personal value systems and processes of collective social change. It ends with some closing reflections.

### Introduction

There is no single accepted definition of change management. This is perhaps not surprising given the difficulties with which change is perceived **2**, the wide diversity of change processes and contexts, and the seemingly

unyielding flow of references of change management’ high failure rate **3**. ‘Change’, in general, can be defined as “a new state of things, different from the old state of things”**4** and ‘organizational change’ as “a state of transition between the current state and a

future one, towards which the organization is directed.”<sup>5</sup> When we talk about organizational change, we differentiate between the content of the change that comes about within a process and the context(s) in which it arrives. In which the context is seeing as equally important, as formulating the content of a change program, as the process through which it takes place.<sup>6</sup> Another typical part of our metalanguage on organizational change, is the managerial point of view: we talk in terms of strategies, planning and implementing, as if it is something that is disruptive, and it is something that if we don’t manage it, it isn’t there. Obviously, ‘management of change’ has something to do with managing the state of transition between the current state and a future one. And as Goodstein and Burke argue, this ‘managing’ is mainly about “recognizing and accepting the disorganization and temporary lowered effectiveness that characterize this transition.”<sup>7</sup> So we assume, that this transition is not only manageable but also that the management of this transition is also a necessity: the change as well as the temporary disorganization it causes, needs to be planned, handled, and controlled from beginning to end. Traditionally, the change process itself is seen as unfolding in sequences, and takes place “by way of a systematic process of well led events, monitored by constant surveillance.”<sup>8</sup> The suggested movement during the transition is plotted as a lineal route. The very reason for this is, the idea that this way of moving ‘forward’ is the least time-consuming and offers the best possibility of planning the events. That is exactly why, authors like French and Bell<sup>9</sup>, and their predecessors, Chin and Benne<sup>10</sup> introduce in the 1960’s and 1970’s

organizational change as ‘planned change’ that needed to be executed from the top down. According to these authors, the planning of change contains activities as programming an elaborate phasing, designing a detailed roadmap and plotting a trajectory to a desired endpoint. The result, mostly called a ‘Master Plan’ or a ‘Grand Design’ provides transparence in what is to be expected, and a sense of security in how the events are linked to successful implementation of the intended change. However, to be sure, we are still talking about planning, designing and plotting, which can make things transparent, but not necessarily with a guarantee that things will happen as planned. In fact, a master plan mostly represents the model of reality and assumptions of the designers, and neither the program, roadmap or trajectory will speak for the territory.

The argument in this paper is that there are ongoing processes of change in organizations. That, however, should not be taken to mean that people, their behavior and the organizations they are part of, constantly change. The local initiatives, improvisations, and modifications individuals engage in, may go unrecognized; opportunities may not be officially taken up, imaginative extensions may not break through existing organizational routines. In short, local adaptations may never become institutionalized when not taken up by management.<sup>11</sup> Meaning, that for organizational change to be happening, we are in need of management being part of the context as well as actively participating in the process. However, this is something completely

different than the idea that change has to be managed as implied by the term 'change management'. In particular, this involves revisiting some fundamental questions, such as: What is actually implied with change management? What is the effectiveness of change management? and What are we managing when we manage change? In the following sections we elaborate briefly on these issues.

### 1. What is actually implied with 'Change management'?

The roots of change management can be traced back to the pioneering work of the National Training Laboratories in the field of Organizational Development in the late 1940s and 1950s.<sup>12</sup> As a discipline on its own, 'change management' began to emerge in the 1980s, driven by leading consulting firms working with Fortune 500 companies. Early adopters, such as GE, Ford, Philips and AT&T, were global corporations that could derive significant savings by more efficiently implementing change programs on a large scale. This work resulted in early change management models such as GE's *Change Acceleration Process (CAP)* and John Kotter's *Eight Step Process for Leading Change*. Nowadays, a quick scan on the internet gives the impression that all the studies and published practices that are labeled 'change management' have the following major themes in common: (1) a management perspective is ubiquitous; (2) it is about strategically and episodically deploying and implementing change; (3) it is guided by top-down communication efforts; and (4) the change is

brought to people while the change trajectory is developed for people who at the end are made responsible for implementing the change. As a change approach, change management, traditionally, starts with a strategically formulated urgency, deploying change efforts according to the existing hierarchical ladder downwards. And while doing so, episodically, following a pre-phased process set out in time, cementing each building block of change in place before moving on to the next. With every step management is monitoring the process in such a way that it stays within the programmed timeframe and budget.

In the corporate world today, change management is a wide-spread practice and, archaic and traditional structures are history. Furthermore, agility and flexibility are key concepts, just as business leaders envision reconfigurable designs that can change almost on demand.<sup>13</sup> The focus is on collaboration, speeding up processes and improving work flow and output. If you're not fast and adaptable, you're vulnerable. Organizations today must simultaneously deliver rapid results and sustainable growth in an increasingly competitive environment. They are being forced to adapt and change to an unprecedented degree: executives have to make decisions more quickly; and employees on the front line have to be more flexible and collaborative. In this regard, mastering the art of 'change management' is now becoming more and more a critical competitive advantage in delayering and integrating hierarchies, motivating people to become more flexible and adaptable by creating more temporary cross-functional

cooperation with increased responsibility and accountability.<sup>14</sup> Of course, when downsizing, the necessary corollary for change management is to empower the leaner work force and keep the whole as flexible as possible.<sup>15</sup>

Although revolutionary at its inception, ‘change management’ traditionally consists of separating people by hierarchical levels, differentiating them by functional work process and segmenting the process into sequentially to be implemented sections. This seems contrary to the desired result, becoming more flexible and adaptable, for which we are in need of just the opposite: working together in a more unified, aligned and cooperative way. Moreover, the management driven way to change which is implied with the label ‘change management’, seem to imply that we allow the few, to think, work and decide for the many. Together with the sequential and episodically way with which the process is to be deployed down the hierarchical ladder, it is giving rise to all kinds of perception biases over what is going on and what is to be expected. After being excluded from the process of determining what the changes will be, people are, odd enough, expected to take responsibility for implementing these same changes.

Of course, ‘the many’ have an opportunity to determine to some extent how these changes will be implemented or how they will be translated to their own workplace, but as Axelrod argues, “this typically does not feel like an opportunity at all, but more like a manipulation.”<sup>16</sup> For ‘the many’ the frustration seems to resemble the ‘not invented here’

syndrome. In the same way, the process leads to frustration as ‘the few’, from their perspective, see people resist, obstruct and neglect what they have been so carefully designing, planning and plotting. This latter starts with Kotter’s first step, as executives try to create a sense of strategic urgency, by looking out for some common language or perception about what is going on in and around their business (Lawrence, 1998, p. 295). Which, as it seems, isn’t as easy as it sounds. People are not going to buy into change until they have become thoroughly convinced that standing pat is not an acceptable option. “They may smell smoke, but they are not going to leap from the burning house until the flames are licking at their heels.” And as Lawrence continues, “Real change cannot possibly begin until the organization as a whole has developed a readiness to move forward and a common understanding of what kinds of changes are required.”<sup>17</sup> Emphasizing the importance of a good initial analysis of the organizations capacities and general state of being.

## 2. What is the effectiveness of change management?

Published work on organizational change is not only ‘extensive’, full of frameworks and models, but also ‘ubiquitous’. Nonetheless, the record of change success is startlingly low. Published estimates of success through recent years from re-engineering or strategic re-orientations are barely around 30%. Surveys of European firms show a mere 20% reporting ‘substantial’ success with implementing change initiatives, with another 63% claiming only ‘temporary’ success

18. At the same time, the evidence from case studies, expert panels, surveys, and economic analyses suggests that the effectiveness of change programs, when considered against their organizational objectives and/or their economic performance, is often disappointing. With the conclusion that “overall rates of success of the practices are moderate, with some successes but also with high rates of failure”<sup>19</sup> Based on their own experience, Oakland and Tanner report that change initiatives do not deliver as expected, in fact the estimate of success levels could be as low as 10%, as against the average of 30% quoted by others.<sup>20</sup> Typical for the line of thinking about the effectiveness of ‘change management’ in recent years, is the following statement: “although the successful management of change is accepted as a necessity in order to survive and succeed in today’s highly competitive and continuously evolving environment, the change management literature report a failure rate of around 70 per cent of all change programs initiated.”<sup>21</sup> Meaning that in these cases the management of change: 1) didn’t reach the goal for which it has been implemented; 2) exceed the deadline or the budget set for it; 3) didn’t lead to positive economic and operational results that outrun the costs of its implementation; 4) wasn’t perceived as a success by management nor by employees.<sup>22</sup>

Discussions about the reasons for the high failure rate often cover the persistent and tragic gap between management and employees, ‘silo’ formation, disunited employees, lack of mutual trust, and confusion about the course of action. In these cases, success has failed to materialize

because the process turned out differently than planned, with unforeseen situations, and reality appeared to be more complex than what was expected. When you think about it, these explanations are in itself enough reason for starting a new change program or to continue the ‘old’ one. As it seems, the more fundamental the problem, the more difficult the outcome is to predict, and the less certain the process is to be predicted. This is often not what executives want. In general, from their perspective, the ideal is a controlled, evidence-based approach, whereby its pre-defined outcome can, with some certainty, be guaranteed beforehand. This deems it a success.

From the managerial perspective, researchers have often attributed low rates of change success to excessive focus on change and inadequate attention to continuity forces<sup>23</sup>. Others have expressed that management of change can be better leveraged by managing continuity or stability forces consciously<sup>24</sup>. Drawing on these views, researchers addressing the ‘continuity and change’ paradigm posited back in the early 1990s that ‘all change serves continuity in organizations’<sup>25</sup>. A conceptual review of the extensive body of organizational change literature, suggests a clear shift in approach from trade-offs (either–or) to paradoxical thinking, reiterating the fact that ‘managing change is invariably managing paradoxes’. Amongst the various paradoxical approaches, the concept of ‘balancing change with continuity’ has gained momentum, and has the potential to provide a logical pathway in balancing contradictions in the ever-changing organizational context.<sup>26</sup>

In some cases, it is argued that management knows better than anyone else in what works

and what does not work in the organization, who will and who will not cooperate, and therefore which interventions will be successful and which ones will fail. The underlying assumption seems to be that management knows the way things are done, which they stand above, or are at least see themselves separate from. Often, management has become used to a certain approach to change, and are no longer able to critically investigate their favored approach, nor their assumptions behind it.

Blue prints, organizational charts and roadmaps all capture the way we sense the work. And as Weick (1993) argue “they help us identify and label what we see” (p.350). For example, an organizational chart helps us see who is at the center and who are at the periphery of information flows. However, as Weick continues, what these devices can’t do is capture how that sensed world came into being.<sup>27</sup> Or as Simon (1962) puts it, the basic problem in design is, given a blueprint, what is the corresponding recipe that will achieve it?<sup>28</sup> Blueprints are assumed to exert control over more of the design, roadmap and trajectory than is consistent with what we know about either organizations or people: “Architects may treat blueprints as givens, but people who improvise treat them as emergent.”<sup>29</sup>

Change management is heavily based on the assumption that once there is a strategic urgency, a mission, a program and some tactics, the work is done; all there is left to do is implementing the change. It can be argued that with every change approach there are certain

assumptions, and with that, a kind of underlying thinking that can cause all sorts of misalignment and errors which may be clever to be explored before the first intervention takes off. In this regard, it is interesting to see that a manager often has difficulties seeing that he or she not only has the solution (i.e. the change approach), but also (partly) causes or sustains the problem. Creating direct connections among people across the organization allows them to sidestep cumbersome hierarchal protocols and shorten the time it takes to get things done. It also fosters more direct and instant connections that allow employees to share important information, find answers quickly, and get help and advice from people they trust.<sup>30</sup> So, management is truly not only a necessity, but also to be seen as one of the stakeholders whose active participation is needed, for making the change effort to a success.

### 3. What are we managing when we are managing change?

During change, products have to be made, customers stay in need of service, and while changing, work processes have to keep running. Changing costs money, takes people’s time and capacity and makes the whole not only less flexible and adaptable during the change but also more vulnerable for structural financial losses. This is true for business but also for institutes, both profit and non-profit. Change and keeping things running are not per se compatible. According to Hawk and Zand (2014), “to maintain effectiveness and efficiency, management continually strives to fit activities into well-defined, routinely performed

tasks and procedures, that is, to move work from non-programmed to programmed tasks.” Ill-defined, non-routine, unpredictable, unique change issues, however, differ from and are more challenging than well-defined, routine, predictable, repetitive operational issues.<sup>31</sup> That is why, as Hawk and Zand continue, management tends to treat these non-routine, ambiguous change issues as 1) an impediment to high-volume production; 2) is motivated to ignore, delay, or reshape those issues to fit existing operations and minimally disrupt output, and 3) something non-existent.<sup>32</sup> From a managerial logic, when we want to manage both processes the first thing to do is to treat them as separated – or as Beer called it ‘apply them sequentially or simultaneously’<sup>33</sup>. Following this logic, underlying assumption is simple: it makes the change as well as the daily business easier to plan, handle and control. Therefore, to improve management’s decision processes, installing a parallel project organization may be an appropriate intervention. Such a parallel organization forms new networks that link authority levels, functional specialties, organizational units, and vital information sources in a collaborative, creative, inquiry process.<sup>34</sup>

A parallel project organization, contains at least two different stands: one based on a managerial logic, focusing on the daily operations and one based on a change logic, focusing on the temporary change targets.<sup>35</sup> Such a ‘parallelized’ or ‘compartmentalized’ way of managing change is mostly composed of people representing a cross section of the existing hierarchical levels, in which each hierarchical

level has its own team. For example, a steering team with executives for designing and controlling the process, and different work groups with members of the different divisions, departments and sections for the implementation<sup>36</sup>.

A parallel project organization is, since the beginning of the 1990s, the standard for implementing organizational change and is considered the most efficient governance structure for planning, monitoring and managing the change process. As such it has become synonymous with change management in general.<sup>37</sup> Although they are presented as two different and equal stands with each a logic of their own, the stand based on change logic is 1) stressing the process dynamics, including the mechanism through which the change is effected; 2) seen as subsidiary to the stand based on the managerial logic; and 3) as the change program continues, is proportional declining in relevance. As a result, and illustrated with our longitudinal research <sup>38</sup>, as the program continues, decisions made in the managerial stand are becoming more and more dominant, ultimately taken over every decision that has to be made in the whole program.

To sum up, ‘change management’ often comes down to this: the more differentiation, segmentation and separation, the more isolation and the more the actual change process becomes erratic and less able to be coordinated or to be controlled for that matter. In fact, as argued here, that what is actually managed, is not the process or the content of the change itself, but the interventions and the

way they are designed, plotted and applied. However, this is something completely different than ‘managing change’, being the transition in content of the change that comes about within a process and the changing context(s), in which it arrives. When we are managing interventions, mostly, the main considerations are ‘how to apply the interventions in such a way that people stay committed to the setout change goals’, or likewise: ‘how to keep the fire burning, causing change heading in the direction as intended.’ This is, however, something that can be done without copying the existing hierarchy into a parallel organization, or without controlling all aspects, and without designing the whole process from the beginning to the end. Moreover, in the end, change management is always about how the resulting, actual change contribute to the proper and better functioning of the organization as a whole. Therefore, what we intended with change management needs to be aligned with what is needed in every actual succeeding moment of the process.

#### 4. Towards an alternative way of looking at change management

A change process is not and cannot be merely a rational, analytic and pre-planned process. We humans do not see ourselves as physical particles that follow nicely set-out trajectories when we are ‘pushed’ to change.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, when we face unclear circumstances, we tend to do things more recursively and in cycles, moving along a lot but not seeming to function or operate in what is supposed to be the “right” direction. This is the typical behavior that most

of us associate with “resistance.” However, this kind of behavior is not exclusive to typical top-down planned change initiatives. Participative change initiatives can lead to initial enthusiasm, intense and widespread sense of ownership and unlocking lots of energy. However, as our own longitudinal research has pointed out, when management and consultants are working under false colors, eventually this can also be a certain recipe for enhancing inactive and cynical reactions<sup>40</sup>. Said so, it seems that the more we try to manage and control a change process, the more we seem to organize our way backward. The greater the efforts we invest in changing things for the better, the less we seem to achieve.

A typical recipe for a design of a change process sounds like this. Take a hierarchy and flatten it; take an executive committee and design the change process; find a dominant coalition and implement the intended change. In each case a starting point is specified – being the existing hierarchy or top-elite. And an action is also specified – flatten, design, and implement. But what is not specified in advance, are the interactions that will emerge as these actions and starting points are mixed together. Even when detailed blueprints supposedly drive the change process, this same open-ended quality is present.<sup>41</sup> Events are set in motion, but the orderliness, they will create remains to be discovered. Change, viewed from a non-managerial perspective, is more emergent, more continuous, more filled with surprise, more difficult to control, more tied to the emerging interactions, and more affected by what people pay attention to than the roadmap



or trajectory as designed by the pre-planned architecture. Even though this perspective may involve more uncertainty, as Weick (1993) suggests, it does not thereby become any less effective. Emergent, continuous designing is sensitive to small changes in local situations, which means the design is continuously updated as people, contexts and conditions change.

### 5. Taking an alternative – interactionist’ perspective

We experience change as we act, think, and reason. <sup>42</sup> These are in fact personal, introspective activities which, in themselves are no guarantee that change is happening as we engage in these activities. Observing change is not only a question of looking at an entity, a person or an organization. Change is also about human dynamics – it is about the little and big incidents, seeing patterns, happenings and experiences. These are things we humans often perceive as difficult to ‘see’, as chaotic, or at least as ambiguous. To understand change, we need to know ‘what is going on’ and therefore we have to be aware of a lot of things altogether, mostly at the same moment.

To take this line of reasoning a step further, things change as we speak, reflect and interact together with others. As such, it is to say that in the way our perception works it is almost impossible to know for sure that we are talking about actual change. In fact, to see change we have to compare the same entity or person, in different episodes of time and compare our

impressions with that of relevant others in the same (changing) context.

Change takes time, and since what we directly experience is very limited in duration, impressions fade away and become less trustworthy. We could tape the whole process on several video cameras from different angles, and discuss the raw footage; the whole entity and the whole process and the whole context. Of course, this option is for the time being, impossible, and taping the whole process with different video cameras is very time consuming and when edited also less trustworthy.

To conclude, we have to register change with our own perceptual abilities and shortcomings, and as a consequence we have to accept that we perceive change only when something has already happened, been reached or fulfilled. However, instead of changing things we can also change the way we perceive these things. In fact, things also change, perhaps even more fundamentally, when we succeeded in changing our own perception as a result of an ongoing interaction. This means changing the way we experience and perceive the world. For Keeney, changing one’s own perception is the deepest order of change that human beings are capable of demonstrating, which he calls “epistemological change.” It is not only the deepest order of change, but it is from an outsider’s perspective also the hardest to realize by others.<sup>43</sup>

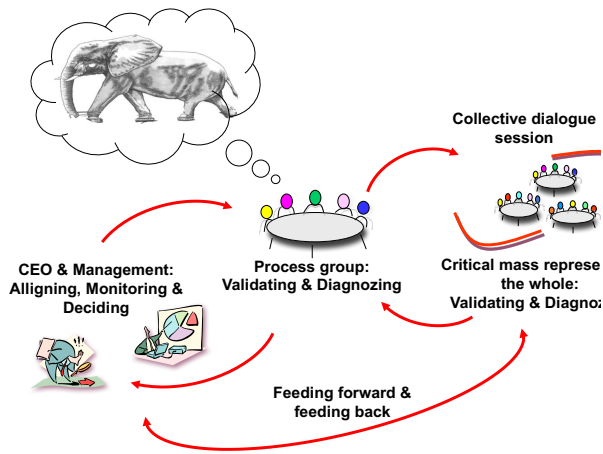
For organizational change to happen, we need to develop a common ground with those who have a stake regarding the change purpose.

Recent, extensive alternative change approaches such as ‘appreciative inquiry’, ‘open space’ and ‘World café’ are presented as not being constrained by traditional managerial assumptions.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, these change approaches meaningfully engage with processes of collective social change, mainly based on dialogue sessions using large group intervention techniques (Van Nistelrooij, et al., 2013). In essence, this is enabled by working with a process group, a cross section of all stakeholders; executives, managers as well as employees. Typically, such a process group, contains 15 to 20 people who are invited because of the change purpose matters to them, regardless their hierarchical position. As such, a process group is a temporary whole learning to engage in an equal and direct way with each other on change related subjects. This alternative way of managing change is about:

- representing the total social setting in alignment with the change purpose and in which the whole of meanings is represented by the participating members of the process group.
- a continuous process of participative inquiry and exploration, stimulating exchange and interaction between the different stakeholders, facilitated by professionals, who understand the differences between facilitating small and large groups and act accordingly.
- coming to an (inter)subjective reality that people create through their daily interaction with each other and not so much about a so-called objective reality as seen by one of the stakeholders.

- examining the perception, behavior, and communication processes with which the participants create their individual and organizational realities, and by doing so, coming to a common ground.
- observing what is happening as we work and interact, capturing and exchanging the observations with each other.
- meeting on a regular basis to reflect, classify, prioritize and select problems, and come up with possible solutions for the problems which are selected.
- validating the scope of the change process, the group’s boundaries, and the level of participation; and when decided to, prepare and compute the outcomes of the feedback of management and the collective dialogue sessions, in which every stakeholder has a role and not a position.

A process group works with an (project) assignment, content- and process related targets and it forms together with management the heart of a developing learning infrastructure as presented in **figure 1.**



**Figure 1** An alternative way of managing change

As illustrated in **Figure 1** the whole process is recursive, cyclic and iterative. It is not about a trajectory, but about a choreography in which only the moments of interactions are set out in the participants' agenda's. Moreover, there is not a certain linear chronological order, except that it is conditional that the process of a full cycle of alignment between the management and process group meetings proceeds an eventual collective dialogue session. Mostly, the meetings with management and process group are happening roughly at the same moment in time. In which it is advisable that a represent of management is a full member of the process group.

The loop between management and process group plays an important role during the first encounters, in defining the scope, the demarcation of the whole of stakeholders, the level of participation and the purpose. Thereby constructing a "differential diagnosis" of the "current reality" of that particular moment in

time. The loops, as well as the whole process, as illustrated in **Figure 1**, can be repeated endlessly. With every new start, participants start with a new purpose, construct a new shared "current reality", demarcate a new group of stakeholders and probably also a new composition of the process group that fits qua context with the new change purpose. For each dialogue session, the process group prepares a program, with for each part of the program a change issue related to the agreed-upon change purpose. The various program parts are arranged into a sequence in which people build up, in real time, a common data set. Mostly it is a sequence in which people exchange images in various themes related to the relevant change issues, and eventually exchange meanings and come to a final proposition for a decision. A process group just orchestrates these kinds of process movements, as a choreography through which participants "learn to dance" with each other.

Working with a process group makes it possible to deal with complex and chaotic contexts in which non-linear interactions seem to generate paradoxical patterns, and in which no clear answers exists. Because all stakeholders and their relationships are present, it is possible to identify in real time, distinct sets of problems that need to be addressed, even though ultimately the problems are entangled.**50** Moreover, we can pull these problems apart and explore them while being mindful of the whole that they together constitute. Working with such a learning infrastructure, is based on a different division of labor, different coordination principles, a different facilitation

approach and as such for the most of us, a completely different way of working all together. It is a proven social technology for taking advantage of emerging adaptive and recursive behaviors.<sup>45</sup>

## 6. Some closing reflections

First, change management is a well-known label and a well spread common practice. Second, the performance of change management appears to be disappointing. This seems to imply that a third conclusion may also be warranted as Clegg and Walsh (2004, p. 219) suggest - that, despite having a great deal of practice, many organizations are not very good at change management. Presented as such, 'change management' is an interesting, but also a curious 'paradoxical' phenomenon, because of 1) it is presented as the most effective way to realize organizational change while it has this record of high failure rate, proving the opposite; and 2) as we want our organizations to be flexible and adaptable, we try to realize this in an opposite way; pre-planned and without any space to adapt to the changing context in progress. In one word, 'change management' seem to be more about the ideal than about the actual situation.

From a managerial logic, organizational change is presented as a clean, linear, and somewhat mechanistic process. Which may be true for organizations that are very cohesive from top to bottom, inside and out, and if everyone agrees on where the organization ought to be headed and how to get there.<sup>46</sup> Which, for most organizations is the problem in the first place. Organizational change is meant to be altering

the way people think and act. Therefore, change management is not only about the content and planning the process; it is also about how you go about winning people over. Interesting in this regard, is the argument of By, Burnes and Oswick (2011, p.2), that "change management seems to be guilty, of conflating organizational change with 'change managers' and overemphasizing actors over acts."<sup>47</sup> However, the idea that management is something that only leaders or executives do is undermined by recent notions as 'distributed leadership', 'management 3.0', 'co-creation', and 'stewardship.'<sup>48</sup> Notions which drew attention to the fact that management is not only an actor, but also a role, based on activities, pervasive in everyday operations undertaken by a network of stakeholders. In like manner, paraphrasing By et al (2011), we could reframe change management as a "micro-situated, every day, distributed practice rather than temporarily perpetuating the dominant perspective during the time period of executing a change program, treated as a strategic tool deployed by key actors in the corporate hierarchy."<sup>49</sup>

## References

1. Disclaimer: This is a non-published paper in progress which most probably contains typo's, language errors and other anomalies. The copyright lies entirely with the author dr. Antonie van Nistelrooij.
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described the elephant in different ways, depending on which part they had touched, and all declared that their description was the correct one. Obviously, none of their descriptions is totally wrong per se, but neither are they totally correct – they describe only one part of an elephant. Like the blind men attempting to describe an elephant, we tend to look at change from our own perspective, which is shaped by our disciplinary background and experience. Source: Ibid. 12, p. 4. However, the same

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