Abstract

Purpose

Change is difficult and yet necessary. Up to 80% of changes are seen as failures (Kerney, 1999). Change is an important issue that will affect most organizations sooner or later. Change can be regarded as something initiated and driven by management, top-down, or change can be based on the needs of the employees, work redesign. Depending on chosen approach change is surrounded by different problems and opportunities. This paper investigates the relations between top down change approach and a change approach based on work redesign.

How do the above mentioned change approaches relate to each other?

Are they interconnect able or are there intermediate aspects?

Methodology/Approach

This paper discusses if and to what extent the two different approaches could benefit from each other and, based on a case study, if the different approaches are interconnect able or if there are intermediate aspects.

Findings

Both Top down and work redesign changes omit both the other perspective and the role of politics in changes. The empirical data shows that politics play an important role and should be taken into consideration in an change situation.

Originality/Value of paper

This paper connects the top down and work redesign perspectives and in that process gives a better understanding of the dynamics of change for both perspectives

Keywords: Top down, Work redesign, Politics, Change

Research paper
Introduction

Change is difficult, despite different models and many decades of research the hard fact is that a majority of change initiatives fail. For example data presented by Harari (1993), show that between 67% and 80% of TQM programs in United States and Europe have failed. Similar figures are presented by Jacobs (2002) who refers to an A.T. Kearney (1999) study that illustrates that only 20% of change projects are successful, while 63% fail to make sustainable improvements and 17% have no impact whatsoever. Change can be contemplated from at least two different perspectives, the top down perspective and the individual perspective. Using the top down perspective change has been seen as coming automatically when introducing TQM if only top management shows a strong commitment for quality issues (Bergman & Klefsjö, 1991). Another view on top down changes is that if only the management show sustainability then the change will come (Repenning, 2002). From the individual perspective it is argued that organizations change only if individuals change Hughes (2006), so the interesting question is how to change individuals. Hackman and Oldham (1980) treats this question and their answer is that an adaption between the needs of the worker and the characteristics of the job (work redesign) will change worker attitude and behavior. The top down approach and the work redesign approach seeks answers to the same problem but from totally different angles. This paper discusses if and to what extent the two different approaches could benefit from each other and, based on a case study, if the different approaches are interconnectable or if there are intermediate aspects.

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the relations between top down change approach and a change approach based on work redesign. And if possible develop a common framework. How do the above mentioned change approaches relate to each other? Are they interconnectable or are there intermediate aspects? The paper is structured as follows. First the theoretical framework is outlined, which discusses change, work redesign and cultural changes. Then the research design is described. The following section present empirical data. The paper is based on an ethnographic study combined with 16 interviews. Finally the conclusions are drawn and the scientific contribution highlighted.

Frame of reference

A change is not a change is not a change.

Specific changes in specific organizations will always be unique (Hughes 2006). A change always has a starting position, a goal and is run by a number of individuals affecting a group of individuals. Some individuals can be part of both the “running” and “being affected” group (Hackman & Wageman, 2000). Sometimes the whole group affected by the change take part in the “running”. A change is performed within a cultural context and there are different environments surrounding the change.

In terms of change scope the situation can be described as a tiny path with huge ditches on both sides, on one side is the slogans only ditch (Hackman & Wageman, 2000) on the other side is the taking more than you can chew ditch where the changes are bigger than accepted within the organization (cf Bohlman & Deal, 1997). There might be situations where no path exists. So to investigate and put effort in improving the change situation is an essential part of change work.
Here an important stand has to be taken, the name of the path is not important, might it be TQM-trail, BPR-rift or Lean-pass. The organizations ability to perform the climbing is more relevant than the path chosen (cf Swartling, 2007). The subject treated here is change competence this can be applied to different kinds of change, even if changes are different the need for change competence still remains. An important part of change competence is the competence of change agents (those who are to implement the change). The change agents competence is high if they have done research to select the right types of change, considered different options with respect to implementing the change, had provided valid arguments to justify the change and could answer employee questions about the change (Cinite et al, 2009).

There is no panacea for how to perform changes in an organization (Hackman, Oldham 1979). All organizations have their own set of values and beliefs and are staffed with individuals. The need for major adoption to the organization that is to be changed is to a great extent overlooked in the QM literature. Change is not problematized all but seen as something that more or less happens by itself or only with minor problems. As an example “the vehicle that conveyed techniques developed in the private sector to the public sector was extremely efficient (Kaboolian, 2000 page 146) and “Within 1 year of the Executive order to adopt TQM, 88,5% of the Department of Defense managers were familiar with the concept” (Kaboolian, 2000 page 146). Another view is that it is focusing on elimination of problems instead of working harder will lead to sustainable improvements (Repenning & Stearman, 2000). If it is that easy why do 67-80% of TQM projects fail. One part of the explanation is that rhetoric win over substance, in many TQM programs the hard-to-implement parts are being ignored until only the slogans remain (Hackman& Wageman, 2000). Another part of the explanation might be that different change programs have little effect if they were not combined with changes in existing structures, power relations, human resource practices and production systems (Kochan, Rubinstein, 2000). In such an environment the change process shifts from one controlled by a top-down strategy to one involving different groups that share power, in these settings the top-down models lose their predictive power and practical effects (Kochan, Rubinstein, 2000). So there is an obvious need for a top down perspective since most (if not almost all) changes are initiated and given resources from the top but a top down perspective is however not sufficient it would benefit from being combined with a work redesign perspective as the changes progresses and effects existing structures, power relations, human resource practices and production systems. In too many organizations the question is what philosophy to implement, not if the situation is suitable for implementation of any change initiative at all. Many improvement initiatives might have benefited from not being put into practice. (cf Hackman, Oldham 1979). The risks with a failed improvement initiative is not only waste of resources within the particular initiative but also increased difficulties for the next initiative since failed initiatives will contribute to improvement initiative fatigue (Asif et al, 2009).

**Work Redesign**

The two lower steps in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs show similarities with the hygiene factors of Hertzberg the three higher steps can be connected to the Hertzberg motivators (Bruzelius & Skärvad, 2004). In the same fashion it is possible to connect the Hertzberg theories to the Hackman & Oldham (1980) motivational model. The hygiene factors can be found in the “context satisfaction” moderator and the motivators can be found in the moderator growth need strength and also in the job characteristics autonomy and feedback. Since most of the Hertzberg theory is incorporated in the
Hackman & Oldham motivational model that model will be the starting point for this overview of the motivational theories. The Hackman & Oldham motivational model is shown in figure 1. The model is based on different characteristics from work itself, and these characteristics will affect different psychological states and these states will generate different outcomes (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). The strength of the connections is affected by individual parameters (moderators). The core job characteristics are skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback. Skill variety is the demand for different kinds of skill and competence that the job puts on the operator. Task identity is to what extent the operators can see how their part fits in the whole picture. Task significance is the impact the work has on the well being of other people. These three job characteristics affect the critical psychological state (CPS) experienced meaningfulness of the work. Autonomy is to what extent the operator has the freedom to decide on how work is to be done and in what sequence. This affects the CPS experienced responsibility for the outcomes of the work. Feedback is knowing the actual result of the job, preferably by feedback from job itself, as when you repair something and you test it and it works. This affects the CPS knowledge of actual outcome of the work. The moderators are knowledge and skill, growth need strength and context satisfaction. Knowledge and skill is the actual competence the individual have for performing the specific task. Growth need strength is the individuals need to improve and develop themselves beyond their current position. Context satisfaction is closely related to Hertzberg’s hygiene factors, things that are not fulfilled and thereby decreasing motivation, examples include low salary, low level of safety at work etc. (Hackman, Oldham, 1980)

Figure 1 The Hackman & Oldham motivational model (Hackman & Oldham, 1980)
One way of investigate the appropriateness of work redesign is to ask the following questions (Hackman, Oldham 1980).

Q1 Is there a problem or an exploitable opportunity?
Q2 Does the problem or opportunity centrally involve employee motivation, satisfaction or work effectiveness?
Q3 Might the design of the work be responsible for observed problems?
Q4 What aspects of the job most need improvement?
Q5 How ready are the employees for change?
Q6 How hospital are organizational systems to needed changes?

Hackman & Oldham (1980) specifically covers the area of work redesign with the purpose of increasing motivation and thereby increasing efficiency, quality and the individuals need for learning. As starting point the use the assumption that all individuals are different and it is important to match individual needs with job characteristics. However this is not a new approach Taylor (1911) also stressed the importance of finding the right person for a specific job but when Taylor stressed adaption of individual to the needs of the job within work redesign it’s more adapt the job to the needs of the individual.

**QM approach to change**

“QM is not just at strategy. It must be a new style of working, even a new style of thinking. A dedication to quality and excellence is more than good business. It is a way of life giving something back to society, offering your best to others”

(George Bush, in Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Application Guidelines, 1992, p1)

The above quotation clearly shows that QM has cultural implications, even though the theories within culture is not used as base when it comes to implementing QM. In QM the top management support acts as force for driving the QM implementation, stressing the communication and reinforcement of values (Dean and Bowen, 2000). The reinforcement of values has a strong connection to company culture since values is the among the core qualities of culture, see figure 2.
The basic assumptions are the core of the culture, followed by the values, norm, behavioral patterns and artifacts (Schein, 1992). QM affects the basic assumptions, based on this the whole culture will change. The change in culture is the means to implement changes within QM. Quality culture is a subset of organizational culture and as such is has to be within the boundaries provided by the organizational culture. Prime movers of organizational culture are where management focuses attention, what is rewarded and which areas that resources are allocated to (Bruzelius & Skärvad, 2004). The gradual change from a culture of error detection to a culture of error prevention and finally to a culture of continuous creative quality as observed by Cameron & Barnett (2000) supports the assumption that changes in culture are slow and gradual. The area of interest is how the QM change recipe based on empowerment customer focus, the participation of everyone and a change of the quality culture relates to the more individual based view of Hackman & Oldham (1980).

**Politics**

Politics has for a long time not been regarded at all in change models. However investigations show that politics within a company definitely exists (Buchanan & Badham, 2008). The reasons for political behavior are twofold, individuals or groups that want to increase their power in an environment that has unclear power balance or during changes when individuals or groups want to protect the existing structures/interests (Buchanan & Badham, 2008). Political behavior can be used both to gain power/influence and not to lose it. Examples of political behavior are.

More common tactics

- Building a network of useful contacts
- Using “key players” to support initiatives
- Making friends with power brokers
- Bending the rules to fit the situation
- Self-promotion, publicizing successes

Less common tactics

- Finding someone else to blame for mistakes
- Claiming credit for the work of others
- Conceding minor issues to win major goals
- Using social society to discover opinions
- Using others to deliver bad news
- Deliberately withholding useful information
- Highlighting other people’s errors and flaws
- Using delaying tactics to block others
- Breaking the rules to achieve objectives
- Compromising now to win future favors

Rare tactics

- Using misinformation to confuse others
- Spreading false rumors to undermine others
- Keeping dirt files to blackmail others
Although politics to a lesser or greater extent is common in many organizations it is a hard subject to research since the sensitivity of the issues makes few organizations willing to participate in a study. Even if you do get access then not being totally honest (as indicated above) is a part of political behavior so there is definitely a risk that in a highly political organization you get political answers describing the situation slightly twisted.

As earlier mentioned (Cinite et al, 2009) the role of the change agent is important, this view is shared within the political perspective (cf Buchanan & Badham, 2008) but within the political perspective the reasons for the importance is different, here the change agent is to maneuver in the political landscape using different skills and tools.

**Change based on work redesign versus QM based changes**

The individual based change and cultural based changes both complement and expand each other. The individual based change core job characteristics can be related to the cultural change approach. The task significance and the feedback from job(using agents) is at least to some extent positively related to customer focus, better knowledge concerning customers needs will increase knowledge concerning the importance and contribution of the product. If the customer satisfaction is monitored and the result can be connected and distributed to the individual worker the feedback from job (using agent) will increase. When kaizen and other improvement methods are introduced (and used) the demand for different skills will increase and as a result the skill variety also increases. As a result of QM the autonomy in most cases decreases as earlier pointed out by Hackman & Wageman (2000). Concerning the moderators, knowledge and skill is affected by the extent the organization focus resources to increased employee competence. The vital role of learning in change work is supported by Oliver (2009) and Swartling (2007). The GNS was regarded as an individual fixed parameter (Hackman, Oldham, 1980) however later research has shown that that GNS can change over time and people working with kaizen activities increase their GNS (Cheser, 1993)). Context satisfaction is to a low extent affected by QM, unless the increases in efficiency results in layoffs, in such a case the level of context satisfaction will decrease.

Relating the QM cultural change approach to the Hackman & Oldham motivational model it is obvious that the cultural aspects are neglected within the latter. Changing norms and values and thereby affecting the basic assumptions is powerful change enhancer. Working with symbolic actions such as engineers and managers participating in the car assembly work (cf MacDuffie, 2000)) “were all here to build cars” (value/basic assumption) and that problem solving meetings take place where they occur, with the operator working there starting up the meeting and defining the problem (norms) are illustrations. When a strong organizational culture is lacking the culture among groups can be quite different (Hamada, 2000).

The different perspectives, top down and work redesign are used to analyze the situation at Type Co with focus on the major change beginning in 2002 and the evolvement of the current situation. The different perspectives are more (or less) relevant during different parts of the scrutinized time period and there are phenomena that are not explained by either of the perspectives.
Method

From a methodological viewpoint this paper has a long and winding road. It started with a literature survey concerning Lean and was to be continued with working and performing interviews at a company that was regarded as Lean. A company that had been recognized in several articles as a Lean company was contacted. However during the period I worked it turned out that the company was far from lean, instead it was an example of a rather political organization with an interesting change history. So back to the literature to do some more reading and a new frame of reference that was based in the empirical data. From a methodological viewpoint the paper went from being deductive to being inductive. The paper is based on a literature survey and a one week ethnographical study at a company (Type Co) combined with 16 semi structured interviews. The areas for interview questions were “improvement work”, “Managing change”, “connection strategy and improvement work”, “Cultural mapping” and “Differences in leadership between Type Co and other companies”. The interviews lasted between half an hour and three hours. The position of the interviewed ranged from managers to operators. All members of the management board except for the president were interviewed. The Interviews were filmed to provide information not only on what had been said but also the accompanying body language. The ethnographical part consisted as earlier mentioned of one week at the workshop floor working at the departments for pre-assembly, assembly and material handling. The ethnographical approach is rather time consuming but might present a less biased picture then given by interviews. The ethnographical part of the study also gave some input to the interview questions.

A case study is an empirical investigation that studies a current phenomenon in its real context and is especially suitable when the borders between the phenomena and the context are unclear (Yin, 2006). In this empirical data case the phenomenon, the informal aspects of the organization, is the context so it can be discussed if there is a border between phenomena and context at all.

The degree of generalization differs between the conclusions, the relationship between the change approaches within QM and work redesign and the presence of a political phenomena that can affect change work has a high degree of generizability but that political phenomena has the same impact as in the case study has a low degree of generizability (if any)
Empirical data

For the purpose of anonymity data that could identify the company or individuals has been changed. The descriptions of different phenomena naturally remain unchanged. Initially the purpose with visiting Type Co was to investigate the characteristics of Lean leadership. Type Co had been mentioned as a Lean company in several articles. Production figures had risen from seven to eight units a week to seven to eight units a day, this sharp increase in production figures was connected to a Lean approach.

The Case of Type Co

The change at Type Co

In 2002 Type Co was losing money, had a bad reputation as being among the worst employer in the region. The products were built in a handicraft sort. The production of each unit was made at one spot and involved a lot of welding. The store was in the cellar of the building and the operators collected the materials needed by them. Efficiency was real low. The sheet metal department had recently been outsourced. A new managing director was hired and the first day she both had a meeting with the directorate and participated in the work at the workshop floor. The need for change was obvious. Initially the product was redesign and based on riveting instead of welding. This work was carried out by the product development department. There was a low degree of involvement of the operators. When the new design was ready the production flow was changed to a paced production line. The change was introduced top-down with small (if any) possibility for the operators to influence the solution. To get a mutual understanding of the new production concept all employees played the Lean game. A sharp increase in demand was encountered from the beginning of 2005. The improvement work was to a great extent the result of the energy and activities of one person. The person responsible for the operational development managed to get operators engaged and in some cases managed to get highly unmotivated individuals to use their energy for productive purposes. However this person was moved to another position where she became responsible for production technology and as the only white collar employee had her office close to the production area.

Culture at Type Co

The first day of workshop floor work I was puzzled the tempo was low, there were no signs of improvement work except for some whiteboard with measurements far from target and no date for the next improvement group meeting. I was first joining a group of operators at a subassembly station. They seemed to do their job, no more and no less. The next day I started up at another subassembly. The operator at this station had been employed 40 years at the company. After a few hours on this subassembly I moved to the assembly line. I started working at the first station (of four) of the assembly line. This was quite different from the subassemblies. There was a team that worked really hard and concentrated when the product arrived at their station. When they were finished they took a long break, waiting for the next product to arrive. The waiting/producing ratio was above 1. This was not an ordinary situation since the station was designed for two operators and at this particular time we were 4 (including me). At this station the culture was “helping out” and all individuals worked hard until all work was done at that specific product. One summer worker worked at this station and he was invited to and participated in the work as well as the ordinary employees.
The second assembly station was the bottleneck. The variation in work content was substantial and there was no leveling of workload. At this the culture was totally different, one operator focused one working while the other was absent for long periods of time. The culture here was more of “cover for me”. At one instance a operator thought there was a shortage of material and found that positive, however there were no shortage since another technical solution was used (the person acting as a knowledge base came by and informed the operators). This was a clear case of real low motivation. One interesting happening was when it was obvious that station 2 was not going to be able to keep up with the pace then the operators at station 1 made all the station 2 work on a product. So in this particular case they expanded their “helping out” culture to comprise station 2 as well.

At the third assembly station there was a new interesting culture. Here I was instructed to do a certain task, a rather tricky one that involved adjustments. When I performed this work the ordinary operators just took a long break or worked real slow. At this station there was a summer worker as well but she spent most of her time sitting on a chair. There was a clear underutilization of her ability. She was not given orders on what to do and did not take any initiatives herself.

The daily production rate was eight units (one each hour). There were difficulties with keeping this pace and seven units for a day was a common result. This particular day eight units had been produced and it was still 45 minutes left of the workday. I received a message from several ordinary operators not to work, that eight was enough, “slow down”, “take it easy”.

The final station was testing. Testing was done by specialists and I did not take part in that activity.

Among operators there was a wish that supervisors should treat those who loiter harder, “After the morning meeting we are supposed to start working but several individuals go out and take a smoke and the supervisor do nothing”. As a consequence the willingness to help out is decreased “it’s always the same individuals that are late because they moon, why should we help them?”. Another quote was “there can be seven persons watching two persons work” concerning that operators only did their own work with no thoughts about the whole picture.

During the interviews there were specific questions about if there was a special Type Co Spirit, but no one thought that there was such a thing.

Politics

In the office the political issues were more visible than in the workshop. One individual had spread a false rumor that another individual had blast a salesperson from another company. This rumor spread around the company among most of the employees but the one who were accused for the blasting had no idea. It was reviled when a Type Co employee meet the salesperson from the other company and apologized. The salesperson had no idea what she was talking about. This incident was described by two individuals from different angles. “A civil war is among the worst things within a company”. In a later situation one of the two persons involved in the conflict should scrutinize the other persons work. Another conflict was when one person demonstrated access to higher knowledge then the competence source of the company in a rather central technical issue.

Two individuals, one manager and one subordinate had a rather complex relation, they socialized privately and spoke in terms of sisterhood but at work the manager treated the subordinate rather
unfriendly. The subordinate was previously responsible for the operational development but was needed in another project, the responsibility for running the operational development was put on the supervisors but that work was low in priority compared to meeting production targets.

Analysis
The analysis is divided into three different parts, first the changes at Type Co are analyzed as a top-down change, secondly the changes are analyzed from a work-redesign perspective and thirdly phenomena that are not covered by any of those perspectives are highlighted.

The change as a top-down phenomena
The 2002 change to a paced production line was a clear example of a top-down change. The first line managers and the operators were not involved at all in the design of the change but were just faced with the new production concept. That the change was successful (in terms of increasing productivity) can be explained by that the new manager had a clear understanding of the efficiency of one-piece-flow and that the economical crisis of the company contributed to a low degree of resistance. Top-down changes are to affect the culture of the company and thereby affect the values and basic assumptions of the individuals. In the case of Type Co the organisational culture is weak, none of the interviewed thought that there was a special Type Co spirit and there were great differences in behavior between different parts of the assembly line. The lack of a strong company culture results in a limited penetrating power for the change. Since there were different norms (and probably different basic assumption) at the different stations at the assembly line the culture at Type Co is heterogeneous. A heterogeneous culture is often a sign of weak company culture since individuals carry their own values and beliefs into the work life situation (Hamada, 2000). Apart from changes in behavior imposed by the new production system there are few cultural changes. The top down change has not affected the values or basic assumptions and thereby fails to explain the growing of continuous improvement activities.

The change from a work redesign perspective
The change situation at Type Co was characterized by crisis, since they were losing money and parts of the company had been outsourced. There was no complacency and the shared basic assumption was that the survival of the company was threatened. In such a case the resistance to change is low. From a more individual perspective, using the six questions from Hackman & Oldham most aspects the situation was favorable for change.

Q1 There was definitely a problem
Q2 The problem involved work effectiveness and employee motivation
Q3 The design of work was to a high degree responsible for the observed problems
Q4 The formerly way of working was better on four out of five aspects on the Hackman & Oldham motivational model, higher demands for skill variety, better task identity (making the whole product), unchanged task significance, higher autonomy and unchanged feedback from job.
Q5 Since there was a crisis the employees were prepared for a change.
Q6 The crisis lowered the level of hospitality from the organizational systems.

An interesting observation is that the formerly design of work is far better from the Hackman & Oldham motivational model perspective than the current design since the levels of autonomy and skill variety has decreased. From a Hackman & Oldham motivational perspective things have gone worse in these aspects. However the introduction of continuous improvement activities provided the operators with a possibility to increase the fulfillment of their growth need strength and also the improved situation of the company probably increased the context satisfaction since the risk of being fired decreased. When the immediate crisis was solved the answers to the above mentioned questions were altered significantly, but the continuous improvement work consisted. The work redesign perspective can show that there was a need for a need for a change but the introduced change in itself was not designed in accordance with the work redesign framework and the impact on the core job characteristics were mostly negative. So in this particular case the crisis seems to be a stronger positive factor then the worsening of the core job characteristics. However the fall in continuous improvement activities did not appear when the crisis was solved, but rather when the responsibility for the continuous improvement work was shifted to the first line managers.

**Unexplained phenomena**

Why did an employee spread false rumors to discredit another employee? What were the main reasons behind the deterioration of the continuous improvement? To spread false rumors is an example of politics within an organization (Buchanan et al, 2008). The purpose is to undermine the confidence for the individual within the organization. The changed position for the operational development responsible meant that focus on operational development questions disappeared and for the supervisors this issue was less important in relation to production goals. That the transfer of responsibility was badly organized made the situation worse. Within the organization there was a focus on expansion and increased efficiency. See too that the successful lean approach is discontinued is, based on this, not logical. The managing director herself focused on the importance of demand for improvement from management based on her background as production manager in another company “if you ask for production figures a focus on production figures is what you will get” yet there was low demand from management. It can be argued that the decisions that lead to the decline of the improvement work was just a result of limited knowledge, that there was a conviction that the improvement work was so mature that it did not need any special attention. This is however not in line with that the managing director on a direct question about the competence among the operators said that it was very low. Another explanation is that a more short term projects needed resources, but the responsible for the operational development did not have any special knowledge within the area of that specific knowledge. Another employee had many earlier worked as an inspector on this type of equipment, so concerning knowledge within that field he was clearly superior.

If not being logical then other explanations ought to be sought for. In this particular case the young female working as responsible for the operational development had both made a success but at the same time challenged the existing power and knowledge system. It is probably no coincidence that false rumors were spread about her. Having a special relation with the managing director helped in terms of getting changes implemented but at the same time made the challenge towards the existing system bigger. Moving her the a less central position in terms of influence both affected the
efficiency of the improvement work and lessened the threat towards the existing power structures. Since she now has her office in one part of the factory and all other offices are in a separate building at the opposite end the exclusion clearly visible.

Conclusions

From the frame of reference it is clear that QM changes are introduced from a top down perspective using top management support to change the different layers of culture. In order to succeed there is a need of a change of mindset among the individuals affecting the basic assumptions. The frame of reference also shows that the work redesign change approach is based on the needs of the individual and omits the top management support and cultural issues. The empirical data shows that crisis is an important change facilitator and that politics played in important role in why change work at Type Co has come to a halt.

That a clear majority of improvement approaches fail is not surprising since theories within the field of work redesign or QM only treats simplified different aspects of a whole that is rather complicated. Work redesign focuses on the individual needs and how the fulfillment of these affects the individual behavior. QM focuses on top management support and affecting the culture. As seen in the Type Co case there is also a political dimension that might affect the change. In the Type Co case it affected the sustainability of the change. The aspect can be hindering, as in the Type Co case, they can also facilitate a change but the important issue is that they can have an impact. That is not to say that these factors always have an impact but since they can have one they ought to be investigated as a part of change preparations and during the lapse of the change. Both QM and change management would benefit from seeing the world as in figure 4 where there are three aspects to consider when planning a change, culture, politics and pacts and individual aspects.
That politics occur might not come as a surprise. An interesting question is why politics occur. Bolman & Deal (1997) claims that politics is a result of tight resources and disagreement within an organization, goals and decisions is the result negotiations, bargaining and tricks in order to reach favorable positions. Liu et al (2010) sees politics as a means for individuals to increase their career growth potential so their views agree. In Type Co this does not seem to be the primarily explanation. It seems as if the young female challenged different individuals and their position. Here politics seems more of defending a position (which implies power) than the power itself. As such it becomes more of a threat. It seems that there are two sides, politics to win and politics not to lose. This finding fits well with the politics for defending existing structures from Buchannan & Badham (2008).

**Managerial Implications**

In the case of Type Co there were elements of both a Top-Down and work redesign approach. In this particular case change strategy is not an either or but rather using both approaches. Regardless the initial strategy it is important consider and analyze the change from the other change approach perspective and thus get a more complete picture. The picture will however not be sufficiently complete if the issue of politics is not treated. It is difficult or even impossible to run changes only top down since the basic assumptions of the employees change slowly and seldom as a result of external pressure but on the other hand it is also difficult to run changes only bottom up since there
will no resources and less strategic thinking. So most successful changes iterate between bottom up and top down or vice versa. However both perspectives disregard the political factor within changes and politics do play a vital role in many change approaches.

*Changing to Lean is a political process* (Liker, 2008 p 427)

Other changes are probably no exception to that rule.

References


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