

An exploration of organisational readiness for change within a municipal utilities company

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Abstract

The research presented in this thesis is an exploration of readiness for change within a municipal energy supplier. The literature review revealed a particular gap of the concept of organisational readiness for change in the context of public sector companies with specific characteristics that may impede change. With a high rate and intensity of change due to radical changes within that industry, especially energy suppliers are under increasing pressure to adapt. Increasing forces for change combined with little change experience created an extreme context for the research presented.

The concept of organisational readiness was chosen as the research focus with the aim to account for these characteristics and environmental specifics. The work of key authors in this field, including Armenakis and collaborating authors (Armenakis & Harris, 2009, 2002; Armenakis, Bernerth, Pitts & Walker, 2007; Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999; Armenakis & Fredenberger, 1997), Holt et al. (2007) and Mossholder et al. (2000) provided the main theoretical basis for the research.

The research objectives were to gain a richer understanding of managers' and other employees' perceptions and beliefs concerning Stadtwerke Bielefeld's readiness for change and key issues for successful change implementation. I adopted a constructivist paradigm with the focus on meanings and understanding using a qualitative approach and a local knowledge case study as the research design. The main element of the data collection was semi-structured interviews with a sample of senior managers identified as key informants, in order to interpret the phenomena in their unique setting. This was complemented by a questionnaire-based survey of non-managerial employees' assessments of readiness for change. The focuses of the applied content analysis were the context and the understanding of the situation as a whole.

A striking finding among the management sample was a predominant focus on the rational side of leadership and a lack of acknowledgement of emotional aspects of change and its implementation. While in broad terms the non-management employees generally shared the managers' confidence that change could

successfully be implemented, there were significant and thus enriching differences at the detail level between the perceptions and beliefs of the two groups.

The research makes a significant contribution to the understanding of change in public sector organisations. A methodology for change readiness assessment and analysis for these companies is proposed and successfully implemented during the research project. A notable finding was the very different and sometimes contradictory perspectives of managers and employees regarding readiness for change, which demonstrated the value of conducting research within two different groups of organisation members.

Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisors, Hilarie Owen and Gerald Watts for their inspiration, feedback and guidance in my research journey. Further I would like to thank as well the other academics, who gave me the chance to discuss my research topic and procedure or certain aspect of it, to find my way and to see where junctions on the journey may lead to.

Moreover, I owe special thanks to Stadtwerke Bielefeld and especially my former line manager Franz Deimel and our former chief executive officer Wolfgang Brinkmann for their support and encouragement to pursue with the idea to apply for a doctorate programme and for offering me the chance to research my own employer as a case study. Going along with that I would like to thank all the interviewees for their willingness to participate, their openness and their time.

Finally, I have to say thank you to all my friends who supported me with offering time for professional discussions, encouragement in times of frustration and demotivation and for their friendly and supportive discussions *not* about the research to clear my mind from time to time.

Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of the thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

Signed:

Date:

26/06/2015

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Abbreviations

Abbreviations

CO ₂	Carbon Dioxide
EEX	European Energy Exchange AG, Germany
NoI	Number of interviewees mentioning a certain point then
NoR	Number of references made in total to a certain point
OD	Organisation Development
OL	Organisational Learning
SAP HR	Module HR standing for Human Resources of the SAP / R3 enterprise resource planning system of SAP SE, Walldorf
SPD	Social Democratic Party of Germany
SWB	Stadtwerke Bielefeld

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1 Introduction

Organisational change has a long history in the management literature and there are numerous articles, books and papers in what has become a substantial field of knowledge. It is now a widely accepted tenet that organisations need to adapt continuously to their changing environments in order to stay in business. With increasing rates of change in business environments, an effective management of change processes is becoming more and more important, while at the same time the rate of failure of change programmes is high. Many authors who address organisational change argue that the frequency of changes and the need for change has increased over the last decades or state that change is an ongoing organisational process (Kraus, 2014; Van de Ven & Sun, 2011; Beer, 2009).

Relevant changes in the environment of the company cause the necessity to adapt in order to retain the strategic fit of the business (Beer, 2009; Meyer, 1990). Given a situation, where certain environmental changes in an industry are foreseeable or already beginning to cause the need for change, the following questions arise: will the environmental changes cause the imperative for organisational change? If so, how can a change process best be prepared and implemented?

1.1 Transition of the energy industry

Due to transnational goals for climate protection, the German government released CO₂ reduction objectives. Until 2040 CO₂ emissions should be reduced by 40% compared to the year 1990 (Bundesministerium für Umwelt, 2013). In addition to those national reduction objectives the operating permits of nuclear power plants were taken back to the original compromise of the former SPD / Die Grünen exit resolution (atom consensus) of the year 2000 as a result of a massively reduced acceptance among the population for the nuclear technique after the disastrous catastrophe of Fukushima in 2011 (Deutschland, 2011, 2000). Therefore, power generation technology is needed based on renewable energies or with low CO₂ emissions. In addition to that power generating capacity within Germany is on average approaching the end of its life cycle (studies of the union for the co-

ordination of transmission of electricity expect a capacity bottleneck from 2015 onwards (RWE, 2007)). The conversion of the power generation system to a system with more renewable energies goes along with a huge need for investment in power lines, since the locations of power generation are changing and power needs to be transported from the location of generation to its consumption. This massive need for conversion of the entire system as it used to exist and resulting immense need for investment may be subsumed as the transition of the energy industry.

Looking at the micro level of single energy suppliers, the traditional business model is no longer working in its usual way. One value-added step, namely power generation, will be completely reversed. Electricity generated by renewable energies has got a granted price and is supplied into the net prior to other sources of electricity generation. This preferred supply with a granted price has squeezed other forms of energy generation out of the market, causing market prices for electricity to fall for several years now. This development is also shown in figure 1, where the blue line is the base price for electricity (front year, European Energy Exchange). The fallen market prices (compare figure 1) cause a remarkable reduction in profitability of existing power plants (AFP, 2013), which causes the business of operating big power plants to fall apart (Flauger, 2013a).

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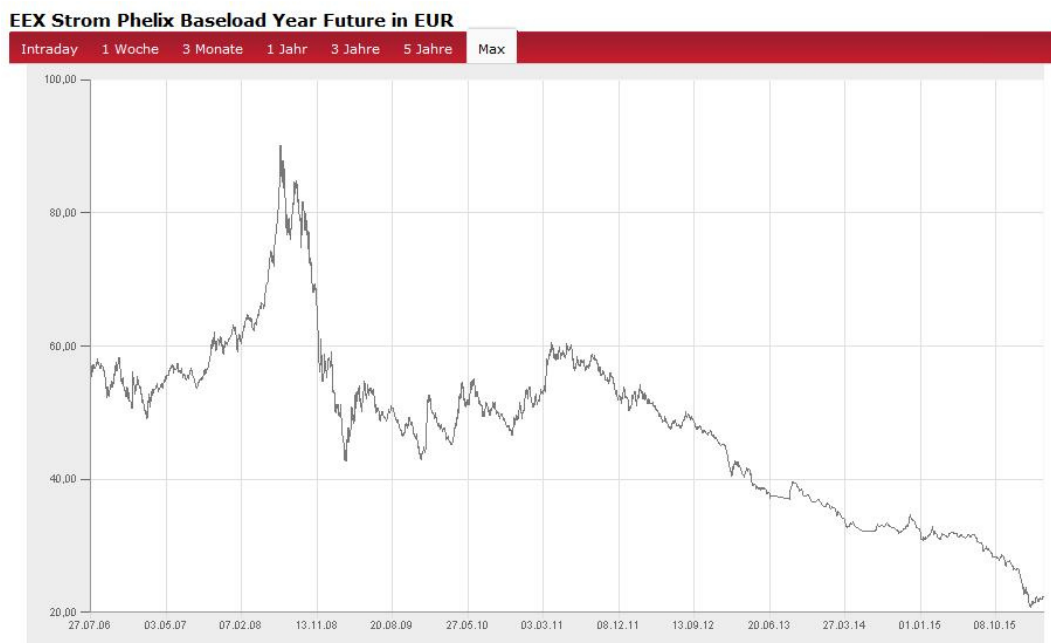


Figure 1: Long-term development of market prices (EEX electricity phelix baseload year future, 2016-04-05) (EEX, 2014)

The entire power generation system needs to be transformed to a more “green” and decentralised generation and operating companies need to follow this transformation in planning their generation strategy (Flaucher, 2013b). New flexible power plants are needed to equalise voltage within the power network when non-controllable renewable energies are fed into the power network. Many planned projects to build such power plants based on gas or power-heat cogeneration with gas or coal are no longer cost effective, which has caused investors to delay building projects of power generation units or led to closures of entire plants (Flaucher, 2013a, 2013b; Wetzel, 2013).

Not only big utility companies but also municipal utilities have to make their processes leaner and more efficient due to sunk margins and have to develop sustainable business models for the future (König & Kästner, 2014; Sydow, 2013). Companies operating a traditional business model including power generation and supply to the end customer have to remodel their mode of operation and their self-conception. The electricity industry has been experiencing a period of relative stability since the deregulation of power supply was launched in 1998. After the industry had allotted market shares then, the industry experienced relative stability

and reasonable profitability with smaller turbulences caused by legislative interferences, and therefore the industry does not have much experience of profound changes. This might be a reason why companies have difficulties reinventing themselves (Schulze, 2013). However, companies will need to adapt to the changing environment to stay in the market. While external pressure increases, companies will need to prepare for a structured, well planned change process to successfully adapt to the changing industry.

These developments of the energy industry can be followed in newspaper articles. What may be concluded is that all the operators of power generation units are concerned, but reactions are multifaceted. An overview of newspaper articles of the timeframe from July of 2012 to December 2013 dealing with the energy industry showed the following reactions to the changes in the market. The basic aim of these reactions is to strengthen financial power via cost saving programmes of unprecedented dimensions:

- Reduction of staff (early retirement, partial retirement, transfer of personnel, hiring freeze, increase in flexibility for reduction of staff).
- Relocation of staff in low-wage countries or other companies.
- Cost savings in labour costs (pay freeze for executive staff or all employees, cancellation of incentives, reduction of professional training, intermission of pay raises).
- Cost savings in marketing and consulting costs.
- Cost savings in purchasing and manufacturing.
- Cost cutting of the entire budget by a certain percentage.
- Reduction of payouts or grants of municipal shareholder.
- Reduction of investments.
- Closure of power plants.
- Disinvestment of non-strategic shareholdings.
- Optimising of maintenance.
- Optimising of project handling.

However, cost reductions, disinvestments and optimisation of structures may be a good starting point for change, but they are not sufficient. As Oesterwind (2014 p. 80) states: “Utility companies are confronted with the biggest practical test of their history. [...] As a reaction, companies reduce costs and try new managerial structures. [...] The companies must reinvent themselves. To achieve this, an encompassing change in culture has to be on the agenda.” For this extensive change, Oesterwind (2014) appraises the energy industry as being well positioned. Some of his arguments are that energy companies:

- Are optimally experienced with traditional energy technologies. Gathered experiences in project management and plant manufacturing may be contributed for the expansion of new renewable, key technologies.
- Are taking an active part in all innovative areas, such as photovoltaic, e-mobility, smart grid, smart home, etc.
- Have several profitable business areas to finance new growth areas.
- Have a huge customer potential in industry and end customers to offer new products and services.

Even though preconditions are good, the transition of the energy industry is a highly complex task which needs an integrated innovation of the system and new business models to be developed. As he states “the transition of the energy industry aims for a comprehensive restructuring of the entire German energy supply” (Oesterwind, 2014 p. 81). In regard to culture as “the intellectual and normative superstructure, the conceptual breeding grounds for acting within the company” (Oesterwind, 2014 p. 83), some important aspects are listed, such as:

- A culture of uncertainty is needed to actively design the future markets, rather than being left behind.
- A culture of understanding is needed and competitiveness between central and peripheral structures of power generation have to be eliminated.
- A learning culture is needed to design action patterns and decisions accordingly for a flexible thought pattern in processes.

Still, new business models will have to be developed, accompanied with a cultural change. This change must be initiated and led by top management to have any chance for success.

This overview shows that there are a lot of pressures to ensure profitability or even survival in the market. Further, the cost saving programmes with partially dramatic extent indicate that the industry is trying to reposition itself, while a concrete vision of a future business model is not completely elaborated yet. Stadtwerke Bielefeld is a company exemplary for that situation, but with some special aspects to be considered.

1.2 Stadtwerke Bielefeld: En route to an extensive change?

Given the developments in the energy industry, companies are affected more or less by the price decline in the energy market: companies that do operate power generating plants suffer financially from the plants not operating at cost effectiveness anymore. External market pressures have been increasing and companies need to proactively prepare for a change to successfully stay in the market. Stadtwerke Bielefeld is an exemplary company experiencing this situation:

Stadtwerke Bielefeld GmbH is a medium-sized municipal utility company located in Bielefeld, North-Rhine-Westphalia in Germany. Over 1,200 employees take care that customers have access to electricity, gas, drinking water and district-heating supply around the clock. To the group of companies of Stadtwerke Bielefeld belong the distribution system operator of electricity and gas as well as subsidiaries that offer mobility services, telecommunication services and public swimming baths. The group of companies generated 738 million Euro in sales with 2,224 people at the end of 2012. Stadtwerke Bielefeld GmbH supplied 3.5 billions of kilowatt-hours of power to customers in Bielefeld and to key accounts all over Germany. The mission statement says “we are the competent partner concerning electricity, water, heat, mobility and communication in Bielefeld and further than that. Our customers can rely on us”. The company has been offering utility services for over 150 years now and positions itself as a big regional one-stop full-service provider, offering custom-

tailored products and services. The group of companies approves their social responsibility and they support social and cultural projects in the city and the region with sponsoring, donations and a trust. The purchasing strategy is regionally orientated to serve as a regional buyer and to help secure jobs in the region ("Konzern-Geschäftsbericht 2012," 2012). For the collaboration between employees and especially between managers and staff, a guideline for collaboration had been defined that represents a part of the mutual understanding of values. The guideline says that the corporate vision will be accomplished with dedicated, qualified and work satisfied employees.

Stadtwerke Bielefeld has been in the ownership of the municipality of Bielefeld most of the time. After privatisation the Bielefeld Beteiligungs- und Vermögensverwaltungsgesellschaft mbH, a 100% subsidiary of Stadt Bielefeld, became the shareholder of Stadtwerke Bielefeld. In 2002 they sold 49.9% of the shares to Stadtwerke Bremen AG. Due to contractual agreements, the shareholder had the option to buy the shares back, which was accomplished in 2012. Since that point of time 100 % of Stadtwerke Bielefeld has been municipally owned again (Stadtwerke Bielefeld GmbH, 2014a, 2014b). Even though the municipality has always been holding the majority of the shares, the municipal influence and the contiguosness to the municipal shareholder have increased again with the rebuy of the shares. This was considered a very important action to be autonomous again, especially regarding the energy strategy. The "energy strategy 2020" is a concept of Stadtwerke Bielefeld to accomplish a percentage of renewable energies in the mix of electricity generation of 20% by 2020 and to increase the number of connections to the distant heating, which is generated in an environment-friendly power-heat cogeneration. To achieve that goal, a long-term investment program has been launched, which comprises a planned investment of 380 million Euros. This concept will help in achieving the climate protection goals of the city Bielefeld ("Konzern-Geschäftsbericht 2012," 2012). This investment program holds the economic implication that the cash for own capital contribution of the investments has to be available and the cash flow has to be high enough to ensure the necessary debt

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capacity. This motivates the need for a sufficient future business model in terms of profitability and a convincing vision even more.

In terms of organisational structure, Stadtwerke Bielefeld has two executive directors. The company is organised in business divisions and the managers of these business divisions as well as executive departments report to the executive directors. Each business unit has got subordinate divisions, merged by the area of expertise and responsibility. The following organisation chart gives an impression about the structure to the level of business units. Due to regulatory rules of the energy economy law (“Energiewirtschaftsgesetz”), the distribution system has been unbundled under company law and is now being operated in the grid company SWB Netz GmbH, therefore distribution system services are not shown in the organisation chart of Stadtwerke Bielefeld.

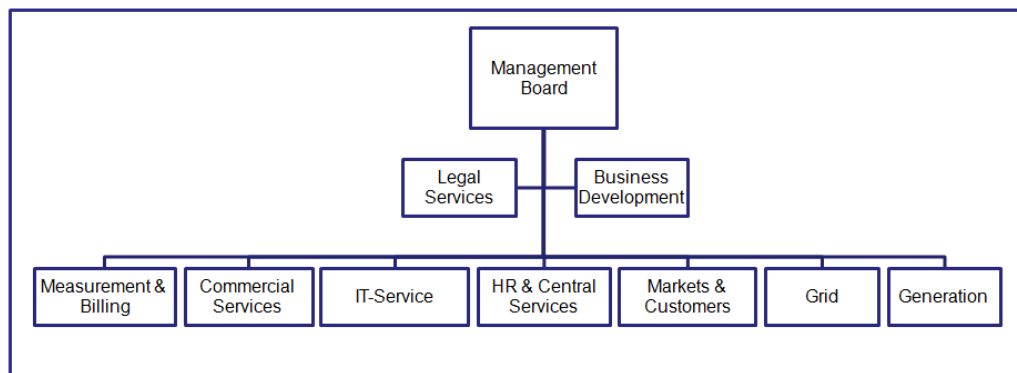


Figure 2: Plan of organisational structure of Stadtwerke Bielefeld

Stadtwerke Bielefeld holds shares in other utilities, renewable energies, distribution networks, waste-to-energy plants and power generation plants (Stadtwerke Bielefeld GmbH, 2014a), which is shown below.

1 Introduction

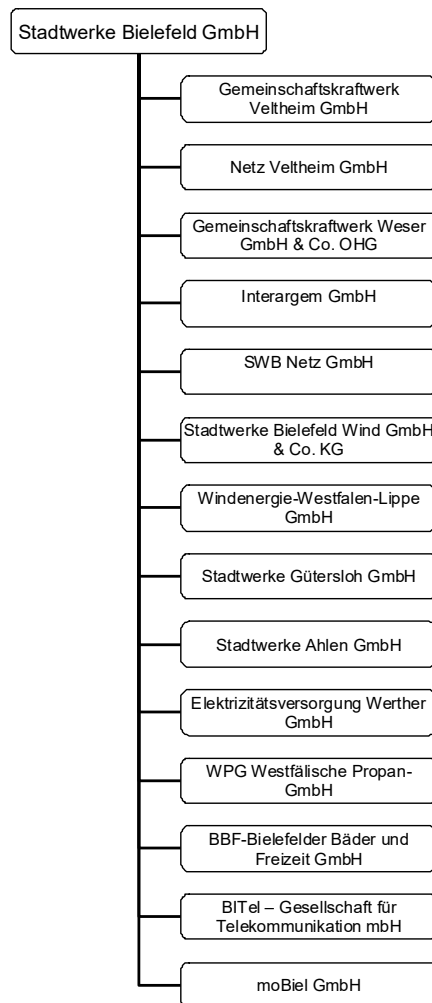


Figure 3: Plan of affiliated companies (non-exhaustive illustration; effective end of 2014)

The ownership of power generation companies includes shares in a nuclear power generation plant (Gemeinschaftskraftwerk Weser GmbH & Co. oHG) and a power generation plant based on coal and gas (Gemeinschaftskraftwerk Veltheim GmbH). The operating permit of nuclear power plants is ending at the latest in 2021; therefore this kind of power generation cannot be part of a future business model. Due to very low operating time and economic inefficiency caused by the preferential supply of renewable energies into the electricity network the steam turbine of Gemeinschaftskraftwerk Veltheim and one of the coal turbines have been shut down at the end of 2012 ("Gemeinschaftskraftwerk Veltheim droht Teilstilllegung," 2011). This made a reduction of staff necessary of about 50%. The latest decision in 2013 was to completely shut down the plant due to inefficiency, resulting in another large loss of jobs ("Kraftwerk vom Netz - Eon bestätigt frühere

Schließung von Veltheim," 2013). Staff at the plant then will be completely laid off. Even though massive investments in renewable energies, mainly wind power, are planned, the electricity supply of the hitherto existing power plants cannot be replaced completely in terms of quantity of supply (Stadtwerke Bielefeld GmbH, 2011/2012). This goes along with decreasing contribution margins. Other services have to be elaborated and marketed to compensate ceasing value creation. This shows that for Stadtwerke Bielefeld, as an example of a utilities company engaged in power generation, one part of the value-added chain is falling away. A radical change needs to be undertaken, as the traditional business model of power generation and supply to end customers is not only a means of generating profits, but also a considerable part of the self-concept of the company, and all this is going to cease.

Stadtwerke Bielefeld has got a long history of over 150 years. Social responsibility for the region of Bielefeld is expressed by support of cultural, sportive and environmental offers and projects. Being an attractive employer in the region, labour turnover is very low. At Stadtwerke Bielefeld GmbH, 31.8% of employees have got a period of employment of over 21 years. Adding the employees with 11 to 20 years of employment to that, the percentage totals to 55.8 (Stadtwerke Bielefeld GmbH, 2011/2012). These facts combined with relative stability in the industry for over 10 years might be a reason why a company has difficulties achieving rapid change due to external pressures in the environment.

1.3 Evolvement of the topic

Stadtwerke Bielefeld GmbH is my employer. Watching external pressures increase, especially market prices for electricity falling, the need for change has become clearly apparent. With falling market prices, decreasing profitability of power generation plants and the steps that have been undertaken regarding Gemeinschaftskraftwerk Veltheim over the past years and its planned closure, it has become more and more clear that Stadtwerke Bielefeld needs to change. First steps have been undertaken with a cost efficiency program launched in 2013 to reduce

controllable costs. However, in my opinion that is not enough, for two reasons. Firstly, the cost reduction objectives will only to a small extent, compensate what is being lost in profitability as a result of the low market price level. Secondly the impression is that the dramatic scale of external pressures has not reached the mindset and self-concept of all employees. This impression is partly shared by managers of Stadtwerke Bielefeld, as discussions have shown. Therefore the efforts undertaken so far can only be a starting point to more profound change for the company. As a result of this belief, I established an interest in how organisational change may be undertaken.

A literature review of organisational change brought up the following aspects: A first insight from the literature review was that there is much written about organisational change and its implementation, reasons why it may fail and how to prevent that. About one specific aspect of change management comparably little is written, despite its apparent importance: namely organisational readiness for change. Special situational factors, in particular changing environments, are only of general consideration (for example by the degree of urgency to take into account). Specific characteristics of companies, such as their experience with change, and the situational factor that profitability of the core business is leaking away are not explicitly dealt with. Therefore the research aims to complement existing knowledge by adding new insights regarding the specific situation when there is little time to build organisational readiness.

More specifically, the review showed where dissatisfaction with the current situation is high, the perceived need for change is likely to be high and thus resistance lower. In this situation change may proceed quickly. Slower change must be planned around likely resistance or a perceived dissatisfaction with the current situation. In the case where mediocre performance has not yet occurred but is anticipated, change is likely to be even more difficult and must proceed at an even slower pace (Beer & Walton, 1987). As I believe that the need for change is not yet perceived by all of the employees of Stadtwerke Bielefeld, the conclusion seems to be that comprehension for the need for change needed to be established and a procedure for slower change needed to be planned accurately. According to the

literature, a successful change implementation may be facilitated if the organisation is ready for change (this will be elaborated in more detail in the literature review chapter). Therefore the assessment of the state of readiness of Stadtwerke Bielefeld was considered a starting point for measures to increase readiness for change. With increasing urgency for change, time for planning was very limited. Therefore a readiness programme may be applied in conditions of urgency and a relatively low level of readiness (Armenakis, Harris, & Mossholder, 1993). The concept of organisational readiness is dealt with in more detail in chapter two (see 2.3.4).

1.4 Research aim and objectives

Based on the insights from the literature review a picture of the existing knowledge and its limitations evolved. Consideration of the unusual, situation of the energy industry and the specific situation of Stadtwerke Bielefeld as a municipal company particularly may make further specific additions to the existing knowledge base. On this basis the research aim was developed. The aim of the research is to explore the need and readiness of Stadtwerke Bielefeld for organisational change and, through a rich analysis of situational factors regarding attitudes and opinions, to contribute to the understanding of organisational readiness within a specific context. In regards to the research aim and according to the insights from the situational factors (see 1.2), change refers to systematic organisational change, which is launched intentionally. To structure the research aim in more detail, the research questions derived from that are:

1. Which characteristics of SWB have the greatest impact on its readiness and capacity for change?
2. How might the concept of organisational readiness be applied to SWB?
3. How do managers and other employees assess SWB's readiness for change?
4. What are the implications of these perceptions for the successful management of change at SWB?

Following this the research objectives to answer these questions are:

5. To investigate the characteristics of SWB that have the greatest impact on its readiness and capacity for change.
6. To explore the application of the concept of organisational readiness to SWB.
7. To learn how managers and other employees assess SWBs readiness for change.
8. To review the implications of these assessments for the successful management of change at SWB.

Based on the stated aim, research questions and objectives, I seek to contribute to existing knowledge of organisational readiness for change, through an in-depth study of characteristics of a German municipal energy supplier faced with increasing pressures within its business environment and decreasing profitability. As a contribution to practice, it is intended to develop guidelines for the planning and preparation of a change programme for an organisation that has little experience of change.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

In the next chapter, the literature review is dealt with in more depth: the term of organisational change is looked at regarding different forms of change and its initiating forces. After that the concept of organisational readiness for change is presented with its different approaches and the concept of Armenakis et al. (1999) is introduced and developed further for an application for the research. Further methods of change readiness assessment and readiness creation are discussed. A brief review is made of change implementation, to better understand the implications of organisational readiness for successful change implementation, specifically looking at issues for public sector companies. Summarising the insights

gained from the change literature, it is shown where the research can contribute to the existing body of knowledge.

The third chapter considers the development of the research design. After considering the philosophical perspectives that underpin the research, the research strategy is explained and the research design elaborated. In deciding on the research strategy, case study method is looked at in more detail and its pros and cons discussed relative to the research context. Next considerations about case design and data collection and sampling issues are discussed. The planned data analysis procedure of a content analysis is explained as well as ethical issues in case study research.

Chapter Four presents and discusses the research findings. The discussion of the findings is structured by the clusters built from content analysis of the data. Therewith the discussion of findings begins with the characterisation of Stadtwerke Bielefeld with its idea of how a change process should be designed follows. After that the perceptions of factors of change readiness are elaborated and the evaluation of change readiness based on the proposed methodology is described. This evaluation of change readiness from a managers' perspective is then compared with the assessment made by non-management employees of the organisation's change readiness, revealing some interesting differences.

In the conclusion chapter (Chapter Five) the key findings are discussed in regard to the research objectives and contextualised within the literature. Further the contributions to knowledge are clarified and justified as enhancements of the understanding of organisational readiness for change. As the research is a real life case study, practical implications are also discussed as well. The limitations of the research are evaluated and on this basis suggestions for further research are proposed. The thesis finishes with a personal reflection of the author.

2 Review of literature

2.1 Organisational change

The description of the current situation of the electricity industry and in particular that of Stadtwerke Bielefeld suggests that change will have to take place, as discussed in the introduction. This begs the question what exactly is meant by organisational change in this context. What does it imply and how can it be differentiated from the regular behaviour of the company, which includes adaptive actions to some extent? Which are the key issues to consider for managing change according to literature? And how can a company prepare for change?

In this chapter, first organisational change is conceptualised with its meaning, its forms and the forces necessitating change. This clarifies the understanding of the need for organisational change. In the following paragraphs the concept of organisational readiness for change is outlined by its meaning and how it may be contrasted against resistance to change. Then consideration is given to the assessment and creation of organisational readiness for change. A short overview of issues of change implementation is given, as organisational readiness for change may be understood as a predecessor for successful change implementation. In a concluding summary, gaps in the literature are identified, explaining, where research might add to existing knowledge. The structure of the chapter is depicted in figure 4.

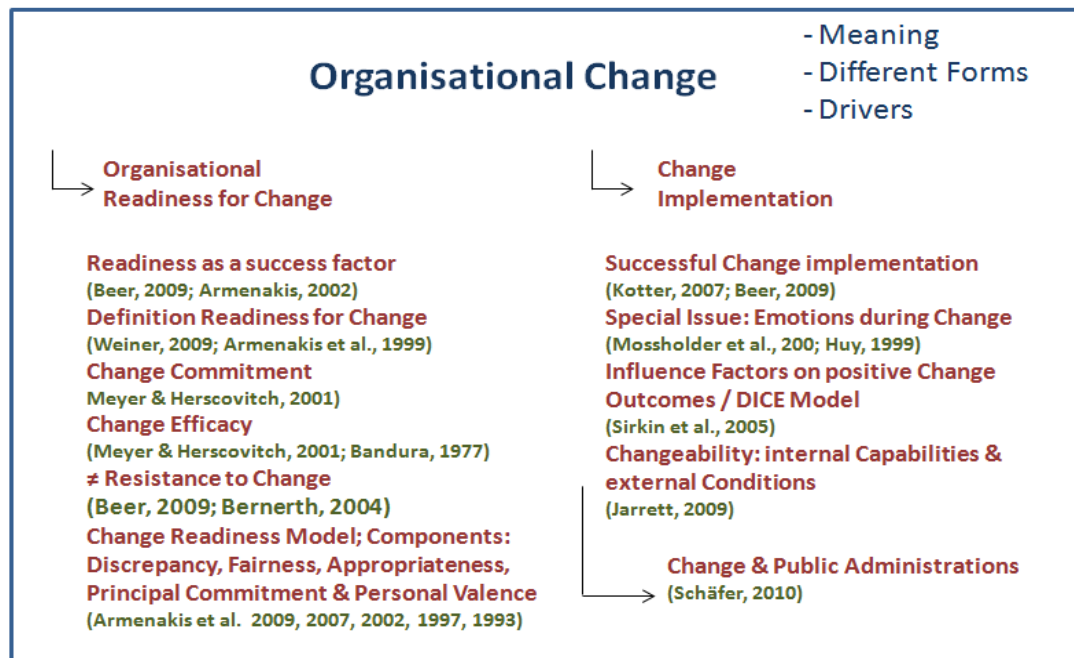


Figure 4: Overview of literature review content

2.2 Meaning of organisational change

Change can be regarded as the “discrete modification of structural organisational elements” (Beck, Brüderl, & Woywode, 2008 p. 413), which gives a system-orientated view of the term, excluding incremental changes. The focus of the research on that definition lies on planned change events, apart from continuous change processes. Kotter (2007) explains change as the creation of a new system in regard to the process involved, which is also a statement focussing on the system. Another explanation states that “change management is the process of continually renewing an organisation’s direction, structure, and capabilities to serve the ever-changing needs of external and internal customers” (Moran & Brightman, 2001 p. 66). This implies that change is not only a continuously ongoing process within an organisation, but also customer-driven. This view contradicts the one of Beck et al. (2008), who focus their research on temporary, discontinuous change interventions. Perceived as an ever-present operation, change is important for every organisation and successful change management is crucial for flourishing business (By, 2005). At this point a differentiation between adjustments, which are part of day-to-day business, and change, which is not habitual, is useful for further focussing of my research. By (2005) for example postulates that change is an ever-present element

for all organisations and these ever-present processes should be distinguished from concentrated, temporally limited change events.

Considering the factor of prearrangement, planned change can be summarised as a deliberate use and application of knowledge to modify patterns and habits (Bennis, Benne, Chin, & Corey, 1976). A more general definition is given by Van de Ven and Poole (1995 p. 512) with change as a “difference in form, quality or state over time in an organisational entity”, while the entity may be a job, a work-group, an organisational strategy, a program, a product or the overall organisation. This definition narrowly interpreted includes every change occurring in an organisation, even if it is a very small one. Because it is such an all-encompassing conceptualisation, it may not be helpful to define the focus of my research project. As Jarrett states, change may occur in many different ways, based on the dictionary definition “change is the act or an instance of making or becoming different; an alteration or modification” (2009 p. XV). This interpretation is also too broad and is therefore not considered useful for focussing my research. However, the definition of change as “a deliberate use and application of knowledge to modify patterns and habits” of Bennis et al. (1976 p. 23) fits well the necessary planned change depicted for Stadtwerke Bielefeld (see 1.2).

This non-exhaustive overview shows that the term ‘change’ is used for communicating different ideas within different contexts. A definition of change for the context of the research was highlighted. To further focus the change context of the research, aspects of differentiation of the forms in which change can occur are now discussed.

2.2.1 Different forms of organisational change

In regard to the surroundings that constitute the possible need for change, a distinction should be made to focus the research question and to clarify which kind of change may occur. Organisational change may be distinguished by different characteristics that are described in more detail in the following discussion. A

distinction based on the extent of changes in terms of depth and continuity is for example episodic versus continuous change (Weick & Quinn, 1999). While episodic change is more radical and started intentionally, continuous change is an ongoing process of small adjustments. In contrast to a long-term adaptability to the business environment, the aim of episodic change is to adapt quickly.

Similarly, Burke (2011) differentiates between revolutionary and evolutionary change. While revolutionary change causes loops and disruptions in a non-linear fashion, evolutionary change is an attempt to amend specific aspects of the organisation for higher performance. An important point is that the identity of the firm, characterised by its mission, culture or main strategy remains unaffected by an evolutionary change. Huy (2001), focussing on the time and content of change, also builds on the differentiation between revolutionary and evolutionary change. A broadly comparable distinction is that of technical versus adaptive change (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). The authors argue that technical problems may need to be solved by applying existing knowledge, while adaptive changes challenge organisations to alter their habits, beliefs or the general idea of doing business. In line with that understanding, highlighting the change of values, Bartunek and Moch (1987) characterise first-order change as single-loop learning (tacit reinforcement of present understandings) and second-order change as double-loop learning (change in values of theory-in-use). Considering these differences, the context for the research is a revolutionary or second-order change, due to environmental forces increasing the need for change (see 1.2).

Other authors explain change as including periods of revolutionary change alternating with periods of equilibrium. In the state of equilibrium, the system maintains an existing and stable construct of rules, standards, processes, etc. Periods of change are marked by significant organisational changes with fundamental modification of the firm's basic configuration into which a system is organised (Burke, 2011; Gersick, 1991). Another approach suggests debates may be clustered by the dynamics of change management, as rationally planned change management, politically governed change management and emergent, bottom-up based change management. Even though there is criticism of the approach of

planned change due to a high rate of failure, it is still a typical procedure, with a perceived need for change increasing to the point of management launching a planned change process. In regard to the perspective of the need for planned change existing despite a high rate of failure, the focus is on a rationally planned change management perspective.

In regard to the dimension of organisational change, Jarrett (2009) differentiates between

- Temporary change (when there is some change, but then the organisation reverts to the traditional way things were).
- Incremental or process change (easy and quick implementation of small improvements or smaller adjustments).
- Organisational restructuring (change that affects structures, fundamental systems and relations within the company).
- And transformational or cultural change (redefining the organisation's strategy, culture, mindset or identity).

This differentiation is focused on the degree of change undertaken. Considering the extent and focus of change, Luecke (2003) gives the following categorisation of change types as a response to challenges of the environment:

- Structural change (remodelling of the functional system to increase performance).
- Cost cutting (elimination or reduction of nonessential activities).
- Process change (modifying how things are operationally done).
- And cultural change (altering the organisation's general approach of doing business and its mindset).

In this definition a degree of overlap can be found; while Luecke (2003) does not explicitly list change that is not permanent but more of a fad, changes with the aim to cut costs are separated from the other change types. One may argue that the other change types may also focus on cost reduction or at least aim at a higher level of efficiency, while the focus is on the object of change, for example processes. For

this reason, the classification proposed by Jarrett (2009) seems to offer clearer distinctions between categories of change.

Change may also be categorised by other characteristics, for example by an increasing level of risks and depth of change (Ackermann, 2010; Gilley et al., 2008):

- Developmental change (improves something already existing and can take place on every level from individual to the entire organisation).
- Transitional change (aims to implement a different known state).
- And transformational change (seeks a new, previously unknown state).

This distinction is a further refinement of evolutionary and revolutionary change, while developmental change can be mapped with evolutionary and transformational with revolutionary change. According to Gilley et al. (2008), the distinction between transition and transformation is that in transformational change the old state “dies” through being replaced, while transitional change modifies the existing state. In a change process, there may be a situation whereby some parts of the business model will be renewed while other units will be transformed to a completely new state. I concede that transition is a part of a transformational process.

Therefore the distinction cannot be made clearly, probably even more so at the beginning of a change process. The authors Gilley et al. (2008) acknowledge that transformation also includes a period of time of chaos, which is not necessarily part of the transition. For practical application it will be hard to define whether there is a condition of chaos, especially since chaos is not defined by the authors, or whether it is just a process of reorganisation. Both types are long-term orientated, with the difference of control over the time period the process consumes. Again this differentiation is of difficult practical application, as a planned period of time for a transition may take longer than expected, so changes into an uncontrolled period of time.

Because of the imprecise boundary between transitional and transformational change, this differentiation will not be applied to the research project. With a closer

look at the transition of the energy industry change processes that proceed in small steps and lead to small improvements are not the focus of the research, but rather an extensive change, which influences both processes and the identity of an organisation. Therefore the focus of my research is a need for an episodic (Weick & Quinn, 1999), revolutionary (Burke, 2011), dialectic (Van De Ven & Poole, 1995), cultural (Luecke, 2003) or transformational (Ackermann, 2010) change.

An overview of differentiated forms of change, which is not discussed further for the purposes of this research project, can also be found in literature reviews about organisational change (Buchanan & Dawson, 2007; Buchanan et al., 2005; By, 2005).

2.2.2 Drivers of organisational change

To better understand and determine the need for organisational change, it is helpful to consider the forces that cause an imperative for change to take place. Porras and Silvers (1991) state that quickly changing environments increase the need of companies to adapt to these external changes. Following their thoughts, it may be assumed that the more radical the influence of external shifts, the more radical the company's adaption has to be. Even though this relationship is not linear, it can be conjectured that an accumulation of influencing factors intensifies the need for the company to change. The organisational change process therefore can be considered as a reaction to events.

A more specific reason for the need of a special type of change is a decrease in earnings, which usually leads to a call for downsizing (Cameron, Freeman, & Mishra, 1993; O'Reilly, Snyder, & Boothe, 1993; Cameron, Freeman, & Mishra, 1991). Huber et al. (1993) propose a more comprehensive set of factors that can induce change: (1) environment, (2) performance, (3) top management, (4) strategy and (5) structure. According to their research, a worsening of the one most notable factor, namely organisational performance, will lead to the need for change. Stakeholders, especially shareholders of the company, will put pressure on management to start actions to increase earnings, when a distinctive downturn in financial performance has been experienced. The findings are of limited application to the situation of the

German energy industry, because the study was conducted in the early nineties and it was carried out in the USA. Even though these limitations exist, it may be assumed that a downturn in financial performance will result in a call for organisational change, since the underlying principle of shareholders expecting a reasonable rate of return rate on their capital is also prevalent in the German energy industry of today. Jarrett (2009) remarks that the impact of the forces of change is felt through the drivers of climate change and the environmental agenda, globalisation, demographic shifts, technological change and regulation or deregulation. These drivers result in a necessity for change as a means of survival and sustainable growth. Another similarly encompassing perspective on reasons for the occurrence of revolutionary change are internal constraints, which disrupt subsystems and activities, or other influences in the environment that threatens the firm in some way (Burke, 2011).

Simply put, either internal or external drivers can, but do not necessarily bring about a perceived need for change. Various authors have identified multiple factors of all categories as drivers of organisational change. Considering the German energy industry, there are many influencing factors that are already present, such as technological and legislative changes as well as a downturn in financial performance. Furthermore, the reactions of other companies in the industry, which are comparable in terms of holding shares in power generation plants, substantiate an imperative for change. Therefore, it is highly probable that organisational change will have to happen at Stadtwerke Bielefeld. Summarising various influences as drivers of change, a revolutionary change process will most probably be needed by power generating electricity suppliers. A substantial reorientation of these companies will have to take place due to major changes in their environment, given the changes in legislation combined with national goals that brought about a completely changed situation on the energy market and its market mechanisms. Perhaps the most compelling argument that a change process will need to happen is the steadily decreasing profitability of electricity generation.

2.3 Organisational readiness for change

2.3.1 Organisational readiness as a success factor

When researching literature about organisational change, numerous models are described as to how change can be managed successfully, while various explanations are given as to why change programs fail (Beer, 2009; Armenakis & Harris, 2002; Cameron et al., 1993; A. D. Meyer, Brooks, & Goes, 1990). Many approaches analyse reasons for failing and give advice based on that. It is stated by many authors that implementation of organisational change is one of the most important success factors of companies but also a point where many organisations fail. While many approaches are found to successful change implementation, relatively little has been written on organisational change readiness (By, 2007). As a potential success factor, organisational readiness for change is an intuitively appealing construct, but comparatively little empirical research has focused on this aspect. At the theoretical level, examining the antecedents of readiness for change may help researchers better understand the organisational change process (Eby, Adams, Russell, & Gaby, 2000). The topic of readiness represents a rudimentary issue in the management of change literature, and there is the need for further refinement for the planned change process (Armenakis et al., 1993). Organisational change is a very complex process. Therefore possible strategies should be considered and applied, if the likelihood of success increases. It should be contemplated, which strategies and tactics to be used to plan the change process. This shows a starting point to theoretically elaborate the concept of organisational readiness for change further. The practical use of the concept of organisational readiness is assessing readiness to deploy active change agents to seek out potential problems such as low readiness and intervene before this cognitive factor results in active resistance to change (Backer, 1995). A helpful tool for researchers and change agents might be an overview of issues to be considered and strategies to be used in order to construct organisational readiness for change instruments that fit specific change contexts. These instruments then can be tailored to local needs, opportunities and constraints (Weiner, 2009).

2.3.2 Understanding of organisational readiness for change

Many models of a change process are based on the concept of Lewin's three stages of unfreezing, changing and refreezing (Lewin, 1951, 1947). Developing this concept further, Bridges (1986) describes the parts of the process as endings, transitions and new beginnings. Even though the author concentrates on transitions as a rather long-term psychological process rather than on changes, which he illustrates as a phenomenon "when something that used to happen in one way starts happening in another" (1986 p. 25), the three stages process model may be compared to the one of Lewin. Even though many authors go back to the concept of Lewin, others argue that employees find themselves in a constant uncertain state rather than accomplishing the refreezing state. This is derived from the changing nature of organisational change, causing stress at the individual level (Mack, Nelson, & Quick, 1998). Other authors connect the concept of unfreezing by Lewin (1951, 1947) with the individual's perception of an organisation's readiness for change (Weeks, Roberts, Chonko, & Jones, 2004). An Individual's beliefs and attitudes about upcoming change are affected in such a way that the forthcoming change is seen as useful, which is described by the authors as the process of unfreezing or perceived readiness for change. Based on that interpretation, change readiness might be understood as an integral and necessary part of any change process.

Even though not portrayed as an issue of focus, similarly to Weeks et al. (2004), Schäfer (2010) describes the change process with the stages of unfreezing, aligning and refreezing based on the concept of Lewin , where the first phase is about getting managers and employees emotionally in the mood for the change process. Further it is a matter of creating readiness to actively deal with the upcoming changes and to first build new competences in leadership. While Weeks et al. (2004) highlight the necessity of the change being seen as useful based on their researching sales organisations, Schäfer (2010) rather argues with the willingness to actively deal with the changes, in the context of strategies for reforms in public services. He argues for a change to happen, patterns of habits have to be opened up by destabilising the status quo. This may be achieved by consequent challenging of

predominant attitudes and customs of working with disruptive interventions to break and overcome the inertness of the existing system.

Armenakis, Harris and Feild (1999) as well as Armenakis and Harris (2002) portray the process as having three phases: The first is readiness, when organisational members get prepared for and become supporters of change. The second phase is adoption, when the change is implemented and in operation and the third is institutionalisation, when the changes are reinforced and have become the norm. The authors emphasise the importance of the change message as the guiding framework for creating readiness and motivation for change. Later research defines the three steps as diagnosis, creating readiness, and change adoption and institutionalisation (Armenakis & Harris, 2009). The articles including these three stages imply that readiness is a mandatory part of any change process. Following this precondition readiness cannot be understood as an absolute state of being ready for change, but rather as a general condition of being ready, to a varying degree. Consequently, Armenakis et al. have defined readiness as "...the precursor of the behaviours of resistance to or support for organisational change" and in later research as "the cognitive state comprising beliefs, attitudes, and intentions toward a change effort" (1999 p. 103). Further they conclude "when readiness for change exists the organisation is primed to embrace change and resistance is reduced". This somehow contradicts the neutral definition of readiness as a cognitive state, when postulating that the existence of readiness itself without a requirement to which degree readiness has to exist or which attitudes, intentions and beliefs towards change have to exist.

Backer (1995 p. 22) summarises, also relying on research by Armenakis and colleagues that "readiness is a state of mind about the need for an innovation and the capacity to undertake technology transfer...". Further he explains readiness as the mental attitude to either resist or support the upcoming change. This mental attitude is influenced by people's perception of financial support, a well-defined mission and leadership structure, a cohesive work team or the technical skill level to adopt a particular innovation, while the perception of people is to a certain extent separated from the actual existence of these resources. Also focussing on attitudes

and making reference to Armenakis and colleagues, Bernerth (2004 p. 39) defines readiness as “a state of mind reflecting a willingness or receptiveness to changing the way one thinks”. The understanding of change readiness as a state of mind or a set of beliefs, attitudes and intentions towards an upcoming change is a valuable and appropriate basis for my research for the assessment of the level of change readiness (4.6).

Beer and Walton (1987 p. 360) explain readiness as “...the social, technological, or systemic ability of a group or organisation to change or try new things”. This description is contrary to the other mentioned above, insofar as it is targeted at the ability and not at the willingness of a group or the organisation. A possible counter-argument might be that the ability to change implies necessarily the willingness and therefore the aspect of willingness is implicitly included in the statement. However, the focus of this explanation differs from the ones that are more attitude-focused. An understanding of readiness for change including both the mental attitude and the capability is also given by Luecke (2003), who proposes that change-readiness exists when people and the structure of the organisation are prepared for and capable of change. Luecke proposes the following as conditions for readiness:

- “Leaders are respected and effective.
- People feel personally motivated to change.
- The organisation is non-hierarchical and people are accustomed to collaborative work.” (Luecke, 2003 p. 18)

Jones, Jimmieson and Griffiths (2005 p. 362) define readiness as “the extent to which employees hold positive views about the need for organisational change (i.e., change acceptance), as well as the extent to which employees believe that such changes are likely to have positive implications for themselves and the wider organisation”. The key elements here are the positive attitude towards change and its outcomes. Cunningham et al. (2002 p. 377) explain that readiness involves “a demonstrable need for change, a sense of one’s ability to successfully accomplish change (self-efficacy) and an opportunity to participate in the change process”. In

this definition, the positive attitude towards change and its outcomes are expanded by the element of participation.

The idea of readiness as the mental attitude to either resist or support change (Backer, 1995) may be differentiated further, considering openness to change as a pre-stage to readiness for change (Wanberg & Banas, 2000). Openness to change was elaborated based on the concept of Miller et al. (1994) and was composed of willingness to support the change and the feeling that the potential outcomes of the change will be beneficial in some way. Miller et al. argue that a high level of openness to change is critical for employee readiness for change. It is stated that openness to change is a "...necessary, initial condition for successful planned change" (Miller et al., 1994 p.60). Research on openness to change showed that a higher level of participation was associated with an evaluation that change would be beneficial, which is in line with the proposed involvement of workers to reduce change resistance by Coch and French (1948). Other research indicated that employees who gathered sufficient knowledge about the change and have a high need for achievement viewed the change favourable (Miller et al., 1994). Further a high level of information and self-efficacy for handling the proposed changes were associated with greater tolerance for change. The aspects of information and participation were linked to the concept of organisational fairness and justice (Cobb, Wooten, & Folger, 1995). This may be a hint that it is important that employees perceive that they are being treated fair during a change process. Armenakis et al. (1999) also build on this idea as a part of their model by the proposal that positive and negative change outcomes should be distributed in a fairly and just way, summed up in the term of personal valence. Even though openness to change may be regarded as a general attitude and readiness for change as an attitude towards a specific change effort, this differentiation cannot be undertaken clearly. Considered from another angle, openness to change as a pre-stage for readiness for change cannot be distinguished precisely as both attitudes will interdependently influence each other. As a practical point, to elaborate an understanding of the concept of organisational readiness for change for practitioners, who do not deal with these concepts on a regular basis, this

differentiation will be hard to explain. For these reasons, the differentiation between readiness and openness will not be applied further within this research project.

Another explanation of readiness is based on a study of worker participation in decision making by Coch and French (1948) and its re-interpretations (Bartlem & Locke, 1981; Gardner, 1977). Basically it is stated that resistance can be reduced by the use of group meetings in which management effectively communicates the need for change and stimulates group participation in planning the changes. Based on this research, a positive interpretation of readiness was established by means of involving employees in contrast to the negative term of resistance to change. An even stronger positive tone is implied by the definition given by Jones et al. (2005) stated above with the keywords of positive views about the need for change and positive implications. Further, it not only describes a positive motivational attribute of the employees, but also their understanding and acceptance of the change being necessary and the proposed solution being right for the organisation.

Jarrett (2009) explains readiness for change on two levels; on the philosophical as “being open to and prepared to embrace change...” and on the practical level, which encompasses a set of core dynamic and internal capabilities that allow companies to adapt. Further he summarises readiness to change as a managerial and organisational precondition and internal capability to change, which can be found in routines, processes and implicit learning. Hence he states that an organisation must have organisational readiness to make change permanent (Jarrett, 2009). Considering this understanding of organisational readiness, Jarrett’s view extends the motivational or philosophical aspects of readiness by adding the ability to change, called “changeability”. The changeability of the company is then matched with the requirements of the external environment to choose one of four generic change strategies. Therefore, in Jarrett’s view, the aspect of “readiness” is part of changeability.

In his research, based on a survey of five thousand executives across different international regions and industries, Jarrett (2009) identified readiness to change as

a crucial success factor. He refers to internal capability to change, found in organisation's routines, processes and implicit learning. Jarrett (2009) offers a ready to use questionnaire aiming at diagnosing, which internal capabilities, task-oriented procedures and culture-related aspects to improve (such as a clear process to evaluate and implement new ideas, regular strategic reviews or a 'blame-free' culture). The readiness model chosen as a basis for my research (see 2.3.4 on p. 36), in contrast to Jarrett(2009), encompasses the need for change directly within the model (e. g. with discrepancy, see 2.3.4 on page 36 ff.). Therefore I considered that model as more appropriate for my research.

Other authors such as Beckhard (Beckhard, 1975) or Weiner (2009) explain organisational readiness using motivational aspects: organisational readiness then involves attitudinal or motivational energy concerning the change. For this energy to occur, dissatisfaction with the current situation is needed as well as a clear vision of the desired state (Beckhard, 1975). With this explanation not only the motivational receptiveness for a change, but also preconditions for readiness are given. This again sets out a positive understanding of organisational readiness. Weiner (2009) characterises readiness by three sets of preconditions: contextual factors, change valence and informational assessment. Existence of these preconditions facilitates implementation of organisational change, but is not sufficient for the expected results. He states "organisational readiness refers to organisational members' change commitment and change efficacy to implement organisational change" (Weiner, 2009, p.2).

To better understand this explanation, a definition of commitment (in general) as "a force [mind set] that binds an individual to a course of action of relevance to one or more targets" may be quoted (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001 p. 301). Commitment to change, more specifically, is a force that binds an individual to a course of action deemed necessary, while this force to support change is distinguished into three forms: first because it is advantageous (affective commitment to change), second due to an awareness that there are costs related to failure (continuance commitment) and third due to a sense of obligation (normative commitment). Research showed that these forms of commitment to change are related but

distinguishable from the components of organisational commitment and that individual commitment to change contributes more strongly to support the change than organisational commitment (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). Nevertheless, organisational commitment as the more general commitment to the organisation does also influence the support of a change effort. Organisational commitment is to some extent influenced by an individual's assessment of the current culture of the organisation and the ideal culture in a state of organisational transformation. The term "organisational culture refers to shared, socially maintained patterns of beliefs and values that help individuals interpret their organisational experiences" (Harris & Mossholder, 1996 p. 527). However, even uncommitted individuals are generally willing to comply with changes. This may be explained by the reluctance to resist change or other factors (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). The finding that commitment to change is a predictor for supportive behaviour for change and that non-commitment is not necessarily an indication for resistance to change contributes to a better understanding of commitment, but on the other hand does not help to build insights about commitment to change for fostering supportive behaviour for a specific change initiative.

The concept of efficacy is an essential component of most conceptualisations of organisational readiness. Bandura (1977 p. 193) defines efficacy expectation as "the conviction that one can successfully execute the behaviour required to produce the outcomes". This is distinguished from outcome expectancy, the belief that certain behaviour will result in a certain outcome. Following this differentiation, a person might believe that a given behaviour will result in a certain outcome, but if the person is not convinced that he or she can successfully execute the necessary action, the behaviour will not be affected. Therefore self-efficacy is an essential requirement for behavioural change. Furthermore, efficacy expectations determine how much effort people will spend and how long they will persevere when facing obstacles. Bernerth (2004) argues based on Bandura's (1977) work the stronger the perceived self-efficacy, the more energetic the efforts of people will be. In summary, perceived self-efficacy addresses evaluations of how well one can execute certain actions required to deal with prospective situations and does

therefore influence thought patterns, actions and emotional arousal (Bernerth, 2004; Banduras, 1977). Therefore the degree of self-efficacy is essential for organisational readiness.

While change readiness is described in the literature as a combination of motivational or attitudinal states, there are different views on how to create change readiness. Whereas some authors illustrate the concept of building organisational readiness in direct connection to a specific change initiative (Glor, 2007; Armenakis & Harris, 2002; Armenakis et al., 1993), others recommend the integration of support for change readiness with the corporate culture. The latter was a result of research where all participants saw it as essential for every organisation to support an organisational culture that enables continuous change management and a high level of readiness for change. By (2007) summarises that management of organisational change may be more likely to succeed if it concentrates on fostering continuous change readiness rather than discontinuously implementing single change initiatives. Further, continuous change readiness is declared as a critical success factor (By, 2007). One may argue that organisations need times of relative calm in between phases of explicit efforts of change implementation to adjust to new structures (refreezing according to Lewin (1947)), processes and mindsets, to fine-tune and reinforce new ways of doing things, which contradicts an approach of continuous change readiness building.

Change readiness can be understood on different levels; on the individual and on the organisational level (Backer, 1995). When researching organisational readiness, most authors explicitly or implicitly understand change readiness at an individual level (Holt et al., 2007; Jones et al., 2005; Cunningham et al., 2002; Eby et al., 2000), while others understand change readiness at the organisational level (Weiner, 2009) or suggest a multilevel framework of individual, work group and organisational level (Rafferty, 2012). It is important to differentiate the level of analysis, as individuals respond differently to organisational change. Also the level of readiness of individuals may be influenced by the readiness or perceived readiness of other individuals (Armenakis et al., 1993). One possible course of action is to assess readiness and then subsequently increase efforts to create

individual, group and organisational change readiness to increase the likelihood of successful change (Rafferty, 2012). Cole, Harris and Bernerth (2006) propose starting at the individual level as organisational change begins with the individual who decides to resist or to support change. An individual's perception of readiness to change is reflected by his or her unique interpretation based on experiences. Considering this, the call of some researchers for a more person-orientated focus is understandable (Wanberg & Banas, 2000). Vakola and Nikolaou (2005) found that occupational stresses, created for example by bad work relationships, overload and unfair pay and benefits, were related to negative attitudes to change. They conclude that stress caused by organisational change will result in creating negative attitudes toward change and will therefore become an obstruction for successful change. Eby et al. (2000) argue that preconceived views of individuals influence their perception of the level of readiness for change of an organisation. While working for the organisation, this perception probably develops over time, so experiences accumulate not only the overall perception of the company is influenced, but also specific aspects of the organisation. Pursuing this idea, the authors frame an individual's assessment of organisational readiness as the perception of a particular facet of his or her work environment. Since perceptions of the same objective reality differ from one individual to another due to their unique interpretative reality of the work environment, the perception of organisational readiness is also a unique personal interpretation.

After discussing the concept of organisational readiness for change and considering the perspectives of numerous authors, a summarising assumption for the further course of the research project is necessary. In my opinion, not only the positive attitude towards organisational change should be a necessary condition for organisational readiness, but also the capabilities to implement the change. As an exemplary basic definition, that of Weiner: "organisational readiness refers to organisational members' change commitment and change efficacy to implement organisational change" (Weiner, 2009 p. 2) is adopted. In regard to the unit of analysis, the organisational level of organisational readiness will be the focus of the research project. Even though I acknowledge that the degree of readiness will differ

from one individual to the other, for the company to effectively implement change, an overall organisational readiness is important, so this will be the focus of the research. To better understand organisational readiness, the concept is differentiated from resistance to change in the following section.

2.3.3 Readiness for change vs. resistance to change

To better understand the concept of readiness for change, it will be looked at in comparison to another issue coming up in this context: resistance to change. Contrasting these two, it can be argued that resistance to change is the negative explanation of why change programs fail, while change readiness is rather a positive precondition to facilitate change. However, readiness for change is distinct from the idea of resistance to change, even though they may interrelate. For example, enhancement of readiness may avoid active resistance to change (Backer, 1995). This distinction is also elaborated by Armenakis et al. (1993) who explicitly differentiate creating readiness from reducing resistance to change. They argue that for reducing resistance to change to create readiness first so that readiness forestalls the likelihood of resistance to change. Creating readiness is seen involving proactive managers playing the roles of coaches and champions of change, rather than reactively observing the occurrence of resistance and just then taking counter action to deal with it. The change process is understood as a dynamic, proactive and systematic, thus suggesting a different view on change (Choi & Ruona, 2011). Beer (2009) explains resistance to change as a consequence of fear of a loss of power, status, esteem and position and a defensiveness against new alternatives, while change can be motivated by environmental pressures or poor performance. While resistance to change is a retrospective reaction aimed at holding on to the status quo, the motivation for change is a proactive idea. Eden (1986) considering research on the role of expectations, suggests that building positive expectations is essential to building readiness, thus reinforcing the positive basis of the readiness concept.

Another understanding of readiness for change is as the opposite of resistance to change (Jacobson, 1957). Elaborating on this, Bernerth (2004) identifies necessity

and appropriateness as the key elements of employee readiness. Going back to the concept of unfreezing by Lewin (1951, 1947), he explains the process of creating readiness as preparing organisational members to unfreeze and to start the course of moving, which is done to alter cognitions of employees in an effort to assist organisational change. Therefore, resistance to change may be understood as a failure to effectively unfreeze the organisation before a change intervention takes place. As a consequence, resistance is a kind of commitment to the current state (Armenakis et al., 1999). Other authors found that resistance is based on the fear of anything new or loss for example of status (Kehoe, 2010; Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008; Klein, 1984), therefore resistance might also be understood as holding on to the known rather than risking the unknown.

Resistance to change may be understood as a construct of three dimensions: behavioural / intentional emotional and cognitive (Piderit, 2000). The aspects may be interpreted as following:

- Behavioural: undesirable behaviours as a response to a change effort (Bartunek, 1993; Coch & French, 1948) or a particular kind of action or inaction (Brower & Abolafia, 1995), which is viewed as an obstacle to change (Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008).
- Emotional: resistance is caused by frustration and anxiety of employees and may result in aggression (Coch & French, 1948) and arises from defensive routines (Argyris & Schon, 1974).
- Cognitive: suggestions that resistance is caused by negative thoughts or reluctance (Watson, 1982) and can be overcome cognitively (Bartlem & Locke, 1981).

Understanding a form of resistance to change as a non-compliance to explicit behavioural requirements (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002), readiness for change may be interpreted as the willingness to comply with certain behaviours or behavioural changes needed for change implementation. This idea is in line with the understanding of readiness for change composed of change commitment and change efficacy to implement organisational change (Weiner, 2009). However, the

differentiation between active resistance to change and a more passive behaviour of non-support for change is blurred. Also there are several reasons for resistance to change, mainly a general resistance to a new, unknown state and these may result in active resistance or passive non-support depending on the perceived impact of these reasons.

A psychologically based explanation and resulting ideas to deal with resistance are described in the analysis of Kegan and Lahey (2001). The authors suggest that besides common or obvious reasons for resistance to change like the fear of a shift in power or fear of learning new things, there is also a kind of personal immunity to change that exists, which they call competing commitment. This competing commitment neither indicates opposition, nor does it result from idleness. It is rather a deeply rooted barrier, which people are not aware of, described as a subconscious, hidden goal that conflicts with people's stated goals. This phenomenon may be another reason for employees resisting change. The authors describe a process to overcome these subconscious barriers to change, after which people are more open to changing their behaviour. This process is complex, a considerable amount of time is needed and it is challenging, painful, energy-sapping or even embarrassing for the employee. These issues point to the limited practicability of this model for an extensive change process. Kehoe (2010) and Kotter (2010) respectively advise responsible managers to get people on board for new ideas or to deal with troublemakers. One important aspect Kotter (2010) mentions is to listen to agitators, treat them with respect, to not let them get personal and to be prepared for the common strategies to attack ideas for change. Besides the overall concept, Kotter recommends that you push good ideas forward, which are not limited to organisational change, as these may be important to seriously deal with resisters, and not only ignore them or order them to cope.

Budner (1962 p. 29) analysed how managers cope with change, focussing on the two dispositional traits of positive self-concept (composed of positive affectivity, self-esteem and self-efficacy) and risk tolerance (composed of openness to experience, low risk aversion and tolerance for ambiguity). It was found that the two factors of tolerance for ambiguity ("the tendency to perceive (i. e., interpret)

ambiguous situations as sources of threat”) and positive affectivity (associated with well-being, confidence energy, affiliation, a positive worldview and self-confidence) had the strongest relation to successful coping with change. In regards to how managers cope with change, Judge et al. (1999) recommended to enhance the success of change efforts by assessing and selecting managers responsible for change based on these two variables. This advice may not be very practicable, because when change is needed, there might be neither time nor financial resources to hire new personnel for that, but from the management already available those considered with high tolerance for ambiguity and positive affectivity may be put in charge as change agents. When selecting change agents, it should be acknowledged that responsible first-line supervisors may resist employee involvement, as research by Klein (1984) found. Reasons for resistance may be found in concerns regarding job security (or a loss of power and control), job definition / expectations and additional workload for implementation. In conclusion, Klein argues that resistance is understandable, since first-line supervisors are squeezed in the middle between employees and management. The aspect of underlying structures of relationships within organisational systems and especially for example the challenges and tasks of certain management positions are also dealt with in detail by Oshry (2010b, 2010a, 2007, 1966).

After the concept of readiness was contrasted with that of resistance to change and a partial overlap in the understanding of both was identified, understanding is complemented by one encompassing model of change readiness.

2.3.4 The change readiness model

Armenakis, Stanley & Feild (1999) define readiness as a cognitive state comprising beliefs, attitudes and intentions toward a change effort and they suggest proactively creating readiness for change. This definition of readiness focussing on beliefs and intentions in my opinion very well fits the aim of my research to explore readiness of Stadtwerke Bielefeld for organisational change through a rich analysis of situational factors regarding attitudes and opinions.

The readiness model of Armenakis, Harris & Mossholder (1993) suggests the importance of building readiness according to the level of readiness assessed and the context of the organisation. The primary mechanism for creating readiness for change is the change message, which should incorporate generally the need for change (discrepancy between the actual state of the organisation and the desired end-state) and the individual and collective efficacy for change. The work on creating readiness (Armenakis, Harris & Mossholder, 1993) complemented previous contributions regarding resistance to change providing a case example. In later research, Armenakis and Fredenberger (1997) researched the views and experiences of 450 practising turnaround change agents, employing a questionnaire derived from change literature and publications on corporate turnarounds. The findings contributed to the understanding of time periods for improvement by changes, resistance to change and readiness practices implemented. In regards to my research, I assume that the findings are not unconditionally applicable, because the focus on turnaround change agents implies that the pressure for change is existence-threatening to the company as external professionals are brought in help with the turnaround. Therefore the findings might not be completely accurate for a situation where urgency is increasing, but not yet existence-threatening (see 1.3, p. 10f.).

An extension of the message components was developed in later research by Armenakis, Harris & Feild (1999) focussing on how to make change permanent. This model to make change permanent was developed from theory and research on organisational change and from successful practices implemented in many worldwide organisations. However, the model was built on a broad theoretical basis, but does not – as a general model - take specific situational factors into account. For the aim of the research to explore the readiness of Stadtwerke Bielefeld, the specific factors regarding opinions, beliefs and situational aspects need to be intertwined for the practical application of the model.

In the research of Armenakis et al. (1999), the message components needed to build readiness are extended to five; discrepancy and efficacy are complemented by appropriateness, principal support and personal valence. The five elements should answer key questions about the change effort:

2 Review of literature

- Discrepancy should convince organisation members that the change is really necessary.
- Appropriateness should demonstrate that the specific change being introduced is an appropriate reaction to the discrepancy.
- Efficacy reassures that the change can be successfully implemented.
- Principal support aims to convince members of the organisation that the leaders are committed to successful implementation and institutionalisation of the change.
- Personal valance explains the intrinsic and extrinsic benefits of the change to organisation members.

The model of Armenakis et al. (1999) is depicted in the following figure:

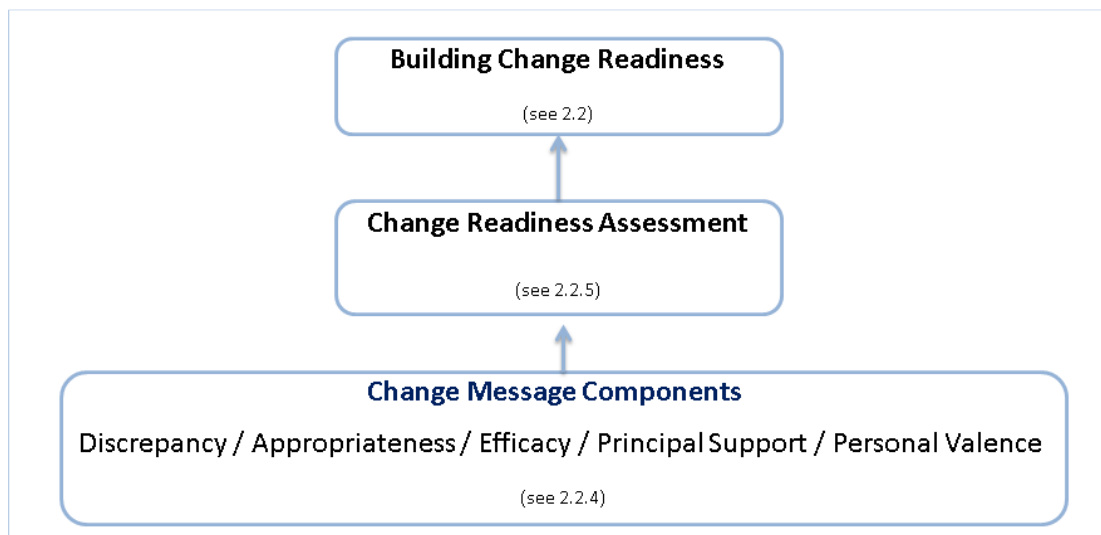


Figure 5: Change readiness model; illustration according to Armenakis et al. (1999)

With a change message comprised of above components, change commitment should be built. Armenakis et al. (1999) conceptualise the undertaking of any change intervention in general and change readiness intervention more specifically as sending a message to organisational members, thus the change message is the core element for readiness creation and later adoption of change. Anyone involved in initiating, implementing, and supporting a change is considered as a change agent, starting with the head of the organisation and then people in all leadership positions supporting change. Armenakis et al. (1999) suggest that change initiatives

may usefully be considered as sending a message to the organisation, so that the most important attribute of change agents is credibility. This is an aspect that needs to be considered for my research in tailoring a change attempt (see 4.2.1; p. 98; 4.4.1; p. 113 and 1.1.1; p. 158).

In later research, Holt, Armenakis, Feild & Harris (2007) found that readiness for change is a multi-dimensional construct with the main influence factors of discrepancy, efficacy, organisational valence (beneficial and appropriate for the company), management support and personal valence. With these core items, a readiness measure was developed and the necessity of these items in a change message was confirmed. Also the instrument was suggested to evaluate an implemented change or use it for periodic assessment to decide whatever actions may be needed to make a change successful. However, refinements of the scales used have been suggested. Armenakis, Bernerth, Pitts and Walker (2007) developed a 24-item assessment tool for readiness assessment that may be used at any stage of the change process. The basis for this assessment tool is also the change message as the core element for readiness creation and thus successful change implementation. With change readiness assessment, a change agent can determine the extent to which ownership for an organisational change exists. Further, unfavourable dimensions may be used to develop modifications of the organisational change content or process. With the model of Armenakis and colleagues (2007, 1999, 1993) as a basis, an assessment of readiness for change may be undertaken. As discussed in this paragraph, the model may be tailored and extended to include specific characteristics into the assessment, which I indeed considered necessary in regard to my research aim.

This model highlights the change message as its core element, with a communicational focus. Given that focus, every action or lack of action of the change agent(s) is interpreted as reinforcing or contradicting the change message. Therefore the central aspect of the model is not one single change message, but the behaviours of managers and opinion leaders, who function as change agents, as a whole needing to be consistent with the change message. Even though a 24-item assessment tool is suggested by Armenakis et al. (2007), further refinement,

adjustment to specific circumstances of the company and testing is proposed later in my thesis (see 3.5.2).

2.3.5 Assessment of organisational readiness for change

Common to the model of Armenakis et al. (1993) and to other organisational readiness approaches in terms of practical application, is the fact that there might be constraints in regards to time and / or financial resources to analyse organisational capacity to adapt and improve it or reduce resistance to change. However, it can be a good starting point to assess the adaptability of the company or to concentrate on ways to reduce resistance to change (Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008; Kotter, 1997) or to actively build readiness for change (Armenakis et al., 1993). Based on that assessment resources can be allocated to different units or different stages of the change process. Furthermore, it also helps to create an awareness of potential pitfalls or critical success factors.

Armenakis, Harris and Mossholder (1993) show in their research how change agents can influence organisational readiness for change. The term change agent refers, according to Armenakis et al. (2007), to anyone involved in initiating, implementing and supporting a change and is extended from non-managerial change agents (persons interacting socially as opinion leaders) to persons in charge of the change as a local change agent (for example an immediate supervisor) to the global (the highest level in the organisation). However, it is important that the change agent genuinely supports the change, holds a high level of credibility and shows behavioural integrity, thus aligning words and deeds (Armenakis et al., 2007, 1999). According to Armenakis et al. (1993), the process of attaining readiness is framed by the idea of a proactive change agent influencing organisational members' beliefs, attitudes and intentions. As a first step it is recommended to assess the state of readiness to effectively guide the implementation. Assessment may be made via a survey while the design will be influenced by constraints such as availability of time, expertise and resources. Therefore it is necessary to adjust the applied instrument for readiness assessment due to situational factors of the organisation. To fulfil this

requirement, the model of Armenakis et al. (1999) was tailored according to the requirements of my research (see 2.5.3).

In research documented by Fox, Ellison and Keith (1988) a scale for readiness for change was developed. Employees were asked to rate five items: if everyone was ready and willing to solve problems, that introducing changes was relatively easy, that beneficial results were expected and that leadership of the organisation would support the efforts to improve procedures. It was concluded that organisational improvements require not only the realisation and acceptance that change is necessary but also an accompanying long-term commitment to advancement from management and employees. These five items identified by Fox et al. (1988) can be mapped onto the model of Armenakis et al. (1993):

- Ready to solve problems → discrepancy
- Willing to solve problems → appropriateness
- Introducing changes was relatively easy → efficacy
- Beneficial results were expected → personal valence
- Long-term commitment to advancement from management and employees → principal support.

Because the models of Fox et al. (1988) and Armenakis et al. (1993) are mutually supporting, I believe that the model of Armenakis et al. is the more thoroughly elaborated and as such the model of Armenakis et al. (1993) is the more adaptable model for my research.

In the model of Armenakis, Harris and Mossholder (1993), the first step is an assessment to determine how ready employees are for change before the implementation phase of change starts. By this assessment gaps between the company management's and employees' expectations of the change initiative can be identified. Recognition of significant gaps offers the change agents to close them and therewith the change implementation can be supported. Furthermore, the assessment may be used as an instrument to develop facilitating strategies for initiation and implementation of change, according to the research of Armenakis et al. (2007, 1999) and Holt et al. (2007). The assessment serves to estimate the degree of buy-in for the change, to determine deficiencies in specific beliefs and to

build a basis to enhance the buy-in among change recipients. All of these authors argue that it is important to ensure that the conveyed change message is effective to support change and therewith to encourage organisational members to modify their work behaviour. To influence the behaviour, it is necessary to influence change recipients' beliefs. Or, as Armenakis and Fredenberger (1997 p. 144) summarise: "assessing readiness for change can be helpful in laying out a road map for communication with employees and for implementing the necessary changes". In earlier research, Armenakis et al. (1993) claim an even higher importance of readiness for change by suggesting that lack of change readiness is a main reason for failure of change implementation attempts.

The idea of readiness for change may be considered in the light of the work of Dweck (2012), who differentiates between static and dynamic mindsets. A person with a static mindset is characterised by a belief in his naturally given superiority, which has to be proven and celebrated constantly, while a person with a dynamic mindset has got a firm trust in human potential and viability. The dynamic mindset person uses mistakes and feedback to learn from and fosters open and controversial discussions and is therefore more open to change, while those with static mindsets enjoy stability. An assessment of a mindset being static or dynamic might explore to what extent deviant opinions are approved, whether trust in viability is present and whether mistakes are tolerated and used as a means to learn from. From this basic work on mindsets it might be concluded that individual readiness for change increases with mindsets tending to be more dynamic rather than static, because of the greater willingness to learn from experiences. However, one procedure might be to look for people with a dynamic mindset as leaders of workgroups or as early adopters of change.

With respect to their model, Armenakis et al. (2007, 1999) argue that reliability and validity of the readiness assessment needs to be addressed and that the specific design will be determined by constraints of financial and temporal resources and expertise. However, from the perspective of a constructivist, the investigator and the object of investigation are assumed to be interactively linked, so that the findings are created during the investigation process (Guba & Lincoln, 1994),

therefore reliability and validity are not of specific concern within my research (this is further discussed in 3.4.2.) Rather the circumstances of the organisation and its acting humans have to be considered, because human behaviour cannot be understood without reference to the meanings and purposes attached to their activities. In regards to my research, the model of Armenakis et al. (2007, 1993) was adapted (see 2.5.3), and the questions for readiness assessment were developed, according to the characteristics of the company (see annex 1 and 2), also including the participant values in the inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Similar advice about a pre-implementation assessment of readiness for change is given by Jones, Jimmieson and Griffiths (2005), who state that such an assessment should help to choose strategies and tactics to encourage employee demand for specific change interventions. Their research showed that perceptions of readiness for change acted as a mediator between the relationship of perceptions of a human relations culture orientation and the acceptance of the usage of a new technology. Therefore, a strong human relations culture may facilitate readiness for change. Based on these findings they concluded that a change implementation may not result in the desired outcomes, because employees are not psychologically ready. However, the consequences of such an assessment of readiness and its results should be subject to further consideration. Further they found a similar influence of organisations' reshaping capabilities to successful implementation of new technology. Reshaping capabilities were described in a pattern of engagement (informing and involving employees), development of all resources and systems needed and performance management capabilities. Informing and involving employees was considered by other authors as an important factor to create readiness for change (Armenakis & Harris, 2002; Coch & French, 1948). This is a further recommendation to assess readiness for change as an analysis of employees' attitudes towards the change event (Beckard & Harris, 1987). McNabb and Sepic (1995) state that change can only happen, when managers assess the culture in which the change should take place and advise to reorientate the attitudes of public sector managers and executives toward the benefits receivable from supporting the change initiative. Even though the research was about a

specific change effort, it may be helpful after assessing readiness to draw attention to the positive outcomes of the change. Lawson and Price (2003) stress the importance of achieving an understanding of, and agreement with, the reasons for change, that employees must have the skills required by change and that they must have positive role models.

Other authors argue that to understand sources of resistance to a large-scale change, employees' perceptions of the state of organisational readiness is one important factor (Eby et al., 2000). Therefore an assessment of change would result in a better understanding, but not necessarily facilitate change.

The research of By (2007) showed a correlation between successful implementation and further management of change and the level of change readiness. A high level of participants in the research (85%) agreed that failure is the only predictable outcome of any change initiative, if an organisation is not change ready. If the research was representative, organisational readiness has to exist or be created before a change project should be started; therefore the phase of assessing and if necessary creating readiness should be mandatory in the layout of the planned change programme. In any way, the level of change readiness is important to be considered carefully when planning a change. Applying these insights to my research, a change readiness assessment is a valuable source of information for the organisation to draw upon in planning organisational change.

2.3.6 Creating organisational readiness

Creating organisational readiness may be understood as an effort to activate collective support by building and shaping awareness regarding the existence of organisational problems and their sources and of solutions to them (Smelser, 1967 in: Armenakis et al., 1993). Eby et al. (2000) found that individual, job, work group and context-related factors were all important antecedents of readiness for change. They propose that the characteristics of the organisation should reinforce a climate guiding the change, to identify specific systems and policies and then to realign

these for the specific change initiative. Eby et al. (2000) give advice on how to encourage perceptions of support, participation and trust among employees. Involving individuals in decision-making in tailoring the change effort or general participation at work will shape perceptions of organisational readiness. Further readiness might be built by offering skills training, promoting open communication and employing task forces to increase employee participation in decision-making relevant to the change. According to Luecke (2003), another procedure to make an organisation change-ready is described by first determining units that are change-ready and to start change initiatives within these units. To increase change-readiness it is proposed to develop more participative approaches to everyday business, to give people a voice to involve them and to drive out fear to empower people (Luecke, 2003).

Another approach by Jarrett (2009) proposes first to analyse the factors with a positive influence on change and to build the change program based on that understanding, in order to increase probability of success. The author (Jarrett, 2009) recommends measuring the adaptability to change. Based on the assessment of changeability it is recommended to tailor an approach for change to the specific context. The author states that to make change permanent, “we must have organisational readiness” (Jarrett, 2009 p. 8). However, as Jarrett (2009) does not go further in articulating the building change readiness, which is the focus of my research, but rather focuses on the strategies combining internal capabilities with external forces, this concept is not further used for my research.

Similarly, Glor (2007) recommends assessing organisational capacity to adapt to changes before a change starts. Glor (2007) makes use of the research on complex adaptive systems that suggests that the three factors variety, reactivity and a capacity for self-organised emergence characterise quickly changing organisations. Glor (2007) recommends that when planning a change process one should develop change execution strategies based on organisational patterns, since she found that some patterns facilitate change more than others. To facilitate planning of change, management needs to know which pattern the organisation is working with. This

again leads to the necessity of assessing the organisational capacity to adapt before launching a change initiative.

Armenakis et al. (1993) focus as a primary means for creating readiness on the message of an organisation for change, which basically must consist of the two central points needed for change: discrepancy and individual and collective efficacy. The discrepancy element should explain the variation of the current state of the organisation, where it wants to be and which the desired end-state is in consistency with relevant external contextual factors. It is important to achieve a high level of clarity and commitment for the desired end-state. To create readiness, the organisation members' perceived capability to overcome the discrepancy must be strengthened. The confidence to correct the discrepancy has been referred to as efficacy and has been found to consistently influence thought patterns, actions and emotional arousal (Bandura, 1977; Bennis et al., 1976). Focussing on these two aspects, it is important to consider the dynamics of social information processing and the interdependencies of organisation's collective readiness and the readiness of the individuals, because individuals are attaching meaning to events and circumstances of the organisation through watching each other and through social interaction.

The focus on communicational aspects – thus the change message – of Armenakis et al. (1993) is also supported by the research of Gilley et al. (2008), who recommend a person-centred perspective due to their findings that by concentrating on motivation and communication, change implementation is more likely to be successful. The model of Armenakis et al. (1993) presumes that there is not only need for change and an appropriate end-state envisioned but also the ability of the organisation and its members to achieve that desired result. If the organisations' management does not have a clear vision about the desired end-state and it is becoming obvious that business as usual does not work anymore, the communicational approaches might not unfold their full potential or may be inappropriate. A clear vision for the change needs to be elaborated first. Therefore a change agent has to diligently verify the existence of discrepancy and efficacy. One of the limits of the research of Armenakis et al. (1993) is that it does not

explain how the single factors influence organisational readiness for change or if they are of equal weighting in terms of impact (this issue becomes particularly relevant in the data analysis (see 4.6.1), when a simple average of the assessment of the single factors is compared with the overall subjective assessment of the respondent). For the purpose of my research, given the lack of detailed information on this issue, it is assumed that the message components influence change readiness equally. This assumption, however, is not confirmed by my research. In the analysis of the readiness assessment of the management and the non-managerial employee sample, there are contradictions comparing an equally weighted average and the overall assessment undertaken by the respondents (see 4.6.1, p. 152f. and 4.6.2, p. 158f.). The weighting of each message component within an overall readiness assessment is an issue for further research, possibly a quantitative study.

A comparable focus on change communication is presented by Miller et al. (1994). They found a positive influence of “quality” information about the change as one factor to being open to change. Organisational members’ cooperation is considered as a necessary condition for possibly successful implementation of change plans. The message and its sources have influence on recipients’ attitudes. Official information providing “...the rationale for the change, the structure to be implemented, the process of implementing the change, the message recipient’s role in the restructured organisation, and the anticipated consequences of the change” may be considered as adequate (Miller & Monge, 1985, p. 385). While sufficient information is only a positive antecedent of openness to change in combination with a high need of achievement of employees, it provides useful information for supporting openness to change: need for achievement is a personality disposition and therefore may not be influenced organisation-wide in regard to an upcoming change process. Information, however, may be tailored for the specific change effort in such a way as to be most likely perceived as adequate and should therefore contain the above components. In fact, research indicates that even negative information is more helpful for employees to realistically assess the change than no

information (Miller & Monge, 1985). This supports the importance of effective communication in regards to a change intervention (see 3.5.2).

Other authors support the idea of communication being central to change implementation (S. Fox & Amichai-Hamburger, 2001). They argue that managers should talk about the change as openly, as early and as much as possible in order to minimise or eliminate resistance to change. They recommend managers to consider the core messages regarding the change, how the messages are put together, what the characteristics of the change agents are, how change agents interact with their audience and the setting in which these interactions with employees take place. Further it is advised that the change message should not only include rational but also emotional arguments. They suggest using words that cause positive and negative feelings for certain components of the change message as well as metaphors to attach a symbolic meaning that is loaded with emotions to reality. Additionally, they advocate delivering the message in an appropriate mode of communication for emotions with pictures, slogans, music and colour included. These means have to be chosen cautiously and sensitively as well as the use of humour, which may help to draw attention, put listeners at ease and release tension. Another advice is to create a pleasant atmosphere, to involve work groups in the project and also to hold ceremonies to relinquish old ways of thinking or behaving and replacing them with new ones by celebrating the past before letting it go. Even though the line of reasoning by the authors is very compelling, it has to be considered, whether leaders can sensibly create positive, pleasant emotions for a change, when there is a dramatic and urgent situation on hand. Furthermore, shareholders and / or management have to be convinced that the time and financial resources needed are worth investing. Huy (1999) recommends engaging in efforts to identify the range of emotions aroused during radical change, to accept them and to determine organisational procedures and processes that enable individuals and work groups to deal with these emotions. As a conclusion, change managers should pay attention to the emotional aspects of change and should not underestimate the emotional impacts of their change related communication (see

5.2.2). Financial and time restraints will determine the extent to which the mode of communication can be adjusted to take emotional aspects into account.

A consideration of the ideas and frameworks discussed here highlights the importance of creating readiness at the beginning of a change intervention and thereby confirms the relevance of my research.

Research by Bernerth (2004) suggests, in considering the multiple and interrelated aspects of “true change readiness”, understanding readiness as a collection of thoughts and intentions toward the specific change effort. To modify the collective cognitions and intentions of a group of employees, the readiness of individuals and the group may be influenced by the dynamics of social exchange. Bernerth (2004) supports the communicational approach of Armenakis et al. (1999), which sets communication as the primary mechanism for creating readiness.

For the message to be effective, both the perceived adequacy and the sincerity of the bearer are crucial. Another important advice given is to build self-efficacy as a first step in creating organisational readiness. In conclusion, the research by Bernerth (2004) reinforces the application of the five change message components of Armenakis et al. (1999) and states that organisational leaders can either take proactive steps before a change effort starts – for example by creating readiness – or they may be forced to react with corrective actions when resistance arises.

2.4 Change implementation

2.4.1 Approaches to change implementation

To round out the picture of organisational readiness for change as a precondition for successful change implementation, it is useful to have a brief look at change implementation as well as to show the interdependencies. The literature on change implementation is vast and advice on procedures ranges from individualistic and more behavioural-focused approaches to system-orientated, methodical organisation-wide programmes. An example of an individualistic way to induce change within a company is described by Meyerson (2001). She delineates paths to

change corporate culture by a form of less visible and more modest leadership, initiated by individual managers. Even though this possibility to change by quietly challenging prevailing wisdom and provoking cultural transformation seems to be a powerful opportunity for a company, it is more suitable for evolutionary change. Moreover, it is a technique that is not suitable for a controlled, broad-based, intentionally started and planned change process.

Regarding planned organisational change, Burke (2008) points out the paradox of planned change: Change must be planned, but at the same time it must be anticipated that things will not turn out quite the way it was planned. First an initiative is launched, but then things turn out to be different and barriers are identified, therefore a step back has to be taken to fix the problems to go on with the process, which is called "loop back". The change process can be described in loops of different sizes. The idea of proceeding in loops is also stressed by the description of change as an ongoing approximation to increasingly ambitious goals (Moran & Brightman, 2001). This description of change includes a regular assessment of the actual situation and the continuous adjustment of the goals of the change. The idea of change processes proceeding in loops is also compatible to the understanding of change as single- or double-loop learning (Bartunek & Moch, 1987; see 2.1.2). According to Burke (2008), there are unplanned obstacles occurring and adjustments to the process itself. Over time a loop pattern can emerge and the change goals can be reached. However, no pattern will emerge without clear goals. Unanticipated consequences will arise as the company's normal ways of doing things are interrupted with new ways. For planning a long-term process, it is important to anticipate the unplanned or to leave enough space for adjustments in the planned process.

Important articles about leading change were written by Kotter (Drerup & Wömpener, 2014; Kotter, 2007, 1997), who describes eight steps on how to successfully undertake change. One aspect Kotter highlights is that high pressure is needed for people to leave their zone of comfort. The aspect of high pressure or urgency is also found in the concepts of organisational readiness (Armenakis et al., 1999). This is not an inconsistency though; if organisational readiness is understood

as a precondition for successful change implementation and urgency has a positive impact on organisational readiness, urgency or high pressure is an important prerequisite for successful change implementation. Another condition named by Kotter (Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008; Kotter 2007) is the claim to have a strong guiding coalition. This again can be mapped with the concepts of readiness for change that call for principal support (Armenakis et al., 1999). However, in the view of Kotter, the guiding coalition will work in most cases to some extent outside the organisational hierarchy, which he reasons by the statement “if the existing hierarchy were working well, there would be no need for a major transformation” (2007 p. 98). This implies either that need for change is ‘home-made’ or existing management have failed to respond appropriately to external developments that cause the need for change. In disagreeing with this statement I believe that there is a point in time when external development and pressures cause a need for change, to which current management may react adequately, but the environmental conditions have changed again. Another advice given by Kotter (2007) is to develop a clear vision and to communicate it effectively. This recommendation can also be found in concepts of organisational readiness for change (Armenakis & Harris, 2002). In summary, Kotter proposes a straightforward approach to implementing change, which cannot be distinguished precisely from the ideas assimilated in the concepts of organisational readiness. However, since Kotter does not differentiate between the steps of creating readiness for change and implementing change, his concept may be viewed as an integrated approach.

Very close to the model of Kotter, Jørgensen, Owen and Neus (2009) identify key challenges and give advice to implement change programs. Some approaches can be found giving phase models, while highlighting different aspects, for example eight steps to alternate business emphasising the emotional factor (Pratt, 2005) or six steps highlighting involvement of management on every level and then the entire organisation (Beer, Eisenstat, & Spector, 1990). Even though “change through persuasion” is a more communication-based concept, it does not contradict Kotter’s model (Garvin & Roberto, 2005).

Beer (2009 pp. 544-548) lists seven steps for successful change with a long-term focus. Some of these can be mapped against the concept of organisational readiness (Armenakis et al., 1993) as follows:

Seven steps for successful change (Beer, 2009)	Change readiness model (Armenakis et al., 1993)
1 Mobilise energy for change in management.	Mobilisation by creating dissatisfaction with the status quo is similar to the idea of illustrating the discrepancy of the current state with an ideal state
2 Develop a new direction in terms of strategy and values.	Development of a new direction is a requirement for illustrating the discrepancy of the current state with an ideal state
3 Identify organisational barriers perceived by lower levels to specify what changes in organisation and behaviour are needed.	Identification of organisational barriers may be linked with efficacy - the conviction about the ability to implement the changes.
4 Develop a clear vision of the organisation's future state.	Development of a clear vision is a requirement for illustrating the discrepancy of the current state with an ideal state
5 Communicate and involve people in implementation.	The idea of effectively communicating a consistent change message is the linking means to create organisational readiness.
6 Support behaviour change after implementation to increase probability of success.	For institutionalisation of change, it is recommended to seek for reinforcement of the change.
7 Monitor progress and develop further changes.	

Table 1: Steps for successful change and change readiness model

Another, more project-related approach for a successful change process execution is given by Sirkin, Keenan and Jackson (2005) with their DICE model. Their research showed that certain factors have more influence on a positive change project outcome than others. A differentiation is made between soft factors, as culture, motivation and leadership, and hard factors that are duration (in particular time between project assessments), integrity that indicates the project teams' capabilities; commitment of senior executives and effort that outlines the extra work employees need to do for the new processes. These factors – duration, integrity, commitment and effort – are subsumed within the acronym DICE. Sirkin et al. (2005) recommend the assessment of each of the four DICE elements before a transformation process is launched. Executives are asked to rate each factor in terms of likeliness of contribution to success for the project. The ranking shows which factors might become critical and need more resources allocated. This implies

that careful project planning focusing on the critical factors can increase likelihood of success.

The focus of research has moved to some extent away from a single general model for successful change implementation towards a contingency theory of organisational change. This should specify alternating strategies, from which the one fitting best the stage of development of the company can be chosen (e. g. Jarrett, 2009; Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008; Strebels, 1994; Beer, 1987). By a situational analysis, for example assessing the strength of forces or the needed speed for change respectively and expected resistance to change, strategies for change are proposed. While Strebels (1994) recommends eight different change paths, with varying weight on dealing with either the forces of or resistance to change, Kotter and Schlesinger (2008) for example suggest methods dealing with varying degrees of resistance to change. Serving the call for a contingency model of change implementation, Jarrett (2009) supplies a model with four typical situations in terms of environmental forces and adaptive strategies. Important factors to make change happen are clustered into the three groups: external environment, strategic leadership within the company and organisational inertia. Companies should be assessed based on these factors to select an appropriate strategy for the company. Jarrett states that a crucial point is to have a strategic goal to align external drivers with the core internal capabilities for organisational change. Depending on an evaluation of the companies' external conditions and their internal capabilities, four main groups of strategies are described to successfully lead change. This model may be an exemplary basis for change insofar that first external factors and drivers for change in the industry are analysed and then their implications for the company assessed. The alignment of the organisation with its environment is the determinant for the change strategy to be chosen. Concluding, Jarrett (2009) argues that an organisation has to take its capabilities to change into account for choosing and applying an adequate change strategy.

2.4.2 Change success factors

This brief overview of approaches to change implementation shows that some aspects considered important by various authors may not be sorted clearly into a pre-implementation phase of creating readiness or the change implementation phase itself. In summary, a list of possible success factors in change was developed on the basis of the literature review. In developing an overview of success factors of change processes, a simple frequency count of success factors was carried out and most frequent factors were listed. I am aware, however, that this method was not perfectly rigorous, as the selection of change literature was determined by the specific search keywords for the research project and also screened literature was perhaps incomplete, mainly due to language and to some extent to availability and currency. Despite these limitations, I believe that the key sources were included and that this auxiliary process was useful in providing the interviewees with an initial pool of success factors, which could be supplemented by the interviewee's own views and felt priorities.

The most frequent key success factors found are:

1. **Effective communication:** subsumed under this keyword are for example open communication (Eby et al., 2000), effective communication of a clear vision (Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008; Kotter, 2007), making people understand the necessity of change and a sense of urgency (Beer, 2009), and why change ("Erfolgreiche Change-Prozesse folgen einer Dreier-Logik," 2014).
2. **Involvement of affected employees:** involve employees in implementation (Beer, 2009; Jarrett, 2009), nourish the perception of participation (Eby et al., 2000) and use participative approaches to facilitate change (Luecke, 2003).
3. **Definition and clarification of objectives:** develop a new direction (Beer, 2009), have clear goals or a clear vision (Burke, 2008; Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008, Kotter, 2007), have a clear desired end-state developed ("Erfolgreiche Change-Prozesse folgen einer Dreier-Logik," 2014) and provide a course of action (Rainey, 2009).

4. **Thorough analysis and planning of the change process:** planning of the change process ("Erfolgreiche Change-Prozesse folgen einer Dreier-Logik," 2014). Further a thorough analysis of the situational factors and a profound planning are seen as a precondition for the change implementation, for example in the DICE model (Sirkin et al., 2005). I argue that a comprehensive planning process is a necessary requirement to develop a compelling vision and strategy.
5. **External consulting:** External consulting as an issue was not derived from the literature review but as a factor specific to the context of Stadtwerke Bielefeld. It was included to give consideration to the fact that the company tends to base complex, very specific or critical decisions on recommendations that are confirmed by external consulting companies. This may be due to the need for security of the company or it might be a habit based on the shareholders being council members, who themselves want to have additional substantiation for decision-making when it is subjected to public discussion. For this reason, it was believed to be both appropriate and interesting to include external consultation as an additional key success factor.
6. **Sufficient resources:** availability of time and resources is often a critical issue in project management and the implementation of change projects. Several authors find resources a constraint on effective change (Armenakis et al., 1993), as a critical factor to provide more resources (Weiner, 2009; Sirkin et al., 2005), or argue more generally the need to provide sufficient resources (Rainey, 2009).
7. **Rewards for good change outcomes:** Some authors suggest the supporting of behavioural change with rewards (Beer, 2009). One might consider a reward system, which may be related to more general incentive systems, such as bonuses or extra time off.
8. **Training:** Change efficacy, the "sense of one's ability to successfully accomplish change" (Cunningham et al., 2002 p. 377), is seen as a central aspect of change implementation, therefore training as a means to increase the ability of employees to perform certain tasks was included. Other

authors also suggest the offer of skills training (Eby et al., 2000) or consider a lack of expertise as a constraint (Armenakis et al., 1993).

Based on this overview of literature about successful change management, the specific issues for public sector companies are discussed in the following section.

2.4.3 Change management in public sector and municipal companies

While the approaches described may be seen as reasonably comprehensive in scope, they need to be supplemented by aspects dealing with special issues of municipal companies. The literature review revealed that literature on aspects of change for German municipal companies is very scarce. As there is little available on that specific topic, in the following section literature about municipal or public sector companies and about public administrations is dealt with in summary. However, there are some aspects and characteristics of public sector companies that should be taken into account.

Schäfer (2010) deals with public sector change management and by determining four key reasons for failure of change processes in public administrations, highlights the special issues he considers important for change processes. These reasons or problems are:

- Wrong anthropology: The assumption that management is primarily based on rational considerations is wrong; employees operate rather by established behaviour patterns than rationality. Instead of management on the basis of rationality and reason, management should focus on revision of observable and practiced patterns of habit.
- Wrong understanding of organisations: It is argued that the majority of employees make incorrect assumptions in regard to the status of the employee towards the organisation. The organisation is not orientated towards the satisfaction of the needs of employees, but rather on the provision of their respective services. Often middle managers represent the interests of employees rather than the best interest of the organisation.

- Wrong management approach: Management concludes that employees in public administrations are generally driven by a need for development. Therefore change approaches are often based on motivational, participative and cooperative premises. It is argued though, that people applying for public administration jobs are seeking security, rather than development, which is why these approaches do not work in public administration.
- Wrong focus: Usually in times when change becomes necessary, the atmosphere in public administrations is laden by a high potential for conflict. The reasons for that are long periods with no human resources development as no new employees are hired, a very low labour turnover rate as nobody leaves for security reasons and because of so called mechanisms of selection, which is explained as “who is really good does not go into public administration, but into the private sector” (p. 7). Therefore the change should not focus on social conflict solving, but rather on the attitude and the mode of operation of employees.

These explanations, even though they are generalisations and represent the opinion of Schäfer (2010), give an impression of the mindset and functioning of a public administration and accordingly also of a public sector organisation.

In regard to dealing with emotions, Schäfer (2010) warns against trying to rationalise discourses by appealing to employees' reason. It is rather recommended to deal with the irrational and to allow showing one's emotions such as anger, anxiety and uncertainty. Another typical issue of public organisations is closeness of the line managers to their staff, which should be replaced by actions aligned with the interests of the organisation. Therefore it is recommended to confront managers with radical arguments to break open well-rehearsed patterns of habit. Further the aim should be to influence the attitudes and habits of the majority of employees (which may be sixty to seventy percent of the total) and not to get everybody on board. These aspects should be considered for a change process in a public sector company as well as the basis for a comprehensive change implementation model, for example based on the one by Jarrett (2009).

Another aspect to be considered is how to bring in new ideas and ways of thinking and acting into the culture and habits of doing business (Schäfer, 2010). Usually labour turnover is low and periods of employment of over twenty years are not unusual, and therefore opportunities to reoccupy jobs only occur when employees leave the company for retirement. This moment in time is a chance for management to initiate change processes by new people bringing in new thinking. However, bringing in specialists from outside corporations into public service companies often fails because of wide discrepancies of salary structures and big differences in corporate culture (Sydow, 2013).

As change in public service companies is a special situation and with necessity for change increasing in the energy industry, a workshop of two consulting companies resulted in a statement about successful organisational change planning and implementation. The change procedure is built on the three pillars of change logic: why to change, desired the end state and elaboration of a tailored detailed approach how to change ("Erfolgreiche Change-Prozesse folgen einer Dreier-Logik," 2014). The result of the workshop was a definition of ten fields of action for change in utility companies and public service companies (Kempf, Kühn, Neuhäuser, & Michulitz, 2014). Some of these action fields may be mapped with the seven steps for successful change implementation (Beer, 2009), but others may not. In the following table aspects to be mapped against Beer (2009) are shown:

2 Review of literature

Fields of action for change (Kempf et al., 2014)		Seven steps for successful change (Beer, 2009)	
1	Bringing organisation and people into action (companies have long and political traditions influenced by long-term investments and the objective of security of supply that need more entrepreneurial spirit of optimism).	1	Mobilise energy for change in management.
2	Finding allies.		
3	Setting about the right aspects (necessary change has to be applied to overcome cultures and routines).	2	Develop a new direction in terms of strategy and values.
4	Creating appropriate structures for change.	3	Identify organisational barriers perceived by lower levels to specify what changes in organisation and behaviour are needed.
5	Working together to create the future.	4	Communicate and involve people in implementation.
6	Steering the change powerfully (accomplish positive experiences and designate change agents to mobilise change activities).		
		5	Develop a clear vision of the organisation's future state.
7	Setting an example of change as a manager.		
8	Pursuing human resources management actively.		
9	Supporting organisational learning.	6	Support behaviour change after implementation to increase probability of
10	Living open communication.		
		7	Monitor progress and develop further changes.

Table 2: Ten fields of action for change for utility companies and seven steps for successful change

These aspects are also dealt with by other notable authors in the general change literature (e. g. Beer, 2009; Kotter, 2007). The authors also recommend measuring the willingness and capability for change in an organisational assessment, but unfortunately specific advice for this is not given. Another issue that is accentuated is to have clear and challenging goals (Forster, 2014; Kempf et al., 2014). Research on organisational change in the public sector, based on the finding of notable differences of culture and environments of public and private sector companies (Rainey, 2009), advises:

- To persuasively communicate the need for change with as many participants and stakeholders as possible.
- Provide a course of action to implement change.
- Build internal support and overcome resistance through widespread participation and other means, to ensure top management support and commitment.
- Build external support from political overseers and key external stakeholder
- Provide resources.

- Institutionalise change: members of the organisation must incorporate new policies into their routines.
- Pursue comprehensive change that is congruent for all subsystems of the organisation (Fernandez & Rainey, 2006).

Besides the focus on external political stakeholders, the guidelines do not add anything specifically new in regard to public sector companies in comparison to general advice for planning organisational change in the opinion of the author. Therefore the model of Armenakis et al. (1993) will be used as a basis for researching organisational readiness.

2.4.4 Special issues of change in the energy industry

To develop an understanding of the situation of Stadtwerke Bielefeld within the energy industry, a review of professional journals and books was undertaken. Situational factors, specifics of the industry as well as actions and reactions of competitors were gathered and analysed to broaden the understanding of the change situation of Stadtwerke Bielefeld.

One major aspect is that stability is seen as a prevalent value in the industry. An article that analysed cultural aspects in power supply companies and the necessary cultural change for the transition of the energy industry concluded for companies operating in the industry that the thought pattern reads as “stability” (Oesterwind, 2014). Also Schäfer (2010 p. 69) sees security as a main aspect to apply at public administrations and talks about employees in municipal organisations as “clearly security-orientated”. This line of thought is as well supported by a study of employer attractiveness (Michulitz, 2013). The study got answers from 93 chief executives and heads of human resources of utility companies regarding what stipulates and supports employer attractiveness. A key finding was that job security is the most important motivating factor to work at a utility company. In the future though, heads of human resources think good payment will become more important as a motivator to work at a utilities company (Michulitz, 2013). The aspect of stability in municipal companies was as well brought up by Schäfer (2010) and he suggested to bring in new ideas with new people, when there is a chance for

it. This may be difficult to realise, as municipal companies and Stadtwerke Bielefeld – currently – do not dismiss anybody due to operating conditions, labour turnover is low and there is also the need to shrink down human resources.

Another important insight is the self-perception of the industry. The survey in the industry about employer attractiveness (Michulitz, 2013) asked for a description of organisational structures, culture and the internal processes of the company. On a scale from one being innovative and progressive to five being traditional and conservative, companies' self-perception was between 2.5 and 3.0 (small 2.5, medium 2.9 and big companies 2.7¹) (Michulitz, 2013). From that it might be concluded that companies see themselves as being rather innovative. This self-perception seems to be somewhat contradictory to the view that stability is a prevailing aspect and thought pattern in the industry. However, this finding derived from a single study and might therefore not be representative for the industry.

The municipal utilities seem to have established a market orientation, being dependable and close to the local customers, offering a sufficient customer potential. This was described by Oesterwind (2014 p. 82): "The local municipal utilities have a competitive advantage". Furthermore he sees the necessity for the energy industry to accomplish a cultural change towards a tolerance of insecurity, in order to exploit market potentials (Oesterwind, 2014). It is necessary to change existing established thought patterns by a learning culture. "Learning is a process of changes that has to be organised in the company" as Oesterwind states (2014 p. 84). More broadly, not only learning is recommended to be established in the companies, but also a rethinking of their self-perception needs to take place. Or, put in other words, a cultural change is called for (Weiss, 2014). These are examples for a focus on a change of mindsets in the energy industry as a supplement to finding a new business model (the most explicit example is "cultural change in power supply companies as a driver of the transition of the energy industry" (Oesterwind, 2014)). Therefore learning and rethinking the mindsets should be considered as an aim when designing a change process at Stadtwerke Bielefeld. For

¹ Small: 1-99 employees, medium: 100-249 and big from 250 employees; decimal values approximated

this to happen, a revolutionary change with a double-loop learning process (Burke, 2011) is needed.

An important and widely accepted precondition for tailoring a change programme is awareness among all employees of the need for change. Therefore, according to the literature (e. g. Armenakis & Harris (2002) or Kotter (2010, 2007)), urgency and awareness of deficiencies needs to be communicated. More specifically in regard to change readiness in the public sector it was found that outcomes, benefits and reasons for the change need to be communicated and the vision of change understood by the employees (Cinite, Duxbury, & Higgins, 2009) and the future direction of the company must be clear (Weiss, 2014). However, despite the call for understanding the need for change and building commitment among employees, Schäfer (2010) criticises the aspiration in public administrations to get even the last resistant employee on board and their focus on the employees rather than on the strategic imperative from the company's perspective. Therefore it is concluded by Schäfer (2010) that not too much effort should be devoted to establishing commitment of employees.

Another aspect to be considered when shaping a communications concept is emotion. Research about emotions during change (Mossholder, Settoon, Armenakis, & Harris, 2000) suggested rituals to set the mood for the new situation after the change. One example was a funeral-like event to let go of the past and then start fresh thinking in the new situation. This idea of performing rituals goes back to the first part of the process of unfreezing by Lewin (1951) or more explicitly Bridges (1986 p. 25) who claimed that people "...have to let go of the old situation and (what is more difficult) of the old identity that went with it". In regard to dealing with emotions, Schäfer (2010 p. 23) highlights the need to "...consciously get oneself into the 'irrational' existing emotions exactly, not to objectify". He further argues that real changes are necessarily connected to momentum of anxiety, concern and anger and administrations can only be reformed successfully by dealing with these emotions. And a way of dealing with these emotions is to allow for them by reacting emotionally and then one can de-emotionalise the situation and interact according to Schäfer (2010). Following these insights, a

change process should be accompanied by emotional appeals and as well with a ritual or other starting point to actively deal with emotions and to start the change with a positive feeling. As these aspects described above are seen as common within the industry, it might be presumed that some of these issues are seen by the interviewed managers as well, which is part of the analysis and discussion of findings concerning Stadtwerke Bielefeld.

In this paragraph special conditions to be considered were added to general aspects of change management. These issues for change implementation in public companies have to be taken into account as well for creating organisational readiness in a public utility company. Issues for successful change implementation may be important for preparing a change process as well. The last section of the literature review will be a concluding summary in regard to the research project.

2.5 Concluding summary

2.5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, an overview was provided of the concept of organisational readiness for change and its positioning within the literature of change management: how it is dealt with in the change literature, how it may be differentiated from resistance to change and issues of practical application such as assessment and creation of readiness. As organisational readiness may be seen as a prerequisite for successful change implementation or even as an integral part of a change process, a brief overview of models for change implementation was provided and interdependencies with the change readiness concepts were underlined.

2.5.2 Limitations of the literature

When reviewing the available literature in the context of this research project, a number of gaps and limitations in applicability were identified:

2 Review of literature

- In comparison with the general change literature, the aspect of organisational readiness is less thoroughly researched. As the above overview showed, in particular the link of readiness assessment with following actions to increase the level of readiness is not dealt with in detail. This is identified as a gap in the literature. From this point onwards, when a readiness assessment has taken place, a general procedure may not be adequate anymore, because specific external and internal factors need to be taken into account. Therefore the research project is based on a readiness assessment to investigate the level of readiness and, based on that, to develop starting points and areas of action to increase organisational readiness. This will contribute to existing knowledge through the design and implementation of a specific readiness assessment based on a rich picture of a specific change situation. Following that the assessment findings will inform actions to increase change readiness, which offers practical implications in addition to the theoretical knowledge supplement of a link from readiness assessment to increasing the level of readiness.
- What the literature review shows is that there is much material with varying aspects on change management and change implementation. However, the special challenges or issues of change in public sector companies and more specifically in German public sector companies have received relatively little attention. German public sector companies and perhaps public administrations in general do have a certain culture, which can make them less change-capable in comparison to private companies. Public sector companies often exhibit a specific culture, shaped by long traditions, long periods of employment of staff and little experience with change and these are a group of organisations that have a very unique precondition for change management. Even municipal electricity suppliers such as Stadtwerke Bielefeld, who do compete in the market, have little change experience and a prominent value is stability. Finding issues of public sector companies is helpful in a practical way as well for line managers and change agents, because they need to be prepared how to deal with change. Given the increasing need for change that is felt in many public

sector contexts, there is a significant a gap in the literature concerning the factors for successful change implementation in public sector and municipal companies.

- An aspect of organisational change that was not found in the literature is a treatment of the assessment of change readiness that acknowledges the difficulties of change in public sector companies. This particular combination of a proposed methodology for a set of companies with certain characteristics that facilitate rather organisational inertia than change readiness was not found in the literature. Thus a methodology for readiness assessment in the specific situation of Stadtwerke Bielefeld with its nature as a municipal company, increasing need for change and limited change experience will make a contribution to the body of knowledge.
- Another gap in the literature in regard to change readiness assessment is the different opinions of different groups of people within the organisation. While there is little found in literature on readiness assessment, there is no research focusing on varying evaluations of different groups of people within one company and therefore this is identified as an additional gap in the existing literature. Such different groups may be differentiated in regard to their area of work, their location, their hierarchical level and other variables. This does not only shed a light on the diverse awareness and evaluation of different groups, but can also result in valuable practical insights such as starting points for actions to increase change readiness.

2.5.3 Adoption of conceptual frameworks for the research

The definition of Weiner, “organisational readiness refers to organisational members’ change commitment and change efficacy to implement organisational change” (Weiner, 2009 p. 2) is considered short and to the point. However, for a change readiness assessment, a differentiated concept of organisational readiness is believed to be more feasible. As it was considered the most comprehensive in the

course of reviewing literature on organisational readiness for change, the message components model of Armenakis et al. (1993) was used as a basic framework for readiness assessment (see 2.3.4 and 2.2.5).

However, as Armenakis et al. (2007) suggest experimenting with the scale, possibly according to the specific needs of an organisation, the model is expanded by another factor according to the values of Stadtwerke Bielefeld. An employee survey of 2010 confirmed, employees do have a high level of trust in top management but also do rely on fair and respectful treatment (Stadtwerke Bielefeld GmbH, 2010). As fairness is an important value and fair treatment a general expectation of employees at Stadtwerke Bielefeld, this very specific characteristic of values at Stadtwerke Bielefeld is added as an item to the change readiness model.

Figure 6 depicts a modified version of the model proposed by Armenakis et al. (1999).

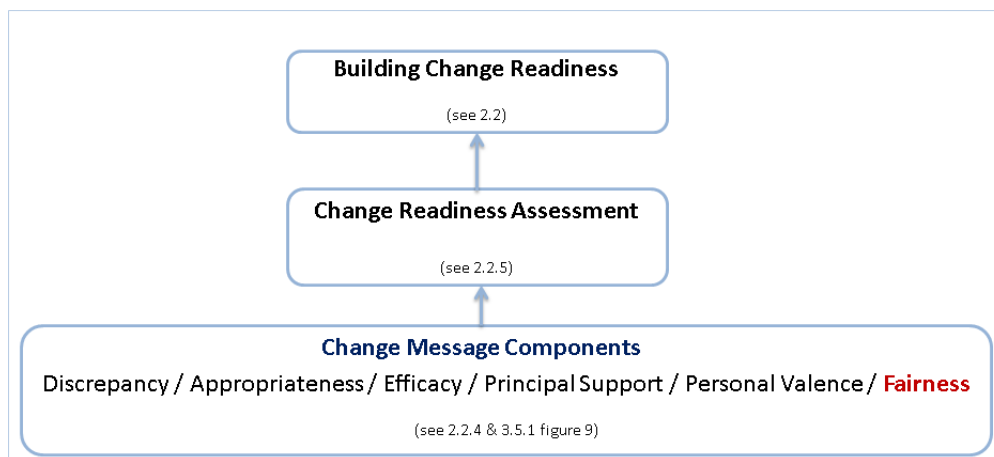


Figure 6: Expanded change readiness model; illustration according to Armenakis et al. (1999)

As illustrated in figure 6, the concept of fairness has been inserted as a change message component on the basis of its perceived importance as a value within Stadtwerke Bielefeld. These change message components were then used to form the structure of the research instruments (Annex 1) Introduction to the research and interview guideline).

2 Review of literature

With a readiness assessment based on the expanded model above, the research on organisational readiness in this specific context provides further insights into how managers can better facilitate change processes and therewith will add to the existing knowledge on change management. By the assessment of the state of readiness, assessed by certain aspects of readiness, starting points for tailoring a change process and an accompanying communication strategy may be found, enabling a practical application of the research.

3 Research methods and methodology

3.1 Introduction

To conduct research on establishing organisational readiness for change, many considerations and decisions must be made about how the research should be undertaken and which methodology and methods should be applied. To make these decisions, a general understanding of the creation and distribution of knowledge in particular areas of inquiry is needed (Steup, 2011). The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the process of elaboration and selection of an appropriate research design, which is referred to as the overall plan or structure to answer the research questions (Tharenou, Donohue, & Cooper, 2007) and to justify the choice of methodology and methods. An overview of the methodology development process is displayed in Figure 7.

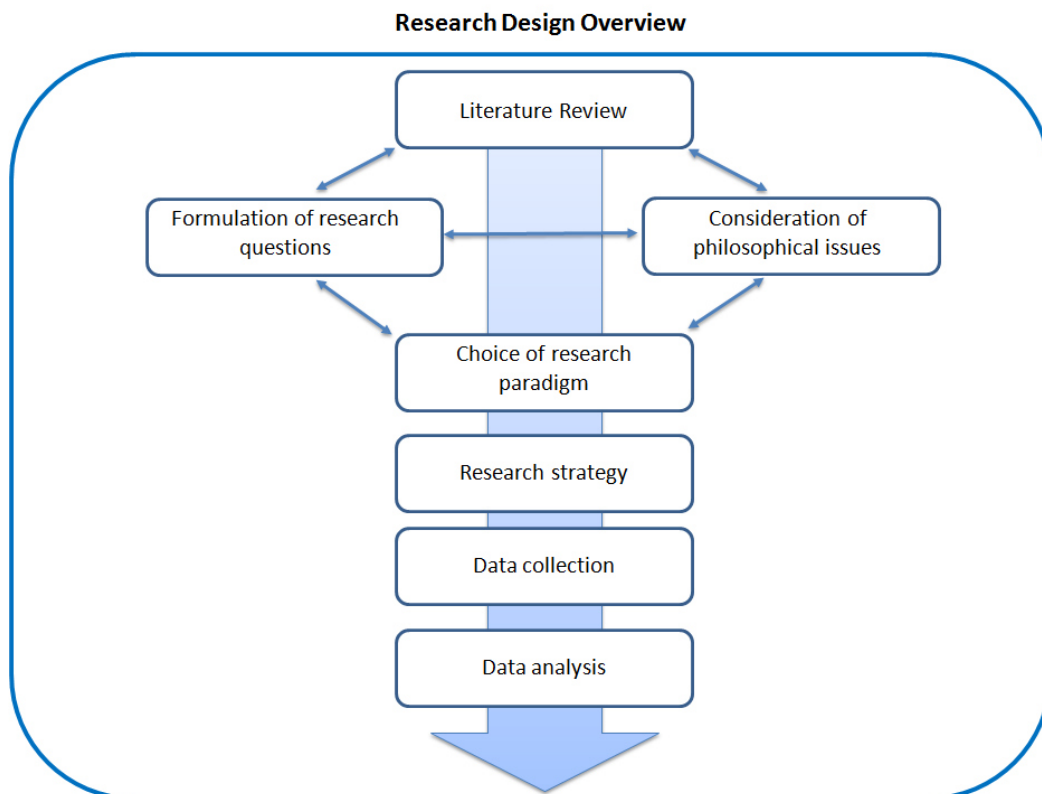


Figure 7: Research design overview

3.2 Research philosophy

Research is based on assumptions about how the world is perceived by humans and how it is understood. A researcher applies a certain paradigm, which may be defined as “a network of coherent ideas about the nature of the world and of the functions of researchers which, adhered to by a group of researchers, conditions the patterns of their thinking and underpins their research actions (Bassey, 2000 p. 8) The meaning of paradigm can be explained on three levels: The term refers to the concepts of reality by social scientists in a philosophical way, it is used as the school of thought regarding a set of scientific habits in the social organisation of science and it is associated with the concrete use of tools specifying methods and techniques for the process of scientific knowledge development (Morgan, 1979). Encompassing all three levels of meaning, a paradigm with basic beliefs about the world and the creation of knowledge is guiding the research design, the collection and analysis of data, and the entire progress of a research project (Collis & Hussey, 2003).

This shows that a researcher must make assumptions about his or her understanding about the nature of the world, because research itself, testing and experiencing reality, must be based on some understanding of the reality (Maykut & Morehouse, 2002). In other words, a researcher has an interest in an understanding of what the world is made of (Moses & Knutsen, 2007), the study of which is known as ontology. Ontology is also described as the “philosophical investigation of existence, or being” (Craig, 2005 p. 758). These definitions represent two aspects of ontology, first the basic beliefs of the world that are incorporated in an ontological position and second these basic beliefs foretell an understanding of how the world can be comprehended. To express it in other words, ontology is about an understanding, that holds assumptions about the nature of reality (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Lowe, 1991).

There are two main philosophical approaches to understanding the basic fundamentals of existence. Moses and Knutsen (2007) call these naturalism and constructivism. Naturalism understands the view of the world as objectively real

and knowledge based on sensual experience, mainly observation. Constructivism sees reality as a result of human construction and therefore changeable while knowledge is overlapping and changing. Similar constructs can be found with different terms: Easterby-Smith et al. (1991) differentiate between two basic paradigms: positivist and phenomenological. The positivist paradigm represents an externally and objectively existing world, an independent observer and value-free science, while the phenomenological stands for a socially constructed and subjective world, an observer as part of the observed, science that is driven by human interests and value-based meanings attached to the phenomena studied to understand. Those two may not be seen as two exclusive concepts, but rather as a continuum, with the positivist on the one side and the phenomenological on the other. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) show a more detailed overview: the external and objective and independent view of the world of social actors called positivism is on one side of the range. In the middle there is realism, which sees the world as objective and existing independently of human thoughts, but the world is interpreted through social conditioning. On the other side is interpretivism, where the world is socially constructed and subjective and cultural and historical social factors influence interpretation (Crotty, 1998).

These perspectives need to be considered in the light of the research project's aim, which is "to explore the need and readiness of Stadtwerke Bielefeld for organisational change and, through a rich analysis of situational factors regarding attitudes and opinions, to contribute to the understanding of organisational readiness within a specific context" (see 1.4). With the research aim, there is a focus on attitudes, opinions and beliefs, which are subject to social interpretation and the attachment of meaning. I believe that research on phenomena that are socially embedded cannot be value-free, while the researcher is socially biased by cultural beliefs, experiences etc. (Saunders et al., 2009). Following that thought, I am convinced that research into social phenomena that involve human interaction requires sensitivity to the social context and interpretation of the data that is gathered to understand human behaviour. Such social phenomena as the culture of the company, attitudes and opinions or a shared mindset cannot be treated as

'facts'. Since research into organisational management issues is in most cases connected with human beings linked in social structures and work environments in changing contexts (e. g. acting as a part of the company, a department or of a project team), I relate to the belief there is not one independently existing objective reality, which is harmonising with the understanding of a constructivist (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). As Easterby-Smith et al. (1991) put it, there are different constructions and meanings that people associate with their experience. Also I believe that a socially interacting human being as a researcher cannot be completely unbiased and value-free. As Guba & Lincoln (1994) point out, constructivism sees realities as apprehendable in form of socially and experientially based mental constructions, local and specific in nature. With research questions focussing on perceptions and specific local characteristics (see 1.4, p. 12), the adopted paradigm fits my research very well.

Closely linked to the ontological basic principles is epistemology, as a general set of assumptions about the best way of inquiring into the nature of the world (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991). An explanation given by the Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Craig, 2005 p. 224) is that epistemology "is concerned with the nature, sources and limits of knowledge". This means, on grounds of the basic belief that the world exists independently but interpretations of human thought give a meaning to it, that a phenomenon researched can only be interpreted in its unique setting and circumstances. Therefore I seek for an understanding of the situation as a whole and of how and why certain aspects have or have not arisen. Therefore an understanding and interpretation of social interaction within the given context is important for knowledge generation.

Considering the understanding of Crotty (1998) that epistemology is a theory of knowledge or what we think counts as knowledge about a topic, one might conclude that knowledge about a certain aspect of social interaction of humans has to take into account the specific circumstances. This can be supported by the information of Moses and Knutsen (2007) that the epistemological commitment outlines what is believed about the fact. Therefore I hold the view that not only the phenomenon itself needs to be researched, but also the circumstances, social

context and actors have to be considered. Further I have to consider my own underlying biases, experiences and beliefs, since I am not independent from the study. Or put in other words, people may look at the same thing and perceive it differently (Moses & Knutsen, 2007). As of my perspective regarding these central issues of meaning within my research are very close to those embedded within the constructivist paradigm, I have adopted this. I believe that the world of researched social phenomena cannot be completely independent from the observer and vice versa; human behaviour cannot be understood without reference to the meanings and purposes attached by human actors to their activities (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). As my understanding in regards to my research fits very well the paradigm of a constructivist, I have adopted this as my research philosophy.

3.3 Research design

The research design is the way in which a study is laid out, the sequence of steps that is planned to answer the research questions (Creswell, 2012; Schreier, 2012). To inquire into a certain situation, a combination of techniques to inquire into a specific situation is used, which is called methodology (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991). The underlying methodology of a research project represents the overall research design or approach that shapes choice of methods (Crotty, 1998). These combined techniques, however, have to be in line with the general understanding of knowledge and its generation. It reflects the way *how* we get to know things and identify patterns and regularities of the world (Moses & Knutsen, 2007). The theoretical perspective is the philosophical position to guide the research (Crotty, 1998), therefore the chosen method should be compatible with the general philosophical position of the researcher. A suitable method to research meanings in a social context is induction, which builds on sensual observations and leads from empirically gathered points to a more general explanation, while deduction starts from general truths to explain particulars (Moses & Knutsen, 2007). Induction is a suitable method to let key categories and concepts emerge from the data (Schreier, 2012). Induction though is not free of possible criticism, since analysed cases reflect

the more general only to a certain extent. Because of that the cases or phenomena have to be chosen carefully and analysis has to be undertaken cautiously and still the findings may not be completely representative for general assumptions. As this research project starts with qualitative data gathering to move towards more abstract ideas, induction is a suitable approach. Furthermore, the search for understanding and meanings, which comprise my subjective interpretations from the perspective of a constructivist, are appropriately applied with induction. By gathering data and interpreting it, I expect to be able to derive a more general, richer understanding, for which induction is a suitable approach. This is emphasised by Easterby-Smith et al. (1991), who state that induction is preferable to develop ideas, while focusing on meanings and on understanding what is happening.

To provide a framework for organising the research activity and the collection and analysis of data (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991), it is necessary to reflect on the aim of the research and how the research design can be created appropriately. Besides that, there are also practical issues to consider: if the chosen design is workable in terms of timeframe and contacts to key persons. Also it has to be considered, which contacts are needed to gather data, if a reasonable response rate can be achieved and if contact persons are willing and able to give information. Therefore, besides a theoretically well-based research design I also considered reasons of practicability for further elaboration. According to Creswell (2002), there are three approaches for a research design: quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods. While quantitative research always involves numerical analysis of data and is based on an analytical approach to gather data, qualitative research is predicated on data collection in form of words and observations and the analysis is an interpretation of this data (Partington, 2002). Mixed methods are distinguished by collecting and analysing both qualitative and quantitative data in a single study. In the research project, a sequential procedure was applied to elaborate on the findings of the qualitatively gathered data with the analysis of quantitative data (Creswell, 2002). To develop a thorough understanding within a given context, a non-numerical analysis gives a broader view for the context of a situation or the relationships of certain elements in comparison to a quantitative analysis (Creswell, 2002). Further,

qualitative research is characterised by the following aspects: the research takes place in its natural setting, the researcher is a key instrument for the research and the reasoning is done in a complex induction by organising the data inductively into increasingly more abstract units of information (Creswell, 2002). These aspects applied to the research project with an inquiry within the given setting of Stadtwerke Bielefeld and therefore the main data gathering is done in a qualitative way. The aim of the research was to explore the need and readiness of Stadtwerke Bielefeld for organisational change through a rich analysis of situational factors regarding attitudes and opinions and to contribute to the understanding of organisational readiness within a specific context. A deep understanding of a given situation is best analysed with a qualitative approach. A thorough understanding of the situation is needed to get a comprehension of “why” and “how”. This statement goes along with the description of the phenomenological paradigm of Easterby-Smith et al. (1991), which suggests that the researcher should try to understand the totality of a situation. For the research project it was sought to develop an understanding of the situation in its completeness. Therefore, the qualitative research approach was complemented by a quantitative study, offering options for triangulation. With this complementarity, the research was designed as a mixed methods study.

3.4 Research strategy

Categorisation of research strategies is not comprehensively defined and unambiguous in literature. According to Creswell (2002), there are five basic strategies associated with qualitative research: ethnographic research, grounded theory, case studies, action research, phenomenological research and narrative research. Thomas (2009) names action research, case study, evaluation, experiment, longitudinal study, comparative study and cross-sectional study as research strategies, thus making a more differentiated distinction.

In the following section, reasons are given for the substantiated decision about the applied strategy for the research, contrasting advantages and disadvantages considering the unique setting of the research project.

3.4.1 Characteristics and application of case studies

Even though the case study is a widely accepted research approach for social phenomena in management research, the research design has to be evaluated carefully. Stake states that case study method “has been tried and found to be a direct and satisfying way of adding to experience and improving understanding”. It is important to understand what contexts are appropriate for case study research. Case studies for conducting empirical research are designed to inquire social or human phenomena. As Yin (2003 p. 13) put it, a case study is “an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context”. As it was constituted, the aim of the research is to explore the need (see 4.2.3) and readiness (see 4.6) of Stadtwerke Bielefeld for a systematic organisational change programme through a rich analysis of situational factors regarding attitudes and opinions (see mainly 4.2 and 4.4.1) and to contribute to the understanding of organisational readiness within a specific context (see 1.4). The research involves an unusual situation that will be analysed in depth; therefore I believe that a case study is the most applicable research strategy: According to Yin (2013) case studies are designed to understand how and why social phenomena occur in a given context. A focus of case studies therefore is the understanding of processes within their specific context.

Stake (1995) also accentuates qualitative inquiry into the single case with emphasise on episodes of nuance, the sequentiality of happenings in context and the wholeness of the individual. This fits very well with the understanding of the constructivist, with an aim of understanding the meaning attached to human activities by the actors (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). As the focus of the case study is to qualitatively inquire into a specific context and the wholeness of the situation, generalisation is not the purpose of a case study approach, it is rather to create a

rich picture with many kinds of insights from different angles. Therefore case study supports the aim of my research to acquire a deep understanding of situational factors regarding attitudes and opinions.

According to Creswell (2002), in a case study the researcher explores for example a process, activity or event in depth on one or more individuals. The process applied for case studies starts with a research question (see 1.4), then data is generated, a theory elaborated, tested or applied (see 2.3.4 & 4.3), data analysed and finally interpreted in a way to answer the research question. The theory development can be based on an in-depth investigation of one case as well as multiple cases. This simple depiction of the process highlights the importance of theory: case studies are used to generate, test or apply existing theory. The application of theory is based on the analysis of the contextual conditions of a (probably social or organisational) phenomenon to create an explanation (see 4.2, 4.3). Because theory testing or application is crucial to case studies, a conceptual framework is needed. The conceptual framework is elaborated in the literature review (see 2.1, 2.5.3 and figure 4) and the model to be applied in paragraph 2.3.4. In my research project, an existing framework (the model of organisational readiness for change proposed by Armenakis et al. (1993; 1999; 2002 - see 2.3.4) is adapted to the specific characteristics of the company and forms a structuring logic of the research instruments, namely the interview guideline (see Annex 1) Introduction to the research and interview guideline and the employee questionnaire; Annex 2) Short questionnaire for employees to assess change readiness; 4.2 & 4.3).

A case study's unit of analysis can vary from individuals to groups, organisations to entire countries and also non-human objects. The decision about the appropriate unit of analysis is crucial for a profound answer to the research question. Yin (2011) argues that case studies are preferable when research topics are defined broadly, contextual or multivariate conditions are dealt with or multiple sources of evidence are examined. Other authors (Simons, 2009; Tharenou et al., 2007) suggest that a case study does not differentiate between observation units and research units. However, just the focus on a single case does not make a study a case study; for a case study design, the researcher has to look as much as possible at the case as a

whole. This was applied to my research, as the exploration of organisational readiness for change within Stadtwerke Bielefeld was embedded in the development of the energy industry increasing forces for change (see 1.1, 1.2), the understanding of organisational change for municipal companies (see 2.4.3, 2.4.4) and characteristics and specific issues of Stadtwerke Bielefeld (see 4.2).

According to Thomas (2011), the selection of a case is determined by the researcher looking at something in its completeness, considering a certain phenomenon within the whole and the 'hows' and 'whys' that surround it. A case may be selected because of the familiarity of the author with it. This may be the researcher's own work, about which he or she has intimate knowledge. Therefore the author is able to gain access to the richness and depth of a case, which would be unavailable otherwise. This kind of case study is called local knowledge case (Thomas, 2011). The research on a local knowledge case fits very well with the understanding of a constructivist as a "passionate participant" with the aim of understanding. Following this logic, Stadtwerke Bielefeld provided a setting for a local knowledge case, the context being the situation it faces in regard to the changes of the energy industry. As the unit of analysis of a case study is the phenomenon under study, this may be an organisation (Lee, 1999). In this case, Stadtwerke Bielefeld was the unit of analysis.

According to Stake (2008), the purpose of a case can be either intrinsic or instrumental. As an intrinsic purpose, Stake (2005) means an original interest, in the sense of the researcher being interested in a better understanding of this particular case. The case represents a particular problem or situation and therefore the case itself is of interest. Consequently, the purpose of the case study is then increasing understanding of the particular case, rather than theory building. Stake uses the term "instrumental" to refer to the use of a case study as a means to a higher-level end, namely that of providing insights into a broader phenomenon. In my research, the case study has an intrinsic purpose, as the aim of the research is a rich understanding of situational factors, attitudes and opinions. Given an unusually complex context in which I have a personal stake, with a pressing and increasing need for change, the case itself is of great interest. However, there is also a

significant instrumental (Stake, 2008) element, as I am exploring the case within a context of familiarity with a substantial literature, which has informed my research and to which I intend to make a contribution. From my personal perspective, therefore, the purpose of the case is both intrinsic and instrumental, as I have a strong felt need to enrich understanding of the specific context but also wish to contextualise the findings within an accumulated body of knowledge.

According to Stake (2005), this form of inquiry requires an in-depth understanding and deep comprehension of the environment and demands a deep understanding of the multifaceted nature of the social situation. As the research project is a local knowledge case, this understanding of the situation can be assumed. An important aspect is the researcher trying to understand the phenomenon from within, being a participant observer (Thomas, 2011), or, as Guba and Lincoln (1994) call it, a “passionate participant”. This term conceptualises the researcher in that understanding as facilitator of a multivoice reconstruction with the aim of understanding. This role brings along the inclusion of participant values in the inquiry, which makes ethics intrinsic to this paradigm (as discussed in depth in 3.8).

A case study is not linked to a single method of data collection, but can use a wide range of data collection methods. Case studies typically apply observations, interviews, questionnaires, and other techniques. Often a combination of methods is used to get a broader data base for analysis (Tharenou et al., 2007). To create rich insights no type of data collection is ruled out (Thomas, 2011). However, since subjective data is an integral part of the case in terms of analysis and interpretation of thoughts, feelings and actions, qualitative methods are predominant. For the decision about data collection techniques, it is important to consider which method best facilitates an understanding of the particular case (see 3.3), which inferences can be made and how these are valued by different audiences (Simons, 2009). On the basis of the specifics of the case study of Stadtwerke Bielefeld, it was decided to use a qualitative data collection method (see 3.5). Considering this, a case study approach was a very good fit with my position as a constructivist and the requirements of the research project.

3.4.2 Reliability, validity and other aspects of research quality

Reliability and validity are widely held to be important criteria of research quality. Reliability is the extent to which the data would be duplicated if collected at another time or through other means and validity is differentiated in internal validity (the extent to which correct cause-and-effect relationships have been established) and external validity (the extent to which findings are generalisable) (McCutcheon & Meredith, 1993 in Tharenou et al., 2007). With respect to these criteria, case studies are often criticised as a research design. However, my philosophical position implies that meaning is always contextual in social phenomena and the researcher is part of this context. By creating the data, the findings and subsequent interpretations of the data necessarily will differ from one researcher to the other. The unique settings of the case study are therefore not exactly reproducible and so reliability is not an appropriate criterion of quality. Thomas (2011) argues that due to the characteristics of a case study – a deep insight into the completeness of a complex phenomenon – reliability is per definition not to be expected. Since the situation is unique, it cannot be expected to achieve findings that are consistent from one time to another or one researcher to another.

More broadly, within the adopted paradigm of a constructivist (see 3.2), reliability and validity are conceptually different issues, as generalisation or theory building is not the aim of the research (see 3.4.1), but rather understanding of situations. Moreover, as Lincoln and Guba (1986) argue, the inquirer and respondent have a relationship of mutual and simultaneous influence. Consequently, they postulate that the primary basis for judging an inquiry from a constructivist perspective should be trustworthiness, instead of rigour (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). In terms of evaluative criteria, Lincoln and Guba suggest credibility as an analogue of internal validity, transferability as an analogue of external validity and dependability as an analogue of reliability. In regard to my research project, the criterion of credibility was significantly addressed by prolonged engagement with the phenomenon, involving lengthy and intensive contact, as I am part of the organisation. With respect to transferability, the descriptive data regarding the context was

substantial, so that others, who may wish to apply all or part of the findings elsewhere, are enabled to make a judgement about the degree of fit or similarity. Dependability is recommended to be verified by a competent external, disinterested auditor. However, the process steps have been explained and documented in a thorough way and therefore I believe to have taken precautions well enough to fulfil the requirements of the dependability criterion – the judgement will indeed be made by my examiners. Even then, it should be acknowledged, as do Guba and Lincoln (1994), that the issues of quality criteria in research carried out within the paradigm of constructivism are not yet fully resolved.

A further important point is to what extent the researcher is independent of the research finding, since he or she has an interactive part in the study, rather than being an objective observer. The method of data collection - in this case interview - is linked to the personality of the researcher and therefore is not completely unbiased. In my research project, I was not independent, as it is a local knowledge case of my employer and also because I personally conducted the interviews. However, from the perspective of a constructivist, this adds additional layers of challenge to data interpretation, rather than invalidating the research. Even more so, the constructivist researcher is regarded as a “passionate participant”, facilitating the reconstruction of understanding.

Due to the fact that case study method is often used with just one or two cases, generalisability to other contexts is problematic according to Verschuren (2003). Stake (2008; 1978) argues that knowledge is a form of generalisation as well and refers to as “naturalistic generalisation”, developed by persons as a product of experience. Because of the universality of experiential understanding, case studies offer an advantage over other methods as a basis for such naturalistic generalisation. As I am an inside or embedded researcher, the “passionate participant” (see 3.4.1), the basis for natural generalisation is even more useful. Concluding from the perspective of a constructivist, aspects of my case study, verified by triangulation, are used to inform some limited generalisation and moreover for a multi-layered understanding of the situation and the actors in it.

Overall I am convinced that a case study in combination with the adopted position of a constructivist, informed by a considered recognition of the context of my research, best fitted the parameters of the research project. Based on this decision, data collection and sampling are considered in the next paragraphs.

3.5 Data collection

To obtain an in-depth understanding of a specific situation, a wide range of data collection techniques is potentially suitable for a case study. An overview of the data collection process is shown in figure 8.

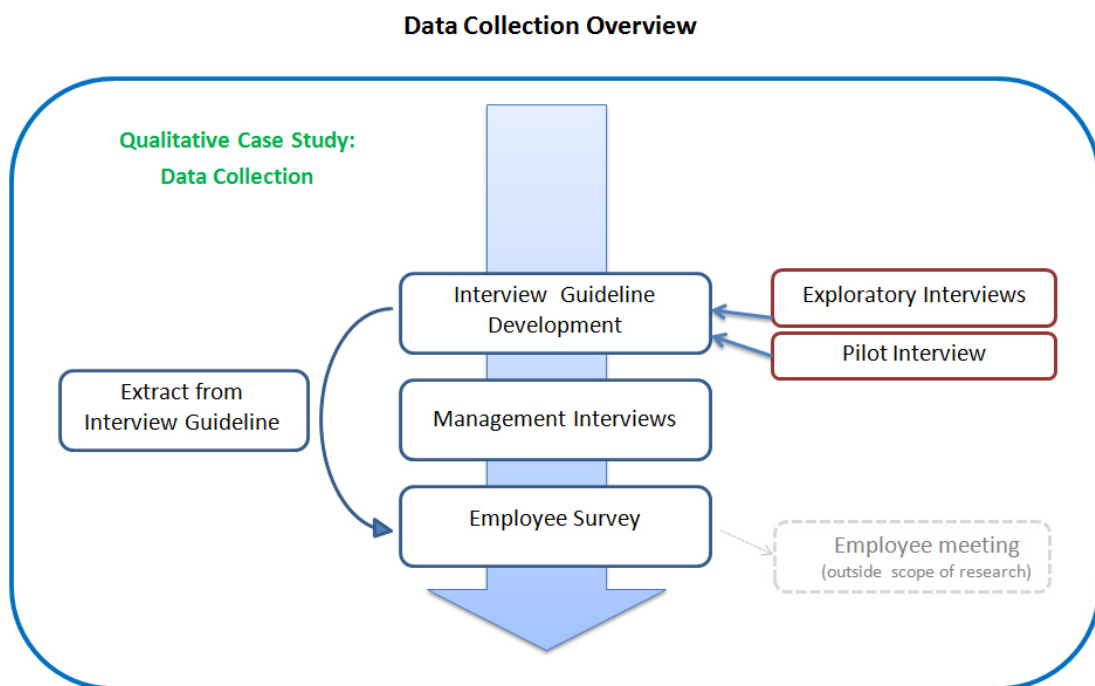


Figure 8: Data collection overview

3.5.1 Interviews as a data collection technique

As Tharenou et al. (2007) suggest, case studies can for example be based on observations, interviews, questionnaires, public records of information and attendance at meetings. In this case, interviews have been chosen as a method for

data collection, with a literature review as a basis (compare figure 7). Interviews are a suitable method for qualitative research to obtain a deep understanding of the specific situation. An advantage over other methods of data collection is the possibility to further ask why interviewees have come to his or her particular view, as well as clarification and discussion of responses. The interview not only helps to substantiate the interviewee's perspective on the topic, but also helps to find issues for the researcher. Also the possibility to probe or deepen a response helps uncovering unobserved feelings or sentiments. Furthermore, as Stadtwerke Bielefeld is a local knowledge case (see 3.4.1), I was able to use my personal access to potential interview partners. I believe that interviews, especially when conducted face to face, will emphasise a mutual trust and confidentiality and therefore willingness to participate will be higher. For reasons of validity interviews were conducted in a semi-structured way, including questions that were clearly formulated and easy to answer, in addition to open questions, in order to obtain unguided answers (see 3.5.2). To assess the scope and depth of the interviews beforehand, the interview structure was communicated to interviewees in advance. This enabled interviewees to become acquainted with the topics to be covered and the approximate duration of the interview, as well as answering some critical questions about the nature of the interview.

3.5.2 Preparation of an interview guideline

For the interviews, it was important to ensure a general understanding of the interviewees of the meaning of change readiness. This was an insight from the exploratory interviews (see the following discussion in this paragraph) to facilitate answering the interview questions, as the term was not commonly understood by the interviewees. Therefore the definition given by Weiner (2009 p. 2): "organisational readiness refers to organisational members' change commitment and change efficacy to implement organisational change", was included in the supplementary sheet to the interview guideline (see annex 1). The interview guideline started with general information about the respondent, such as gender

and age, etc. (see annex 1; general information). The general questions were rounded up by an open question about the respondent's personal change experience to lead the interviewee to the topic of change bit by bit. Following that, questions about Stadtwerke Bielefeld were asked. These questions (see annex 1; section I., question 1 to 3) were derived from the research questions and objectives shown in figure 8 (see 1.4, p. 12):

Research Question	Research Objective
Which characteristics of SWB have the greatest impact on its readiness and capacity for change?	To investigate the characteristics of SWB that have the greatest impact on its readiness and capacity for change.
How might the concept of organisational readiness be applied to SWB?	To explore the application of the concept of organisational readiness to SWB.
How do managers and other employees assess SWB's readiness for change?	To learn how managers and other employees assess SWBs readiness for change.
What are the implications of these perceptions for the successful management of change at SWB?	To review the implications of these assessments for the successful management of change at SWB.

Figure 9: Research questions and objectives

In the following section II of the interview guideline, respondents were asked questions about organisational change (see annex 1; section II). First, respondents were asked to rank the most critical aspects for successful change implementation (see annex 1; section II, question 4). For that question a list of possible success factors in change, which was developed on the basis of the literature review (see 2.4.1), was provided. Due to the fact that the gathering of data about the specific influencing factors and the assessment of their importance was to be undertaken in one interview, for the importance assessment, possible factors were provided in the interview question.

The following questions 5-9 (see annex 1; section II) were designed to develop a deep understanding of the respondents' opinions about change readiness and the level of change readiness of Stadtwerke Bielefeld. To assess the level of change readiness (see annex 1; section II questions 5, 6 and 9), the model of Armenakis et

al. (2007, 1999, 1993; see 2.3.4) was applied as a basic concept. The message components identified by these authors as important to the creation of organisational readiness (discrepancy, appropriateness, valence, efficacy and principal support) were employed and reformulated as statements to be rated on an ordinal scale. Due to my knowledge of the importance of “fairness” for employees at Stadtwerke Bielefeld, which was supported by a high ranking of “fairness” in an employee survey (Stadtwerke Bielefeld GmbH, 2010), an additional statement concerning fairness was formulated and added to the original message components. From the perspective of a constructivist, I was in a position to function as a facilitator of reconstruction of understanding and therefore added that attribute to the original Armenakis et al. model (2007, 1999, 1993; see 2.3.4). With that the original model of change readiness by Armenakis et al. was developed further (see figure 6). My development from the model to the applied research instrument is shown in figure 9:

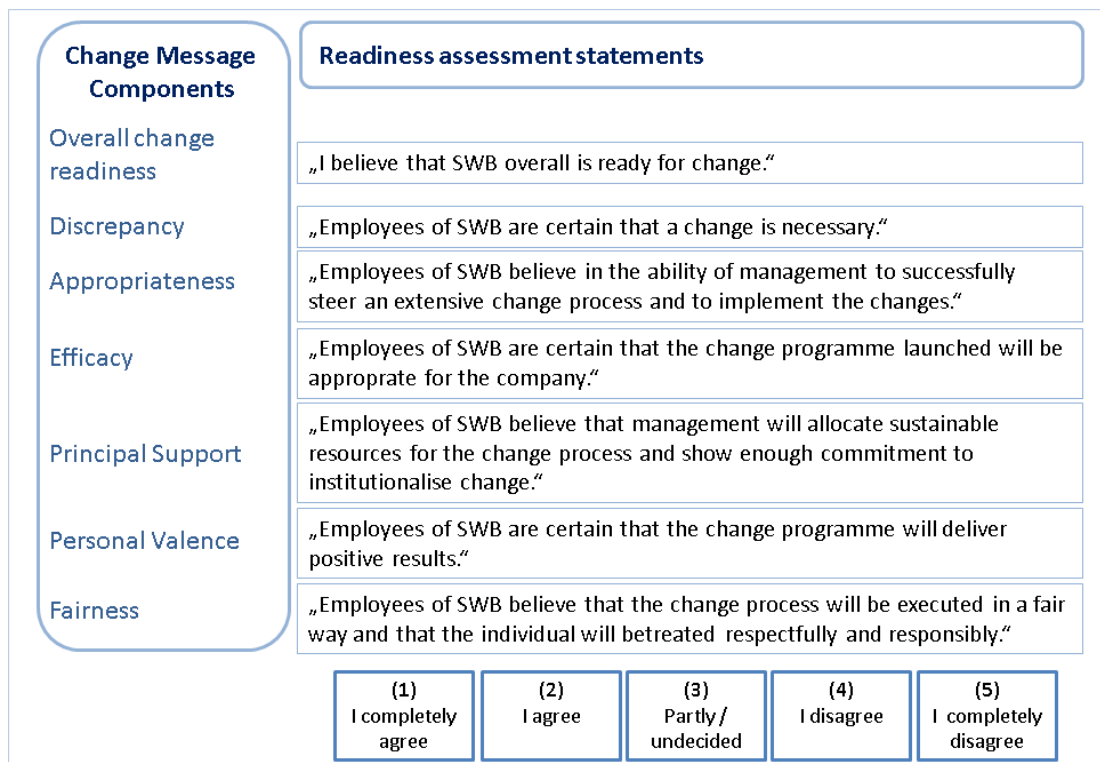


Figure 10: Research instrument derived from the Armenakis et al. (1999) model

The ordinal scale of the readiness assessment answer options allows for a rank order, by which data can be sorted, but does not allow for a relative degree of

difference between them. In order to obtain a graduated measure of respondents' attitudes to each readiness assessment statement, it was decided to use a Likert scale (Likert, 1932). As shown in Figure 10, respondents were asked to evaluate the statements (Likert items) by indicating their level of agreement or disagreement with each. A symmetric distribution of positive and negative positions is given, as well as a neutral middle point. The respondents were asked to assess the statements concerning change readiness on a scale from one to five according to their agreement with the statement. Due to the symmetric wording with clearly defined linguistic qualifiers of the categories around a midpoint, items may approximate an interval-level measurement. The gradation of each successive item category is inferred to be equidistant. Assuming or approximating an interval scale, logical or mathematical operations may be applied. With that assumption, simple mathematical operations such as simple average and median as the numerical value separating the higher half of answers from the lower half were applied.

However, this methodology is subject to central tendency bias, acquiescence bias and social desirability bias. In gathering, the interviewees need to take a stance, as to their opinion about readiness for change. I argue that acquiescence bias and social desirability bias would still be an issue, if the question seeking the interviewees' opinions were formulated differently. Central tendency bias might rather be an issue, if alternatives are suggested to the interviewee, especially if a middle option is provided. Therefore a forced choice could have been applied. In the opinion of the author, even a "neither agree nor disagree"-answer is an opinion in regard to the assessment of the degree of change readiness. If a statement is worded positively, e.g. "employees are convinced that..." and the state aimed at is a positive manifestation of the characteristic given, the undecided answer may be a clue for a need for action. Therefore the forced choice method was not applied.

With the questions 5 to 9, interviewees were asked for their understanding and assessment of the level of change readiness at Stadtwerke Bielefeld. To enrich understanding of organisational change and its implementation at Stadtwerke Bielefeld, three more open questions were asked (see annex 1; section II, question 10 to 12). These questions helped to develop an understanding about change

implementation and the specific issues for municipal companies. The picture of Stadtwerke Bielefeld then could be compared to the insights from the literature review and especially literature regarding municipal companies (see figure 7, p. 68). After the initial development of the interview questions, these were tested with two exploratory interviews with volunteers conducted outside of Stadtwerke Bielefeld. These volunteers were persons with sufficient work experience of more than ten years in marketing and sales respectively within medium sized companies. They had also experienced organisational change during their professional life. These exploratory interviews were conducted to test whether questions are understandable, not too complex and the order of questions does allow for a fluent course of the interviews. One important insight from these exploratory interviews was that it would facilitate answering questions about change readiness, if a general understanding of the term was established beforehand. With further insights from the exploratory interview questions were reworded and smaller adjustments made. As a result the initial interview guideline was developed. The first interview of the management sample was designed as a pilot interview. After the first interview took place, the initial interview guideline was revised and slightly adjusted. This adjustment was undertaken to make the interview guideline easy to follow and a small addition was made (for slightly revised interview structure see annex 1). After throwing a light on aspects of data collection, the applied sampling is discussed in the following paragraph.

3.6 Sampling considerations

Generally, sampling involves selecting members from a population, so that they are representative of that population. The purpose of a qualitative case study is to explore a phenomenon by means of in-depth inquiry. In a smaller organisation that is the subject of a case study, all of the actors might conceivably be interviewed as a 100% sample. In a larger organisation such as Stadtwerke Bielefeld, a sampling becomes a significant issue in research design, whereby the expectation is not to represent the entire population, but to offer deep insights into opinions. On the basis of this understanding, it was decided that the interviewees should be key

informants, best able to offer research insights. Key informants are characterised by a special position in the organisation, who possess special knowledge and or status and have access to perspectives or observations denied to the researcher. Further, these managers play a key role in the case and therefore are informants from which one is likely to learn most about the issue in question.

In the case of Stadtwerke Bielefeld, members of the first and second management levels were identified as key informants. They all hold a very responsible position, are in charge of fifty to over a hundred employees, and have decision-making authority and considerable work experience with the company. Also they are persons who have been concerned with questions of organisational change before (as I am aware, given that it is local knowledge case). The key informants were selected, because they hold representative knowledge about the case.

To create the sample or selection of interviewees, all key informants in the population were identified and listed in a first step. Due to the limited numbers of managers of the first and second level positions at Stadtwerke Bielefeld, there was no further sampling required (there are two directors and seven heads of business divisions, two heads of staff divisions as well as one director of the distribution grid service company). Instead, all twelve managers were asked to participate in the study. Thereby the aim of the sampling was to select key informants as interview partners and this group of informants was selected as a 100% sample.

The objective for the initial stage of the data collection was to gain at least eight participants for the interviews, due to the small population of identified key informants. When the findings suggested that more interviews would be necessary due to the iterative nature of interviewing for a case study, more interviewees would be acquired. This would be achieved by expanding the group of key informants by including the managing directors and heads of business divisions of the subsidiaries of the Stadtwerke Bielefeld group of companies. As these managers do not operate within the core business of Stadtwerke Bielefeld, they are affected by the need for change in different ways. However, as the companies are integrated financially they do have an interest in the financial stability of the parent company.

As planned, the identified key informants of Stadtwerke Bielefeld were listed. According to the organisational structure displayed in figure 2 (p. 8), the management board, the heads of business units and staff departments were identified as key informants as well as the managing director of the subsidiary Stadtwerke Bielefeld Netz GmbH, which was unbundled under company law due to legislative requirements. This formed a total of twelve key informants to be invited to participate in the interviews. Due to the impending retirement of one of the managers, for one management position two persons were asked to participate.

Internal consent for the conduction of interviews was obtained on October 15th, 2013 with one of the managing directors in a face-to-face meeting with me. After that a brief description of the research project, the interview guideline and the group of possible interviewees was provided to the managing director, who then informed the designated group of persons on November 11th, 2013. In the following two weeks, I called the designated participants on the phone, offered to provide further general information about the research project, answered potential questions and asked if the person was willing to participate. If the person agreed, a time for the interview was scheduled. Even though the assumed duration of the interview would be about an hour to an hour and a half, a slightly longer time frame was scheduled, to buffer possible delays, to clarify questions beforehand, to explain the interview procedure and to ask for final permission for recording of the interview. The interviews were to take place in the office of each manager, to be undisturbed and to have a natural real-life setting. In accordance with the proposal of Schreier (2012) that phenomena researched can only be interpreted in their unique setting and circumstances, the surrounding of the interview was chosen to be as authentic as possible. As it was assumed, willingness to participate in personal face-to-face interviews was high, and therefore all thirteen persons asked were willing to be interviewed, which made a participation rate of one hundred per cent. The interviews were conducted between November 15th, 2013 and January 29th, 2014. About two to five working days before the interview was to take place, the interview guideline (see annex 1), which included a brief description of the aim of the research and an exemplary definition of organisational readiness for change

was mailed to the participant via in-house mail. Therewith the interviewee had the opportunity to prepare for the interview and a high level of transparency was ensured. The electronically recorded interviews were passed to professional transcribers, who signed confidentiality agreements beforehand. After the interviews were conducted and electronically recorded, transcripts were drawn up and a printout of each mailed to the interviewee within two weeks from the interview date. This offered the chance for the participants to read through their answers again and correct something, if necessary, and also participants felt valued by the confirmation in a short time. With the consent to the transcript of the participants the process of data collection was completed.

3.6.1 The management sample profile

Thirteen interviews including a pilot interview were conducted. Of the thirteen interviewees, one was female and twelve were male. The high ratio of males in the workforce, with an overall gender balance of 73% male to 27% female (Stadtwerke Bielefeld GmbH, 2013/2014), is skewed even more in favour of males in management positions. The age range was from 42 to 69 with an average of 55.4 years. Most of the respondents were in the age group 51-55. The distribution of age groups, professional education and gender are shown in figure 11:

Age Group	Respondents	Education	Respondents	Gender	Respondents
40-45	1	Commercial	7	Male	12
46-50	1	Technical	5	Female	1
51-55	6	Both	1		
56-60	2				
61-65	2				
66-70	1				

Figure 11: Characteristics of the management sample

The relatively high average age might be explained by the selection of top management with the highest level of responsibility within Stadtwerke Bielefeld for the interviews, as top management positions are usually filled with experienced

professionals. Consequently, the average duration of professional experience was also high with 30.2 years per person and an average professional experience at Stadtwerke Bielefeld of 20.0 years, with a combined total of 260 years of work experience with the company.

3.6.2 The sample of non-managerial employees

It was initially proposed to the senior management that it would add a valuable dimension to the evaluation of readiness to be able to compare the results of the interviews of managers with the assessments made by non-management employees. However, it was then decided that it was not possible to interview these employees, due to company confidentiality policies. Therefore a short questionnaire-based survey of employees at Stadtwerke Bielefeld was developed and implemented. For this purpose, a questionnaire was designed using only the six statements phrased to function as Likert items about change readiness as discussed cited above (see 3.5.2; annex 1, section II, questions 5, 6 and 9). The statements were formulated in exactly the same way as in the management interview guideline. To test the questionnaire, a project group, of which two persons also participated in the interviews, was asked to pretest and evaluate the statements. The pretesting resulted in slight changes to the wording of the statements (see also figure 5). The questionnaire, a one-pager in its original format, is included as annex 2.

The next step was to randomly select non-managerial employees to participate. It was intended to obtain fifty completed questionnaires as well as to recruit fifty persons to participate in a short workshop to discuss change readiness and other issues not of specific relevance to this research. That was not a statistical determination, as the survey was of a qualitative nature. For that purpose, 70 non-managerial employees of entire Stadtwerke Bielefeld were selected randomly with a SAP HR query by the HR department and were asked to fill out the questionnaire about change readiness. The 70 employees represented about 5.9% of the non-managerial employees of Stadtwerke Bielefeld, based on a population of 1184 non-

managerial employees (end of 2012). The survey was emailed out by the HR department with an enclosed explanation of the purpose of the survey. The only criterion for selection was non-managerial; profession, age group or other possible selection criteria were not applied. Of the 70 employees who were invited, 65 returned the completed questionnaire. Again, as it was an internal questionnaire, the response rate was expected to be high and a 92.9 % rate was achieved.

Even though the short questionnaire was worded exactly the same as the interview questions to maximise validity and provide a basis for triangulation, there are limitations to comparability, as the setting of the questions was different as part of a face-to-face interview with the managers and a written, emailed questionnaire for the employees. The employee survey was mailed out with a short explanation, so the respondents had the chance to get some clarification of the meaning of the questions. However, the explanation was carefully worded so as not to influence responses by my intervention. Some comments sent back with the survey questionnaires showed that follow-up interviews with these employees would have been interesting. Further comparability is limited due to the differing population size of managers identified as key informants and employees. The procedure of data analysis and the comparison of the management and non-management sample's answers is described in the next paragraph.

3.7 Data analysis procedure

According to the development of the interview guideline (see 3.5.2), data generated from the interviews to be analysed were electronically recorded and transcribed. The interviews were conducted and transcribed in German, as that is the corporate language. The results of the interviews were processed using a content analysis procedure (Schreier, 2012) on the basis of the German material. Only after the analysis was completed, results were translated into English by me. Taking the constructivist position of the "passionate participant", facilitating the reconstruction of understanding (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) I was in a better position to do the translation than any other person, having conducted the interviews myself

and being part of the corporate culture. The position of a participant observer (see 3.4.1) facilitated a feeling for the meaning of what was said, especially in regard to company-specific language. To ensure the accurate translation, I used the chance to call the interviewees back after conducting the interview for clarification of what was said (if necessary), used different dictionaries to get a feeling for varying nuances of word meanings and consulted native speakers in cases of doubt. These different options were undertaken to ensure credibility and transferability.

Content analysis (Schreier, 2012) is a systematic technique to describe and frame the content of gathered material. The process includes data reduction by the derivation of themes or categories of topics and interpretation of the content (Tharenou et al., 2007). An important part of the process is coding, to scan the material for clusters of topics. According to Schreier (2012 p. 6) the following steps are involved in qualitative content analysis:

1. Deciding on the research question.
2. Selecting research.
3. Building a coding frame.
4. Dividing the material into units of coding.
5. Trying out, evaluating and modifying the coding frame.
6. Main analysis.
7. Interpretation and presentation of findings.

With the above steps three to five, the coding frame is built and then adjusted to the material. As the coding frame is to some extent data-driven, the analysis is flexible, following and reducing the data. By abstracting the concrete information in the material, different main categories are identified. These categories are the aspects to focus on, based on the research questions (Schreier, 2012). In the research project, the main categories, further divided by clusters, therefore represent the topics that were talked about. The subcategories – in this research called keywords - represent what was said about the main categories by the interviewees. For the names of the clusters the exact (translated) wording of one or more of the answers were assigned, where possible. By identification and assigning

of answers to the subcategories, options of what was said about the main categories were clustered and reduced to the subcategories. How many distinctions of subcategories are needed was determined by the research questions and the gathered data. Therefore the coding frame structured the material by main categories specifying relevant aspects and subcategories specifying relevant meanings concerning this aspect.

While developing the coding frame, care has to be taken that there is no mixing of dimensions, that subcategories are mutually exclusive, that each unit of coding can be assigned to at least one subcategory in the coding frame and that each subcategory is used at least once (Schreier, 2012). A three-step process was applied: first four of the interviews transcripts were examined for a trial coding to develop and try out an initial coding frame. According to Schreier (2012) as a rule of thumb and a trade-off between practicability and variability of the material, 10 to 20% of the material should be included in the trial coding; in this research project the four interviews equalled 30% of the quantity of the interviews. Second a few days after the initial coding frame was developed and tested with a trial coding, the main coding started, which included the entire material. In this process, the transcriptions of the interviews were segmented by the questions or themes according to the interview guideline, which was a homogeneous underlying structure of all interviews. The segmentation and coding segment by segment ensured to do the coding decision in the same manner and thus increase validity of the coding according to Gläsel and Laudel (2010). With the main coding, the initial coding frame was developed further and categories added as well as combined. The third step was to do the coding again to increase validity of the coding frame after a pause of three weeks. Schreier (2012) suggests doing the coding with more than one researcher to increase validity of the coding frame; as there was no second researcher available, a re-coding was done by me. The coding frame was adjusted again according to the data, so that the coding frame is data-driven, as Gläsel and Laudel (2010) propose. The coding was carried out using the NVivo software package, which helped to flexibly change and merge categories within the coding frame. The findings of the analysis in the resulting logic and order of the coding

frame (see Annex 4) Coding frame (German)), their discussion and interpretation are dealt with in chapter four.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Management research needs to consider ethical questions, as possibly confidential information is gathered, analysed and from which conclusions are drawn. Results of research may be used and eventually published; therefore the researcher needs to be aware of his or her responsibility. Bias may influence the researcher while performing interviews or analysis. It is also possible that informants try to influence results of the study for political or power-related reasons. Easterby-Smith et al. (1991) suggest two aspects to bear in mind: first to be aware that power and political issues are significant, even if it is not clearly evident and second to have clarity of purpose and flexibility in handling problems. Also it is indispensable to safeguard confidentiality during and after completion of the research, so that any disclosure of confidential information, especially the names of the research participants, must be avoided. Further it is necessary to explain the purpose of the research project to the participants, preferably in advance of their voluntary participation. For this reason, a written explanatory statement is suggested (Tharenou et al., 2007). In my research project, confirmation of confidentiality and the explanation of the purpose of the research project were given verbally by the managing director of the company to the group of designated participants on November 11th, 2013 (see 3.6.1). A short introduction to the topic of the research was as well mailed to the participants with the interview guideline, when the interview was scheduled (see annex 1). Confirmation of confidentiality was given again by me, before the interview started and time was given for asking any questions by the participants.

It is acknowledged by Easterby-Smith et al. (1991) that political issues and power relationships can raise significant ethical issues in research within organisations. The fact that my research was a local knowledge case was very helpful, in that the interviewees and I have longstanding and mutually trustful work relationships that

facilitated open discussion. Secondly, I believe that hierarchical levels were not an issue, since all of the interviewees occupied a hierarchically superior position in the organisation to my own.

For the research project, there were several steps undertaken to comply with ethical guidelines. First, a discussion with one of the managing directors about conducting the interviews in the company took place in October 2011 and again in October 2013, just before the interview phase was to begin. The aim and objectives of the research were explained and the planned procedure as well as further use of gathered data was elaborated. After that, permission for the laid out plan was given. In a second step, the research project was explained briefly to potential interviewees by the managing director and it was highlighted that participation was voluntary and anonymity granted. In a further step, potential interviewees were called and asked if they were willing to participate and whether they had a need for more detailed information about the research, the procedure and other issues. Questions were answered at this stage and an appointment for each interview made. Brief research project information and an interview outline were handed out about a week before the interview was scheduled. The project information included the nature and purpose of the study and its method, expected benefits of the study, information about confidentiality and anonymity and the use of gathered data, together with contact information for the author (Thomas, 2011). At the beginning of each interview, the interviewee again got the chance to ask questions for clarification and it was explained that anonymity is ensured. Following each interview, a written transcript of the interview was provided to the interviewee as a matter of course. In addition to that benefits for participants might be offered, for example to give a summary of the overall results (Tharenou et al., 2007). An offer of the summarised results of the analysis of the interviews was accordingly made, which was seen as an appropriate benefit and also reinforced transparency.

For the employee survey, confirmation of confidentiality was provided in the email to which the survey was attached. The same email explained the nature of the research project and the broader issue of organisational readiness for change. Responses from the employee survey were listed in an Excel worksheet without the

identity of the employees. By these means, confidentiality was safeguarded by the HR department that mailed out the survey (see 3.6.2).

3.9 Concluding summary

In the course of this chapter, the philosophical underpinnings of the research were considered and my adoption of the perspective of a constructivist was clarified and justified (3.2). Based on that foundation, the research design (3.3), featuring a qualitative approach and inductive interpretation of data, was elaborated. The choice of a case study approach as a research strategy (3.4) was explained and justified on the basis of the specifics of the research project. The research was designed as a single case study with a local knowledge case of Stadtwerke Bielefeld as the unit of the study (3.4.1). Advantages and disadvantages of case studies and aspects of reliability and validity (3.4.2) were discussed. The data collection procedure (3.5) that comprised a series interviews with managers (3.6.1) and an employee survey (3.6.2) was explained. The sampling of interviewees (3.6) was addressed by identifying key informants (resulting in a 100% sample of the key informants) and a simple random sample of non-management employees for the employee survey were explained. The strategy for data analysis (3.7) was presented with a content analysis and the development of a coding frame. Finally, ethical issues (3.8) were considered and my response to these discussed. In the following chapter, the data analysis and the findings are presented and considered.

4 Analysis and discussion of findings

4.1 Introduction

As it was planned and documented in the methodology chapter, the thirteen interviews (including one pilot interview) were conducted, transcribed and analysed. The gathered data was coded and clusters were built, which represent the main categories of the coding frame (see 3.7). In the course of this chapter, the analysis and its interpretation are discussed. As the identity of the interviewees is to be kept anonymous, for the purpose of citations each interviewee has been assigned fictional initials. In the course of the chapter, a rich picture about Stadtwerke Bielefeld is created and – if applicable – recommendations on the basis of the findings are given. To structure the chapter, the gathered data is introduced in a logical order with the structure determined by the main categories resulting from the coding frame. The structure of the analysis and discussion with a link to the section in the interview guideline is shown in figure 12:

<u>Structure of the analysis</u>		
<u>Section</u>		<u>Section in interview guideline</u>
4.2	Characteristics of SWB	
4.2.1	Cluster A: Mindset and behaviour	I.1.; I.3. (managers)
4.2.2	Cluster B: Culture and values	I.2. (managers)
4.2.3	Cluster C: Situational factors	I.1. & II.12. (managers)
4.2.4	Cluster D: Change experience	General information (managers)
4.3	Application of the concept of organisational readiness at SWB	
4.3.1	Factors influencing succes of organisational change	II.10. & II.11. (managers)
4.3.2	Relative importance of success factors	II.9. (managers)
4.3.3	Proposed design of a change process	II.10. (managers)
4.4	Perceptions of building organisational readiness for change	II.7. & II.8. (managers)
4.5	Evaluation of change readiness	
4.5.1	Assessment of the management sample	II.4.-II.6. (managers)
4.5.2	Assessment of non-managerial employees	Employee survey
4.5.3	Comparison of non-managerial employees to managers ¹ evaluation of change readiness	I.2.-I.4. (managers) & Employee survey

Figure 12: Structure of the analysis

4.2 Characteristics of SWB

As a basis for the research objective to investigate the characteristics of SWB that have the greatest impact on its readiness and capacity for change, first the characteristics of Stadtwerke Bielefeld were elaborated. The characterisation started with an overview of publicly available facts of Stadtwerke Bielefeld in the introduction chapter. In addition to this, a description of the situational factors was given, based on an exemplary overview of press releases between November 2011 and February 2014 regarding the implications for the utility companies of the transition of the energy industry. Furthermore, interviewees were asked how they would characterise Stadtwerke Bielefeld as an organisation. In the course of analysis, the description of Stadtwerke Bielefeld was differentiated on a first level between company-specific attributes and situational factors. In terms of data gathered, the company-specific attributes were ascribed much more detailed answers than the situational factors. It was asked to describe the company regarding its history, culture and mindset (see annex 1); it is understandable that situational factors were only used as a reference to embed the specific factors within their specific environment. The clusters built from content analysis are described in the next paragraphs.

4.2.1 Cluster A: Mindset and behaviour

The company-specific aspects again were clustered during the process of coding into the cluster “mindset and behaviour” and “values and culture”. The first consists of descriptions of manners, routines and typical behaviour and the latter of characteristics considered desirable and lived ideals, or the opposites. The discussion of these clusters –in the order of number of interviewees mentioning that point (NoI) and then number of references made (NoR) - follows in the next paragraphs.

4 Analysis and discussion of findings

Cluster Name	Keywords	NoI	NoR
A: Mindset and Behaviour			
	Stability and Inertia	11	26
	Reticent, sceptical communication	6	8
	Credibility	6	8
	Market Orientation	5	6
	Thinking in Silos	3	5
	Self Confidence	3	4
	Enthusiasm for new Tasks	2	5

Table 3: Overview A: Cluster mindset and behaviour

The most frequently mentioned category in the cluster is **stability and inertia**. People working at Stadtwerke are seeking stability rather than change and they are staying in the very same jobs for a long time. WV summarised:

„In our industry or in our company culture – I say as well in our industry – are predominantly, are people represented, who are less curious, but rather inert.“

The company and its employees do not run after every trend and do not like surprises. This behaviour was related to the business model of the company that had a natural monopoly for many years, when

“...one needed a contract every 20 years” (UM).

One interviewee connected the felt inertia with the company’s mission statement that includes dependability. While stability seems to be a very important value for the employees, one interviewee stated that

“...unfortunately we have a strong workers’ council, which always protects employees against change” (KI).

This statement shows the underlying assumption by some members of the company that change is negative for the employee and he or she has to be protected against it. The impression of prevalent stability and inertia of the company seems to be typical in the industry as insights from the literature review showed (see 2.4.4, p. 60). Considering these aspects, a key finding is that people working for Stadtwerke Bielefeld as well are seeking stability. This is connected to a felt organisational inertia of Stadtwerke Bielefeld. Referring to the idea of static and

dynamic mindsets of Dweck (2012) and the finding that a majority of people working at Stadtwerke are seeking stability, one might conclude that the majority of people have fixed mindsets, who enjoy stability and to whom change is more threatening.

The next category is called **reticent, sceptical communication** mentioned by six respondents. BW said about that:

“That is like a ritual before each works meeting, hard times lie ahead to us and if we will be able to keep the level of profits and so forth... [...]. And everybody knew that profits were increasing.”

Comparable to each other, six persons talked about internal communication, especially on the works meetings when presenting the annual result. Even high profits were presented in an understating way, warning that the next year will be difficult, competition will be increasing and the company would have to make an effort in the following year. Even though these warnings were given, profits have been high for the last years. An important issue in relation to that is **credibility**, if communication by top management is still credible in the near future, when annual results will really drop in the next year. Successful years were not celebrated but rather downplayed and interviewees were worried, if credibility is still perceived by the staff. The issue of credibility was brought up by the interviewees in the context of reticent communication, the experience of warnings given and reality showed not to be that serious in the following year; another three raised that issue without this context, but that credibility is in question. In the current situation, when profits really will decrease after some years of announcing it without that happening, it is concluded that top managers of Stadtwerke Bielefeld need to take care of their credibility. Therefore it is seen as crucial to foster an open, authentic and motivating communication.

By the number of mentions, the next most mentioned category might be surprising; the category is called **market orientation**, as it is not naturally connected to stability and inertia (see above). Five interviewees attribute a similar positive assessment to the market and service orientation of Stadtwerke Bielefeld. Even though the company came from a position comparable to an office of the municipality, it

developed to a company competing successfully in the market, since the liberalisation of the electricity market had been launched in 1998. Now they are positioned close to the local customer and have a sufficient local customer potential and knowledge about these customers. This was also described by Oesterwind (2014). Previous successful competition in the market since the liberalisation and the years of high profitability are closely related to the next category mentioned by three of the participants namely **self-confidence**. This self-confidence is considered from two sides: Firstly, Stadtwerke has been distributing the highest profits over the last years among the subsidiaries of the municipality and that assures good positioning in regard to the shareholder as well as on the market. Secondly the reorientation starting in the year 1998 towards a customer focused business model gave an assurance to the people, who helped implement the reorientation:

“As soon as we have an objective, a vision, where we want to be then we can achieve that” (NJ).

These are key aspects to build a positive change communication: for a creation of a positive attitude about the change, it may be emphasised that the company has gone through a phase of reorientation to the customer successfully, meaning that the capabilities for that are there. Second, the company has got a good starting position with the local customer focus.

The next cluster is named **thinking in silos**, which is understood as that employees may have realised that there is a need for change, but they deny their responsibility and argue that the transition of the industry is a matter of market and sales business unit. Three respondents were consistent in saying that this thinking is obstructive for the change process and has to be broken through. The change has to be made a concern of everybody. This will be a main task in preparing the organisation for change and will be argued again in regard to which aspects are important to successfully undertake a change process. The finding is here that thinking in silos is seen as contradicting change and has to be broken up by generating a feeling of being affected by the change for everybody. Even though there is the impression of employees denying their being affected by change, two participants talked about **enthusiasm for new tasks**.

4 Analysis and discussion of findings

“People at Stadtwerke Bielefeld are enthusiastic for what they do and they excitedly undertake new tasks. It is always negative or problematic, of course, if one cuts back, reduces or scales down” (PU).

The explanation given by PU suggests that people are interested in new tasks and enthusiastically operate changing technologies, but do not happily accept changes implying reductions and cut-backs. This assessment is supported by the self-perception of the industry as being rather innovative (Michulitz, 2013). However, the answers of the study and of the managers of Stadtwerke Bielefeld might be subject to social desirability bias, as they are portraying their company in a favourable light. Even though such a bias might play a role in giving the answers, the company might build a change process on the positive self-image of being enthusiastic for new technologies, and connecting this to the technically induced changes in the energy industry. This will help to set a positive focus on the communication of the project.

The following section provides an overview of interviewees' responses when asked for their perception of the culture and values of Stadtwerke Bielefeld.

4.2.2 Cluster B: Culture and values

An overview of the cluster is provided in the following table, sorted by the number of interviewees mentioning that point (NoI) and then number of references made (NoR):

4 Analysis and discussion of findings

Cluster Name	Keywords	Sub-Keywords	NoI	NoR
B: Culture and Values				
	Reliability and security of supply		10	18
	Trust in top management		9	13
	Security		8	11
		Risk disposition, try new things	8	11
		Scepticism about new things	2	3
	Shared identity, identification		8	14
	Tradition		6	8
		Long periods of employment	2	2
	Good job situation		5	13
	Local roots		5	8
	Qualified personnel		3	6
	Low level of emotion		1	1

Table 4: Overview B: Culture and values

Within the cluster named as culture and values of Stadtwerke Bielefeld the most frequently mentioned aspect is categorised as **reliability and / or security of supply**. This goes along with the highest ranking in terms of frequency of the category stability and inertia in the mindset and behaviour cluster. The quality of the service and the dependability of availability are not only a crucial value to Stadtwerke Bielefeld, but also the self-conception of core competencies for the main business. The conclusion is that the company values are also reflected in the behaviour of the employees in addition, people that have a high affinity for stability tend to work at employers such as Stadtwerke Bielefeld, because they can readily identify with the main business. As one participant stated

“..and therefore it is a baseline at Stadtwerke Bielefeld to seek for high reliability and high stability und this draws through over 100 years that Stadtwerke have been existing as a common thread” (KI).

Looking at a self-portrayal of the industry, it is not surprising that the umbrella-brand campaign of the union of municipal utility companies (VKU) emphasised

competency, reliability and customer proximity (2011; 2010). Regarding this, the explanations given by the respondents is in line with the industry's self-conception.

Also very high in the number of mentions is trust in top management. Some of the interviewed managers refer to Stadtwerke Bielefeld's last employee survey from the year 2010, which included a similar question relating to past experiences. One participant stated:

"And in the past our top management has overcome all crises and all adversities or so and the trust simply must be there and it is even there, in my opinion" (NJ).

Based on that one might conclude that people at Stadtwerke do not strive for change by themselves, but as soon as they have a given objective and have understood it, they have a high confidence in management decisions. Another participant explained

"...because the memory, the experience of the employees is, the top brass, they do not lie. The top brass have good reason, when they say so. I do not have to understand these reasons, but they are credible, because that matches my former experiences. Then you have won already fifty percent. If you are in a company culture, in which you say, well we also cheat each customer, then you also cheat every employee, then they are extremely sceptical and do everything only with double and triple protection" (WV).

The survey in 2010 to which the interviewed managers referred comprised 82 statements that were assessed on a scale from 1 ("is entirely true") to 5 ("is not at all true") or 0 ("I do not know, not applicable"). Results were evaluated by an external firm and for each statement percentages of agreement were provided, while answers 1 and 2 were counted as an agreement. The statement respondents pointed to was "I trust that top management will ensure success and security also in the future" and had an overall agreement for the entire company of 89% (Stadtwerke Bielefeld GmbH, 2010). This is an additional indicator for a high level of trust in top management, even though it was a few years ago. The high degree of trust in top management is an important finding.

Clustered in the keyword security are three different aspects mentioned: firstly **security**, discussed as such, then willingness to accept risk or to **try new things** and

the perceived **scepticism about new things**. NJ for example called for a rather risk-affine procedure:

“And, so this creative process is in my opinion going with the courage to eventually be able to pursue an aberration, to identify it and to revise it.”

Many of the respondents talking about security focus on job security, which Stadtwerke Bielefeld is associated with. The aspect of risk disposition to try new things was mentioned by interviewees with the call for having more courage to try new things. This courage should be accompanied by more flexible structures, curiosity of the people and the willingness to learn from aberrations, as they explained. Scepticism about new things is described as a basic attitude that needs to be overcome to try and implement new business models. The interviewee WV stated:

“I experience our corporate culture being rather sceptical about change. ... Everything that is not already known or of which the goal or possibly predictable result is known, that is encountered with scepticism.”

As **stability** was a very important aspect regarding the mindset and behaviour of people at Stadtwerke Bielefeld, it is no surprise that security as well is considered important by the respondents. A cultural change towards a higher degree of risk-affinity is a very complex and difficult process. As stated earlier, it might be helpful to establish a learning culture (Oesterwind, 2014). Based on these pieces of information, a more risk accepting culture would be useful. However, since cultural change is a complex challenge and a long-term project, it has to be carefully, comprehensively considered and thus should be undertaken in a separate endeavour, as it is not the focus of this research.

Further the perceived culture is characterised by a **shared identity and identification** with the company. The identification with the company is attributed to the public services offered supporting the public good with many of the employees living in the city and also to the fact that a lot of employees have family that is or has been working for the company. The finding that a shared identity is an important value is surprising, as thinking in silos (see 4.3.1) was raised as an issue.

Especially the aspect, of who is affected by the outside forces and changes, is attributed to certain – *other* – business units of the company:

“...because as I said, at the moment, within the company, as I think, in many departments it is seen, that is a problem of M [business unit market and customer], that is a problem of the generation and I am far away from that. And I do not have to change anything about my work routine and my business.” (MH)

One might suggest that a shared identity exists within a certain unit in the company but, beyond that, a feeling of being affected is limited. However, this cannot clearly be derived from the data. Identification with the company is however not unusual in the industry. A high degree of identification with the company is also an important attribute within the industry, according to a study of employer attractiveness undertaken with utility companies (Michulitz, 2013). The study further concludes that “the loyalty of managers constitutes an important mainstay for the change process of the companies” (p. 6). These study results confirm the perception of eight interviewed managers of a high degree of identification of employees with their employer. The finding of a shared identity and a high degree of identification with the company is a strength the company might use.

The aspect of identification with the company might be related to the keyword **local roots**. Subsumed under the aspect local roots mentioned by five respondents is the regional business focus of the company, the closeness to the municipal administration, as the municipality has always been holding more than fifty per cent of the shares and the local responsibility for the end customer. Local responsibility, closeness to citizens and being an important purchaser for the region are some of the aspects, on which an umbrella brand campaign within the industry placed special emphasis. The campaign was launched by VKU, the union for municipal companies, and was continued in May 2011 ((VKU), 2011). As the feeling of local rootedness was stressed by five respondents, it is an aspect the company might use to build into communications on creating a feeling of common bond. Therefore the local rootedness is considered to play a significant role for employees at Stadtwerke Bielefeld.

Another characteristic of Stadtwerke Bielefeld is **tradition**; this keyword was mentioned with the two different aspects of **tradition of the company** and **long periods of employment**. Stadtwerke Bielefeld with its history of over 150 years is perceived as a very traditional and thus stable company. Given the long periods of employment with a lot of employees celebrating their 25th, 45th or even 50th anniversary in the company, one respondent concluded that the prevalent mindset is determined by the people who are long established. The long tradition of the company and with it the tradition of its people might be an obstacle to change. The tradition shaping the culture of Stadtwerke Bielefeld may be connected to the evident stability and inertia describing the company. As the interviewed managers suggested, the tradition of the company has to be connected to a future-orientated strategy and the inertia has to be “unfrozen”. Furthermore, for example, UM proposed that the top management needs to communicate a future strategy taking into account that tradition is an important value for people at Stadtwerke Bielefeld. One reason for these long periods of employment and very low labour turnover rates may be the **good job situation**. Respondents talked about a culture very much respecting the well-being of the individual, treating the individuals with respect and loyalty. This is complemented by different employee benefits as well as favourable company agreements. In particular, the workers’ council has been taking up the cause of these favourable agreements and the protection of the individuals. In regard to upcoming changes, the protection of the individual is seen by some of the respondents as obstructive to increasing flexibility. Also non-monetary benefits should be reviewed in times of decreasing profits. One respondent even critically named the protective behaviour nonredeemable:

“...our job situation, constitution at Stadtwerke against the backdrop of being nonredeemable, that one does not even – unless one has transgressions – take a risk and a nevertheless strong position of the workers’ council – whereas I do not want to question the principal of workers’ councils – but I realise that this is unbalanced” (DF).

Based on the finding of **good job situation**, it might be considered appropriate to reduce favourable company agreements and non-monetary benefits, to first

achieve immediate cost reduction and second to set an example that the situation is serious.

The next important keyword is **qualified personnel**. People at Stadtwerke Bielefeld are well qualified due to routine further training, structured training of managing staff and skilled and motivated employees. A possibly very important aspect, which may also be related to the long periods of employment, is the experience with change. Even though the industry has been very stable for many years, an extensive change has occurred starting with the liberalisation of the electricity market in 1998. Many people that supported the new business model with a focus on market orientation then, are still there:

“We have proved that and everybody, who has been contributing to that, back then, is still there and knows how it works. Thus we as well have the knowhow to do such a thing as well as the people being able to implement that. Know how may be theoretical, but ours know how to do the implementation. Therefore I believe that we can do that” (NJ).

Even though the company has not experienced a lot of changes, a significant proportion of the people (between 40.7 65.2% (Stadtwerke Bielefeld GmbH, 2013/2014), who have supported the one rather evolutionary change at Stadtwerke Bielefeld, are still there. This is a strength the company should build on. Further employees are skilled and well-trained. Therefore it is recommended to put qualified personnel in positions designing the change or for change implementation. Another aspect of the culture at Stadtwerke Bielefeld mentioned by respondents was a generally **low level of apparent emotion**. One respondent made specific reference to this, saying that “the culture is low in emotion” (RF). Even though people at Stadtwerke Bielefeld were described as enthusiastic and the director of human resources stated this as a criterion to hire somebody, one might expect that enthusiastic people are rather emotional than not; however, Stadtwerke Bielefeld is described as technically orientated, less emotional and rather fact-based. From the fact that only one respondent talked about people in the organisation being not very emotional, it cannot be concluded that the other respondents oppose this perspective. However, the fact that none of the remaining twelve respondents was talking about emotion in a change context of the interview might be an indicator

that managers rather focus on the cognitive side. RF said in that context as the only one mentioning emotion at all:

“...that is again a piece of the culture of Stadtwerke that the emotional is not very distinct”.

It is surprising though that literature give significant attention towards emotion in regard to change (Mossholder et al., 2000; Pratt, 2005; Bridges, 1986), but none of the interviewees did when characterising Stadtwerke Bielefeld. This is taken as an interim conclusion and will be elaborated further in 4.4.1, when looking at change success factors of Stadtwerke Bielefeld.

After the perception of the respondents to describe Stadtwerke Bielefeld was considered, in the next paragraph the assessment of the situation of the company is summarised.

4.2.3 Cluster C: Situational factors

The characterisation of Stadtwerke Bielefeld as an organisation was complemented by the perception of the current situation in the opinion of the interviewees. This is an important aspect in regards to the research aim, which as well sheds a light on the need or urgency (see 1.4) for the change to come. The table provides an overview of the following keywords (sorted by the number of interviewees mentioning that point (NoI) and then number of references made (NoR)):

Cluster Name	Keywords	NoI	NoR
C: Situational Factors	Uncertainty	3	4
	Urgency	1	10

Table 5: Overview C: Situational factors

Concerning situational factors, **uncertainty** in the industry and felt by the employees was an important issue to the interviewees. In particular, there was a

worry that uncertainty might cause speculation, so rumours will be important to consider for targeting change communication:

„...if I have uncertainty, unclarity about what will be really happening, then the vacuum is filled by rumours by circulation of misinformation and such things. That is even harmful“ (WV).

As stability and security were within the top three of the issues regarding mindset and behaviour or culture and values respectively, and are therewith very important features for employees at Stadtwerke, a situation characterised by uncertainty will be discomforting. This is an important finding, as top management will have to give comfort in a situation of uncertainty by showing the way or pointing out secure aspects of the situation as a kind of corner stone on the way towards a new structure of the company. Otherwise, if security-seeking people are overwhelmed by uncertainty, either rumour will spread, as one respondent mentioned, or people will become confused. Further, the discomfort of an uncertain situation often arouses emotions that might have to be dealt with and should therefore be considered.

Especially in regard to the description of Stadtwerke Bielefeld, only one respondent explicitly mentioned the **urgency** of the situation, but on that account very forcefully. The fear was that Stadtwerke might miss the window of opportunity to start a remodelling the business:

“If I do not sometime now put up a vision by management and an aim and a strategy, where I want to be in ten years’ time or whatsoever, then I am afraid, we will not be able to motivate the employees to joining in with that... But as I have said, we have to be careful now not to slumber away the signs of the times and get that across. And at the moment it would rather be the ideal point of time with the development of financial results, which reflects a bit the facts. That would not be the only thing, what one would need to put across, but a few figures help to arise willingness or comprehension for change readiness“ (MH).

Not surprising, this respondent is one of those persons being very close to the market due to his responsibility. The fact that only one person talked explicitly about urgency might be an indicator of the other managers seeing the degree of urgency not as high as the one experiencing market changes in his day to day

business. Concluding one might say, that overall the need for change is not a prevalent aspect for the interviewed managers. Thus one might state, that the need for change is not felt or not internalised yet. The cluster named ‘change experience’ is looked at, which includes more detail, as respondents were explicitly asked about their own experience of change.

4.2.4 Cluster D: Change experience

To get a better understanding of the spirit regarding change at Stadtwerke Bielefeld, interviewees were asked if they have been affected by a change directly and about their change experience. While ten out of thirteen respondents said they were affected by a change directly while the others were not, the cluster change experience is structured as follows:

Cluster Name	Keywords	NoI	NoR
D: Change experience	Stability of the company and industry	11	23
	Extensive change process	8	13
	Continuity with smaller changes	5	5

Table 6: Overview D: Change experience

In regard to the **stability of the company**, financial stability and no dismissals over many years as well as the **stability of the industry** with basically the same business model offering public services for over 150 years were discussed. Also it was mentioned that the industry has been so stable, that the transition which is now necessary, is something the industry has never experienced before to this extent:

„I see the situation in our industry, which I have been observing for over 35 years, that has not even begun to be experienced...“ (DF).

This is an important finding that the company as well as the entire industry has not been forced to change in the past to this extent and therefore the company is change-inexperienced. There have been only evolutionary changes taking place, since the last revolutionary change, when the electricity market was deregulated beginning in 1996 and took effect in 1998. This might be an explanation that the

entire industry is reacting to market forces mainly by cost savings, but does not seem to have a vision of the future design of the industry yet, as it was outlined in the introduction.

Eight of the respondents mentioned being part of an **extensive change** process, while many of those refer to the reorganisation as a result of the liberalisation of the electricity market in Germany in 1998. The remaining five only claimed to have experiences with **continuity with smaller changes** such as reorganisation of departments or business units and smaller adjustments regarding processes and layouts of jobs. These might be regarded as evolutionary changes (Burke, 2011). Therefore it might be concluded that the majority of the respondents perceive the company and the industry as stable and change-inexperienced with a high degree of continuity. Overall, nearly two-thirds of the interviewed managers have directly experienced extensive change and the rest were also responsible for evolutionary changes. Therefore it is concluded that a large share of managers at Stadtwerke Bielefeld do have some change experience, on which it may be built on.

To summarise the picture of Stadtwerke Bielefeld, one might look concluding at the top aspects that were mentioned by more than two thirds of the respondents, encompassing all clusters: the main aspects are **stability and inertia** (number of mentions: 11), **reliability and security of supply** (10), **trust in top management** (9), **stability of the company and the industry** (11). These aspects were elaborated and discussed in the preceding paragraphs and they outline an understanding of the characteristics of the company, which will constitute the basis for the following depiction of the understanding of a change process at Stadtwerke Bielefeld.

In the next paragraph, the understanding of the respondents of a change process is discussed. Experiences of the past may be reflected by the proposed success factors for change.

4.4 Application of the concept of organisational readiness at SWB

To explore the application of the concept of organisational readiness to SWB, first an understanding of a successful change process was elaborated. For that purpose, interviewees were asked to name the aspects important for SWB to successfully undertake a change process. The idea of a change process at Stadtwerke Bielefeld from the perspective of interviewed managers is discussed in the course of this chapter. The discussion starts with the factors considered important for a successful change process and then the importance of success factors in the opinion of the interviewees are discussed. Possible success factors were provided in the interview guideline (see annex 1) and these factors were elaborated in the literature review (see 2.4.1, p. 49ff.). Therewith a successful change process at Stadtwerke Bielefeld is considered from two sides: first success factors brought up by the interviewees answering an open question and second interviewees' personal ranking of possible success factors derived from literature.

4.4.1 Factors influencing success of organisational change

Starting with the factors considered as key for success, the table provides an overview of the broad cluster of change process influencing factors (sorted by the number of interviewees mentioning that point (NoI) and then number of references made (NoR)):

4 Analysis and discussion of findings

Cluster Name	Keywords	Sub-Keywords	NoI	NoR
Change Process Influencing Factors	Understanding of the situation of all employees		13	49
		Emotional Communication	11	30
	Involvement		3	4
		Top-down-approach	10	21
		Change under one's own Steam	7	9
		Critical Discourse with Employees	7	9
		Workers Council	2	2
		Shareholders	3	3
	Vision of Change		10	25
	Pressure & Action		9	23
	Spirit of Optimism		7	24
	Thereof	Change as an opportunity	6	13
	Thereof	Look ahead	1	4
	Being affected personally		5	7
	Embedding of Employees after Change		4	26
	Thereof	Anchor; Certainty	3	11
	Thereof	Individual approach	4	8
	Labour turnover as a Chance		4	11
	Being afraid of Change		4	10
	Perspective of Future Strategy		2	6
		Rethinking self-conception	1	2
	Resistance		2	2

Table 7: Overview change process influencing factors

The most important point mentioned by all interviewees was that an **understanding of the situation** and the need for change needs to be established for all employees. It was argued that employees need to understand the situation to support the change programme (e. g. HM, SU). Therefore not only external factors that trigger the need for change need to be understood, but also a company-wide understanding should be established that change needs to take place for the good of the company. This is in line with literature, that high pressure or discrepancy and aspired outcomes, benefits and reasons for the change need to be communicated

(see 4.2). Therefore a very important finding is that an understanding of the situation is an absolute necessity. There is a possible area of conflict: considering on the one side that an effective communicational concept to achieve an encompassing understanding of the situation of the employees is regarded as crucial and on the other side the issue discussed earlier of reticent, sceptical communication in combination with credibility of top management was seen as an issue by six of thirteen respondents (about 46% - see 4.3.1).

Furthermore, **emotional communication** was seen as an important issue by eleven respondents to support understanding and to create a feeling that everybody and the entire company are concerned. However, respondents were specifically asked about the importance of emotional communication. Schäfer (2010) as well warns especially for public services not to overemphasise rationality, but as well to consider emotional aspects and states that successful reforms of municipal organisations have to be designed on the basis of rationality as well as on emotions. While only one respondent sees the need for communication to be more emotional, ten call for a well-balanced mixture of fact-based reason and emotional aspects to increase identification and willingness to support change. PE remembered a shark tank with Stadtwerke Bielefeld as a dolphin depicting the vision of the company for the new market orientation with the electricity market liberalisation in 1998 as an impressive example of an emotional appeal in communication. A similar picture for the new strategy would be helpful to motivate for change and emotionalise the vision of the change, as PE argued. Therefore it may be considered to include emotional appeals in the communication concept for the change initiative.

As it was discussed earlier (see 4.3.2) none of the interviewed managers talked about how to deal with emotions during change or considered emotional aspects of the culture or mindset of people at Stadtwerke Bielefeld. All but one respondent agreed on emotional appeals for communication suggesting a focus on rational arguments rather than on the emotional side. When talking about culture and mindset of the people working at Stadtwerke, they do not talk about emotions. If talking about leadership they focus entirely on the cognitive side of it. This might be the case as the company and the sector as well is technically orientated and much

driven by rules and regulations. Therefore it is concluded that emotion during change is not considered a focus issue for managers at Stadtwerke Bielefeld to deal with. There is therefore a discrepancy between the focus assigned by literature to dealing with emotions (e. g. Schäfer, 2010; Mossholder et al., 2000; Huy, 1999) and the level of awareness of this issue revealed in the case study. It might be concluded further that managers at Stadtwerke do rely on the rational basis of leadership², as Schäfer (2010) finds typical for public administrations.

This seems even more of a risk for successful change implementation: As people at Stadtwerke Bielefeld and in the industry were found to be stability seeking, the uncertainty of an upcoming change will be even more a threat to them (e. g. Thon-Jacobi & Kaufung, 2014). Also the fact that the company as well as the industry has little change experience possibly adds to change being perceived as a threat by the employees. Not dealing with emotions or not being prepared to deal with them might be a pitfall impeding change implementation.

The next most mentioned heading is **involvement** of employees and communicating with them. If one aggregates the sub-keywords with the main keyword "involvement" 13 respondents mentioned that in total 48 times. The first subheading then is the predominant opinion that a **top-down-approach** should be applied. Top management should develop a clear concept for the change and objectives and then more and more employees should be involved step by step, to use existing know how, to involve employees by creatively designing the change process and to get a broad acceptance by occupying a diverse composition of people from all parts of the company and its direct subsidiaries. This is in line with the call for **change under one's own steam**, to motivate more energy for the change with the step-by-step confirmation that one is able to make a difference. In addition to that a majority of respondents seeks a **critical discourse with employees**. This should help to use their detailed knowledge about their specific tasks, to take them seriously, to offer an outlet for emotions caused by the

²In this context see as well the reflection about the „emotional rollercoaster“ during change (0)

approaching change, to get feedback from employees and to spread information about the progress. RF stated in regard to the image of the stability-seeking:

“That of course may cause disturbance, but apart from that agitation and discussion are not harmful per se.”

Rather as an aside, not in the conversation about involving employees was the precondition of involving the **workers’ council** also to build confidence among the personnel and the involvement of the shareholder, because if the **shareholder** does not agree, the change just will not happen. It may be concluded that either the involvement of the shareholder is seen by managers as a rather straightforward task or it is taken as self-evident as an essential requirement and therefore not talked about in more detail. Involvement of employees in the decision-making to tailor the change effort was also discussed by Eby et al. (2000) to increase organisational readiness for change. Merging the keyword “involvement” with the two sub-keywords “top-down approach” and “critical discourse with the employees”, which are the categories dealing with involvement of employees, one gets 13 interviewees mentioned that point with 34 references. That means each respondent considered involvement of employees as crucial. Therefore it is recommended to account for the high degree of consent about the importance of employee involvement and involve individuals in designing of and deciding about the change process in a top-down approach, encompassing more and more individuals with each step (described for example by NJ).

Also a lot of consideration was given to the requirement of having a clear concept or **vision of the change**. People at Stadtwerke need to understand why certain changes have to be undertaken and the strategy has to be plausibly explainable. Communication about the vision needs to be clear and comprehensible. Also the vision helps to avoid angst or fear:

“By the way you always see that people very quickly want to know where will the journey lead to? That is a very common question. If you then have to answer I do not know that yet, because we do not have this process yet and that is all open and unbiased, then you only madden people. There is scarcely anybody who say oh how wonderful, an open-ended process, how exciting, there I would like to participate” (WV).

Regarding change communication, the change literature discusses the high level of importance of purposeful communication: for example promoting open communication to nourish perceptions of support for change (Eby et al., 2000) and to achieve a high level of clarity and commitment for the desired end-state (Armenakis et al., 1993) have priority. Clarity about the objectives is very important to get employees' commitment. As SU commented:

„...Where does it lead to? Where should we march? Boss, show us the way. And then we will get that done“

This suggests that employees are indeed willing to perform the necessary tasks, they only have to understand what the goal is and why it has to be done. It is concluded that the high degree of consideration of effective communication by respondents affirms this priority in the literature.

In addition to the vision of change to be communicated clearly and convincingly, two respondents discussed the **perspectives of the future strategy**³. In distinction from a clear vision, comprising what should be done to reach which goals and with which strategy, the perspective of the strategy-category is rather concerned with the positive aspects of the strategy to establish a successful business model. The fact that the perspective of the future strategy was only mentioned by two respondents might lead to the conclusion that a goal, such as survival of the company or a certain level of profitability, is connected inevitably to a vision for change. However, there is no proof in the data for that. When respondents talked about issues considered important by them, they consequently did not talk about issues not mentioned and why they were not mentioned. It might at least be concluded that as only two respondents talked specifically about the future strategy, that this is not an issue considered key for the success of the change project.

³ In order of the number of sources this was only the tenth keyword; it is discussed in the context of vision of change here.

Somewhat surprisingly only one respondent explicitly talked about the **process of rethinking** in connection with the perspective of the future strategy. Even if one's job is not affected directly by the change, the self-conception has to change.

"...and that is so with some organisational changes or what so ever one will call that, it is often that not the entire company, not every job is affected, but it is the mindset" (PE).

Even though the literature review found a focus on a change of mindsets in the energy industry as a supplement to finding a new business model, issues of rethinking or developing corporate culture are not a predominant issue brought up in the interviews. This might be the case, because most interviewees did not consider this issue as important, since it is less tangible or it might be believed that a completely new business model and the way to establish that will cause cultural changes as a side-effect. The interesting finding here is that an expected issue of rethinking or reconsidering the self-perception of the company as one part of the traditional value chain is only mentioned by one respondent. It might therefore be concluded that this is unexpectedly a non-dominant issue for the managers of Stadtwerke Bielefeld, or, more probably, that only a few managers give much thought to cultural issues. Moreover, it can be very difficult to think objectively about one's own corporate culture, particularly for long-service employees.

The issue of **pressure and action** was discussed by nine respondents with 23 references, with respect to the need to be persistent in the process and to force the employees who cannot be convinced into the process. These respondents also felt that perhaps the most important need was, after a time spent elaborating the process, to really start doing things and give people specific tasks. This eventually includes terminating part-projects, if it becomes apparent that nothing structurally changes. A suggestion by Schäfer (2010) is to destabilise the current situation to increase internal pressure for change. That may be done by disturbing interventions, possibly with an external consultant as a catalyst, to change patterns of action. These disturbing interventions include questioning issues such as predominant role concepts, attitudes and thought patterns as well as cultural symbols, rules and forms of interaction. A key finding here is that pressure for

change is needed and action has to be started to get going with the change. To increase pressure, active interventions should be undertaken with questioning prevalent patterns of organisational behaviour (as postulated by Schäfer, 2010).

In contrast to a recommended approach with persistence and pressure, seven respondents said **a spirit of optimism** should be generated. It should be striven for as a positive prevailing mood, an enthusiasm that is spread already while elaborating the necessary changes and this optimism should result in people feeling positive about change. Of the seven respondents talking about an optimistic spirit, six spoke for seeing **change as an opportunity**, for the company to hold its ground in the market and for the individual employee to learn and to improve oneself. Another issue mentioned by one respondent was to rather **look forward** into the future than in the past and to let go the past:

“And it is crucial, I think, that we accomplish exactly not to look behind and say, in previous times everything was great and now everything gets really awful, but say now something new starts and that but even so is a big chance...And with this process it is for sure the question does one say goodbye to the old at one time, with its content and intellectually to develop it further and to save the business with that and starts with a positive mood” (UM).⁴

Based on the estimation of the respondents to start a change process with a positive spirit seeing change as an opportunity, it is recommended to perform a kind of ritual to signal that the old situation has ended. This may help to unfreeze the organisation and to let go of the past.

The next important issue brought up for tailoring the change process was **being affected personally** by the change. If people realise that the change concerns the entire company and therewith everybody, five respondents believe people to be more likely to take responsibility for the change and to support it. To come to that agreed understanding of everybody being affected, thinking in silos needs to be broken up. This is an important finding and it is recommended to tailor the change

⁴Author’s note: a strategy of the managing directors or the board of directors had not been developed by the time the interview took place.

communication in such a way that employees do feel concerned and get a feeling of all being in the same boat.

Following the line of thought of being affected personally, four interviewees considered an **embedding of the individual** in the new situation important. This subsumes showing the individuals how the future company works and which their future place within it will be, what will be expected by them. More generally, respondents argued that it was important to contemplate the factor of dealing with human beings and to respect this fact. The need to let employees know what is expected by them and show them that they are either able to fulfil that or they will get support for that (mentioned by BG, GM and WV) may be related to the issue of efficacy as a change readiness component: Efficacy, the “sense of one’s ability to successfully accomplish change” (Cunningham et al., 2002 p. 377), is seen as a central issue of change implementation within the literature. Therefore the point based on this is the need to clearly communicate expectations to the employees. Three of the respondents thought it important to employees some certainty, something like an **anchor**. It is believed that even bad news is better than a longer period of uncertainty and therefore it seems to be good advice to communicate what has been decided as soon as possible. In a positive way, this might help stop speculation about what might be and encourage curiosity about the new, arousing interest and motivation to help create the new situation. However, this “anchor” might even be to tell a person that his job is not part of the future company, but this person may be offered further qualification for a new job (suggested by GM) or the anchor might be to give the certainty that the corporate pension scheme will be paid further (suggested by KI). It is considered important to say what will not change when a change intervention will be launched (KI) and also to clarify, what was decided on already in the process (WV). Four respondents preferred an approach that takes account of **the individual**, bearing in mind that people are different in their openness to change (the “human factor” - UM). The chance for the individual to ask questions or to address specific problems should be offered. This shows that there cannot be a generally “right” approach, because people react and

feel differently. It is considered important that time and space to address individual concerns should be granted.

As another crucial factor for the change process, **chances of natural labour turnover** were discussed by four respondents. This is considered to have twofold advantages: On the one hand labour turnover enables the company to reduce personnel without redundancies and on the other hand recruitment may bring fresh thinking from the external labour market into the company. This shows that respondents are aware of the need to downsize and need to see the positive issues of the little labour turnover there is and to use it. Another four respondents talked about **fear of change**, or more specifically fear of loss, that may cause blockages or resistance to change. These fears may be without any realistic substance, as one respondent described:

“These are fears of loss that happen there. They [people at Stadtwerke Bielefeld] have not even heard about job losses. That is excluded by the established Stadtwerker, because there is not experience about that. But there are not the real threats, but there are fears” (WV).

As the company and its employees were described as mainly stability seeking, showing inertia accompanied by scepticism about change, one might have expected more respondents to mention fear of change and resistance to change. It might be that because only four respondents specifically talked about fear, that it applies only to a small percentage of the people, but there is no proof for that in the data. Again this is a possible weakness of open questions, since respondents do not necessarily cover certain topics unless they are specifically prompted. However, management should be aware that for launching and communicating a change programme, there is the possibility of fear existing among employees. As well as the possible impediment of fear, two respondents explicitly talked about **resistance to change**. HM suggested that resistance will be caused, if jobs are downgraded in their significance and responsibility. On the other hand, changes of processes and other aspects that do not have an impact on job significance are more likely to be accepted. Interestingly, BG argued from experience of IT projects that people per se resist changes, because they know the current state, the organisational

environment and are capable of what they have to do, so the change causes resistance, at least at the start. This explanation might be linked to the change readiness component of self-efficacy: if people are convinced that they are able to handle the new situation, they will be less likely to resist change. Interestingly, the respondents mentioning “fear of change” were different from the ones who discussed “resistance to change”. If one clusters “fear of change” and “resistance to change” together as “negative emotions towards change”, one gets six references in total. This might be an indicator that these managers have experiences of negative emotions towards change, which BG explicitly mentioned as his personal experience. Looked at from another perspective, one might positively conclude that respondents concentrated on aspects of how to make change happen and how to communicate change in a positive and motivating way rather than focussing on possible barriers. A very important insight from analysing the wording and frequency of the clusters, is that the overall conversation about change with top managers was dominated by positive connotations. However, this cannot be explicitly derived from the data, as there was no direct question about it and the impression of positive connotations in the wording is to a certain extent subjective.

After looking broadly at the perceptions of the interviewees of the various factors that influence a change process, the next section deals further with the perceived importance or weight of the influencing factors on the process. While the preceding discussion was of responses to an open question, the one that follows is based on an analysis of the answers to a closed question.

4.4.2 Relative importance of success factors

In the preceding section, factors to successfully undertake a change process in the unguided opinion of the interviewees were discussed. In the literature review (see 2.4.1, p. 49ff.) possible success factors for change were elaborated and these were provided in the interview guideline (see annex 1), complemented by an optional “other” response where interviewees could add aspects that were missing in the preceding list in their opinion. In this second consideration of a change process at

4 Analysis and discussion of findings

Stadtwerke Bielefeld interviewees' personal ranking of possible success factors derived from literature are discussed first. As respondents were as well allowed to assign more than one number one ranking, if they considered them equal, in the second part of the paragraph a weighting approach was applied to get an overall ranking of success factors.

The results of participants' ranking of provided success factors are portrayed in Table 8.

Crucial Factors for successful Change	Interviewees initials and respective rank of success factor												
	DF	WV	MH	GM	RF	KI	UM	NJ	HM	BG	BW	SU	PE
1 Effective Communication		2	3	2	3	1		1	1	1	1	3	1
2 Involvement of affected employees	3	3	4	3	1	1	1	2	1	1	1		1
3 Definition and clarification of objectives	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1
4 Thorough analysis and planning			2	4	4					1			1
5 External consulting	4			5		no		4	dep.	2			
6 Sustainable resources		4		5		3	5	3				4	
7 Incentive systems for good results				5	5		4						
8 Training		5								2			
9 Other													
a Speedy and courageous, authoritative implementation	2			3			3						
b Certainty of controllability		1											
c Set an anchor						2							
d Start creative process								2					

Table 8: Overview of interviewees' ranking of provided success factors

The table gives the ranking each interviewee has assigned to each suggested factor. Where the cell has been left blank, the factor was not named as one of the most important factors by the respondent. There are two exceptions of the ranking method given: KI explicitly denied external consulting to be a crucial factor, but rather argued for a change process designed by the company and its own personnel, which is indicated by "no" rather than a ranked number:

"External consultation is to some extent a declaration of bankruptcy, one does not get that done by oneself. One can also dodge behind others then. That is rather convenient."

On the same topic, HM argued with a similar line of thought that a consultancy regarding specific issues might be useful, but not for the entire process, which is indicated by "dep." (depends) instead of a rank:

“What I do not consider very helpful is external consultation, because external consultation often is used to hide as a manager from responsibility and to pin it on the consultant.”

Further in the interviews additional issues were brought up, subsumed under “other”. These mentioned issues were:

1. **Speedy and courageous, authoritative implementation.** This may be seen in connection to the clustered issue of “pressure and action” for change implementation as discussed above. In this context it was highlighted that this implementation process should last no longer than half a year, so that motivation does not fade out in this time period (DF). GM described that as follows:

“That is a very important story, later on one has to do something and one should be that good in the process or one has to abort it, if one sees, nothing changes structurally. Then one has to be courageous and say it is like that right now, we do not reach cost efficiency for example or cost efficient structures, because we have to deal with these and those framework conditions. Then one has to just postpone the project for two or three years. But that has to be a very clear message, such a kind of fraying and running dry, that is – I think – not very helpful for a company.”

2. **Certainty of controllability:** this is a confirmation in regard to the individual employee that tasks and processes, as they will be after the change has been implemented, are manageable by him or her. This issue was brought up by WV:

“So my impression is that it is key to a successful change process that I give employees the certainty, that they can master the reality, the processing after the change; the certainty of controllability of such a process. To achieve that, things from that list are very important, such as...”

He argued that the most important issue is “certainty of controllability” and his ranking of the other aspects are rather to support this as the most important issue.

3. **Set an anchor:** The idea behind this is to give the employees certain fixed points – or anchors – during a time of insecurity while the change is being elaborated. These anchors need to be communicated as soon as possible

and it is important that management is able to hold on to these anchors; therefore these have to be chosen carefully. KI explained:

“And here within Stadtwerke I can say that change processes of any kind have certain anchor points that are effective, namely the one, you will not be given notice. But that is an important message, a very important one. It may be that we put this department and the occupation into question, but you will not become unemployed, you will not be given notice. I have to check that beforehand it that takes effect, but if that is a condition that does take effect then one should as well express it. The second is nearly synonymous with that. It may be, that your occupation will change, it may be that your workplace changes, but you will keep your position here and you will essentially keep your basic salary...But I can promise you for the next foreseeable five years that what we do now, that is it. That means these are points that take effect for the foreseeable five years. That is somewhat a message. Because there is always the fear, now a change, tomorrow may come another one, is that not a crazy idea of him, does that hold for the next two, three years...”

4. **Start a creative process:** The interviewee mentioning this was convinced that the entire company should be involved in the process of elaborating the change. That may be done by a top down –approach, involving more and more employees in the process, because each individual knows best his or her workspace and therefore should be involved in remodelling the processes. NJ explained:

“Nobody is as smart as everybody. When I reach a phase when it comes to implementation, when I have to develop ideas, thus wanting to start a creative process within the company, then it will only work, if I put together employees from various hierarchical levels, but also from various departments; thus this creative process that cannot be done by only three persons. Then one is too blind.”

After this explanation of the table and its content, the results are looked at in more detail. It is shown that the factor which got the most frequent number one ranking (nine in total) is “definition and clarification of objectives”, followed by “involvement of affected employees” (seven times number one) and “effective communication” (six times number one). This represents the opinion that people need to know as precisely as possible where they need to go, to be motivated to move, as NJ explained:

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“If the company or the employees do not know, in which direction he wants to steer, then one cannot create a spirit of optimism, because people do not know where, why, what should I do anyways and which needs is there now anyway? That is on the very top of the list in my opinion, if that is not there, then one can actually pack in.”

Further employees want to be involved, they want to know what their position after the change is and help forming the process and get motivated by that. An explanation is given for example by UM:

“Involving of employees, but as well specific... - objectives I do not consider enough but it is a matter of assigning tasks to people. So it is about – I think – creating specific projects and not about theoretically debating that all the time.”

The communicational issue is closely intertwined with the first two, as the objectives need to be communicated to be understood and accepted and involvement is very important for affected employees. For example SU explained:

“...and I have made this experience as well, if one clarifies the objectives and the employees are also able to comprehend the objectives, then such a change process is most likely possible.”

From this first interpretation of the table it might be summarised that employees need to know what the objectives are and they need to be involved. The high importance of the success factor “definition and clarification of objectives” is in line with the most important issue of tailoring a change “understanding of the situation of all employees” (see 4.4.1).

The frequency of number two rankings shows a slightly different order: first “definition and clarification of objectives” (four times), “effective communication” (two times) and many other factors with one number two ranking. Taking into account the rank number three factors, the picture gets too complex to be overlooked. Looking again at the overall ranking of factors, it is noticeable that “effective communication” has got six number one rankings, but not one of them as a sole number one. That is due to the fact that respondents were allowed to assign rank one to more than one criterion, if they considered them equal. Therefore in a next step, the ranking was weighted to assign an overall ranking to each criterion

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and to take into account if a rank was given as a sole rank or as an equivalent ranking of more than one issue. For that a simple scoring method based on a cost-utility analysis from decision theory was used. Cost-utility analysis is a quantitative non-monetary method based on that proposed by Zangemeister (1971) to analyse a certain quantity of complex alternatives for action with the purpose to rank these alternatives according to the preferences of decision makers. This method was simplified, so that a sole rank one was assigned one more point than the same rank as a multiple ranking, and a sole rank two got one more point than a multiple ranking and so forth.

The revised weightings after applying this points scale resulted in an overall ranking for each success factor, as shown in table 9:

Crucial Factors for successful Change	Interviewees initials and respective rank of success factor														Sum	Overall Rank
	DF	WV	MH	GM	RF	KI	UM	NJ	HM	BG	BW	SU	PE			
1 Effective Communication		6	5	7	5	8		8	8	8	8	5	8	76	3	
2 Involvement of affected employees	5	5	3	5	9	8	9	6	8	8	8		8	82	2	
3 Definition and clarification of objectives	9	6	9	9	7	8	7	8	8	8	8	7	8	102	1	
4 Thorough analysis and planning			7	3	3					8		9		30	4	
5 External consulting	3			0		no		3	dep.	6				12	7	
6 Sustainable resources		3		0		5	1	5				3		17	5	
7 Incentive systems for good results				0	1		3							4	12	
8 Training		1								6				7	9	
9 Other																
a Speedy and courageous, authoritative implementation	7			5			5							17	5	
b Certainty of controllability		9												9	8	
c Set an anchor						7								7	9	
d Start creative process								6						6	11	

Table 9: Sum of weighting points and overall ranking of factors

With that approach, an overall ranking of the success factors was assigned. If an overall rank was assigned to two factors, the next rank was left out and the next number was allotted. A clearer rank order of factors was obtained by this method, with the most important factor “definition and clarification of objectives”, followed by “involvement of affected employees” and “effective communication”. However, this order is the same as obtained with the simple count of number one rankings. The next important factors are then “thorough analysis and planning”, “sustainable resources” equalling “speedy and courageous, authoritative implementation” and “external consulting”. Considering respondents were asked to determine the most

important factors out of a list of eight suggested factors, the lower ranked factors after the mentioned six are not dealt with further. Therefore the interim conclusions that employees need to know what the objectives are, that they need to be involved and that effective communication supporting it is essential, are confirmed by the overall ranking.

For the factor ranked fourth “thorough analysis and planning” it should be taken into account, that analysis and planning to develop objectives for the change is considered as a necessary and self-evident step by some interviewees and was therefore not necessarily stressed by assigning a high rank. RF put it as follows:

“Then three [definition and clarification of objectives] and four [thorough analysis and planning] interrelate very, very much in my opinion. Thus there must be objectives and the entire thing must certainly as well really thoroughly be analysed and planned.”

“Sustainable resources” is seen as a critical factor in a time when financial resources are getting more and more constrained with decreasing profits. Respondents mainly talked about human resources, when considering implementing the change due to the fact that a decreasing capacity of human resources has to handle a stable or increasing workload. NJ put it as follows:

“I have to determine employees to take the lead, that these press ahead the implementation, for that they have to clear their minds, they cannot then deal with day-to-day operations and do the rest after closing time. That will not work. Also these have to be dispensed to a certain extent for implementation at any rate.”

This statement shows, that regarding resources it might be considered that –if no additional resources for the change development and implementation are available or affordable – priorities have to be set for the existing resources, especially regarding the human resources. Therefore employees should be clearly instructed how priorities should be set. However, employees will be motivated to work overtime, if they are convinced that the change is the right thing. This goes back to the issue ranked as first “definition and clarification of objectives” or going back to the factors influencing success of a change, where it was described as “vision of change” that people at Stadtwerke need in order to understand the change strategy. Again, the vision of the change might only be understood and really

comprehended if the communication works. That is where the link to effective communication lie, showing the strong interdependence of these factors.

Equally ranked with “sustainable resources” was the factor “speedy and courageous, authoritative implementation”. This issue was brought up by only three respondents, subsumed within the “other” category, but with a high importance in contrast to the equally ranked “sustainable resources”, which was mentioned by six respondents with a lower importance assigned to it. This issue might be connected to “pressure and action” among the factors perceived to influence the success of a change. One might speculate that if the leadership of Stadtwerke Bielefeld has not always been courageous and authoritative when necessary in the past, employees might not take subsequent decisions by management sufficiently seriously. Taking the remarks about the need for courageous, authoritative implementation and pressure and action for change implementation into account, it is recommended to authoritatively set objectives for change implementation and not let the change vision and general procedure be challenged, once it is elaborated. Further considering that according to literature (as briefly mentioned in 4.2), commitment occurs for example because of the costs related to failure or a sense of obligation (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002), possible negative outcomes if the change is not successful and also consequences of not supporting the change should also be communicated. Since it is about the future of the company, negative outcomes are for example loss of jobs. This should not be communicated as a threat, but rather as a factual possibility. In relation to that, emotional appeals may be included (see the above discussion regarding the aspects influencing success of a change, specifically sub-section 4.4.1 “emotional communication”).

The factor in rank seven that needs more detailed discussion is “external consultancy”. As it was explained earlier by the two exceptions to the logic of answering the interview questions, when two respondents explicitly denied the general necessity of external consulting, this factor is seen in a double-edged way. First consulting may support any project of the organisation, if specific expertise is needed or pertinent questions to be worked out, consulting is seen as necessary and helpful. On the other hand, if consulting is used as a means to hide behind the proposals of a consultant, it is seen as disadvantageous or even disastrous (a

“declaration of bankruptcy” as seen by KI or “often used to avoid taking responsibility” by HM, see above). A typical fear regarding consultancy in combination with restructuring is the consultant identifying huge potential for efficiency and resultant layoffs, but not helping the company to implement those efficiency enhancements. This fear is exemplified by the statement of GM:

“And then it has to lead of course subsequently to action. I believe that is such an experience that may tire a company. There are these nice T-Shirts, ‘we have survived McKinsey and Roland Berger’, thus always to see many processes that are launched, but at the end of the day, will not be implemented.”

This may explain why consultancy was assigned a relatively low rank. It may be interpreted that there is a somewhat ambiguous attitude toward external consultancy. HM recommended that consultants should only be mandated for specific questions:

“Consulting only makes sense in my opinion, if I really try by comparable processes to get a kind of better procedure.... Rather a consultancy on the level of processes...of which one can say that it is really helpful. Well, not so abstract, you can save so and so many millions, but with the following means we believe, if you implement it and shorten accordingly, the following is possible.”

The last issue to be considered in more detail is “certainty of controllability” (see above). This was only mentioned by one respondent, but this person considered it the most important factor. This issue is also considered important by literature: self-efficacy as “a sense of one’s ability to successfully accomplish change” (Cunningham et al., 2002 p. 377) is, together with the opportunity to participate in the change, the defining element in regard to change readiness. Therefore one might conclude that a similar description of self-efficacy is also considered important on the basis of the data gathered, even though not by a majority of respondents. As respondents were not given “self-efficacy” or something similar as an option, the fact that only one respondent talked about it is not a sufficient criterion to conclude that it was not considered important by the remaining respondents, they may just not have thought about that in the interview.

The last four in the ranking “set an anchor” (see above) and “training” on rank nine, “start a creative process” (see above) on rank eleven and finally “incentive system for good results” are not discussed in more detail here. As these were allocated less than ten per cent of the points (the most important factor of these achieved 6.9% at rank nine, 5.9% rank eleven and 3.9% rank twelve), they are determined to be less important by me. An exception to this 10%-rule was made for “certainty of controllability”, as it was considered most important by one respondent.

After an in-depth discussion of factors influencing the success of a change project in the opinion of the interviewed managers and a closed question to rank the importance of suggested answers, a rich picture of the managers’ understanding and opinions concerning change has been created. The next sub-section gives an impression of what the respondents considered key to tailoring a change process for Stadtwerke Bielefeld.

4.4.3 Proposed design of a change process

Managers of Stadtwerke Bielefeld were asked what they considered most crucial in designing a change process at the company. Condensed answers in the order of number of interviewees mentioning that point (NoI) and the number of references made (NoR):

Cluster Name	Keywords	NoI	NoR
Design of Change Process	Transparent and fair Procedure	7	12
	Name Responsibilities	6	11
	Sustainable Resources	6	7
	Active and Enthusiastic Actions	4	6
	Manageable Steps	3	10
	Benefits	2	2

Table 10: Overview proposed design of a change process

Even though the distinction made between influencing factors and process-orientated factors is not always clear, a cluster was created to capture these opinions. Most factors in this cluster discussed here were brought up in the context of how to design the change process. The most important aspect, named by seven

respondents, was setting up the process in a transparent and fair way. Issues raised in this context were fairness, open and honest communication and transparency about the process and decisions made. Contrary two respondents felt communication regarding change were transparent in the past, one stated that it was not transparent in regard to relocations of personnel within the company. This might be reasoned by the fact that the latter interviewee is the one knowing the company for many years as an outsider and having the least time of employment with the company compared to the others, not having some kind of organisational blindness. Also the reason might be due to the specific experiences of each interviewee in his or her own business unit and feedback from employees. Whatever the evaluation of the degree of transparent communication in the past may be, it is an issue for planning change communication. One piece of information let drop was the other extreme of involving employees:

“...but in the past it has been even very distinct in my opinion, right up to the fact that change processes partly have been restrained, if the individual did not find himself there” (MH).

This may be connected to the high degree of influence of the workers' council within the company as well as to the opinion of nine respondents that the process should start with some pressure and action to be taken soon. Following this line of thought, six respondents proposed to name responsibilities for change development and implementation. It was considered important to identify responsible persons to start implementation, because only with clear responsibilities would implementation start at all. Employees should feel a shared responsibility and the conviction should be spread that the entire company will be affected. This again should counteract silo thinking.

A factor that is seen sceptically by five out of six respondents when talking about that issue is the allocation of sustainable resources, especially regarding human resources. One recollected that in the past, there has been enough labour time devoted to such projects. Again, the one with the deviating opinion is the person with the least time of employment at the company. In this case one might reason that the degree to which one feels available human resources as a shortage and the

level of extra work as too high might substantially differ between a person who has spent a long time within the same company and a person who has experienced different companies as an auditor. Research suggested that the impact on the employees' own work affects the perceived readiness for change (Cinite et al., 2009). Even though a direct link was not shown, increased workloads may set off resistance to change (Brown and Duguid (1991), Jellison (1993) in: Cinite et al., 2009). It is concluded that resources for change implementation are seen as a crucial factor, which is by literature reinforced.

Enthusiastic and positively motivated actions were also considered important by four interviewees. Even if not everybody is enthusiastic about the change, one might put in charge for the implementation work those who are. To increase enthusiasm and motivation for the work on the change project, manageable steps were also believed to be important. The smaller change steps may be reviewed regularly to learn for the process (HM). Combining these issues of motivation for the change process and implementing manageable steps, UM suggested starting with a lighthouse project:

"The question is, if I can then start a wave with lighthouse projects also in single departments and through opinion leaders in persons who more and more say, I really support this. ... But I realise, one cannot wait for the last or the mass to be convinced. Therefore I say one has to –in my opinion – start concrete implementation of single things as soon as possible with opinion leaders to tell everybody distinctly there is something happening and that is fun to work at".

One author suggested to successfully implement changes, a workforce should be recruited that responds to change as a challenge rather than an obstacle (Schneider, 1987). This is in accordance with the opinion of some interviewees to make people see change as an opportunity. However, since the profitability of power generation is reducing considerably, a substantial number of new personnel will not be needed and labour turnover at Stadtwerke has always been low, so that reoccupation of jobs with external, change-positive people is not a real possibility. Building on the logic that organisations are a function of the people they contain (Schneider, 1987) and understanding change projects as smaller organisational units, it is recommended to start with sample lighthouse projects that should be

staffed with people identified as fostering and embracing change (as suggested by UM).

The last keyword within this cluster is benefits: two respondents talked about benefits with a priority on financial benefits. However, financial benefits might be scarcely spread in times with deteriorating financial performance and decreasing financial resources. An important and longer-term benefit might also be that the company will survive. Even though there might not be sufficient funds for additional financial benefits, alternatives should be considered such as securing jobs or the possibility of taking time off as extra holidays due to flexi-time agreements. However, it should be clearly communicated, which rewards are possible and which are not.

This sub-section looked in detail at how managers suggest a change process should be designed. As change readiness was seen as an important factor to successfully implement change (as elaborated in the literature review), the discussion now turns to analysed change readiness assessed by the interviewees.

4.5 Perceptions of building of change readiness

To explore the facets of the research question “how do managers and other employees assess SWB's readiness for change?”, first a summary of the identified factors influencing change readiness based on the interviews is given. The second part will complement this assessment by the insights from the literature review and also the assertions of the interviewees are compared to the prevailing opinion by literature.

Being asked about the factors of influence of change readiness, the following clusters of answers were formed:

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Cluster Name	Keywords	NoI	NoR
Change Readiness	First build change readiness	7	9
	Change readiness as an individual characteristic	4	8
	Description of change readiness	5	8

Table 11: Overview change readiness

More than half of the interviewees saw it as important to build change readiness first. Important issues were taking the time to prepare and build readiness to not cause resistance to change and to implement the changes more sustainably. As preconditions for change readiness the following were mentioned:

- Involving employees and communication.
- Generating acceptance.
- Having a clear concept and objectives.
- Showing the advantages of the new state after the change.

Even though seven respondents were positively arguing to first build organisational readiness for change, one was very distinct about that:

„I only know from my experience here, from many projects, which I have done with all departments and all companies, that the effective readiness for change is an essential part for the success of such a process and that we do well to establish such readiness in one step before we start with the actual implementation“ (BG).

Even though seven of thirteen interviewees argued for building change readiness first and then start implementing change, six did not see that kind of preparation as necessary or possible. Some of the six argued that there is no time for a preparation project and others favoured to foster readiness within the actual implementation phase. Therefore no clear recommendation for a separate, pre-implementation readiness building may be inferred. Alternatively, an integrated approach starting the change with sample projects accompanied by a communicational approach, supporting the identified issues to further build change readiness may be applied.

Another important facet discussed was change readiness as an individual characteristic. One issue was that the people who are rather ready for change and proactively support a change project tend to be the people who like to co-create

and who are willing to accept some extra work. Another point was that readiness for change might be learned. The few respondents, who mentioned change readiness in this context as a characteristic of the individual, believed that individual change readiness is not very high. This is consistent with the picture of the company and its employees operating in a very stable business environment for many years, thus having not a lot of change experience. And with little experience people at Stadtwerke were not able to “learn change” and therefore are not at a high degree of change readiness. With a separate set of questions about change readiness (see annex 1, II.5, 6 & 9) the assessment of the level of change readiness is discussed in that regarding part of the analysis and discussion (see 4.6.1, p. 139ff.). As individual characteristics might not be altered quickly it is rather recommended by some interviewees to put people in charge who as individuals are considered to be more positively disposed to change than others.

The discussion about change readiness as an individual characteristic is linked to the impression of organisational change readiness; here too experience with change and its positive influence on change readiness was brought up as well as the issue that a company perceived as stable attracts security seeking employees or makes them comfortable in their stable job environment.

“In the one company the ones survive, that can deal with changes well and in the other you have cultivated who can deal with that worse. Insofar, when a company, the organisation supports change readiness and practices that more often, then it is easier. Everything which is practiced works better” (KI).

To foster change experiences, it might be recommendable to divide the overall change plan into smaller steps or sub-projects, as for example NJ and UM suggested. This not only helps to make the task more manageable, as it was suggested above (see 4.4.3), but also to reflect on sub-projects and how they are assessed to create an experience to learn from (as KI stated “everything which is practised works better”). Or as UM pointed out, the company has not celebrated successes that have been accomplished in the past and that might be done in the future. This is also confirmed by literature, as the keyword of change experience and the confidence in the ability to implement changes can be found in change literature as well (for example see Jarrett (2009), Armenakis et al. (2002, 1999,

1997, 1993), Eby et al. (2000)). Other conditions for change readiness mentioned were putting people in the mood, awakening enthusiasm, involve a broad basis for setting objectives and these may be supported by acceptance for the need for change by facts. The keywords of involvement and creation of a sense of need for change are also dealt with by many authors (for example see Luecke (2003), Armenakis et al. (1999), Smelser (1967)).

Regarding the respondents' understanding of change readiness, it is mainly driven by understanding the situation, the forces driving the need for change and by former experiences with change. When discussing change success factors from the two perspectives of openly asking respondents for change success factors (see 4.4.1) and a ranking of a list of suggested success factors (see 4.4.2), the understanding of the situation was both times the most often mentioned.

However, considering the responses concerning change readiness, only a proportion of the respondents were convinced that it is a necessity. MH explained:

"...I believe, we will not get that done somehow, that we arouse readiness for change, without having launched the process yet...I believe we will only be able to organise arousing the readiness as part of the process. For the other we have, I think, little time, right?"

There is no clear picture from the interviewees' perspective as to whether it is advisable to try building change readiness first in a kind of separate pre-project. This disagreement of the interviewed managers regarding the process of building change readiness adds extra tension to the situation of Stadtwerke Bielefeld. To get a better impression about how change readiness is assessed by the interviewees, in the next sub-section this issue is discussed.

4.6 Evaluation of change readiness

The focus of this section is the research question "how do managers and other employees assess SWB's readiness for change?" Accordingly, the results of the proposed methodology to assess Stadtwerke Bielefeld's readiness for change are analysed. This is divided into the section of analysis of the assessment of the

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management sample, then the assessment of the non-managerial employees and a comparison of the assessment of the two different groups of employees.

4.6.1 Readiness assessment by the management sample

The response of each respondent regarding each message component derived statement is shown in the following table:

		DF	WV	MH	GM	RF	KI	UM	NJ	HM	BG	BW	SU	PE
a	Discrepancy	4	2	3.5	4	1	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3
b	Efficacy	3	3	2	2	2	1	1	2	3	2	1	2	1
c	Appropriateness	2	2	2	3	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2
d	Principal commitment	2	3	3	2	2	1	3	2	3	4	1	4	2
	resources									2				
	commitment							2		4				
e	Personal valence	4	1.5	2	3	2	3	2	2	2	1	2	2	3
f	Fairness	2	1.5	1	1.5	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	2
5	Overall readiness	4	4	3.5	2	2.5	2	3	2	3	4	2	2	3

Table 12: Responses to change readiness assessment

There are two special issues to be considered: the statement regarding principal commitment is worded in such a way that it implies two issues: “...assign sufficient resources” and “...show enough commitment”. Therefore two respondents gave two answers to that question. UM was sceptical about the resources and rather optimistic about the commitment. He assigned the “I agree (2)” to the issue of commitment and an overall “partly / undecided (3)” to the statement. He explained among other things:

“I believe that is a threat at least at the moment that one perceives we have to rather reduce and do not get on track that we do have changes and as well have to add new resources in certain departments.”

HM answered in a different way, also being very doubtful about the resources. He describes that resources in some sub-areas of the company are scarce already for the operational business and therefore a change project will lead to a management of shortages, getting more severe due to demographic change and the challenge to keep essential know-how within the company. Regarding the increase in financial

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pressure, he talks about squaring the circle. Further, some respondents were not certain about one answer or the other, therefore they chose the middle of two answers (e. g. WV was uncertain between „I strongly agree“ (1) and “I agree“ regarding personal valence (f), which therefore was assigned the value 1.5.)

As each Likert item was assumed to be equidistant (see 3.5.2) simple statistical analysis was possible. The results are shown in table 13 below:

Managers		Mean	Median	Modal value	Variance	Standard deviation
a	Discrepancy	2.88	3.00	3.00	0.67	0.82
b	Efficacy	1.92	2.00	2.00	0.58	0.76
c	Appropriateness	2.08	2.00	2.00	0.24	0.49
d	Principal commitment	2.46	2.00	2.00	0.94	0.97
e	Personal valence	2.27	2.00	2.00	0.61	0.78
f	Fairness	1.54	1.50	2.00	0.23	0.48
5 Overall readiness		2.85	3.00	2.00	0.68	0.83

Table 13: Statistics of change readiness assessment

Looking at the assessment with the mean (empirical average), “fairness” was assessed highest. Managers of Stadtwerke Bielefeld believed that a change process would be fair and employees treated respectfully and responsibly. When being asked about the design of a change process (see 4.4.3) the top issue mentioned was a transparent and fair procedure. Thus a fair and transparent procedure is not only seen as very important, but also believed to be what would be applied. With so much emphasis put on fairness it might be concluded that there is a focus on the human factor of management.

The next three were “efficacy” (with 1.9), “appropriateness” (with 2.1) and “personal valence” (with 2.3), all on average assessed with a two. Therefore it might be concluded that managers of Stadtwerke Bielefeld believed that there was trust in the ability of management to successfully steer an extensive change process and to implement change, that a change process to be launched will be appropriate for the company and that the change will result in positive outcomes. The issue of efficacy is also confirmed by the third most important facet mentioned for the design of a successful change process, which is planning manageable steps (see 4.4.3). The

conclusion can be linked to the cluster “trust in top management”: to characterise Stadtwerke Bielefeld as an organisation, nine respondents mentioned that they believed in a high level of trust from employees in top management. The last two in the ranking are around an average three: “principal commitment” (with 2.5) and “discrepancy” (with 2.9). Managers at Stadtwerke Bielefeld are undecided –but with a positive tendency – that management will assign sufficient resources and show enough commitment to bring the change to institutionalisation and that employees of Stadtwerke Bielefeld believe that change is needed. As it was already discussed regarding the exceptions of the pattern of answers, some managers are sceptical about the availability of resources, as the financial scope of the company is getting smaller. Resources are not only a question of availability, but also of prioritisation to devote existing resources to certain activities, as it was discussed above (see 4.4.3). The modest approval of the issue “principal commitment” regarding resource allocation and commitment of top management reinforces the need for a robustly focused procedure. Therefore it is recommended by NJ to strictly prioritise workloads and to plan and allocate resources for workload implementation as well as to openly communicate prioritisation and resource allocation to the employees (see above). When considering the aspect of discrepancy, which was assessed rather ambivalently by interviewees, there is a gap between the actual conviction that employees believe that change is needed and the high importance of change success factors with definition and clarification of objectives ranked as top priority (see 4.4.2) In particular, the objectives of the change seems to be an issue that needs to be stressed more.

The **median** as the numerical value separating the higher half of answers from the lower half is also shown in the table. Ranking the answers by the median value, the order is the same as ranking the answers by the simple average. The median of 1.5 of “fairness” for example shows that half of the respondents assessed that item higher and the other half lower than 1.5. The median value gives a rather solid statement compared to the simple average, if the distribution of values is uneven. In this case, the integrally rounded average value is the same as the median value, which is indicative that the distribution of answers is relatively even. This

comparison does not work with values with one decimal, because answers were assigned an integral value (in general) and therefore the median has to be an integral value (in general). For another angle to look at the responses the interviewees gave, the modal value might be helpful. Only for “discrepancy” the **modal value** was three, thus “undecided”; for all other statements the modal value was two, which meant “I agree”. This shows that the most frequent assessment of the statements regarding efficacy, appropriateness, principal commitment, personal valence and fairness was a positive agreement. On the other hand, most of the interviewees were undecided as to whether employees consider a change necessary. Also this perspective shows that for a successful change process, employees at Stadtwerke Bielefeld need to be convinced that change is needed.

The variance of the responses measured how widely the answers vary from the mean. While the responses to fairness (with 0.23) and appropriateness (with 0.24) vary relatively little from the mean, efficacy (0.58) and personal valence (0.61) as well as discrepancy (0.67) and overall readiness (0.68) vary more widely. The variance in principal commitment (0.94) is the highest. The standard deviation of the responses provides a quantified measure of the degree of variation of the responses, which aids interpretation. Looking at the standard deviation, fairness (0.48) and appropriateness (0.49) deviate the least from the mean, with a little less than a half from the mean. Efficacy (0.76), personal valence (0.78), discrepancy (0.82) and overall readiness (0.83) show a higher deviation. The highest deviation is principal commitment (0.97). With all standard deviations below one, it is concluded that the opinions of managers do not differ very much. Or put in other words, managers are relatively close to each other’s assessment of the level of readiness.

These interpretations do have some limitations, since the population with thirteen respondents is rather small and therefore not statistically significant. However, these simple statistics do help to obtain a richer qualitative understanding of the assessment of change readiness by adding an insight into diversity of opinions. From the perspective of a constructivist, I am looking for an understanding of human actors and their behaviour in a social context (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). As the

readiness assessment analysis firstly dealt with simple averages of the responses of the interviewees, the information about how widely answers vary from the mean and to what degree they vary can enrich understanding of the given answers. The simple statistics enable a deeper understanding of the opinions of the interviewees and are therefore a valuable addition to the analysis.

Considering the issues that were identified as key for a change process, it becomes apparent that there is need for action: all interviewees regarded an “understanding of the situation of all employees” (see 4.4.1) as important for designing a change process. With all interviewees mentioning that issue and 49 references in total, it was ranked the highest. Discrepancy however, which was formulated as “employees [...] believe that change is needed”, was assessed with an average value of 2.9. The value of 2.9 equals a “partly / undecided” agreement to the statement. There is a mismatch between the high degree of importance of the understanding of the situation and the actual assessment that change is considered needed. Furthermore, as managers assess the belief of employees that change is needed as partly / undecided, it might not be surprising, that only one respondent talked about the urgency of the situation. However, respondents were not explicitly asked how they evaluate the situation and therefore the fact that only one talked about urgency should not be interpreted as evidence that none of the other respondents saw any urgency.

Looking at the issue of appropriateness, a means to convince employees of that might be to get them involved. The issue of “employee involvement”, which was aggregated by the keyword “involvement” with “top-down approach” and “critical discourse with the employees”, was identified as a crucial factor (see 4.4.1). Here I argue that there is no contradiction, as all respondents consider employee involvement important, but also the average rating for the statement “...that the change program they launch is appropriate for the company” is 2.1, equalling “I agree”. Or, looked at from another angle, employees at Stadtwerke Bielefeld trust in the appropriateness of a change programme and additionally it is deemed necessary to involve them in designing the change.

Looking at the issue of valence, with an average of 2.3, employees of Stadtwerke Bielefeld do believe in positive outcomes of the change, as assessed by the interviewees. Connecting this to the insights from the open questions of the interviewees, the keyword “perspective of the future strategy” might be reflected on. The keyword was only brought up by two respondents with six mentions, dealing with the positive issues of the strategy to establish a successful business model. It was not considered key for the success of a change project to focus on the perspective of the future strategy. Earlier it was conjectured that a positive (financially beneficial) perspective was not considered key, because it is inevitably connected to a vision of the change that got a relatively high ranking in regard to mentions, with ten mentions. In connection to the positive assessment of valence it might reasonably be concluded that employees at Stadtwerke Bielefeld do believe in a positive outcome of a change and also a positive perspective of the future strategy. This again cannot be proven exactly by data. However, as the assessment of valence was positive, I argue that there is no imperative for action in this regard.

Looking at the overall assessment of the change readiness of Stadtwerke Bielefeld, the average is 2.8, which reflects a judgement of “partly / undecided” rather than “I agree”. Even though this is marginally positive, the overall outcome is a non-positive readiness assessment. The median value is three, which signifies “partly / undecided” and so is in line with the simple average of answers. The modal value however is two, which is a more positive agreement that Stadtwerke Bielefeld is ready for organisational change. If the modal value is two, but the average is around three, there must be some answers lower than three. The count shows that three respondents answered “I disagree” (scale point 4) or four, if the middle between “partly / undecided” and “I disagree” of one respondent is counted within that category as well. A reasonable conclusion is that managers are certainly not totally convinced - but still broadly positive – that Stadtwerke Bielefeld is ready for change, which is a key finding of the research. As stability and inertia (4.3.1) was the cluster brought up most frequently describing the mindset and behaviour characteristic for the company by eleven out of thirteen mentions (about 85%), it is somewhat

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surprising that there still is a positive average change readiness assessment. As most of the managers believe the company to show organisational inertia, one might have expected that it would be assessed as not being change ready.

Taking a comparative look at the self-perception of the industry, this result is confirmed: An earlier industry-wide study of employer attractiveness (Michulitz, 2013 - see 4.2) asked for a description of organisational structures, culture and internal processes. The scale given ranged from one being change-ready to five being change resistant. The answers tended to about a 2.6 for large and medium-sized companies and around 2 for small companies. Even though the specific way of asking the question is not known by me, it might be concluded that the overall self-perception across the industry is as slightly more tending to being change resistant. The difference found by the study between small companies with under 100 employees (average rating 2.0) and medium and large companies with above 100 employees (average rating 2.6) might allow for the conclusion that smaller companies have got more flexible structures, allowing them to be more change-ready than the bigger ones. However, comparing the findings from this research within Stadtwerke Bielefeld and the Michulitz (2013) industry study, the overall impression is that the utility companies are about half-way between being change-ready and change resistant with some tendency to change readiness.

Another way to look at an overall change readiness assessment is the following: If each element of change readiness would theoretically be weighted equally for a measure of overall readiness, the average of the answers a) to f) would have to be the same as the overall assessment. Therefore a comparison between the averages of the elements a) to f) is compared with the overall assessment of readiness. The next table shows this comparison:

Change Readiness	DF	WV	MH	GM	RF	KI	UM	NJ	HM	BG	BW	SU	PE
Average a to f (interview guideline II.9)	2.83	2.17	2.25	2.58	1.67	1.83	2.17	2.17	2.50	2.17	1.50	2.50	2.17
Overall readiness 5 (interview guideline II.5)	4	4	3.5	2	2.5	2	3	2	3	4	2	2	3

Table 14: Comparison of overall assessment with average readiness assessment

The table illustrates that ten out of thirteen respondents assess the overall readiness less positively than a simple average of all readiness components would suggest. It is not possible to interpret this in a rigorous way, since it is neither proved by research that the message components necessarily result in change readiness or that the components do have an equal weight. Moreover, there was not conclusive evidence of the comprehensiveness of the model for change readiness used (e. g. Eby et al., 2000; Armenakis et al., 1993). Another weakness of interpreting this observation is that the population of thirteen is too small for a solid quantitative analysis. However, it might be concluded that as a whole, Stadtwerke Bielefeld's readiness for change is viewed with a degree of scepticism by the managers. While some readiness components, mainly fair and respectful interaction with employees, are assessed positively by the managers, other components will need to be strengthened, such as discrepancy, principal commitment and sustainable resources.

4.6.2 Readiness assessment by non-managerial employees

After the interviews were conducted and first insights of the analysis were presented to the company, an additional short survey was answered by non-managerial employees of Stadtwerke Bielefeld to shed another light on the evaluation of change readiness (see 3.6.2).

A summary of the assessments made by employees is shown in Table 15 below:

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	Non-managerial Employees	Mean	Variance	Standard deviation
a	Discrepancy	2.6	0.47	0.66
b	Efficacy	2.4	0.44	0.66
c	Appropriateness	2.9	0.53	0.73
d	Principal Commitment	2.4	0.49	0.70
e	Personal Valence	2.6	0.57	0.75
f	Fairness	2.5	0.80	0.89
	Overall Readiness	2.29	0.43	0.65
	Average a to f	2.6	0.27	0.52

Table 15: Non-managerial employees' overall assessment of readiness

Looking at the overview, the picture is different from the assessment made by managers at Stadtwerke Bielefeld. The strongest agreement of non-managerial employees was assigned to the assessment of overall readiness of the company, with an average of 2.3. Therefore it might be concluded that non-managerial employees believe that, on balance, Stadtwerke is change ready. The next two in an order of the assigned averages are efficacy and principal commitment both with 2.4. Even though a slightly lower agreement was stated regarding these two issues, it may still be said that non-managerial employees believe in the ability of management to successfully steer an extensive change process and to implement the changes and that management will allocate sustainable resources for the change process and show enough commitment to institutionalise change.

Regarding fairness, the non-managerial employees' assessment is in the middle between agreement and being undecided (2.5). Therefore one might conclude that non-managerial employees do not believe unconditionally that they will be treated fairly and respectfully during change.

Similarly, the felt necessity of change (discrepancy) and the positive outcomes of a change programme (personal valence) are agreed with only reluctantly, with a tendency to being undecided (both 2.6). The assessment of the non-managerial employees regarding the need for change and the conviction of a positive outcome of a change programme might be interpreted as a rather undecided mood with a positive tendency. The last aspect in the order of agreement is appropriateness with

an average of 2.9. Therefore it might be concluded that non-managerial employees are rather undecided as to whether the change programme will be appropriate for the company. This might be a reflection of the fact that there is no substantial information about what the change will specifically comprise. Four of the responding non-managerial employees commented that they could not assess its appropriateness, because there is little known about the change yet. It might be interpreted, that non-managerial employees do not trust management blindly, but they want to be able to judge for themselves, whether the proposed changes are appropriate. One person commented on the statement with the question “which change programme?”.

Comparing the assessment of overall readiness (2.3) with the average of the single readiness components (2.6), non-managerial employees assessed the overall change readiness more positively than a simple average of the presumably equally weighted readiness components. It might be concluded that the overall mood regarding change is better than certain, specific issues regarding change might indicate.

Overall, non-managerial employees answered in a rather positive way, which could be due to a social desirability bias. The “completely disagree” response was only assigned three times for three different statements out of 444 single answers (which approximates to 0.7% of the total) and they all came from one person. The other extreme “completely agree” was assigned much more often (20 times in total, which approximates to 4.5%). This might be an indicator that people generally tend to not using the extremes of each end of a continuum. However, it might be concluded overall, that the mood regarding change is somewhere between positive and part agreement.

The variances and standard deviations of these data were also calculated. A striking revelation is that all standard deviations of the non-managerial employees' readiness assessments are relatively low, from the lowest 0.65 (overall readiness) to the highest (fairness) with 0.89. If we treat the standard deviation of fairness with 0.89 as an outlier, the other standard deviations are even closer together from 0.65 (overall readiness) to 0.75 (personal valence), with 0.66 for discrepancy and

efficacy, 0.70 principal commitment, 0.73 appropriateness and 0.75 for personal valence. Therefore one might conclude that the mean of the assessments represents very well the individual responses, as the standard deviations are relatively low. The simple statistics enable a deeper understanding of the opinions of the interviewees, which is important for a richer understanding of human actors and their behaviours in a social context from the adopted perspective of a constructivist. The information gained from the statistics about how widely answers vary from the mean and to what degree they vary, enriches the understanding of the given answers and are therefore a valuable addition to the analysis (see 4.6.1).

Some of the responding non-managerial employees felt they could not answer some or all of the questions or as long as they do not know what exactly the change will be about. They are therefore not committed to implement changes, unless they have assessed the changes for themselves and built their own opinion. For example one employee commented "...are for me [at the] state of affairs not to be answered!" (Q 7 on the questionnaire) or "Points b) to f) can only be answered, when the content of the change programme is known. Depending on the content there will be different assessments" (Q 46). Regarding these comments, one might conclude that this is an issue for Stadtwerke Bielefeld that some employees do not trust in the decisions by management, unless they have been able to form their own opinion. Consequently, they are not change ready, but will decide for themselves how they will react when they are presented with what exactly is expected of them regarding the change. In total there were five employees (approx. 7.7%) who made comments such as that. However, out of the 65 responses, every single item was assessed by at least 62 persons (95.4%) and so one might reasonably assume that the number of responses is still significant.

In the following section, the employee survey outcomes are compared with the findings from the interviews with the managers.

4.6.3 Inter-sample comparison

As a basis of comparison between the two groups of employees within the organisation: non-managerial employees and managers, the employee survey was constructed using exactly the same questions as were asked in the interviews with the managers. That procedure ensured a comparison of the answers of the different groups. An overview of the comparison of findings is provided in the following table:

		Non-managerial Employees		Managers		Deviation of means
		Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation	
a	Discrepancy	2.59	0.68	2.88	0.82	11%
b	Efficacy	2.42	0.66	1.92	0.76	-21%
c	Appropriateness	2.88	0.73	2.08	0.49	-28%
d	Principal Commitment	2.44	0.70	2.46	0.97	1%
e	Personal Valence	2.60	0.75	2.27	0.78	-13%
f	Fairness	2.53	0.89	1.54	0.48	-39%
Overall Readiness		2.29	0.65	2.85	0.83	24%
Average a to f		2.58	0.52	2.19	0.72	-15%

Table 16: Non-managerial employees' versus managers' assessment of readiness

The overview shows the different results from the assessments made by non-managerial employees and managers at Stadtwerke Bielefeld, showing mean ratings. The highest agreement was assigned to the statement of principal commitment, with 2.4 for non-managerial employees and 2.5 for managers. Both groups equally believe in the ability of management to allocate sustainable resources for the change process and show sufficient commitment to institutionalise change.

The next two elements with a generally comparable assessment are the felt necessity of change (discrepancy) and belief in the positive outcomes of a change programme (personal valence). The deviations of non-managerial employees' and

managers' assessments are above ten percent (with 11%⁵ for discrepancy and 13% for personal valence). In regard to discrepancy both groups agree reluctantly with a tendency to being undecided. However, the assessment of the managers (with 2.9) is less positive than that of non-managerial employees (2.6). Therefore one might conclude that non-managerial employees see a need for change rather more than managers believe that they do. The assessment of personal valence is more optimistic within the group of managers, with an average 2.3 of managers, compared with an average of 2.6 for the non-managerial employees. One might assume that non-managerial employees cannot believe in a positive outcome of change for themselves, as they do not know the exact change programme yet and / or they might be sceptical, since change often means that the workforce has to shoulder the major part of any cost reduction. This cannot be proven from the data, but only hypothesised, as only one employee commented like that:

"I think that the staff has the notion, that the economising or changes all only "hit" the lowest level. Everything is examined carefully and one tries to save as many units of full time equivalents as possible. Nevertheless the employee is not conveyed, how the upper levels participate in economising of the company..."

It is concluded that non-managerial employees are less convinced of a positive personal outcome than managers are, possibly because it is felt that negative change outcomes are often more to the disadvantage of non-managerial employees than of managers.

The issue of efficacy was assigned an average of 2.4 by non-managerial employees and is evaluated a lot higher (21%) by managers with a 1.9. Therefore it might be concluded that non-managerial employees are less convinced in the ability of management to steer and implement changes, than management itself is. The average evaluation of appropriateness with 2.9 of non-managerial employees and 2.1 of managers (28%) is even more visible. Consequently, the group that has influence on decisions about what will be done regarding an upcoming change has more confidence in designing an appropriate programme than the group who will

⁵ The comparative 'deviations of means' shown are calculated as the difference between the managers' mean assessment rating and the employees' mean assessment rating, expressed as a proportion of the latter.

be (most probably) executing and implementing changes. Possibly, non-managerial employees believe less in the appropriateness of a coming change since they do not know enough to judge by themselves if it is appropriate or not.

The highest deviation found between non-managerial employees' and managers' assessment (39%) was regarding fairness. While managers strongly trust in the fair treatment of non-managerial employees (1.5), non-managerial employees do not place so much trust in that (2.5). Interestingly the group of persons that has most influence on the procedures and respectful and fair treatment, i.e. the managers, is more convinced than the employees, who are those affected. A reason for that might be a discrepancy in the understanding of fair treatment between these two groups or also non-managerial employees might not be confident about treatment as long as they do not know what is going to happen. As data does not provide further insights about the reasons for that, a follow-up discussion with non-managerial employees in a qualitative way might provide more information.

Finally, looking at the overall readiness of the company, the deviation between the assessment of the non-managerial employees (2.3) to the average assessment of managers (2.9) is 24%. Therefore one might conclude that managers are less convinced that the company is change ready than non-managerial employees. This is even more noteworthy as top managers are the ones who have to promote a change programme and motivate the non-managerial employees for it. Perhaps surprisingly the picture is the other way around when looking at the single message components: the average of all six message components weighted equally is 2.6 for non-managerial employees and 2.2 for non-managerial employees. Comparing the average of the single message components, managers overall are more confident that the company is change ready than are the non-managerial employees. However, when asked directly about the overall change readiness, non-managerial employees assess it more positively than managers. This is an interesting finding that suggests that the managers may perhaps include other issues in their overall assessments. An alternative explanation is that, when asked to make an overall judgement, they were expressing a professional caution in responding.

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Comparing the standard deviations of the answers of managers and non-managerial employees, a striking finding is that standard deviations of non-managerial employees are – with the exception of fairness (with 0.89) – relatively low and close together (from 0.65 to 0.75) for the different assessment items. In comparison, managers' answers show a higher variance, with two standard deviations below 0.5, i.e. fairness (0.48) and appropriateness (0.49), a group of medium standard deviations around 0.8, i.e. efficacy (0.76), personal valence (0.78), discrepancy (0.82) and overall readiness (0.83) and a spike of 0.97 with principal commitment. In other words, the managers showed a generally lower level of agreement about Stadtwerke Bielefeld's readiness for change than did the non-managerial employees.

Concluding the comparison of managers and non-managerial employees at Stadtwerke Bielefeld, the highest deviations of assessment are in fairness (with about 39%) and appropriateness (with about 28%). Both items are assessed more favourably by the managers, who do have influence, than by the non-managerial employees who have a more passive role in both of these dimensions. This might be an indicator that there is the need to build trust and to communicate openly about the change programme to convince non-managerial employees about its appropriateness. The highest agreement in assessment is in the item principal commitment, with a deviation of means of only about 1%. In regard to the discrepancy dimension, that there is a strategic need for change, non-managerial employees and managers also make similar assessments (with a deviation of about 11%). Comparing the picture of an overall mood, comprised of an overall average of the statements, one might conclude that managers are a bit more positive (with a 2.2) than the non-managerial employees (with a 2.6). However, for both groups it is a statement of being somewhere in between agreement and part agreement, with a rather more positive assessment by the managers.

In the course of this paragraph the results of the employee survey were compared to the results to the insights from this part of the interviews with the managers. The comparison showed substantial deviations, which might be an indicator where

action and / or more communication might be necessary. To round it up, in the following paragraph a summary of the analysis chapter is given below.

4.7 Concluding summary

In this chapter the analysis of findings from the gathered data has been presented and discussed. In this concluding section, the key findings are reviewed.

The analysis started with a literature review in respect of the industry, to clarify the situation of Stadtwerke Bielefeld as a municipal utilities company and the understanding and experience of change within the industry. There were several characteristics of successful change for municipal energy suppliers (or rather public administrations found), which are briefly listed:

- Stability is seen as an important value within the industry.
- The self-perception of the industry is –in contrast to the prevailing stability- rather innovative.
- Market orientation has been established by municipal energy suppliers, which offers sufficient customer potential (Michulitz, 2013).
- It is seen a necessity to establish a learning culture and to become more risk-affine for a reorientation of the business.
- If change becomes necessary, employees need to understand the change vision (Oesterwind, 2014).
- To deal with emotions concerning change, rituals may be useful ways of marking and celebrating the change (Bridges, 1986).

As these issues are seen as common within the industry by a number of different authors, it was presumed that managers of Stadtwerke Bielefeld are also aware of these issues. In the course of the analysis it was found that only some of the issues were addressed: stability as an important value (4.3.1), an established market orientation, but without an explicit reference to the customer potential (4.3.1), a call for more risk affinity and the striving for a learning culture (4.3.2) and the need of employees to understand the change vision (4.4.1). However, a rather innovative

self-perception cannot be confirmed by the data gathered, even though employees were seen as enthusiastic for new tasks by two respondents (4.3.1). Dealing with emotions was not an issue that was addressed by the interviewees.

In summary it might be concluded that Stadtwerke Bielefeld is “typical of its industry”, based on insights from the literature review in regard to labour stability, market orientation, the need for a learning culture and a necessity for employees to understand the change vision. It would seem that it differs in respect of management focus on emotions during change. It was found from the literature review that being prepared to deal with emotions is a critical factor in managing change, but this was not considered so by the interviewed managers. Thus, a clear discrepancy was found between the assigned level of importance given to emotion in the literature and the emphasis on the rational side of leadership shown by the respondents at Stadtwerke Bielefeld thus making it a very important aspect.

The most prominent finding regarding the change readiness assessment is that the overall assessment is positive in both the management and employee samples. A contradiction was found between the overall assessments of managers and employees of change readiness, where the overall readiness was assessed higher by managers while the average of each readiness component was assessed higher by the employee group. A possible explanation of this could be that managers take other, undisclosed, factors into account in making their assessment.

In this chapter the company was characterised as one with a long tradition and little change experience, due to a long period of stability within the industry and thus stability of the company. Stadtwerke Bielefeld was characterised by its employees as seeking stability, being a company that is market oriented on the one side, but also showing some problematic characteristics of public administrations, for example having a tendency to stability and organisational inertia (4.3.1). The company offers a good job situation and employees are loyal to the company, staying for long periods of employment. Reliability and dependability are core values, forming part of the business model. Even though stability and inertia were the most frequently mentioned characteristics of the business during the research, not only the managers, but also the employees tended towards a belief that the

company overall is ready for change. Another imbalance was discovered between the high degree of importance of the comprehension for the situation and the actual assessment that change is considered necessary. For a successful change process, employees at Stadtwerke Bielefeld need to be convinced that change is necessary. Furthermore, a very careful and thorough procedure is needed when communicating and achieving an understanding of the situation by all employees, because credibility of top management is seen as an issue. Overall, top management has got a distinct vision about how the change process should be designed and what are the key factors to be considered. However, there are various potential problems, some of which were revealed by this research that will have to be considered in planning the change.

In the following concluding chapter, the key findings of this research are summarised and contextualised. A contribution to the theoretical understanding of change readiness within an organisation that has little change experience and has been growing in a stable environment for about many years but is now experiencing increasing environmental pressures for change is clarified. The research will also inform recommendations for practice, with respect to the design and implementation of the change programme that has become essential to the organisation's strategic adaptation.

5 Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

In the opening section of this chapter the research questions are revisited and the main findings are critically examined as responses to them. The discussion also considers the findings alongside the specific contextual factors of Stadtwerke Bielefeld's industry, human organisation and strategic imperatives.

The contributions to knowledge made by this research are then discussed and contextualised within the literature. The practical implications for Stadtwerke Bielefeld with regard to the future implementation of change are discussed and some recommendations are made for future actions. The limitations of the research are then considered and proposals are put forward for further research. Finally, my personal reflection rounds off this concluding chapter.

5.2 The research questions revisited

In this section, the research questions are revisited in turn and answered by means of a consideration of the main research findings.

The research questions were as follows:

1. Which characteristics of Stadtwerke Bielefeld (SWB) have the greatest impact on its readiness and capacity for change?
2. How might the concept of organisational readiness be applied to SWB?
3. How do managers and other employees perceive SWB's readiness for change?
4. What are the implications of these perceptions for the successful management of change at SWB?

5.2.1 Characteristics of SWB and their impact on change readiness

The first research objective was to investigate the characteristics of Stadtwerke Bielefeld that have the greatest impact on its readiness and capacity for change. A key purpose was to provide a necessary basis for the application of the concept of organisational readiness for change. To determine these characteristics, a literature review of the industry was conducted, which informed the subsequent primary research conducted within the business.

One of the main insights from the literature review was that stability is seen as a prevalent value in the industry, with the consequence of making organisations rather change resistant. The most all-pervasive value expressed by people working at Stadtwerke Bielefeld is stability, which is interpreted as both the business imperative to maintain stability and security of supply, as well as stability of the industry and the permanence of employment. It was suggested by some of the managers that people seeking stability consciously choose employment with Stadtwerke Bielefeld.

This value was confirmed as the most important issue seen by the interviewed managers, of whom eleven of thirteen respondents brought up the issue of “stability and inertia”. A key finding was that people working for Stadtwerke Bielefeld are generally seeking stability, which is connected by managers to a perceived organisational inertia of the company. This need for security was expressed by one manager who argued for giving employees an “anchor” of security, meaning something that can be secured as stable despite the changes. Security is not only of high value, but also implies in the opinion of the managers a risk-averse disposition and scepticism about trying new things.

Thus not only the industry-wide value of stability was validated for Stadtwerke Bielefeld, but it was also confirmed as an important issue in regard to the difficulties of implementing change. Acknowledging and overcoming this predominant desire for stability is therefore a key factor in enhancing change readiness as a predecessor for successful change implementation.

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An important consequence of the high level of stability of the industry over many years is that it has resulted in businesses that are relatively change-inexperienced. In respect of the change experience of the organisation, Stadtwerke Bielefeld has been in a stable industry and the company has also been internally stable for many years. There has been one major change 15 years ago and some of the people who experienced that are still there. Therefore the level of change experience is not uniform throughout the company, with some managers and employees having experience of this major change, albeit some time ago.

Another important factor that characterises Stadtwerke Bielefeld as an organisation is the increasing uncertainty of the strategic environment, with the transition of the energy market continuing and old market structures no longer working in the known ways. Surprisingly, however, these issues were mentioned by only a few respondents. Even more surprisingly, only one respondent mentioned urgency, but in that interview it was a dominating topic. This showed a tension between the desire for a well-planned top-down procedure and the increasing need to start action. With the forces calling for change increasing, one might have expected to hear more respondents talking about urgency. Instead, most of the managers saw Stadtwerke Bielefeld as an operator in a stable industry with predominant stability since the last major change 15 years ago. Therefore the company may be seen as having little experience of change, as only small organisational adjustments are implemented regularly.

From the literature review and key informant discussions, it was found that whereas municipal utility companies had been successful in establishing and embedding a market orientation, they still needed to establish more of a learning culture with a higher level of risk acceptance to reposition their business models. This was also found to be the case for Stadtwerke Bielefeld, as respondents highlighted these issues, so this may be an important aim in the future reorientation of the company. The one major change mentioned in this regard was the one implemented 15 years ago, with the aim of positioning the company as a serious player in the market with a customer and service orientation, mainly focusing on the local customers.

Somewhat surprisingly in regard to service orientation, thinking in silos was raised as an issue. Specifically, the company's problems were felt by some managers to be an issue of certain operational units, other than one's own. In the opinion of some managers, this way of thinking has to be overcome and replaced with an inclusive mind-set, in which everyone feels an inter-dependent part of the whole organisation.

Also felt to be important core values were a high degree of trust in top management, which was also revealed by former employee attitude surveys. However, the internal atmosphere was described by managers as being influenced by scepticism towards the internal communications within the annual statements of the company, when good results were communicated in combination with a warning that times will get harder in the next year. The annual warning about hard times but with profits developing well year on year was described as a kind of ritual.

Despite the fact that top management is seen as highly credible, trust was highlighted as an issue to be monitored in the near future, as the change process was implemented. Internal company communication has been characterised as being sceptical, not celebrating successes, and perhaps this is a reason why management credibility is believed to be an issue in the opinion of the managers interviewed. However, trust in top management has been high in the past and therefore credibility in a change programme is a tension to be taken care of. Furthermore, a crucial issue brought up by the literature review is that employees need to be involved in order for organisational change to be accepted and that the vision of the change outcomes needs to be clearly communicated. These are clearly important issues for Stadtwerke Bielefeld, as employee involvement in change and effective communication are also widely understood to be very important success factors in the academic literature with respect to the implementation of change (e. g. Beer, 2009; Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008; Kotter, 2007). Even though one might assume that managers see communication as crucial, because they may have read literature about change or learned about it in a seminar about managing change, this may not have been internalised and adopted effectively as a management style.

As managers intensively discussed that issue during the interviews, I see this as a confirmation that communication is a key factor.

Overall, key values of Stadtwerke Bielefeld were identified as stability, reliability and security of supply, a high degree of trust in top management and predominant stability of the company and the industry. While these may be seen at face level as positive values, the related characteristics of the organisation were perceived as problematic by many of the managers. In particular, internal stability and security were seen as having negative consequences with respect to change readiness and effective change, being associated with organisational inertia, risk-aversion and perhaps resistance to change. It was also clear that another side-effect of stability was a low level of change experience within the organisation, which was recognised by some managers as potential limitation to effective implementation of change. The internal culture and structure of the business were also seen as potentially problematic, with a rather weak pattern of, and respect for, internal communications and inter-departmental barriers that had resulted from restructuring.

5.2.2 Application of the concept of change readiness to SWB

The second research objective was to explore the application of the concept of change readiness to Stadtwerke Bielefeld, through investigating the issues considered important to successfully undertake a change process. This was addressed by means of internal primary research, during which a sample of key managers were interviewed.

The most important requirement for a change process according to the respondents is a comprehension of the situation by all employees. Employees need to understand the forces and the need for change as well as the benefits expected and the appropriateness of undertaking the proposed change. To achieve this, in the opinion of the interviewed managers, employees should be involved in designing and making decisions about the change process in a top-down approach, encompassing an increasing number of people with each step. This somewhat

contradicts literature on change in public organisations that argues it is a leadership mistake trying to get everybody on board (Schäfer, 2010). Further the call for pressure and action in the process (see 4.4.1) shows the opinion of the managers that a certain amount of pressure is needed, which implies that not the very last person can or should be involved.

To communicate emotional appeals with the need for change is also seen as helpful to get people on board for change. However, the management focus is on the rational basis of the communication. This shows the discrepancy of the assigned importance of emotions during change by literature (e. g. Schäfer, 2010; Mossholder, 2010; Huy, 1999) and the ascribed importance of management of Stadtwerke Bielefeld. Furthermore, the vision of the change should be convincing and understandable, while the process should be undertaken with a certain amount of pressure and be started with a spirit of optimism. The perspective of the future strategy, however, concerned with the facts of the future business model, is not an issue considered key to the success of the change project. This might bring up tensions as change literature explicates to have a clear vision of the change and its goal as a factor for success. The issues of a new self-concept and mindset in the communication of the vision for change are not mentioned with a frequency that one might have expected. When looking further at the issues considered important to successfully undertake a change process, a key finding is the opinion that people need to know as precisely as possible where they should go and who is in charge, to be motivated to move on. Furthermore, employees want to be involved, they want to know what their position will be after the change and help in forming the process and thus become motivated by that involvement. It was also considered important to identify responsible persons to start implementation and to specifically plan resources for implementation, to devote necessary resources to the project (maybe by strictly prioritising workloads) and to openly communicate that to the employees. Regarding the concept of change readiness, about half of the respondents consider it necessary or realisable in terms of time pressure to build change readiness first.

A further objective of the research was to make a contribution to the understanding of readiness for change and its evaluation in the specific context. A rich picture of the specific context situation of Stadtwerke Bielefeld with increasing outside pressure for change was created. Various issues regarding the characteristics of the company, the unique situation as well as its change experience and the conception of the design of a change process were looked at. The specifics of the environmental context of Stadtwerke Bielefeld were discussed in the course of the introduction (Chapter 1), recognising that the need for change is coming from outside forces and the company is reacting, rather than actively embracing change.

5.2.3 Assessment of the change readiness of SWB

The third research question required an exploration of the perceptions of managers and non-managerial employees of Stadtwerke Bielefeld regarding the organisation's readiness for change. The model of Armenakis et al. (Armenakis & Harris, 2002; Armenakis et al., 1999), which was identified as the most comprehensive framework in the literature review, was used as a basis for the assessment methodology and further developed into the research instruments discussed in 3.5.1.

The findings of the readiness assessment are presented with reference to the research objective to elaborate how the level of change readiness of Stadtwerke Bielefeld is perceived. The most prominent finding is that the assessment showed that fairness was rated highest, leading to the conclusion that managers believe that a change process would be fair and employees be treated respectfully and responsibly. Discrepancy was assessed the lowest with an average of 2.9. Managers at Stadtwerke Bielefeld are broadly undecided – but with a positive tendency – that employees of Stadtwerke Bielefeld believe that change is needed. A mismatch was found between the high degree of importance assigned to the wish for comprehension of the situation of all employees and the actual assessment that change is considered needed. The overall assessment of change readiness with a 2.8 showed that managers are not completely convinced that Stadtwerke Bielefeld is

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ready for change. Looking at the assessments of single message components, starting points for action to increase change readiness might be identified, thus illustrating the implications of the perceptions of change readiness for the successful management of change at Stadtwerke Bielefeld.

Taking an overall view of the assessments made in the employee survey, employees believe that Stadtwerke is change ready and they are more convinced that the company is change ready than are the managers. Comparing the average assessment of managers and employees further, regarding principal commitment there is the highest accordance of employees (2.4) and managers (2.5). Both groups have nearly equal trust in the commitment of the top management. The aspect of fairness shows the highest difference between employees and managers: while managers strongly trust in fair treatment of employees (1.5), employees do not trust that so much (2.5). Overall, one might conclude that the assessment of change readiness is positive in both groups, with every item being assessed positively on average.

On the basis of the message components, the simple average of the assessment of managers was analysed. The most prominent finding is that the assessment showed that fairness was rated highest, leading to the conclusion that managers believe that a change process would be fair and employees treated respectfully and responsibly. Discrepancy was assessed the lowest with an average of 2.9. Managers at Stadtwerke Bielefeld are undecided –but with a positive tendency – that employees of Stadtwerke Bielefeld believe that change is needed. A mismatch was found between the high degree of perceived importance of understanding of the situation and the actual assessment that change is considered necessary. The overall assessment with a 2.8 showed that managers are not fully convinced that Stadtwerke Bielefeld is ready for change. Another important finding was that a closer look at assessment of the single components will help to find starting points for action to increase change readiness.

Looking at the assessment of the employees, the overall readiness assessment showed that employees believe that Stadtwerke is in broad terms change ready and

they are more convinced of that than managers are. Regarding the commitment of top management, the closest accordance between employees (2.4) and managers (2.5) was found. Both groups have nearly equal trust in the commitment of the top management. The highest difference in assessment was found in the aspect of fairness: while managers strongly trust in the fair treatment of employees (1.5), employees were less convinced of this (2.5). Overall, one might conclude that the assessment of change readiness is positive among both groups, with every item being assessed positively on average.

5.2.4 Differences in assessment of readiness

The differences in the perception of change readiness of non-managerial employees were analysed in comparison to the perception of managers. Therefore the evaluation of the assessment of change readiness by employees was analysed with regard to the specific elements that were assessed as well as the overall readiness assessment discussed above. The highest deviation in assessment was found for the aspects of fairness, which got a 39% higher assessment by managers, appropriateness with 28% and efficacy with a 21% higher assessment. Managers are more confident that employees will be treated in a fair, respectful and responsible way that the change programme will be appropriate and that management will successfully steer and implement an extensive change. This might be interpreted as the ones having influence on fairness, appropriateness and efficacy trusting more in the implementation of these aspects than the employees, who are rather waiting for what is there to come and to be implemented by them. The deviation in personal valence is less with 13%, but again managers are more positive about the change being beneficial. In regard to the discrepancy in the perceived necessity of change, employees are more convinced than managers (11%). Surprisingly, even though in most of the specific factors the average assessment by managers is more positive than that of employees (by an average of 15%), overall readiness was evaluated more positively by employees, with a margin of 24%. This shows a distinct discrepancy between the evaluation of specific aspects of readiness for

change and the overall evaluation. A possible explanation is that managers are overall less than totally convinced about capability of employees, while the employees share a basic “that can be done” attitude. This interpretation would fit with the impression of one management interviewee who said that employees need to be shown the way, then they will get that done (see 4.4.1). Whether this is true, however, cannot be judged on the basis of the data gathered.

To summarise, managers and non-managerial employees perceive the level of change readiness differently. Overall readiness is evaluated more positively by non-managerial employees, while the assessment based on the specific aspects of change readiness is on average evaluated more positively by the managers, which may be the case because managers in contrast to employees do have influence on these specific aspects (see 4.6.3).

5.2.5 Perceived importance of change readiness

To provide a degree of triangulation to the assessments of change readiness, a subsidiary research objective was to explore perceptions of its importance as a precondition for change and ideas about the process of building change readiness. The perceptions of the interviewed managers were then compared to the prevailing opinion by literature.

More than half of the interviewees saw it as important to build change readiness first, thereby investing time to prepare and build readiness, in order to limit resistance to change and to implement the changes more sustainably. Even though more than half of the interviewees argued for building change readiness first and then start implementing change, six did not see that kind of preparation as necessary or possible. While some argued it is not possible to build change readiness first due to time restrictions, others did not see the necessity to put so much focus on change readiness building by devoting separate phase of the implementation process to it. This view is perhaps reflective of the tendency of

some managers to play down both the urgency for change and the challenges in achieving it, as discussed above.

A contrasting alternative approach was also suggested, involving starting the change with a limited sample of projects accompanied by a communicational approach, focusing on the issues that had been identified as important to build change readiness. This suggested a more complex view of the challenges of achieving change on the part of the managers who suggested this approach.

Another important facet discussed was change readiness as an individual characteristic, together with another suggestions was that readiness for change might be learned. The few respondents, who mentioned change readiness in this context as a characteristic of the individual, believed that individual change readiness was not very high at that time, which is consistent with the picture of the company and its employees operating in a very stable business environment for many years. As individual characteristics might not be altered quickly it is recommended by some interviewees that people should be put in charge who are individually considered to be more favourably disposed to change.

To foster change experiences and confidence that change is manageable, some interviewees recommended to divide the overall change plan into smaller steps or sub-projects to help generate quick successes that could be communicated and celebrated. This procedure is also confirmed by literature, as the keyword of change experience and the confidence in the ability to implement changes can be found in change literature as well (for example see Jarrett (2009), Armenakis et al. (1993), Eby et al. (2000)).

However, the analysis showed that there is no clear picture from the interviewees' perspective as to whether it is advisable to try building change readiness first in a kind of separate pre-project. With the understanding of the model of Armenakis et al. (1993), principal support is an important aspect constituting change readiness. The disagreement between the interviewed managers regarding the process of building change readiness adds another layer of tension to the situation of Stadtwerke Bielefeld.

5.2.6 Design of a change process at SWB

The fourth research objective was to explore perceptions of key issues and success factors in implementing effective change at Stadtwerke Bielefeld. To get an encompassing picture of the understanding of change at Stadtwerke Bielefeld and the aspects that are considered important to successfully design a change process, respondents were asked how they would design a change process as the manager responsible.

To implement a change successfully, all respondents considered understanding of the situation by all employees as important at the beginning of a change process. It was believed that employees need to understand the forces and the need for change as well as the benefits expected and the appropriateness of undertaking the proposed change. Further, respondents regarded involving employees in designing and deciding about the change process within a top-down approach as a useful means to achieve this understanding, as well to get the best ideas and support from a broad constituency of the company. Other important aspects regarding involvement of employees are to accomplish the change under the company's own steam and in own style, to get into a critical discourse with the employees, to get the workers council involved and finally also to involve the shareholder, the city administration of Stadt Bielefeld. As suggested by a majority of the respondents, the vision of the change should not only be elaborated, but also must be convincing and understandable. Almost as many of the management sample argued that the process should be undertaken with a certain amount of pressure and activity, insofar that planning should end at a certain point and things have to get started, even if it means to take some risks. Moreover it was seen as necessary to start the change with a spirit of optimism, promoting change as an opportunity, and to make people look ahead instead of looking back at the good old times. In contrast to a focus within the literature, change of mind-set was mentioned by only one respondent. Also surprising was that only two interviewees talked about resistance to change. That might be due to a positive trust of the interviewed managers in their ability to implement change, but that could not be proved by the data gathered. Concluding about the aspects considered important, the perception of

important issues for successful change implementation was much focused on the human factor, meaning that management has done a lot in the past to get everybody confident. This discussion revealed a degree of tension, insofar that some managers wish for a more goal-driven procedure, without not trying to make every single employee confident in the process and outcomes. (This aspect is subsumed under the issue of “pressure and action”).

To get a rounded picture of the understanding of change at Stadtwerke Bielefeld, respondents were asked to rank possible change success factors that were derived from the literature review, on the basis of their importance. Eight aspects for successful change implementation were listed and respondents were asked to name the most important ones in their opinion, complemented by the option of an “other” category to allow them to add their own factors. While respondents were allowed to assign an equal rank to more than one factor, a simple scoring model was used to get a clear ranking of the factors.

Of the pre-determined factors, “definition and clarification of objectives” was ranked the highest and it was concluded that in the opinion of the responsible managers, people at Stadtwerke Bielefeld need defined objectives and they need to understand them. The perceived high importance of the success factor “definition and clarification of objectives” was in line with the most important aspect of tailoring a change with “understanding of the situation of all employees”, as a clear understanding of the objectives was seen as a necessity to get understanding of the situation of all employees. The second highest ranked success factor was involvement of affected employees, meaning that to support the implementation of changes, employees at Stadtwerke Bielefeld need to be involved and they want to be asked about the changes. As one might expect, the factor ranked third was “effective communication”, which is seen as a necessity to accomplish the other two aims. Or put in other words, effective communication is needed to inform employees about the objectives of the change, to discuss them and to ensure that they are understood and possibly modified in the light of feedback. Regarding involvement, communication is also perceived as important, because employees want to contribute their share of ideas. Accordingly, the next important aspect

“thorough analysis and planning” is seen as a necessary precondition to formulating convincing objectives and change processes. A possible interpretation is that the ranking of “thorough analysis and planning” was not even higher because some managers might consider that as a self-evident, as one person explicitly stated. The next aspect “sustainable resources” is seen not only as an important condition to implement change, but also a critical issue for the organisation. As Stadtwerke Bielefeld is in a situation where profits are decreasing significantly, rather than the business growing, availability of financial and even more so human resources is regarded with some scepticism. As the existing workforce will not be able to perform their regular daily tasks and work for change implementation in parallel over the longer term, clear priorities have to be set. At the same rank was “speedy and courageous, authoritative implementation”, which was brought up under the “other” category by three interviewees. This is based on the belief, that too long a period of planning and discussion lets motivation abate and therefore a timely start of action is seen necessary. The next-ranked factor of “external consulting” is seen as necessary and useful only in some cases, when special knowledge is needed. Something that was explicitly not considered helpful is a management consultancy to organise the entire change programme. “Certainty of controllability” under the “other” category was only mentioned by one respondent but also considered the most important by this person. This aspect is about ensuring for every employee that he or she will be able to handle their job after change implementation, which is linked to the concept of self-efficacy (see e.g. Bandura (1977), Cunningham et al. (2002)). Finally, the next two ranked factors were “training” and “set an anchor” mentioned as “other”. “Training” insofar may be brought in line with “certainty of controllability”, as it is to ensure that employees confine in being able to handle the situation after change implementation and as well supports self-efficacy. To “set an anchor” was explained to give the employees something that is fixed as an anchor in times of change. Therefore people that get afraid by change have something to adhere to, something that is fixed and will not change.

A finding by its omission was that managers at Stadtwerke Bielefeld do not consider dealing with emotions during change as important, or even accept that emotions

might be a focus issue in regard to change. This is an important finding, as dealing with emotions during change is a focal aspect according to the change literature (e. g. Schäfer, 2010; Mossholder et al., 2000; Huy, 1999).

5.3 Contribution to knowledge

In the literature review, an overview was provided of the concept of organisational readiness for change and it was contextualised within the existing change literature. The review showed that there are several areas within which further research will add to existing knowledge. Starting with these gaps in the literature, the following contributions were identified. First a brief overview is given and in the following discussion each contribution is explained.

The discussion of contributions to knowledge is organised as follows:

1. Issues of change implementation in public sector companies.
2. A methodology for change readiness assessment and analysis.
3. Assessment of change readiness for a German public sector company.
4. Differences in the assessments of the level of change readiness.
5. General understanding of change readiness.

5.3.1 Issues of change implementation in public sector companies

A gap in the literature was identified surrounding specific issues for change implementation within public sector companies, a category that includes German municipal energy suppliers. A lot of important work can be found on change implementation, for example by Kotter (Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008; Kotter, 2007), or the basis of his work (e. g. Drerup & Wömpener, 2014; Jorgensen, 2009) or important contributions by other authors (Burke, 2011; Beer, 2009, 2008). Most of these works are non-specific for a certain kind of corporate structure or industry. Public sector companies have certain specific characteristics that tend to impede successful organisational change implementation. As is the case within Stadtwerke

Bielefeld, these include stability as a dominant value in combination with a long-established tradition, long periods of employment of staff and little change experience due to stability of the industry for many years (Kempf et al., 2014; Schäfer, 2010). These characteristics were explored in depth through a mix of methods, including literature review, primary research, creating a rich picture of the specific context of Stadtwerke Bielefeld with its municipal structures with exposure to the dynamics of the energy industry. This exploration revealed an environment with increasing dynamics driving forces for change, surrounding a public sector company with change impeding characteristics, thus building an area of conflict for change implementation.

Even though the primary research was based on a single case study of a company operating in a municipal structure within the energy industry, the review of literature dealing with the industry (in general terms, rather than concerning organisational change) suggested that other public sector companies shared similar attributes, such as stability-seeking and limited change experience. It is reasonable to suggest that the findings might be generalised to other public sector organisations with similar characteristics to Stadtwerke Bielefeld or other change-inexperienced companies. At the micro-level, the research identified factors considered to be important for successful change implementation from the perspective of both managers and employees, contributing to a more detailed understanding of organisational change in public sector organisations. Therewith it was depicted, how change implementation might be successfully structured. The important aspects for change implementation for a “typical” public sector company added to the existing non-corporate structure specific body of knowledge about change implementation. With the importance of the central points of an understanding of the situation of all employees and effective communication, the specific requirement of change implementation in public sector companies is that it is more focused on the human factor, meaning sustained investment in building confidence in change. The research revealed a limitation insofar as the Stadtwerke Bielefeld managers wanted a more goal-driven procedure, rather than the need to build confidence among the employees.

Another important contribution to understanding issues of change in public sector organisations is the complexity of dealing with emotions. In the study, a discrepancy was found between the consensual importance assigned by the literature to dealing with emotions and the findings concerning the attitudes of managers to this issue (Schäfer, 2010; Mossholder et al., 2000). Although these managers were generally aware that emotion is important to change in a general sense, they did not assign it any importance by mentioning that aspect in the context of Stadtwerke Bielefeld. A reasonable explanation for this is the predominantly rationalist management culture within the organisation. Given the strong consensus within the literature that successful change requires careful attention to emotions, this is a risk for successful change implementation in stability-orientated public sector organisations. Therefore this specific contribution enriches the understanding of change implementation by the importance of devoting a focus to dealing with emotions.

5.3.2 A methodology for readiness assessment and analysis

Another weakness in the literature was that there is no comprehensive methodology for the assessment and analysis of readiness for change. In particular, there was no framework found that fitted with the concept of change readiness of Armenakis et al. (1993), which I found to offer the best basis for this assessment.

For the purpose of the research, a specific research instrument was developed in order to assess and analyse organisational readiness for change. From the analysis of the readiness assessment, management priorities can be identified to increase change readiness. The combination of the research instruments, its implementation, the analysis and its interpretation were invaluable to the research and, as an integrated methodology, would be applicable and of value to many other organisations. The methodology developed here is therefore a further contribution to knowledge, building on other works that developed the concept of readiness for change.

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In more detail, the methodology for readiness assessment was based on the definition of organisational readiness for change by Weiner: “organisational readiness refers to organisational members’ change commitment and change efficacy to implement organisational change” (Weiner, 2009 p.2). With that definition as a basis, the model of Armenakis et al. (Armenakis & Harris, 2002; Armenakis et al., 1993) was developed into a research instrument to evaluate change readiness. The single elements of the model – originally as ‘message components’ for readiness creation (discrepancy, appropriateness, valence, efficacy and principal support) – were transformed into statements for change readiness assessment. By this means a research instrument was designed to evaluate the level of change readiness. The assessment of change readiness on the basis of the individual readiness components also lays the foundations for a further analysis of weak points, revealed by the comparative ratings awarded to each component. A follow-up analysis of the lower rated components will provide guidance for the development of interventions to increase change readiness. Using this method, a research instrument for readiness assessment and analysis was developed, taking issues of practical application into account.

An important aspect of the proposed methodology was the combination of a series of in-depth interviews (i.e. those with the managers) with a survey conducted with non-managerial employees. This depicted the advantages and disadvantages for practical application of both methods of gathering data for assessment. Hence the concept of organisational readiness for change was applied, aiming at evaluating the level of change readiness and identifying key issues which could inform starting points for the increase of change readiness as a means to facilitate change implementation.

This integrated methodology could be valuable for the use by other organisations for analysing change readiness. By revealing weaknesses in regard to change readiness with its inherent structure, the methodology is not only useful for analysis, but also for the practical aspect of developing starting points to increase the level of change readiness. For further development of the methodology, I propose to add one or more open questions regarding the most critical aspects or

the evaluation. The enriching findings from the interviews enabled a deeper understanding of the situation and the characteristics of the company. This supplementary knowledge might help to reveal the specific needs of other organisations or industries. Further research on the importance of emotions (see 5.5.6), especially in regard to change readiness, might expand the understanding of change readiness by an additional factor. More frequent application of the methodology, in a broader variety of contexts, might aid its further development through increasing experience of use and insights gained from analysis.

5.3.3 Assessment of change readiness for a public sector company

It was found in the literature review that there is little research on the assessment of change readiness, but none was found in change literature specific to a German public sector company with its dominating value of stability and little change experience, or of those in a German context. Therefore a methodology was proposed and applied for change readiness assessment within the unique context of a municipal company. The uniqueness of the context is characterised by the conflicting situational factors of an increasing need for organisational change due to growing external pressures and the organisational characteristics typical for public sector companies such as stability-seeking and little change experience. It is proposed that this situation requires a very well planned and specifically tailored organisational change process. The applied readiness assessment delivers starting points for such an approach and also offers guidelines for practical use. However, the contribution to theoretical knowledge is the combination of change readiness assessment within a specific and – from a change agent’s perspective – challenging setting of a change-inexperienced German public sector company. Regarding the importance and prevalence of the public sector in Germany and the continuing pressure on it for cost savings, this is a very important issue. More broadly, given the importance of the public sector in other developed countries, the field of application is vast and therefore research in this area is extremely important and highly applicable. With respect to the attribute of being change-inexperienced, the

possible field of application may be extended to private sector organisations that have experienced long periods of stability and therefore little need for change, so have accumulated little experience of change.

5.3.4 Differences in the assessments of the level of change readiness

An additional gap in knowledge identified from the literature review was that there is no comparative research on assessments of change readiness of different groups of employees within a single organisation. The analysis of the differences in perceptions of change readiness of different groups of employees within one organisation enriches the understanding of the subjective character of change readiness. Therefore a further contribution to knowledge is the analysis of deviating assessments of the degree of change readiness of within Stadtwerke Bielefeld. In this research, the comparison of the assessment of organisational readiness is between samples of managers and non-managerial employees and the assessments showed some striking differences. Interestingly it was found that managers have more trust in those factors they have influence on than do the employees. The differences were most significant with respect to beliefs that the change process will be fair and employees will be treated in a respectful way, that the outcomes of the change programme will be appropriate for the organisation and that management has the ability to successfully steer and implement an extensive change process. A particularly interesting finding was that there was a noteworthy difference within each sample between the average assessments made using single readiness components and those made by means of an overall change readiness assessment. Even more worthy of note is that this deviation was found for both groups, but for managers it was converse to the employees. When asked to make an overall assessment, employees were more confident that change could be accomplished than were the managers, while their evaluations at a component level were significantly more negative than those made by the managers. These differences within each sample of employees indicate as well that the perceptions of single readiness factors do not show a linear correlation to the perception of the

overall readiness for change. This does add to the understanding of readiness for change but as well calls for further exploration, as managers might include other aspects into their judgment or are just cautious in their answers.

In conclusion these particularly interesting differences in perception make a contribution to the theoretical understanding of the concept of change readiness, as well as offering valuable insights for the management of change. They also suggest a need for further research, in order to explore the reasons for the differences that were revealed.

5.3.5 General understanding of change readiness

Overall, the findings of the research made a contribution to a deeper understanding of the specific context of a change-inexperienced company in a previously stable environment facing an increasing need for change. Stadtwerke Bielefeld is moving between the conflicting priorities of the growing urgency of change and an organisational culture with a predominant value of stability. In developing a rich picture of Stadtwerke Bielefeld as an organisation, a number of different dimensions of the characteristics of the company relevant to change were explored.

On the basis of the methodology developed by me to evaluate the state of readiness, a better understanding of change readiness evaluation and analysis was gained. In order to refine and to build upon the contributions to knowledge made with this research, possible directions for further research are discussed in the following sections, as are implications for practice that arose from the research.

5.4 Limitations of the research

The research undertaken features some limitations, which are discussed in the following section, followed by proposals for further research:

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- Due to the nature of case study research, data gathered from a single case has very limited generalisability. Case studies are designed to “investigate(s) a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (Yin, 2003 p. 13) and offer therewith an understanding of the “how” and “why” of social phenomena. This research within a municipal energy supplier in a situation in which forces for change are increasing offers a rich picture of the company and the characteristics of people working within it. While the organisation has many characteristics that make it unique, others are certainly shared by other public sector organisations within Germany and perhaps beyond its borders. It is therefore reasonable to suggest that there is potential transferability of the findings to other organisational contexts, but that this should be treated with caution and supported by further research. However, the research instrument and associated methodology is more readily transferable to other contexts, although it is important that its implementation is informed by internal research.
- As I play an active role in the organisation that hosted the project, I was not independent of the research context or the findings. This applies even more specifically, as Stadtwerke Bielefeld was chosen as a local knowledge case (Thomas, 2011), as I have special access to the richness and depth of the case, which would otherwise be unavailable. The high participation rate of 100% for the interviews and of 93% for the employee survey supports the advantages of the access to the company, but is perhaps also evidence of my engagement with the organisation.
- The issues of non-transferability and the personal engagement of me also raise issues at the micro-level concerning the research process. One of these is that of the use of language and the mutual understanding of certain terms. There are some terms or words used in the research that have meaning within the organisation beyond that of the pure word, which is influenced by socialisation within the company and its external social setting. I, as a member of the same corporate culture, probably has an understanding of meaning that is very close to that of the interviewees,

which was an advantage in this case. As a further issue, the interviews were conducted in German, which is the official and only company language, and the analysis was translated into English (see 3.7). Being part of the same corporate and regional culture was also an advantage in translation, helping me to find the English words that best expressed the meaning of the original words. However, as English is not my mother tongue, some aspects might have been lost, which could pose a degree of limitation to the research outcomes.

- While the data collection method of semi-structured interviews offers the advantage to have the chance to respond to interesting insights and to clarify certain aspects for the interviewee, data collection is not the same for every interview and the content of the interviews is not exactly comparable. To provide a degree of comparability between interviews, an interview guideline (see annex 1) was developed. However, every discussion follows its own path and develops differently. On the other hand, the employee survey was mailed out with only a short explanation, so the respondents did not have the chance to get some clarification of the meaning of the questions, but the data collection was not influenced by my intervention (see 3.5). Some comments sent back with the survey questionnaires showed that follow-up interviews with these employees would have been interesting, to understand their hesitation about answering some of the questions. A meeting with the employees answering the survey did offer the chance to hear the employees' voice their concerns. However, that meeting was undertaken by a project group at Stadtwerke Bielefeld, but was beyond the scope of the research and without my involvement.
- The fact that the organisation's future strategy was mentioned by only two respondents might lead to the conclusion that issues such as survival of the company, or a certain level of profitability, are connected inextricably to a vision for change. However, there is no proof in the data for that. Again, further research might show how interviewed managers connect the vision for change and perspective of future strategy, or whether an existing

perspective of the future strategy is so self-evident that they do not need to discuss it.

- Key contributions to knowledge are the issues of change implementation for German public sector companies and their specific characteristics, such as stability-seeking and relatively little experience of change. It is probable that the research findings and methodology are applicable to other public sector organisations with a similar set of characteristics but this cannot be substantiated without further research.

5.5 Proposals for further research

The discussion of the limitations of the research demonstrates that there are still many aspects of the case insufficiently understood, whereby further research could add to the understanding of organisational change and also contribute to practice.

5.5.1 Follow-up interviews

The research produced many interesting and valuable insights but also many that required further exploration. In the preceding discussion of limitations, it was acknowledged that what was not said by the respondents was perhaps in some cases as interesting as what they did say. This highlights the need for further, less structured interviews in which these underlying, unspoken issues might be explored. For example, it was noted that very few of the managers explicitly mentioned the organisation's strategy. It was hypothesised that this was because the strategy was very familiar to the managers, to the extent that it was assumed as what would give direction to the change programme, but this was far from clear and an interesting topic for further research.

5.5.3 In-depth interviews with non-management employees

Another potentially valuable extension of the research would be to conduct in-depth interviews with a selected group of employees, to get a richer and more comprehensive picture of their attitudes and values. Although I initially proposed in-depth interviews with both managers and employees, this was not at the time sanctioned by senior management. However, the climate has changed since the management interviews took place and this additional research is more likely to be seen as of value.

5.5.4 A longitudinal extension of the case study

A reassessment of the degree of organisational readiness after some time might show changes in the degree of organisational readiness at Stadtwerke Bielefeld and further enrich the understanding of the concept, as well as to provide valuable new insights for the successful implementation of change. Another suggestion for further research is to assess readiness before a change programme is launched and to use this as a basis for reflection on successful and less successful aspects of the programme and contribute to possible improvements in change. This research could add to the understanding of the connection between organisational readiness for change and successful change implementation. While these forms of reassessment would have exceeded the scope and timeframe of my research project, they could still offer significant value, both to the organisation and the development of knowledge.

5.5.5 Exploration of the differences between perceptions

The exploration of the differences in the perceptions of managers and non-management employees offered highly interesting insights. Perhaps the most interesting of the research findings was the striking difference between managers' and employees' evaluations of Stadtwerke Bielefeld's readiness for change. The

differences were so strong in some dimensions that further research is necessary to explain them. This is a further requirement for follow-up interviews that are less formally structured, in order to allow exploration of these issues.

5.5.6 Exploration of perceptions of the importance of emotions

Another important and unexpected finding of the research was the lack of acknowledgement by managers of the importance of emotions in the management of change. This contrasted strikingly with a consensus in the academic literature that the emotional impact of change must be understood and taken into account in designing and managing change initiatives. Some possible explanations for the reasons for this emerged through the research but, because of its importance to the successful implementation of change, these issues are worthy of future research.

5.5.7 Research within other public sector organisations

A final proposal for further research is to explore the issues of change readiness and implementation within other public sector organisations. Those most comparable with Stadtwerke Bielefeld are other municipal energy suppliers, so research based in one or more of these would be very valuable for triangulation purposes and might reveal further dimensions of variability and complexity. More broadly, research on other German public sector organisations would further test the applicability of the research instruments and the consistency of the findings. As a broader level still, because research evidence in this field within public sector organisations is so lacking, further research within other country contexts would be extremely valuable in exploring the many issues of context.

5.6 Implications and recommendations for practice

Based on the findings from the research, there are further recommendations for practice, as the case was researched in its real-life setting. The recommendations

represent the conclusions of the author, formed on the basis of the literature, the findings of the research and her specific knowledge of the company. It is clear, however, that these are not of general practical use, but rather for a comparable setting to the one of the case. The recommendations are the following:

- The aspect of stability in municipal companies was mentioned by interviewees as well as developed by Schäfer (2010). He suggested bringing in new ideas with new people, when the opportunity and need arises. This will be difficult to realise, as municipal companies, including Stadtwerke Bielefeld, as a matter of policy do not dismiss anybody due to changing operating conditions, labour turnover is low and there is also a pressure to reduce the cost of payroll and therefore to resist the replacement of leavers. However, it is strongly recommended as advisable to bring in external knowledge and behavioural patterns into the company, if and when possible. This could be facilitated by reducing the number of apprentice positions and getting vacancies filled by people with experience from outside the company. However, this must be done carefully and be communicated responsibly, since a public sector company is of public and political interest.
- In the course of the analysis it was concluded that the majority of the respondents perceive the company and the industry as stable and with a high degree of continuity, thus not having a lot of experience with change. However, a large proportion of managers at Stadtwerke Bielefeld do have some experience of managing change, which could be drawn upon in developing and implementing a change programme. The company should therefore maximise the use of the change knowledge of those who have supervised major changes and let them help elaborate the change design.
- From the substantial discussion of effective and open communication it was concluded that all of the respondents set a high priority on effective communication. This focus was also affirmed by the literature. Therefore it is recommended for Stadtwerke Bielefeld to proactively foster open

communication, which must involve an open dialogue and critical discourse with the employees, as well as a readily understandable vision of the desired end-state (as for example suggested by the respondent NJ). A further application of open communication would be to recognise explicitly that “the good old times” are over, but that the company will have a future, provided that change can be successfully implemented. It has to be made clear that the past is over. Therefore it is recommended to – maybe even in a form of ritual – let go of the past and the old identity, as suggested by Bridges (1986). Further, considering the somewhat ambiguous attitude toward external consulting, which has been shown in the interviews, it is recommended that if consultants are contracted for certain aspects of the change project, to first communicate openly the objectives for the consultation to the employees and second to not only receive advice, but also require the consultants to engage in implementation. The degree to which consultants will be utilised should therefore be part of the content of the communication concept and discussed openly.

- An aspect found in many articles about change implementation as well as in regard to the specifics of public administrations is that of dealing with emotion within an organisation. Even though it is represented as an important topic by notable authors of change literature, none of the interviewees mentioned emotion as an issue. This might be the case because managers tend to de-emotionalise business situations (Schäfer, 2010), as was confirmed by the research findings. It is strongly recommended that emotions be given in-depth consideration when planning and evaluating the change process. Furthermore, middle management should be prepared and informed about dealing with emotions when initiating a change process. As middle management is in a kind of sandwich position (e. g. Oshry, 2007) probably seeing themselves more as an employee than as a manager (Schäfer, 2010), they should be prepared to have to deal with fear, uncertainty or even anger of their work team. It is strongly recommended that middle managers are not only informed that

they will have to deal with such emotions, but also explicitly advising them to allow for these emotions and how to respond to them.

- An important finding is the high degree of trust in top management. However, this was a self-perception of management supported by the results of an employee survey from 2010. The results of the employee survey regarding change do not confirm this trust. The employees are not convinced about certain issues, for example that the change will be appropriate for the company, without knowing anything about it themselves. It might be concluded that they need to be informed and involved. This perspective should be used for communicating the change, building upon the trust employees have shown management in the past.
- Another finding was that employees want to know what is expected by them and they want to be sure that they are either able to fulfil the expectations or that they get appropriate support. A clear communication of the vision of the change and a clarification about what has to change and what will stay the same may also help to alleviate fears. The aspect of being capable of the change is related to the issue of efficacy as a change readiness component. Efficacy, the “sense of one’s ability to successfully accomplish change” (Cunningham et al., 2002 p. 377), is seen as a central aspect of change implementation according to the literature. Therefore it is recommended to nourish a perception that the specific tasks of change can be handled both at the individual level at the level of the company as a whole.

In conclusion, it is suggested that a communications programme might be tailored on the basis of the message components that functioned as a theoretical framework. The research highlighted issues on which management should focus on in order to develop a tailored procedure for building organisational readiness for change at Stadtwerke Bielefeld. Additionally, it might be helpful for the company to commission a structured and systematic analysis, based on comprehensively gathered data and to reflect on the company’s self-perception. In particular, the comparison of the assessment of change readiness of managers with those of employees sheds light on different perceptions within the company.

5.7 Personal reflection

Reflecting on the course of the research, there have been various stages in its development. In the beginning, when the topic evolved with the changes in the energy industry, the practical questions arising of how to plan change, the research scope and aim were rather cloudy. With increasing forces for change in the energy industry, I got more and more interested in how to prepare for change effectively. While working through the literature, the concept of organisational readiness for change emerged as an interesting model of preparation for change that included aspects that might be researched further. After a while the topic became clearer, not least with the help of my supervisors, helping to structure complex questions and many thoughts and ideas. Working through data collection and interviewing, not only was a lot of information gathered but also my communication and interviewing skills were reinforced. Researching a case study of my employing company does bring along many issues for consideration. For example, the willingness of managers at Stadtwerke Bielefeld to participate in interviews and later to facilitate the employee survey was extremely helpful. Not only were the respondents very friendly and welcoming, possibly on the basis of the good work relationships with me personally, but also the timing was fortuitous. At the same time that I started researching the topic at the end of 2011, the increasing pressure of environmental forces brought the need for change more and more into the minds of the top managers at Stadtwerke Bielefeld. When the interviews were conducted between late 2013 early 2014, many of the respondents regarded the issue as highly topical, this being mentioned frequently in feedback by them. This reinforced my belief that my research would deliver something of practical benefit to the company.

In 2014 the issue of change became more and more important at Stadtwerke Bielefeld. One consequence was that a project called “future workshop” was established, in which over a hundred employees worked part-time in a project on ideas about the future strategy of the company, which new products might be launched, what forms of co-operation might be useful and so on. Another permanent work group at Stadtwerke Bielefeld is called the leadership panel. It

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consists of various managers from the different companies and departments of the Stadtwerke group and works on current topics of leadership. Results of this group are spread to all managers from the Stadtwerke Bielefeld group of companies via yearly one-day long workshops.

I am a member of the leadership panel and in 2014 we started working on how to deal with change, especially as a middle manager, who has targets from the upper management level and has to communicate this to the employee base. In addition, the middle management has to take responsibility for implementing the changes at the operational level. One result of the work on that topic for the management workshop was to become sensitised to the role of emotions during change, as portrayed in a model called ‘the emotional rollercoaster’:

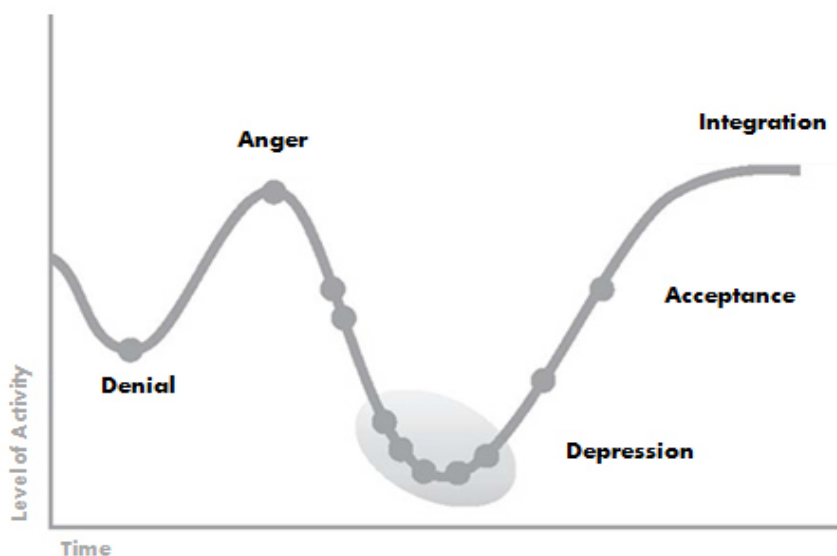


Figure 13: The emotional rollercoaster (Groth, 2011)

When the concept for the management workshop on the basis of this model of emotions during a change process was presented to top management, interestingly it was decided not to title the management workshop as “emotions during change” or “the emotional rollercoaster”, but rather as “the process curve of change”. It was possible that the senior management did not want to put emotions into focus by overemphasising them. While this was only a personal observation, it is extremely interesting given the findings of my research, since the management focus is so

much on rationality rather than on emotions, that even a widely accepted model is advertised internally by eliminating the word 'emotion' from the title.

Meanwhile the workshops were all held and the feedback from management participants was that it is good advice to think through the emotional aspects of the change in the different phases in advance of implementation and also that the workshops might help to treat employees individually in regard to where they might be on the curve. From that feedback given one might be tempted to conclude that middle management is more aware of emotional aspects of change than top management. This might be a helpful starting point to usefully bring what I have learned into the company, by trying to sensitise more managers to the emotional aspects of change. Finally I hope I can deliver some practical benefits with the understanding of change readiness to Stadtwerke Bielefeld and that management will start acting accordingly and on time.

Regarding my personal development, I have learned a great deal in the course of the research: most evidently about change management, change implementation and change readiness as well as about methods and methodological implications, and about the philosophical implications of my research topic, in particular ontological and epistemological perspectives. However, in addition to that I also learned a lot about the company, about its mind-set and also about myself. This learning is continuing, as I uncovered many more aspects of change, which will be interesting to explore in further research, in order to get a deeper understanding of the change readiness model and, more broadly, of the successful implementation of change. To summarise, I can conclude that the research was a holistically valuable experience, which I am confident will continue to repay the effort that I have invested in it.

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Annex 1) Introduction to the research and interview guideline

I. Topic of the research

Due to environmental issues, politics intervened in structures with regulation and subsidy, which resulted in previous market mechanisms not working any longer; wholesale prices are falling while end customer prices are rising. Companies that cannot operate their own power plants profitable anymore have to reinvent their business models and find new ways of adding value and operating profitably. Additionally, companies and their employees have to redefine their self-conception, having operated in a relatively stable industry with sufficient earnings for years.

Stadtwerke Bielefeld is a municipal energy supplier that has been operating for over 150 years now, being an important regional employer very much focused on the region, operating a traditional business model of producing electricity with own power plants and selling to mainly local customers. Recent years have been stable and profitable for the company. The business model of the company and its perception has to be repositioned, but also accompanying mindsets of management and employees

The research project deals with the aspect of organisational readiness for change. On the basis of available literature about this topic, the level of readiness for change of Stadtwerke Bielefeld should be assessed and on the basis of these recommendations for action should be developed.

II. The term organisational readiness

Organisational Readiness for change “refers to organisational members’ change commitment and change efficacy to implement organisational change” (Weiner, 2009).

III. Questions

General information

Sex

Age

Position at Stadtwerke Bielefeld

Professional education

Professional experience in years

Thereof with Stadtwerke Bielefeld

Have you got experience with an organisational change that directly affected you?

I. Questions about Stadtwerke Bielefeld

1. How would you describe SWB regarding its history, culture and / or mindset?
2. In your opinion, which are the most important values and beliefs for employees of SWB?
3. Do you feel a certain degree of inertness regarding organisational change at SWB? Why do you think so and what may be done to reduce that?

II. Questions about organisational change:

4. In your opinion, which are the most critical aspects for a successful change process:
 - (1) Effective communication
 - (2) Involvement of affected employees
 - (3) Definition and clarification of objectives
 - (4) Thorough analysis and planning of the change process
 - (5) External consultation
 - (6) Sufficient resources for the implementation of the change
 - (7) Incentive system for successful results of the change process
 - (8) Training
 - (9) Other (please specify)

Annex

5. Regarding an overall assessment of organisational readiness for change, please rate the following statements on the basis of a scale from one to five, with

- (1) I completely agree
- (2) I agree
- (3) Partly / undecided
- (4) I disagree
- (5) I completely disagree

“I believe that SWB overall is ready for change.”

6. Please explain your assessment
7. Do you believe in a relationship between organisational readiness for change and a successful implementation of organisational change?
8. What in your opinion characterizes organisational readiness for change?
9. According to literature, there are several factors regarding efficient communication for a change process, which are regarded to be key for organisational readiness for change. Please rate your agreement with the following statements on the former scale (see question 5) from one to five:
- a. (Discrepancy)
Employees of SWB are certain that a change is necessary.
 - b. (Efficacy)
Employees of SWB believe in the ability of management to successfully steer an extensive change process and to implement the changes.
 - c. (Appropriateness)
Employees of SWB are certain that the change programme launched will be appropriate for the company.
 - d. (Principal commitment)
Employees of SWB believe that management will allocate sustainable resources for the change process and show enough commitment to institutionalise change.
 - e. (Personal valence)
Employees of SWB are certain that the change programme will deliver positive results.

Annex

f. (Fairness)

Employees of SWB believe that the change process will be executed in a fair way and that the individual will be treated respectfully and responsibly.

2. How would you as manager in charge prepare the company for an extensive change process? (For Example regarding communication, structures, involvement of employees, definition of objectives, analysis and planning, external consultation, etc.). Please explain your answer.
3. When specifically looking at effective communication, how important do you feel is emotional communication?
4. Do you have any additions regarding that topic of organisational change?

Annex 2) Short questionnaire for employees to assess change readiness**Survey about Change Readiness at Stadtwerke Bielefeld**

Change Readiness refers to commitment of organisational members and the efficacy to implement changes.

There are various factors considered as key for change readiness. Please assess the following statements on a scale from one to five.

Thank you for your support.

Assessment	Complete ly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Partly (3)	Disagree (4)	Completely Disagree (5)
General					
I believe that SWB overall is ready for change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a.) Discrepancy					
Employees of SWB are certain that a change is necessary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b.) Efficacy					
Employees of SWB believe in the ability of management to successfully steer an extensive change process and to implement the changes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c.) Appropriateness					
Employees of SWB are certain that the change programme, which will be launched, will be appropriate for the company.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d.) Principal Commitment					
Employees of SWB believe that management will allocate sustainable resources for the change process and show enough commitment to institutionalise change.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Annex

e.) Personal Valence					
Employees of SWB are certain that the change programme will deliver positive results.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f.) Fairness					
Employees of SWB believe that the change process will be executed in a fair way and that the individual will be treated respectfully and responsibly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Additional Comments:					

Annex 3) Exemplary interview transcript of WV, 21st November 2013 (German)

I: Interviewerin

B: Befragter

I: Ich würde dann beginnen mit ein paar statistischen Fragen. Geschlecht, männlich ist ...

B: Ja, das kann ich bestätigen.

I: ... offensichtlich. Alter?

B: 52 Jahre.

I: Position in der Unternehmung?

B: Geschäftsbereichsleiter und Gesamtprokurist für – zuständig für Personal und Zentrale Dienste.

I: Ihre Ausbildung?

B: Ich bin einmal Elektriker. Also meine erste Ausbildung ist Elektriker. Dann habe ich eine Weiterbildung als – in Betriebswirtschaft und Organisation gemacht. Das ist allerdings noch nicht möglich gewesen, so was, wie ein Bachelor oder so abzulegen. Also ich bin Diplominhaber, nicht Diplom-Betriebswirt.

I: Ja. Also da geht es natürlich da auch bei der Frage darum, inwiefern Vorbildung da vielleicht auch reinspielt in Ihrer Einschätzung?

B: Fachlich eindeutig vorgebildet und bedingt, ja, also eigentlich schon wissenschaftliche Kenntnisse.

I: Wie viele Jahre Berufserfahrung haben Sie insgesamt?

B: 35.

I: Und wie viele sind Sie schon bei den Stadtwerken? Auch 35?

B: 35. Aber in der jetzigen Tätigkeit, was den Personalbereich betrifft, eher 18 Jahre.

I: Gut.

B: Also mit leichten Veränderungen, aber da gibt es eine große – über fast 20 Jahre eine Kontinuität im Personalbereich.

I: Damit ist die nächste Frage schon fast eine rhetorische. Haben Sie schon die Erfahrung mit einem organisationalen Wandlungsprozess gemacht ...

B: Ja.

I: ... der Sie auch direkt betroffen hat?

Annex

B: Ja. Ich habe selber welche durchgeführt, also im eigenen, unmittelbaren eigenen Bereich und habe einige, etliche begleitet.

I: Gut. Dann würde ich jetzt beginnen mit den Fragen zu den Stadtwerken Bielefeld. Wie würden Sie die Stadtwerke Bielefeld in Bezug auf Historie, Kultur und Mentalität charakterisieren? Was zeichnet uns aus?

B: Ich finde, dass unser Unternehmensleitbild da recht zutreffend ist. Wir sind kompetent und zuverlässig. Wir sind bedingt innovativ. Ich betone bedingt, also wir sind innovativ, aber das Ganze eben vor einem – also noch stärker ist der Begriff Zuverlässigkeit. Ich glaube, dass – ich weiß, dass wir sehr engagiert und sehr qualifizierte Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeiter haben, die einerseits mit ihrer Tätigkeit sehr zufrieden sind, andererseits aber auch ein sehr hohes Beharrungsvermögen in ihren Werten und in ihren Tätigkeiten haben. Das, was die Veränderungsfähigkeit betrifft, ist die deswegen eher unterentwickelt.

I: Gut. Da würde ich gleich gerne noch mal zu fragen. Ich habe jetzt hier die Systematik der Fragen etwas angepasst nach der ersten Revision. Die Struktur ein bisschen geändert. Sie hatten einen Aspekt gerade schon erwähnt, darauf zielt auch die nächste Frage ab, was sind Ihrer Meinung nach die wichtigsten Werte und Überzeugungen unserer Mitarbeiter? Sie hatten ja gerade Beständigkeit.

B: Kompetenz. Also Kompetenz spielt eine sehr hohe Rolle. Zuverlässigkeit spielt eine sehr hohe Rolle. Engagement spielt auch eine große Rolle. Ja, das wären mal so drei, die ich ganz stark im Vordergrund sehe.

I: Gut. Dann möchte ich jetzt Fragen zum organisationalen Wandel stellen. Zum einen, welches sind Ihrer Meinung nach die kritischen Aspekte für einen erfolgreichen Wandlungsprozess? Da habe ich exemplarisch jetzt hier einige aufgezählt. Ich würde die jetzt einmal erst vorlesen. Effektive Kommunikation, Einbeziehung der betroffenen Mitarbeiter, Definition und Klarstellung der Ziele, saubere Analyse und Planung des Wandlungsprozesses, externe Beratung, nachhaltige Ressourcen für die Implementierung der Änderungen, Anreizsysteme, Training oder Sonstiges. Wenn Sie jetzt bitte Ihrer Meinung nach die Kritischen einmal identifizieren würden.

B: Mit Kritischen im Sinne von positiv wirkend? Verstehen wir uns da richtig?

I: Ja, kritisch kann in beide Richtungen wirken, also die ich besonders beachten muss, damit ich einen erfolgreichen Wandel vollziehen kann bzw. wo ich aber auch viel falsch machen kann.

B: Ja. Also ich halte – also mein Eindruck ist, ein Schlüssel zu einem erfolgreichen Veränderungsprozess ist, dass ich Mitarbeitern die Gewissheit gebe, dass sie die Realität, die Arbeitsabläufe, nach der Veränderung beherrschen können. Die Gewissheit der Beherrschbarkeit eines solchen Prozesses. Um das zu erreichen, sind

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aus dieser Liste Dinge, wie einmal die Ressourcen, die nachhaltigen Ressourcen für die Implementierung der Änderung sehr wichtig. Das Training ist sehr wichtig. Die Definition und Klarstellung der Ziele, damit Mitarbeiter verstehen, was ich denn durch die Veränderung, was hinterher das Ergebnis sein soll. Und damit auch eine effektive Kommunikation. Das geht ja einher. Also ich muss das ja mitteilen. So. Weniger wichtig sind zum Beispiel externe Beratung. Das kann notwendig sein, muss aber nicht unbedingt. Wenn ich das Know-how habe, ist es sogar eher sinnvoller, es ohne externe Beratung zu machen, damit ich nicht noch ein Element der Verunsicherung mitbringe. Sondern, wenn ich mit vertrauten Personen arbeite, ist das unbedingt leichter. Ja. Das würde ich mal so da stehen lassen. Also mir ist wichtig, ganz – also bei anderen, nehmen wir es mal unter 9. Andere, halt die Möglichkeit, wirklich den Mitarbeitern eine Gewissheit zu vermitteln, dass sie die neue Realität beherrschen. Das ist ein ganz wichtiger Schlüssel.

I: Wenn Sie diese von Ihnen genannten Punkte jetzt noch priorisieren sollten, dann nehme ich, wäre jetzt der gerade genannte, Beherrschbarkeit der Änderungen oder Gewissheit über die Beherrschbarkeit, dann ist es der Wichtigste.

B: Ja. Ganz wichtig ist die Einbeziehung der betroffenen Mitarbeiter, weil sonst können die diese Gewissheit gar nicht erzielen, einbezogene, betroffene Mitarbeiter, die noch – Entschuldigung, noch wichtiger ist, dass – also an Punkt – an Stelle Zwei ist die Definition und Klarstellung der Ziele. Da muss man unbedingt Klarheit schaffen, was will ich damit erreichen, um umgekehrt auch alle Befürchtungen, die immer da sind, möglichst überzeugend aufheben zu können.

I: Gut. Also das reicht jetzt aus meiner Sicht, die Top-Punkte herauszustellen.

B: Ja, das sind die Top Drei.

I: Irgendwann wird es dann ja auch ein bisschen schwierig, das jetzt weiter zu priorisieren, es sei denn, Sie haben schon eine konkrete ...

B: Nein. Da steht nichts Falsches. Das hängt immer auch dann von der Komplexität ab, ob ich eine externe Beratung brauche. Die Top-Ziele sind diese Gewissheit. Ist die Definition und Klarstellung der Ziele, dazu kann es notwendig sein, eine saubere Analyse und Planung herzustellen, sonst habe ich ja keine klare Zielformulierung. Aber die Ziele sind wichtiger. Wie ich zu dem Ziel komme, sind verschiedene – das kommt auf die Komplexität an.

I: Ja. Gut. Dann würde ich jetzt gerne im Folgenden ein paar Aussagen vorlesen, die Sie bitte einschätzen sollen anhand einer Skala von 1 bis 5, wobei 1 die vollständige Zustimmung ist, 2 eine grundsätzliche Zustimmung, 3 ist unentschieden, 4 ist eine Ablehnung und 5 ist eine komplette Ablehnung. Die erste Aussage ist: Ich bin der Meinung, dass die Stadtwerke Bielefeld insgesamt änderungsbereit sind.

B: Stufe 4.

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I: Wie begründen Sie Ihre Einschätzung?

B: Weil eine Änderungsbereitschaft pauschal oder per sé nicht einfach gegeben ist oder nicht gegeben ist, sondern es kommt ja immer auf die konkreten Betroffenheiten und Ziele an. Also deswegen, ich erlebe das in unserer Unternehmenskultur eher skeptisch, dass man Veränderung gegenüber ist und deswegen würde ich das auf 4 stellen. Skeptisch, also nicht 5, dass es also strikt ablehnend wäre, aber es gibt erst mal immer eine ziemliche Skepsis.

I: Gut. Aus der Theorie zur organisationalen Änderung habe ich ein paar Faktoren, die als wichtig angesehen werden, hier einmal aufgelistet und würde Sie bitten, die entsprechenden Statements dazu einmal einzuschätzen anhand der gerade genannten Skala von 1 bis 5, ob Sie zustimmen oder die Aussage ablehnen. Die erste Aussage dazu ist, die Mitarbeiter der Stadtwerke Bielefeld sind davon überzeugt, dass eine Änderung notwendig ist.

B: Aktuell würde ich das auf 2 setzen. Also weitestgehend. Jetzt muss man natürlich noch mal sagen, also die Einschränkung oder – ich glaube, dass fast jeder sagt, Änderungen sind notwendig, weil wir wissen, dass der Energiemarkt sich verändert hat. Ob jetzt auf ihre eigene Tätigkeit beziehend oder sagen: „Aber damit habe ich eigentlich nichts zu tun“, das ist eine spannende Frage. Diese persönliche Betroffenheit, da wird noch mal jeweils ein großer Unterschied gemacht. So. Und da sind einige, da sind fast alle die sagen, eine Änderung ist pauschal notwendig. Ob das auch für sie selbst gesehen wird, das ist sehr – da gibt es eine deutlich kleinere Zustimmung.

I: Gut. Die nächste Aussage: Die Mitarbeiter der Stadtwerke Bielefeld vertrauen in die Fähigkeit der Geschäftsleitung, erfolgreich einen umfangreichen Änderungsprozess zu lenken und die Änderung umzusetzen.

B: Also aus den Mitarbeiterbefragungen würde ich behaupten, dass das auf Stufe 3 gestellt wird. Also wir haben dazu ja Befragungen im Rahmen der Mitarbeiterbefragungen gemacht. Da gab es aber sehr großes Vertrauen in die Geschäftsführung. Das ist sensationell hoch. Das ging aber eher in die Richtung, dass die uns vor Veränderung schützen. Und dass also die Notwendigkeit und so, das ist also, glaube ich, eher neutral. Also das wird – ja, neutral gesehen.

I: Gut. Also das ist jetzt Ihre persönliche Einschätzung in Kombination mit den Erkenntnissen aus der Mitarbeiterbefragung?

B: Ich würde sagen, das ist weitestgehend aus der Mitarbeiterbefragung abzuleiten.

I: Okay.

B: Also das sind ja diese 110 Antworten, die es da round about gibt, die kenne ich relativ gut und deswegen – die gibt es nicht 1:1 diese Frage, aber aus der

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Kombination von zwei, drei Antworten zur Veränderungsbereitschaft, Veränderungsnotwendigkeit kann man das so belegen.

I: Ja. Gut. Dann die nächste Aussage: Die Mitarbeiter der Stadtwerke Bielefeld sind überzeugt davon, dass das Änderungsprogramm, das ins Leben gerufen wird, für das Unternehmen angemessen ist. Ist natürlich noch fiktiv.

B: Ja. Also ich habe bei den drei Teilthemen, die wir gemacht haben, also Aufwandssenkung, Investitionskostenreduzierung, Personalkostenbearbeitung, habe ich insgesamt sehr große Zustimmung erlebt. Also da würde ich das auf 2 setzen.

I: Gut.

B: Also 2 nur deshalb, weil es gibt natürlich einzelne Kritiker. Also da hängt ja auch wieder davon eine persönliche Betroffenheit ab.

I: Ja. Gut. Dann die nächste Frage zielt auf die Unterstützung der obersten Führung des Unternehmens ab. Die Mitarbeiter der Stadtwerke Bielefeld vertrauen darauf, dass die Geschäftsführung hinreichende Ressourcen für den Wandlungsprozess zur Verfügung stellt und genug Engagement zeigt, um den Wandel durchzuführen.

B: Das wird auch, denke ich, auf 3 gesehen, also eher neutral. Ja. Aus ähnlich genannten Gründen. Es gibt für viele noch keine wirklichen Erfahrungen damit. Und es gab jetzt ein paar, ich will mal sagen, Einschränkungen, die Umorganisation bei der Mobil ist nicht von allen verstanden worden. Da sind auch teilweise gravierende Fehler gemacht worden, was die Kommunikation betraf und die Einbeziehung der Mitarbeiter, insbesondere die Klarheit der Ziele und die Begründetheit der Ziele ist von etlichen nicht verstanden worden. Deswegen höre ich aus dem Bereich sehr grundsätzliche Kritik daran. Am Vorgehen, nicht am Ergebnis.

I: Ja. Aber damit sind wir ja wieder bei den Aspekten, die das Ganze positiv unterstützen können, aber auch die kritisch sind, wenn man sie nicht hinreichend beachtet, oder wenn man es nicht hinreichend umgesetzt bekommt.

B: Wir leben in einer realen Welt. Das, was wir gerade diskutiert haben, ist nicht nur fiktiv. Wenn Sie Umorganisation machen, können Sie es alles erleben.

I: Ja. Das ist sicherlich so.

B: Und deswegen in der Realität alles beobachtbar. Wenn Sie keine klare und akzeptierte Zielformulierung haben, dann haben Sie die Reaktion, dass es Unverständnis gibt.

I: Ja. Die nächste Aussage: Die Mitarbeiter der Stadtwerke Bielefeld vertrauen auf positive Ergebnisse durch den Wandlungsprozess.

B: Ja. Das würde ich – also würde ich auf 2 setzen. Das ist sicherlich so. Auch nur eingeschränkt durch die – also ich würde 1 bis 2 setzen. Also wir haben einen großen Wandlungsprozess in den Jahren 97 bis 2000 durchgemacht, also wir das

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Unternehmen auf die Liberalisierung ausgerichtet haben und da hat eigentlich – sind auch noch ganz viele aktiv aus dieser Zeit, und die haben – würden heute bestätigen, dass es ein rundum positiver Wandlungsprozess war. Alles, was noch nicht bekannt ist, oder wo ich noch nicht das Ziel und das möglich vorhersehbare Ergebnis kenne, dem begegne ich mit Skepsis. Deswegen diese Einschränkung. Also es ist nicht eine positive Stimmung – auf jeden Fall eine Änderung, kann nur gut werden, sondern es ist so, die bekannten Änderungen waren nicht schlecht, schauen wir mal, was da kommt.

I: Gut. Dann die letzte Aussage in diesem Themenbereich: Die Mitarbeiter der Stadtwerke Bielefeld vertrauen darauf, dass der Änderungsprozess fair abläuft, und dass der Einzelne respektvoll und verantwortungsvoll behandelt wird.

B: 1 bis 2. Das ist ein Grundwert unseres Unternehmens, dass wir einen fairen, partnerschaftlichen Umgang miteinander pflegen, und dass es Wertschätzung gibt. Da ist man auch sehr sensibel. Also bei den Fehlern, die bei der Umorganisation der Mobil gemacht worden sind, war nämlich genau das das Problem. Also, dass der wertschätzende Umgang mit einzelnen Betroffenen nicht ausreichend stattgefunden hat.

I: Ja.

B: Das sind Einzelfälle. Ist ganz klar. Aber das wird sehr genau bemerkt.

I: Gut. Einzelfälle werden dann ja auch oftmals breit diskutiert.

B: Ja. Ganz eindeutig.

I: Ja. Und dann ja auch stärker bewertet, als der einzelne Fall es vielleicht auch hergeben würde.

B: Ist nur 1 zu 650, aber dennoch ist das ein sehr ...

I: Ja.

B: Das spielt in der Meinungsbildung eine große Rolle.

I: Gut.

B: Also bei denen, die eine Meinung dazu haben, sagen wir mal so.

I: Ja. Sie haben es ja gerade schon angesprochen, Sie haben viel Erfahrung schon mit Änderungsprozessen gemacht und auch gerade unlängst die Umorganisation der Mobil live miterlebt und ja auch verantwortlich mitgestaltet. Insofern schließt sich da sicherlich die nächste Frage ganz gut an. Wie würden Sie als verantwortlicher Manager das Unternehmen auf den Änderungsprozess vorbereiten?

B: Indem ich – also, indem ich eine Strategie entwickel, die plausibel und erläuterbar ist, damit Menschen eine, ja, ich sage mal, eine Vision davon kriegen, wie eine neue Realität aussieht. Und dann muss man das weiter runter brechen und

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klären, was heißt das für meine bisherige Tätigkeit. So. Das ist so der Vorgang. Also ich muss wirklich – idealerweise schaffe ich für viele eine positive Stimmung, eine Aufbruchstimmung. Das meine ich mit Vision, dass man also eine Aufbruchstimmung hat, dass man quasi Lust darauf hat, was zu verändern. Und deswegen auch bereit ist und in der Lage ist, persönliche Mühen da einzubringen. Beantwortet das die Frage?

I: Ja. Das heißt, diese Betroffenheit des Einzelnen, das hatten Sie vorhin auch schon mal erwähnt ...

B: Ja.

I: Das ist ein Aspekt, den Sie jetzt insbesondere auch aus den bisherigen Erfahrungen gewonnen haben?

B: Ja. Also Menschen engagieren sich in der Regel nicht pauschal oder abstrakt für irgendwelche allgemeinen Änderungen, sondern die wollen wissen, was heißt das für mich. Und da ist eben eine persönliche Betroffenheit da. Ändern sich bei mir persönlich Arbeitsabläufe, ändern sich Vorgesetzte, ändern sich organisatorische Einbindungen? So. Und dann kommt darüber hinaus die Frage, könnte ich betroffen sein von Entgeltverlusten, von Prestigeverlusten, von Bequemlichkeitsverlusten? Das sind so Verlustängste, die dann da stattfinden. Sie haben nicht mal gehört Arbeitsplatzverlust. Das schließt der gelernte Stadtwerker aus, weil da gibt es keine Erfahrung für. Aber es sind ja nicht die realen und – die realen Bedrohungen, sondern es sind ja Befürchtungen. Also wir hören das ja, also, wenn Opel in Bochum zur Disposition steht, gibt es Befürchtungen bei dem gewöhnlichen – in Führungszeichen – Stadtwerker, ob mir das auch passieren könnte. So reagieren Menschen. Und – so. Wenn ich von Betroffenheiten spreche, sage ich immer, ich muss das im Auge haben, was jemand eben an z. B. Verlustängsten haben könnte. Und da muss ich zumindest gegen – nicht nur argumentieren, ich muss davon möglichst überzeugen und genügend Gewissheit schaffen, was davon eintritt und was nicht eintritt.

I: Ja. Gut. Ja, ich glaube, das ...

B: Auch da erst mal, da bin ich sozusagen – es geht auch da erst mal um Gewissheit darüber, also als wir z. B. die Kohlekraftwerk beendet hatten, gab es natürlich eine große Verunsicherung bei den Mitarbeitern. Haben wir im ersten Schritt ganz klar gesagt, wer ist betroffen? Also wer ist verpflichtet oder wer ist gezwungen, einen Arbeitsplatzwechsel zu machen, weil seine Tätigkeit definitiv wegfällt? Das waren 2/3 der Beschäftigten im Kraft-, 1/3 der Beschäftigten. Also 2/3 konnten wir schon mal die Gewissheit geben, nein, Du wirst weiterhin für den Betrieb der Kohlekessel, der Turbinen, der Generatoren benötigt und Deine Zukunft ist auch weiterhin hier in der Stromerzeugung. 1/3 haben wir gesagt, für Dich müssen wir eine Alternative finden. Und haben das dann über einen langen Zeitraum vor dem Ereignis Schritt für

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Schritt gemacht, sodass immer – also wir haben erst die Zusage gemacht, jeder von Euch kriegt eine Perspektive, und dann haben die Menschen Schritt für Schritt erlebt, dass er selbst oder schon andere eine Perspektive definitiv bekommen haben. Also diese Gewissheit trat ein, ja, die tun das ja wirklich. So. Und damit konnten wir diesen Wandel relativ geräuschlos über die Bühne bringen. Das ist ein großer Anpassungsprozess gewesen, der kaum bis gar nicht negativ begleitet wurde.

I: Hatten Sie das Gefühl, ab dem Zeitpunkt, wo diese persönliche Betroffenheit identifiziert war, dass dann insgesamt die Ängste sich reduziert haben?

B: Ja, eindeutig.

I: Auch bei denen, die betroffen waren?

B: Ja, auch bei denen, die betroffen waren. Also auch denen, denen wir gesagt haben, Deine Tätigkeit fällt weg, da war die Standardreaktion: „Ja, das habe ich mir gedacht. Jetzt weiß ich Bescheid. Was ist meine Zukunft?“ Dann gab es einerseits die Gewissheit, ja, ich bin betroffen und dann die Neugierde und die Erwartung, was kommt jetzt?

I: Also auch da konnte man das dann an der Stelle ins Positive letztendlich herumdrehen?

B: Ja.

I: Ja, das ist doch eine sehr schöne Erfahrung.

B: Und das erleben Sie bei allem verhältnismäßig in diesem Maßstab bei allen Umorganisationen. Und dann kommt noch ein menschlicher Faktor dazu, dann gibt es Menschen, die sind insights discovery. Denken Sie an das Rad. Da gibt es Menschen, die sind Veränderungsprozessen aufgeschlossener gegenüber und manche sind ängstlicher demgegenüber. Das kommt noch erschwerend hinzu. Und dann ist es wichtig, dass die Akteure – dass den Akteuren bewusst ist, dass diese unterschiedliche Mentalität da ist. Und die entsprechend angesprochen werden. Das ist dann noch sozusagen die Königsklasse bei Umorganisationsprozessen. Ändert aber nichts daran, dass Sie erst mal – ich wiederhole mich – diese Gewissheit schaffen müssen, ja, Du bist betroffen. Ja, wir werden eine Alternative für Dich finden. Wir klären jetzt, was Du kannst, und dann klären wir, was wir für Vakanzen zum Beispiel haben. Und dann sehe ich – und dann gibt es einen, der sagt, oh, wie schön, das ist ja interessant. Ich wollte sowieso nicht immer Kohle schippen. Und es gibt welche, die sagen, oh, wie schrecklich. Jede Art von Veränderung macht mir physisch Angst. Und dann muss ich sagen, okay, dann müssen wir damit umgehen.

I: Ja. Das heißt, Ihr Ansatz ist dann an der Stelle, wenn man eine Vision hat und das soweit ausgearbeitet hat, ist Ihr Ansatz sehr individuell. Sie gehen auf den einzelnen

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Mitarbeiter zu, klären Betroffenheiten und erarbeiten dann individuelle Perspektiven, um dann die Neugierde zu wecken?

B: Das wäre ideal. Ja. Das ist ideal.

I: Ja. Gut. Aber wichtig ist ja auch, dass man eine Vorstellung davon hat, was eigentlich ideal ist.

B: Ja klar. Bei organisationellen Veränderungen ist das das sinnvollste Vorgehen, dass ich möglichst schnell Klarheit darüber schaffe, dass ich etwas verändere, inklusive der Erläuterung, die aber dann wirklich nur zweitrangig ist, warum ich das mache. Entscheidend ist erst mal zu wissen, was wollen die überhaupt, wie weit bin ich persönlich davon betroffen? Und zwar mit meinen Hoffnungen, aber auch in meinen Ängsten. Also welche Verlustängste könnten da angesprochen werden? So. Und dann bricht man das runter. Natürlich ist eine Erstinformation, ich sage mal, bei großen Umorganisationen, dann geht das, wie immer, vom Abstrakten ins Konkrete runter. Dass ich das nacharbeite. Übrigens erleben Sie dabei ja auch immer, dass die Leute ganz schnell wissen wollen, ja, was – also wo geht die Reise hin? Das ist ja eine ganz häufige Frage. Wenn Sie dann antworten müssen, das weiß ich noch nicht, weil wir haben diesen Prozess ja noch nicht und das ist alles ergebnisoffen, dann machen Sie die Leute nur verrückt mit. Es gibt kaum jemanden, der sagt, oh, wie schön. Ein ergebnisoffener Prozess, wie spannend. Da würde ich ja gerne mitwirken. Das ist nur für die Externen spannend.

I: Ja.

B: Auch dieses Thema – also dieses Schlagwort Betroffene zu Beteiligten machen, sehe ich vor dem Hintergrund relativ skeptisch. Das macht Sinn, weil ich deren Expertise brauche, aber es hilft dem Menschen überhaupt nicht weiter in ihrer Betroffenheit, welche – was passiert denn – was ist am Ende des Prozesses. Und deswegen hat das – also ist die Einbeziehung von Betroffenen hilfreich und sinnvoll, weil ich deren Wissen und deren Kenntnisse der Abläufe durchaus schätze und häufig brauche. Aber bei manchen Dingen ist das eher hinderlich.

I: Ja. Also verstehe ich Sie da richtig, dass dieses Schlagwort „Betroffene zu Beteiligten machen“ für die breite Masse nicht unbedingt geeignet ist?

B: Ja, das ist nicht unbedingt geeignet.

I: Ja. Gut. Ja, ist ja ganz interessant, weil ja viele gängige Konzepte, die man über Jahre hinweg so auch in der Literatur verfolgt hat, dass sie sich dann vielleicht doch noch mal als nicht das Allheilmittel herausstellen.

B: Wäre ja schade, wenn die Wissenschaft nicht auch mal was Neues rausfinden würde.

I: Genau.

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B: Also – ja. Weil – darf ich auch noch mal sagen – es gibt natürlich sehr gute Konzepte und es gibt sehr hilfreiche Hinweise, was bei Change-Management auch erprobt ist. Es gibt nicht den Mitarbeiter. Es gibt nicht den Stadtwerker. Es gibt nicht – genauso wenig, wie den Deutschen, den Russen, den Japaner, den Amerikaner gibt. Es sind jeweils Menschen, die einer Kultur entstammen. Da gibt es grob sicherlich Unterschiede zwischen Japaner und Deutschen oder zwischen Amerikanern und Russen, weil andere kulturelle Entwicklungen da sind, und dennoch sind Menschen immer individuell. Das Einzige, was ich bei vielen Umorganisationen immer wieder erlebt habe, dass dieser Wunsch nach Gewissheit da ist.

I: Gut. Das ist eine ganz gute Überleitung zu meiner nächsten Frage. Es gibt ja viele verschiedene Vorgehensweise, wenn ich einen Änderungsprozess plane. Und wenn ich das etwas vereinfacht darstelle, gibt es einmal die Möglichkeit, einen Wandlungsprozess direkt umzusetzen und mit der Umsetzung auch in die Breite der Unternehmung hineinzugeben, oder ich versuche zunächst, das Unternehmen darauf vorzubereiten, das Unternehmen mit ins Boot zu nehmen, um es jetzt mal etwas vereinfacht auf zwei Vorgehensweisen zu reduzieren. Glauben Sie an einen Zusammenhang zwischen erfolgreicher Umsetzung eines Wandlungsprozesses und der Vorbereitung des Unternehmens darauf?

B: Eindeutig. Ich tendiere ausdrücklich zu dem zweiten Modell, also ich muss – ich habe es ja eben – ich habe eben von der Verbreitung oder von der Vertretung einer Vision gesprochen – also ich muss einen – bei kleinen Umorganisationen ist das immer ein bisschen ein großes Wort, aber ich muss Menschen schon einen Eindruck davon geben, dass die neue Realität, die ich erreichen will, nach der Veränderung, dass die Vorteile hat. Dass die, aus welchen Gründen auch immer, besser ist. Und diese Gründe, warum ich davon überzeugt bin, dass es besser sein wird, die muss ich erst mal verdeutlichen. Das ist uns zum Beispiel bei dem Umorganisationsprozess bei der Mobil so nicht gelungen. Ganz viele haben gesagt, was soll das? Ich verstehe es einfach nicht. Ich sehe – ich habe keine Kritik daran, wie das jetzt auf mich selber, dass ich in die und die Schachtel, also in den und den Ablauf reinkomme, das ist gar nicht mein Problem, warum der Quatsch überhaupt? Das ist eine häufig gestellte Frage gewesen. So. Und da gibt es schon, sagen wir mal jetzt für Stadtwerke gesamt, es gibt jetzt eine große Verunsicherung, weil der Energiemarkt sich ändert, mehr noch – also jeder, der es halbwegs wissen will, weiß, dass er – dass also beispielsweise das Ende der Stärke der Eigenerzeugung eingeläutet ist und da gibt es natürlich schon deutliche Fragen nach einer Strategie, wie sollen wir uns zukünftig aufstellen, wenn wir nicht mehr die großen Mengen Strom verkaufen können in der externen Verteilung? Davon ist vielleicht der Mitarbeiter bei mir in den elektrotechnischen Diensten überhaupt nicht betroffen, weil der macht nicht Vertrieb, sondern der kümmert sich um die

Notstromversorgung auf dem Betriebsgelände. Dennoch hat er diese Frage als jemand, der sich ein bisschen interessiert. So. Da sind wir jetzt dabei, also die Menschen mit ins Boot kriegen. Ich glaube, dass wir da für jetzt unsere anstehenden Umorganisationen in dem Sinne gute Voraussetzungen haben, weil vielen klar ist, dass sich die Welt verändert hat, und dass deswegen erwartet wird, wie wollen wir darauf reagieren und wie weit bin ich von diesen Veränderungen betroffen? Und dann kommt die Frage, sind wir wieder bei dem Punkt, wenn ich davon betroffen bin, wie wirkt sich das konkret aus und was erwartet man eigentlich hinterher von mir?

I: Ja.

B: Und das spüren Sie in Gesprächen, wenn Sie - jetzt aktuell sind ja eindeutig betroffen die Vertriebsmitarbeiter, also die erleben das schon hautnah und das geht ja so auch ein Stück weit durchs Unternehmen dann weiter.

I: Sie haben es eben am Beispiel der Kohleerzeugung hier im Heizkraftwerk genannt, da war eine gewisse zeitliche Komponente ja auch da. Man hat mit den Mitarbeitern gesprochen, hat ihnen gesagt, Ihr seid betroffen, das ist Deine Perspektive oder wir erarbeiten noch eine Perspektive und dann – Sie sagten eben, das war lange, bevor die Umsetzung erfolgt ist.

B: Wir haben die Chance in diesem Idealfall gehabt, dass wir das ungefähr in drei Jahren vorbereitet haben. Also von der abschließenden Entscheidung Stilllegung der Bekohlung bis zum 31.12.2012, wo dann wirklich die – oder das war dann tatsächlich irgendwie der zweite Weihnachtsfeiertag, wo die letzte Kohle über den Wanderrost gegangen ist, das war ein definierter Zeitraum. Der war relativ lang. Das war labormäßig, das war – da hätten Sie eine Doktorarbeit drüber schreiben können, darüber promovieren können. Ja. Das ist bei anderen Umorganisationen nicht immer so. Nicht immer so.

I: Das heißt, dieser zeitliche Vorlauf, wo man mit dem Mitarbeiter sprechen kann, und dann auch noch mal Ängste individuell besprechen kann oder auch Bedenken ausräumen kann, das ist schon etwas, was Sie lehrbuchmäßig auch als gutes Vorgehen ansehen.

B: Hängt immer von der Größenordnung ab, wie weit ich das machen muss. Es gibt nicht eine immer gültige Zeitskala. Quick and dirty kann auch sehr erfolgreich sein im Sinne von – also, wenn ich im Kern diese Frage, wie schaffe ich die neue Realität, also wenn ich das – wenn ich ausreichend Zeit habe, das noch umzusetzen, kann das auch sehr schnell gehen. Ich brauche nicht immer jahrelang also Stillstand oder Gewissheit, wo eigentlich noch nichts passiert. Also Mitarbeiter wollen dann auch erleben, dass was passiert. Also eine Ankündigung, zwei Jahre warten, ein Jahr Umsetzung, das ist eher schädlich sogar, weil das führt zu Unruhe und das führt – Unruhe ist ja nichts Schlechtes, sondern, wenn ich Unsicherheit habe, Unklarheit

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darüber habe, was denn dann nun wirklich passiert, dann füllt sich häufig ein Vakuum durch Gerüchte, durch Verbreitung von Falschinformationen und so was. Das ist dann sogar schädlich. Also schnell und konzentriert kann sehr gut funktionieren oder – also, wenn ich etwas längerfristig vorbereiten kann, ist das wegen der Erstellung einer wirklich durchdachten Konzeption und einem dann auch zügigem Ausrollen hilfreich. Also ich mach vielleicht keine Flüchtigkeitsfehler.

I: Ja. Gut, die längerfristige Vorbereitung kann ja auch sein, dass es zunächst in irgendwelchen Köpfen entwickelt wird, das Konzept, und dann zu einem bestimmten Zeitpunkt, zwei Monate vor dem Ausrollen, dann gezielt kommuniziert wird.

B: Genau. Wenn das dann – genau, gezielt kommuniziert und dann eben das anspricht, was ich eben auch gelobt habe, dass man sagt, die haben – also die da oben haben ein klares Konzept, das ist sogar überzeugend. Man kann mir sehr deutlich sehr sagen, was hinterher dabei rauskommt. Und der erste Schritt ist, die wissen sogar, warum sie das tun. Also die füllen damit eine Lücke, die auch ich nicht leugnen kann. Also der Mitarbeiter in der Bekohlung konnte nicht leugnen für sich, das war ja eine Realität, dass die Verbrennung von Kohle zur Stromerzeugung nicht mehr geht. Das konnte er bedauern und für falsch halten, aber er hat erkannt, dass es auf jeden Fall nicht willkürlich ist oder so was, sondern das ist eine Rahmenbedingung, die so ist, wie sie ist. So. Und dann hat er natürlich sehr interessiert geguckt, was machen die jetzt mit mir? Der wusste dann, ich bin betroffen. Und dann, was machen die mit mir und was passiert mit mir? Und das war – und das haben Sie bei anderen Prozessen auch, dass diese Glaubwürdigkeit im gesamten Prozess einfach dann da ist.

I: Gut.

B: Und das ist auch bei Umorganisationen im kleinen Bereich, dass ein Vorgesetzter ausscheidet und das Unternehmen verkündet, super, dann kann ich eine Stelle streichen, ich lege Bereiche zusammen, weil das passt sowieso ganz gut, das ist dem letzten Mitarbeiter klar, dem letzten Mitarbeiter klar. Und dann kommt ja nun die Frage zu Ihrer Betroffenheit, dann kommt die Frage, ja, und wie machen Sie es jetzt? Was heißt das für mich? Welchen Arbeitsabschnitt habe ich? Habe ich dieselben – wie ist der/die neue Vorgesetzte?

I: Wo sitze ich zukünftig?

B: Wo sitze ich zukünftig?

I: Auch immer ganz wichtig.

B: Ja, wobei das hat ja auch – ja, ein schönes Beispiel, es ist sehr pragmatisch, Gewissheit zu bekommen. Nordseite, Südseite. Und – ja, da sind wir wieder dann ein bisschen bei inside discovery, also kein Mensch hat wirklich Probleme mit

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Umzügen, außer die Tatsache, dass sich überhaupt was verändert. Und wie läuft ein Umzug ab? Habe ich den hier schon mal erlebt? Das sind manchmal ganz banale praktische Dinge. Muss ich die Kisten selber schleppen oder nicht?

I: Es sind aber auch genau die banalen praktischen Dinge, an denen sich manchmal die Geister dann entzünden.

B: Ja, klar. Ja, weil das ist – es gibt einen Teil von Menschen, siehe (unklar 0:35:27.6), die haben wirklich bis hin zu physischen Schmerzen und unglaubliche Ängste vor Veränderung. Weil sie ein sehr geringes Selbstwertgefühl haben wahrscheinlich, weil sie ein sehr geringes Selbstvertrauen haben, weil sie einfach nicht glauben, dass sie das hinkriegen, einen Umzug zu bewältigen. So. Und wir kennen das. Also ich habe ja nun reichlich Erfahrung auch bei räumlichen Änderungen. Also wir haben jetzt zum Beispiel ein genial tolles neues Gebäude bezogen, nämlich den Netzbetrieb. Dennoch erleben wir beim Einzug Reaktionen bis hin zum Vandalismus, weil Menschen einfach mit dieser Veränderung ein Problem haben. Und das können Sie auch bei Wohnungsbauunternehmen kennenlernen. Also die Menschen können – also nach objektiver externe Beurteilung können aus den letzten Löchern kommen, also aus Wohnungen – also ich beziehe mich auf ein Gespräch mit unserem Kollegen von der BGW, die haben ähnliche Erlebnisse. Die lösen teilweise Unterkünfte auf, machen Großsanierungen, gehen auf Mieter zu und sagen, Mensch, also Du musst aus Deiner 1949 gebauten Wohnung raus, das ist alles Mist hier und jeder sagt auch, das ist ja wirklich Schimmel an den Wänden, haste nicht gesehen. Dann wird ein ganzer Block versetzt in einen schicken Neubau. Sie haben einen kleinen Teil von Menschen, die mit dieser Änderung überhaupt nicht klarkommen, die das ganz schrecklich finden. Die lieber in ihrem letzten Loch hausen unter eigentlich so fast – ich übertreibe jetzt nicht – menschenunwürdigen Bedingungen, als in einen schicken Neubau einzuziehen. So. Und das ist – weil sie einfach nicht wissen, ob sie mit dieser neuen Realität klarkommen. Die leiben keinen Schimmel an den Wänden, aber die sind so gefangen in ihrer alles bekannten Umgebung, dass sie das nicht bewältigen wollen. So eine scheinbar – wo jeder andere sagt, das sind nur gute Veränderungen.

I: Sie haben im Gespräch jetzt schon einige Punkte genannt, die so die Erfolgsfaktoren sozusagen eines Wandlungsprozesses sind. Wenn ich mir jetzt die Frage stelle, wie ich ein Unternehmen oder wie ich die Änderungsbereitschaft eines Unternehmens charakterisieren kann, was ist da aus Ihrer Meinung wichtig? Sie hatten eben zum Beispiel genannt das Thema Selbstvertrauen darein, dass ich diese Änderung auch wirklich bewältigen kann. Können Sie das so bestätigen oder ergänzen?

B: Ja, Selbstvertrauen, gut, das haben Menschen oder sie haben es nicht. Das kann man auch als Personalentwicklung kaum beeinflussen. Das ist – nein, Sie müssen – also ein wichtiger Erfolgsfaktor ist, Sie müssen ein glaubwürdiges Konzept haben,

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mit einer Vision beginnend, wo Menschen sagen, ja, das ist – es ist zumindest nachvollziehbar erst mal als Gesamtziel. Da ist ein wichtiger Punkt, ich will Arbeitsplätze erhalten, ich will weiterhin Wohlstand schaffen für Beschäftigte. Ich will und so weiter. Und dann muss man wirklich sagen, häufig kommunizieren wir ja Ziele als – sowohl für Externe als Interne – gut, also Umweltschutz, CO2-Minimierung. Den meisten Beschäftigten geht das vollkommen am – das ist also – das ist nicht ihre Realität, sondern es ist viel wichtiger die Frage, habe ich danach noch genauso gute Berufsaussichten wie vorher? Dann ist es mir relativ egal, ob ich mit Schweinehälften handel oder mit CO2-Zertifikaten. So. Das ist – also da muss man immer auch sehen, dass Menschen da aus guten Gründen in der Regel eben eher egoistisch als altruistisch sind.

I: Ja. Das hieße ja ...

B: Zumindest in ihrer persönlichen Betroffenheit. Man kann ja beides sein. Also ich kann ja mich ehrenamtlich ganz toll engagieren, aber erst mal möchte ich einen funktionierenden Arbeitsplatz haben, wo ich von leben kann, gut leben kann.

I: Ja. Also, wenn ich Ihre Aussagen jetzt einmal versuche zurück zu beziehen auf die Änderungsbereitschaft des Unternehmens, hätte ich das jetzt so verstanden, dass sich die Änderungsbereitschaft dadurch auszeichnet, dass das Unternehmen als solches ein klares Ziel vor Augen hat und für dieses Ziel dann auch gewinnt und gewinnen kann?

B: Ja. Ein klares Ziel vor Augen hat, dass ich dafür die Menschen erst mal gewinnen kann, dass sie diesem Aufbruch folgen wollen, das ist, sie ins Boot nehmen. Für eine Veränderungsbereitschaft insgesamt spielt natürlich auch ein Erfahrungshintergrund eine Rolle. Wir haben ja Mitarbeiter, die langjährig beschäftigt sind. Also es gibt ja auch ein unglaubliches Gedächtnis an tatsächlich erlebten Veränderungen und da werden die meisten sagen, bestätigen können, ja, das ist in Ordnung gewesen, das ist gut gewesen, weil eigentlich ging es hinterher keinem schlechter als vorher.

I: Positive Erfahrungen.

B: Positive Erfahrung. Das ist für eine – wenn wir jetzt abstrahiert sagen – Veränderungsbereitschaft in einem Unternehmen wichtig. Man kann da ganz viel Vertrauen verspielen. Also, wenn die Erfahrung ist, das hat gar nicht funktioniert und das war hinterher alles schlechter als vorher, dann werden Sie mit dem nächsten Veränderungsprozess ganz große Schwierigkeiten haben, weil dieses Vertrauen verloren gegangen ist. Also eine große Stärke unserer Unternehmenskultur ist beispielsweise die Glaubwürdigkeit unserer Geschäftsführung. Das muss man eindeutig so sagen. Deswegen werden auch sehr, sehr hohe Erwartungen daran gestellt, dass Sie eine Zukunft vorhersagen können,

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dass also eine Montagsrunde – ich erweitere das jetzt mal – dieses Vertrauen muss immer wieder bestätigt werden.

I: Auf der anderen Seite sind natürlich das dann auch die Stärken, auf genau die man setzen kann. Gezielt.

B: Eindeutig. Daraus wird ja auch Veränderungsbereitschaft. Also, wenn man – weil, wenn die Erinnerung, die Erfahrung, das Erlebnis der Beschäftigten ist, die da oben lügen nicht. Die da oben haben gute Gründe, wenn sie das sagen. Ich muss diese Gründe zwar nicht verstehen, aber sie sind glaubwürdig, weil das mit meinen früheren Erfahrungen übereinstimmt. Dann haben sie schon gewonnen. 50 %. Wenn Sie in einer Unternehmenskultur sind, wo Sie sagen, na ja, wir hauen ja auch jeden Kunden übers Ohr, dann hauen wir auch jeden Mitarbeiter übers Ohr, dann sind Sie extrem skeptisch und machen alles nur mit doppelt und dreifacher Absicherung.

I: Ja.

B: Und das ist eine große Stärke, die wir haben. Deswegen bin ich da völlig gelassen. Also wir haben bisher jeden Veränderungsprozess ganz gut hingekriegt und manchmal – also, wie immer, zu langsam, wie immer, zu mühselig, und wie immer, mit zu vielen Schleifen und zu vielen Kompromissen. Aber da bin ich völlig gelassen. Das ist bei unserer geschätzten Konkurrenz noch schlechter.

I: Also auch die Tatsache, dass man, wenn man so die Presse liest, das Gefühl hat, die ganze Energiewelt bricht zusammen, auch das beängstigt Sie nicht, sondern ich nehme da eine sehr positive Einstellung wahr, wir werden eine Lösung finden mit Knatschen und Holpern.

B: Genau. Also wir haben – also ich bin geprägt, persönlich, und ich glaube auch, das können auch viele bestätigen, von den positiven Erlebnissen der Umorganisation oder der Anpassungsprozesse an den liberalisierten Markt, ich sage mal, 95 bis 2000/2002 oder 97 bis 2000, je nachdem. Also, wo wir das Unternehmen so aufgestellt haben, wir haben damals keinen Stein auf dem anderen gelassen. Wir sind von der Spartenorientierung auf die Prozessorientierung umgeschwenkt und vieles andere mehr. Wir haben Riesenschritte gemacht da. Also es war nach meiner Erinnerung eher eine Aufbruchstimmung, weil einfach klar war, wir packen das an und wir werden den Tiger reiten. So. Und das ist nun Ausgangsvoraussetzung. So. Damals hatten wir ein relativ klares Bild, das konnte man kommunizieren. Jetzt ist das Management aufgefordert, eine Strategie vorzulegen, wie wir in einen veränderten Markt mit einem Energiemarktdesign umgehen wollen. Die Verunsicherungen, die sind mindestens genauso, wie sie – oder sind ungefähr genauso, wie sie 95 waren.

I: Das ist ein interessanter Aspekt, auf den wollte ich gerade auch gerne noch mal zurückkommen. Die Einschätzung damals und heute, und wie ist die Stimmung, wie

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ist die Verängstigung oder wie positiv werden die Chancen gesehen? Die würden Sie als etwa gleich positiv oder negativ beurteilen?

B: Ja. Also wir sind jetzt in der Phase, bevor es losging. Also wir sind jetzt in der Phase, wo, sagen wir mal, vor 95, vor dem Energiewirtschaftsgesetz, wo auch unsere Verbände eher noch dagegen gewettert haben und gesagt haben, das funktioniert alles nicht und wo die wirklichen Bewahrer, also auch sich hauptsächlich Mühe gegeben haben, zu erklären, warum das eigentlich gar nicht geht mit Durchleitung und keiner wusste, wie es funktionieren würde. Es gab keine greifbaren Modelle. Typisches Beispiel, niemand hatte die Gewissheit, wie funktioniert eine Durchleitung, wie wird die abgerechnet. Also physikalisch konnte ich Ihnen damals schon die Kirchhoff'sche Knotenpunktregel erklären. Also Summe der Ströme und so. So funktioniert es ja auch letztendlich. Aber wie ich das denn abrechne, wenn ich in München Vertrieb mache und in Hamburg liefere. Das war noch ziemlich unklar. Genau genommen, es war völlig unklar. Und in einer ähnlichen Situation sind wir heute. Wir stellen jetzt fest, dass das, was zwischenzeitlich war, aus verschiedenen Gründen so nicht mehr funktioniert, weil nämlich Vorrang erneuerbarer Energien und vieles andere, den Energiemarkt ziemlich stark verändert. Und kein Mensch kann uns heute sagen – also im Moment wissen wir alle nicht so richtig, wie sieht es eigentlich in fünf Jahren aus.

I: Ja.

B: So. Aber ich kann Ihnen eins sagen. In fünf Jahren wird es Strom geben und Gas und Wasser. Da bin ich – das ist unser Riesenvorteil in unserer Branche. Also, wenn Sie in anderen Branchen gucken, da müssen Sie sich ab und zu wirklich Gedanken machen, gibt es unser Produkt eigentlich noch in fünf Jahren? Braucht der Mensch noch dieses oder jenes? Und, wenn, dann von uns. Also in welcher Form? So. Und da sind ja ganze Industrien gewachsen, wieder auf null geschrumpft. Ich sage mal, die Bielefelder Textilindustrie. Sie und ich sind vollständig bekleidet. Aber unsere Kleidung wird nicht mehr in Bielefeld genäht, sondern sie wird hier nur noch designt. Also Seitensticker designt Blusen und Hemden, die aber alle nicht mehr in Bielefeld produziert werden. Das ist also, was ich weiß, ist, dass wir in Bielefeld auch 2025 Strom verbrauchen werden. Ich glaube, dass sogar mehr noch hier produziert wird, weil dieses ganze Thema der Eigenstromerzeugung und der Steuerung, und so weiter und so weiter, eine Rolle spielen wird. Also wir werden wegkommen von den Großkraftwerken auf der grünen Wiese a lá Veltheim. Unsere Vorväter haben da irgendwann 1956 angefangen, ein Riesenkraftwerk zu bauen, das bauen wir jetzt ab. Das ist normal. Das ist normaler Zyklus. Wir sind ja am Philosophieren. Also ich bin deswegen so optimistisch, weil ich sage, wir haben ein Produkte, das unglaublich wertvoll ist und das immer gebraucht wird. Wir müssen gucken und da haben wir gute Chancen, dass wir in der Wertschöpfungskette dieses Produktes an möglichst vielen Stellen vertreten sind.

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I: Und damit auch noch Geld verdienen.

B: Ja, selbstverständlich. Sonst wäre es ja keine Wertschöpfung.

I: Ja, ja.

B: Muss ich Ihnen das erklären? Klar. Genau. Es ist so. Der Sinn der Sache ist Geld verdienen.

I: Ja. Nein, da haben Sie auf jeden Fall einige interessante Aspekte jetzt auch schon genannt. Ich würde ganz gerne, auch, wenn es jetzt nicht mehr hier zu den eigentlichen Fragen gehört, noch mal auf einen Punkt zurückkommen, den Sie relativ am Anfang des Gespräches erwähnt haben, und zwar in verschiedenen Aspekten. Zum einen hatten Sie es als Wert aufgeführt, nämlich Beständigkeit. Und zum anderen aber auch den vielleicht eher etwas negativen Aspekt, da weiß ich jetzt gerade leider nicht mehr ganz genau, welches Ihr Wort war, etwas, wie eine Trägheit des Mitarbeiters gegenüber Wandlungsprozessen.

B: Beharrlichkeit.

I: Beharrlichkeit, gut.

B: Oder Beharrungsvermögen. Ja, das ist das – also wir haben ja im Unternehmensleitbild das Thema Zuverlässigkeit. Da steckt natürlich auch ein Stück weit drin Beharrungsvermögen. So. Und das sind jetzt meine Erfahrungen in konkreten Veränderungsprozessen, dass ich – ich sagte es ja eben schon mal, dass es mir manchmal zu langsam geht, dass wir zu viele Schleifen fliegen, dass ich mir manchmal mehr Aufbruch wünschen würde, mehr Neugierde. In unserer Industrie oder in unserer Unternehmenskultur – ich sage auch in unserer Branche – sind überwiegend, sind Menschen, die weniger neugierig sind, sondern die mehr beharrlich sind, vertreten. Das hat was mit dem Arbeitsfeld zu tun, mit dem Geschäftsfeld. Wir sind nicht Marketing, wir sind nicht Werbeindustrie, wir sind nicht Fashion oder so was. Das hat was mit ganz frühen Lebensentscheidungen zu tun. Jemand, der Rechnungswesen oder der Elektrotechnik oder Maschinenbau studiert und dann in der Planung arbeiten möchte, der ist nicht zwingend hochinnovativ.

I: Wie könnte aus Ihrer Sicht denn etwas mehr Innovationsbereitschaft darein gebracht werden?

B: Indem ich das Interesse und auch da wieder die Neugier der Menschen anspreche. Dass ich sage – also, dass ich einmal bestätige, wir brauchen Veränderungen, weil sich unser Markt völlig verändert. Da tut sich was, was uns massiv betroffen macht. Wir müssen – wir werden uns im Grunde aus der Erzeugung verabschieden, in Veltheim aus der Eigenerzeugung verabschieden. Wer da nicht versteht, dass das eine Veränderung ist, der ist wirklich intellektuell ein bisschen – haben wir auch. Also jetzt Menschen, die das überhaupt nicht erfassen

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können. Aber das ist die absolute Minderheit. So. Also ich halte diese – ich habe das – das ist ein bisschen ambivalent, diese Begrifflichkeit Beharrlichkeit. Die ist auch eine große Stärke, weil bei unseren Kunden ist eben Zuverlässigkeit auch ein wichtiges Element, weil die Versorgung mit Grundnahrungsmitteln, wie Trinkwasser, die Versorgung mit Grundbedürfnissen, wie Strom und wie Wärme und Stromenergie ist nichts, was ich – die meisten Menschen möchten das nicht dem Zufall und irgendwelchen unseriösen Typen überlassen. Das sind die meisten – es gibt nur ein paar extrem Preissensible, denen ist alles scheißegal. Also die machen sich nur über den Preis Gedanken. Also das ist auch eine Stärke, die wir haben, und deswegen – gut, muss ich mich als Management in diesem Unternehmen damit rumschlagen, das müssen aber auch die Menschen bei der Deutschen Post, das müssen auch die Menschen bei – auch bei VW. Weil da ist auch – also das Image Zuverlässigkeit, das Auto soll funktionieren. Ich kaufe – wenn ich – brauche ich jetzt nicht die Werbe-, oder die Eigenschaften von VW – wenn die damit werben, das Auto, dann ist das ja ein Anspruch, der ist schon ziemlich global. Und ich weiß aus den internen Abläufen von VW, die diskutieren dieselben Sachen, wie wir.

I: Ja. Das heißt, diese Beharrlichkeit wird ein Stück weit aufgelockert über das Rationale, über das Verstehen und Akzeptieren?

B: Ja. Eindeutig. Genau. Weil diese Beharrlichkeit – das sind ja Menschen, die rational arbeiten, denken und handeln, und deswegen kann ich sie über die Rationalität ansprechen. Und nicht nur oder nicht überwiegend über die Emotionalität. Also wenn der Riecke in der Betriebsversammlung zukünftig irgendeinen Tanz aufführt, weil er motivieren will, das würde Entsetzen mit sich bringen.

I: Ja.

B: Steve Ballmer macht das oder hat das gemacht.

I: Wobei, wo Sie gerade die Betriebsversammlung ansprechen, da empfinde ich das mindestens so, dass eine gewisse emotionale Betroffenheit der Redner in diesem Fall, ich verallgemeinere das mal, auf jeden Fall die Person auch eher mitnimmt. Also, wenn da zum Beispiel ein Herr Riecke da eine sehr emotionsgeladene Rede hält, das bewegt die Menschen auch mehr, als wenn es nur rein Sachargumente sind. Ist zumindest mein Empfinden.

B: Eindeutig. Also auch in unserer Unternehmenskultur sind ja keine – jeder hier reagiert auch auf Emotionen, fast jeder, also so ziemlich jeder reagiert auf Emotionen auch. Und das ist – ich habe Herrn Riecke da absolut zu geraten, das auch an verschiedenen Stellen ähnlich zu machen, wie auch in der Führungskräftekonferenz, wo ja noch mal sehr deutlich rübergekommen ist, unser Markt verändert sich. Wir haben zur Kenntnis zu nehmen, dass also – eine ganz

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klare Gewissheit ist, es wird nicht mehr so weitergehen, wie es 19-, sagen wir, 2003 war. Vor zehn Jahren.

I: Ja. Ja, gut, daraus schließe ich jetzt, ich stelle zwar die rationale Argumentation in den Vordergrund, aber ich unterfüttere das Ganze mit einer entsprechenden Emotionalität.

B: Wenn ich eben von Vision gesprochen habe, dann habe ich damit auch Emotionalität gemeint, weil eine Vision ist etwas erstmal, was nicht greifbar ist. Wenn ich sage, ich träume davon, dass das und das und das passiert und ich dabei bin, ich möchte gerne – das ist so. Wenn ich eine Mannschaft – es gibt diesen schönen Satz, ich glaube, ich bin nicht sicher, von Richard von Weizsäcker, wenn ich jemanden dazu motivieren will, ein Schiff zu bauen, dann muss ich mit ihm nicht über Pläne philosophieren, ich muss ihm von der Schönheit des Meeres Begeisterung vermitteln. Das ist hier auch so. Ein dezentraler Erzeugungsmarkt mit vielfältigen, unterschiedlichen und Betriebs- und Erzeugungseinheitsgrößen und so weiter und so weiter, das ist total spannend. Das ist sogar aus technischer Sicht viel spannender. Es ist viel spannender, 500 Mikro-BHKWs zu steuern und instand zu halten, als ein Großkraftwerk. Technisch gesehen habe ich da unheimlich viele Chancen drin.

I: Die Begeisterung gilt es jetzt nur noch, ins Unternehmen zu bringen.

B: Ja. Begeistern. Ich muss Begeisterung erzeugen. Menschen in unserem Unternehmen haben viel Leidenschaft. Da gucken wir auch nach. Weil das ist ein Auswahlkriterium, dass man einfach auch Leidenschaft für das hat, was man tut.

[Unterbrechung durch Klopfen an der Tür]

B: Also. Selbstverständlich haben Menschen in unserer Unternehmenskultur Leidenschaft und deswegen kann ich sie auch begeistern für etwas. Nur, dass sie das dann durchaus rational umsetzen und nicht ganz so hipp sind, wie, ich sage mal, in der Werbeagentur.

I: Gut. Ich bin jetzt so weit mit meinem Leitfaden am Ende angekommen.

B: Endlich.

I: Haben Sie noch irgendwelche Ergänzungen?

B: Nein. Mal so – ich glaube, wir haben alles, was mir wichtig war, angesprochen. Und – ja, ich freue mich, wenn ich dazu ein bisschen beigetragen haben. Bin mal sehr gespannt, wie meine Sichtweisen in dem Kanon Ihrer sonstigen Interviews und Erkenntnisse, welche Rolle die spielt hinterher.

I: Gut. Dann bedanke ich mich ganz herzlich. Und mache das Gerät aus.

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Annex 4) Coding frame (German)

Name	Sources	References
1.1_Beschreibung SWB	0	0
1.1_Mentalität, Verhaltensweisen	0	0
1_Beständigkeit, Beharrungsvermögen	11	26
2_Glaubwürdigkeit	6	8
2_Zurückhaltende, skeptische interne Kommunikation	6	8
3_Marktorientierung	5	6
4_Bereichsdenken_Betroffenheit_Verantwortungsübernahme	3	5
4_Selbstbewusstsein	3	4
5_Begeisterung für neue Aufgaben	2	5
1.2_Werte, Kultur	0	0
1_Versorgungssicherheit Verlässlichkeit	10	18
2_Vertrauen in GF	9	13
3_Sicherheit	8	11
Risikobereitschaft, Neues probieren	3	6
Skepsis ggü. Neuem	2	3
3_Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl Identifikation	8	14
4_Tradition	6	8
Betriebszugehörigkeit	2	2
5_gute Arbeitssituation	5	13
5_Lokale Verankerung	5	8
6_Qualifiziertes Personal	3	6
7_wenig emotional geprägt	1	1
1.3_Beschreibung Situation	0	0
2.1_Verunsicherung	3	4
2.2_Dringlichkeit	1	10
1.4_Erfahrungen mit Änderungen	10	17
1_Stabilität Unternehmen, Branche	11	23
2_umfangreicher Änderungsprozess	8	13
3_Kontinuität mit leichten Veränderungen	5	5
1.2_Veränderungsbereitschaft	0	0
1_zunächst Veränderungsbereitschaft herstellen	7	9
2_Veränderungsbereitschaft individuell	4	8
3_organisatorische Veränderungsbereitschaft	5	8
1.3_Wandlungsprozesse	0	0
1_Einflussfaktoren Wandel	0	0
1_Verständnis für die Situation bei allen MA	13	49
Emotionale Kommunikation	11	30
2_Beteiligung	3	4
1_top-down-Erarbeitung, erst FK dann MA	10	21
2_kritischer Diskurs mit den MA	7	9
2_Wandel aus eigener Kraft	7	9
3_Einbindung Betriebsrat	2	2
3_Einbindung Gesellschafter	3	3
2_Leitbild des Wandels	10	25
3_Druck Aktion	9	23
4_Aufbruchstimmung (inkl. Unterpunkte)	7	24
davon_nach Vorne schauen	1	4
davon_Wandel als Chance	6	13
5_persönliche Betroffenheit	5	7
5b_Einbettung des MA nach dem Wandel	4	26
davon_Anker Gewissheit	3	11
davon_individuelles Vorgehen	4	8
6_Angst vor Veränderung	4	10
6_Chancen aus Fluktuation	4	11
7_Perspektive zukünftiger Strategie	2	6
Umdenken, Selbstverständnis	1	2
7b_Widerstand	2	2
2_Gestaltung Wandlungsprozess	1	1
1_Transparent fair	7	12
2_Verantwortliche benennen	6	11
2b_ausreichende Ressourcen fraglich	6	7
3_Aktives, begeistertes Handeln	4	6
4_überschaubare Schritte	3	10
5_Anreize	2	2