Katrine Helgesen

"From limitless excitement to structural comfort"

A case study on the transitional process of an organization going from being a project organization to a permanent public institution.

Master Thesis on Organization and Leadership

Department of Adult Learning and Counseling

Faculty of Social Science and Technology Management

NTNU Videre

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Abstract

That change processes are exciting but sometimes hard to implement for organizations is a known fact. But the change process that I am looking into in this study is beyond hard, as this was change that had to be implemented no matter what. This is the story about the project organization whose sole purpose was to create a permanent organization and then almost over night changed into a permanent, operating organization and with the major differences that entailed.

What inspired me to do this research was most and foremost a self-experienced life as a "project worker" for the same operating field as the case organization. The thrill of always stepping into unfamiliar territory and hardly ever having to do things two times was almost addictive. And it was the individual human aspect of this change that caught my interest for this study. How did they experience this massive change and, did they learn from it and how?

And as we are all different as human beings, so was each experience different. After a series of two interviews per informant, conducted two years apart, emerged seven categories from the data analysis that had impacts on their experience, two transition categories and five learning categories. For transition emerged the categories of *awareness of change* and *grief process.* For learning emerged *framework/ structure*, *psychological ownership*, *goal orientation/ vision*, *interpersonal relationships* and *leadership* as categories having an impact on their experiences.

I used the results from the data analysis and discussed these with the background of different theoretical perspectives. To cover the vast area of aspects that emerged, I have used theoretical perspectives about project organizations vs. permanent organizations, organizational transitions, learning in organizations, psychological ownership, leadership and vision and goal orientation.

My three very different informants had also very different roles in the organization and different private situations, which had an impact on their experienced outcomes of the process. For the category goal orientation/ vision my findings suggested that common for all three of them, however, was a lack of an experienced vision bringing them beyond the launch of the project and into the new permanent organization. With such a vision, transforming from project to permanent organization might have been a smoother process.

Acknowledgements

I cannot believe I am here. I have climbed the mountain that seemed so high and unreachable for a long time. And I didn't do it all on my own. These are the people I want to thank for having helped pushing me up.

If you look up in the dictionary for the words *guidance* and *counselor* you will find a long written explanation of the words. Much simpler would have been to put a picture of Jonathan Reams there instead. Jonathan, you are in my mind, the definition of a guidance counselor, with your calm, always helpful and constructive feedback that made me leave your office enlightened, relieved and motivated as opposed to the often sorry, frustrated and confused state I was in when entering it. You pushed me up the hill towards the mountain, showing me how to use the map and the compass. Thank you so much!

To my informants in the case organization, obviously I could not have done this without you. But the way you received me in such stressful times was admirable. You gave me your honest thoughts and opinions and made me feel comfortable in the interview situation, something that meant so much to me, being a novice in scientific research that I was.

To Hege, my fellow student, if it wasn't for you and the walk and inspiring talk we had I would not have started this climb in the first place. You really gave me the biggest push and the friendship we jump-started has given my life a new dimension. And to my dearest, dearest Alf Anton and Ingrid Kristine, thank you for the welcoming intrusion into my life and for being the reason that I had to choose a different, but much better path up the mountain. Finishing this study has been so much nicer with my new family by my side.

Finally I want to thank, Hanne, my sister-in-law, for taking the time in a busy pre-Christmas period to proof-read my thesis. It means a lot to have fresh eyes having a final look at my writing.

I hope what I have done with the help from the people above, has resulted in a product that will be appreciated.

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Katrine Helgesen

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1 Introduction

Change is the capacity of life (Wheatley, 1999). This is the story about a major change. The change of a temporary organization creating and changing into the shape and culture of a permanent organization. The word "learning" indicate change in some way (Bateson, 1972). Does a major change then, indicate a high degree of learning?

In my previous job I worked project oriented, with few routine assignments in my job description. This way of working, feeling the intensity and work load increasing the closer we got to the peak of the project, where we had to present our product to the public, was very exhilarating. Then the very next day when it was all over I felt sad and empty inside. Wrapping up with boring routine work like financial statements and governmental reports felt meaningless and attacking a new project with the same enthusiasm was sometimes hard.

Operating within a field I have worked in myself, being given the chance to look into Organization T (project organization) and Organization R (permanent organization) and their transitional process was something I found tremendously fascinating. Organization T was not only working on a project basis, but its entire reason to exist *was* a project and the main goal for the project organization was to create Organization R. Once having created the permanent Organization R, this organization consists of much of the same people as the people of Organization T, but the organization's agenda is entirely different.

1.1 Purpose of study

Having taken the course *Financing of business development* at the *Master of management program* at NTNU earlier I had learned about entrepreneurial work and how to make ideas and projects into a permanent business. I therefore thought literature on transitional processes of this kind were easy to find. When doing the initial literature search for this thesis I realized that this was not the case. Most of the theory I found on *project/ temporary organizations* dealt with the project organization operating within, or in relation to an already existing permanent organization, hence not focusing on the challenges of a project changing character and becoming a permanent organization, once the project reaches the end. And as for theory on *transitional processes*, all the studies I found were done on transitional processes taken place *within an already existing, permanent organization*. Here, focusing more on which

changes took place and which did not. So as far as I can tell from my literature search, the specific kind of transition that this study focuses on has been limited subject to earlier research.

The object of this research is not, however, the entrepreneurial aspects of such a transition. Having a background in teaching and through the introductory classes, *Coaching and guidance counselling* and *Leadership development and organizational transformation*, I have taken an interest to the human aspect of organizational development. That this transition had an impact on my informants is unquestionable. And that there were both positive and negative impacts is also beyond doubt. Narrowing down the focus even further, I wanted to gain deeper insight of how and if my informants had experienced *learning* from this process. My research question for this study is therefore the following:

How was/is the transitional process a process of learning for Organization T/R?

1.2   Approach and structure

For this thesis I have done a case study using methods from phenomenology. I conducted all together four times two interviews, interviewing four employees when the organization was still a project organization and then four interviews when the organization had become a permanent, operating organization. I also interviewed pr. e-mail a manager of a similar organization, having gone through a similar transition, in North America.

After this introduction I will present the relevant theoretical perspectives for this thesis. In chapter three I will present the methodological choices I have made, before I move on to the presentation of the data analysis in chapter four. Chapter five consists of a discussion based on the data analysis from chapter four and the theoretical perspectives of chapter two. Eventually, in chapter six I will conclude and answer my research question as well as giving my opinion on how some aspects could have been done differently. Lastly, I will present a recommendation for future research.

2 Theoretical perspectives

In this chapter I will describe theoretical perspectives relevant for my thesis. Describing a phenomenon that is experienced differently by all of my informants required many different aspects to be exposed in order to make these descriptions as accurate as possible. Considering the time limit and the length of this thesis, I therefore prioritized to present multiple aspects with few theoretical perspectives, as opposed to few aspects with a multitude of perspectives.

I will start by looking at differences between a project/ temporary organization and a permanent organization to look at how structural factors may have an influence on the process. I will then continue with providing perspectives on transitional processes and learning in organizations.

2.1 The project/ temporary organization

As mentioned in the introduction, when I first started exploring the literature for theory that fitted my study, finding the exact theory proved more difficult than first anticipated. The theory I found on *project/ temporary organizations* dealt with the project organization operating within, or in relation to an already existing permanent organization, hence not focusing on the challenges of a project changing character and becoming a permanent organization, once the project reaches the end.

By looking at theory describing the differences in character of the project/temporary organization and that of the permanent organization I did find, however, elements that seemed applicable for my research and explanatory for the character of the transitional process that Organization T/R went through. These elements are: *organizational behavior*, *processes* and *learning*.

2.1.1 Organizational behavior

Having a need to perform, in order to achieve specific goals within a certain time frame, Lundin and Söderholm argue that *action* is the core of the organizational behavior in a temporary organization, as opposed to *decision-making,* which is the core of organizational behavior in routine operations. They point out four concepts that must be seen in the light of *action* in the temporary organization; *time, task, team* and *transition* (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995).

The concept of *time* is what differentiates the temporary organization the most from the permanent organization. The limited time for the temporary organization's existence, defines how the temporary organization works. Everything that goes on and what tasks are being carried out, has to be measured in time (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995).

In the temporary organization the *task* is the reason for being. The task is also unique; nobody else is doing exactly the same. The task often has to be solved by being creative and flexible in order to compensate for the often lack of experience, since similar tasks has never been carried out before. The task in the project organization can be compared to the goal of the permanent organization. But where goal has its focus in *decision-making*, the task is more related to *action*. The task is what stimulates motivation and creativity the most and thus provides the most development in the temporary organization (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995).

Another key contributor to motivation in the temporary organization is the *team*. While a team in the permanent organization may be just any group of people, the team in the temporary organization is put there to focus one specific task. The people in the temporary organization are gathered to represent different kind of experience and maybe even different kinds of expectations. This generates a commitment to the team that not only provides the basis for motivation, but also communication and leadership. The fact that the team is time limited may also help the team avoiding big conflicts, since all the members know in the back of their minds that they will not be working together for ever and thus accepting each other's conflicting interests better (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995).

The last concept in Lundin and Söderholm´s theory deals with *transition*. The temporary organization has a clear mission, the task. With the completion of the task a transformation has taken place. The focus on the transition of the temporary organization makes it easier to avoid the resistance to change, which can be an obstacle to development in permanent organization.

Turner and Møller offer a slightly different approach when describing the difference between the project organization and the permanent organization. In a project/temporary organization the *processes* are different than those of a permanent organization. The processes of the project organization are those of *flexibility, goal orientation* and that they are *staged*. They contrast the routine operation in the sense that these processes must be *stable, activity oriented* and *continuous*. (Turner & Møller, 2003)

2.1.2 Learning in project organizations

Grabher discusses the problem of learning in a project organization, pointing out how the limited time period of the project organization collides with the theories of learning requiring trust, which in turn is a result of a long-term relationship between people (Grabher, 2002). Referring to Glückler and Armbruster, he argues that instead of building trusting relationships based on shared experiences, members of the project organization will rely on *networked reputation* as a key a principle for establishing relationships (Grabher, 2004).

Project/temporary organizations and permanent organizations differ in several aspects. In this section I have discussed Lundin and Møller's perspective on how *behavior* is different in the two, making the project organization *action-oriented*, while the permanent organization is focused around *decision-making*. Turner and Møller offer a perspective explaining how the two different organizational types differ in their processes. Learning is also different in the project/temporary organization, and Grabher argues that relationship building is based on *networked reputation* in the project organization as opposed to *shared experiences* in the permanent organization. What is certain for the project/temporary organization is that it is time limited and at the end of the time period comes a transition. How may the organization and its employees react to that?

2.2 Transition

A transition occurs when a person's reality is disrupted, causing a chosen or forced change, and a need to construct a new reality surfaces (Chick & Meleis, 1986). Though, researchers within the school of *Nursing*, Chick and Meleis provide a useful definition of the concept, in my opinion, as it enhances the *individual*. Even though I am looking at a transitional process of an organization, this organization consists of *individuals,* and therefore, as I see it, it is how each and every one of these individuals manages the transition, that will determine the quality of the outcome of it. In the book "The Dance of Change", Senge introduces what he calls *profound change*, and how an *inner shift* refers to a change in people's values, aspirations and behaviours whereas *outer shift* is a change in process strategies, practices and systems. For a change initiative to be successful both *inner* and *outer shifts* are necessary (P. M. Senge, 1999). But such a process is not easy and may be painful to the people in the middle of it. In this theory section I will look at how grief and anxiety might occur and the importance of commitment in such a process. I will also look at how much change that can be imposed at

one time in a successful transitional process. Initially though, I will look at how the *awareness* of change plays an important role for the outcome of the transitional process.

2.2.1 Awareness of change

Owen describes transformation as "the process by which Spirit, or consciousness passes through various manifest forms or states (Owen, 2000). Though using the word *transformation,* which does not have the same meaning as the word *transition* (*transformation* representing the actual change that has taken place *after* a transitional process (Pearsall, 1999)) his description of the process is interesting. Like a journey where you visit multiple countries and places that mark your consciousness and your Spirit, so will a process of change influence you in the same way (Owen, 2000). And like the journey, this process also takes time but unlike the journey you cannot turn around and go home if you should not like the places you visited or the people you travelled with, the human system.

Fortunately though, as Owen sees it, a human system is adaptable. He calls it a Complex Adaptive System. *Complex* because it has many different elements in it, *adaptive* because it will always change to fit its surrounding environment and *system* because it is after all organized. Such systems, consisting of human beings, has the ability to be aware of a change and therefore able to do something about it, as opposed to a rock falling that cannot know what is happening and therefore unable to influence the process (Owen, 2000). Chick and Meleis say that transition is the process of surfacing awareness. Surfacing awareness involves noticing *what* has changed and *how* things are different. Levels of awareness will influence the level of engagement (Chick & Meleis, 1986). So like planning and preparing is often the key to a successful journey, the same can be said for a transitional process.

2.2.2 Grief and anxiety

Your suitcase is packed, the travel guide easily reachable on top of your hand luggage and you start the process. Eventually you reach what Bridges calls "the neutral zone" and Owen calls "open space". Common for both of these perspectives is that they represent the period between ending and the new beginning in an organization's transitional process (Bridges, 2009; Owen, 2000) This is where learning and creativity will take place if an organization is patient and doesn't try to rush through it. For the people in the middle of it this is most likely a period of both fear and uncertainty, but eventually also when an organization is most receptive of new ideas and innovative thinking. The possible dangers in the neutral zone are,

according to Bridges, namely the anxiety that arises from the uncertainty of having lost the old and safe boundaries, which in turn might lead to a decrease in motivation (Bridges, 2009).

To some people this period might represent a period of grief, making it necessary to allow all the stages of grief work (*shock* and *anger*, *denial*, *memories*, *open space as despair*, *open space as silence*, *questioning* and *vision*) to process through the members of the organization (Owen, 2000). Especially interesting with this perspective is, I think, the *memory* stage where people are honouring the heroes of the past and may seem to be hanging on to the past. Clinging on to the past is not helpful for the development of the transitional process, but towards the end of this stage comes the time for letting go (Owen, 2000).

2.2.3   Commitment and change

According to Senge a committed worker will be willing to invest in change initiatives. Such initiatives will in turn release learning capabilities, which ultimately will feel like a personal result on the individual worker. Having a committed worker on the other hand, may be more challenging for the leader, as this worker will be independent and hard to control. Such a worker is much more fruitful to an organization, however, as he will never be afraid of expressing his opinions (P. M. Senge, 1999). Pierce suggested that the employees' feelings of ownership to their organization affect employment attitude towards change within the organization. Sometimes though, the committed worker may promote change and other times act as a source of resistance to change (O'driscoll, Pierce, & Coghlan, 2006) .

2.2.4   How much change at once?

Bridges argue that some managers have had a tendency of thinking that because they are already changing lots of things they might as well change everything, even if some of the changes are not crucial for the larger shift that is in progress in the organization. Implementing more changes than necessary, however, will only have disruptive effects and a crucial large change may be jeopardized as an effect of the added, not necessary changes. Bridges therefore recommends to either postpone or even cancel out entirely changes that are unrelated to the larger shift the organization is right in the middle of (Bridges, 2009).

In this section I have focused on how a transitional process requires awareness by the people involved for them to be able to adapt to the new reality. Nevertheless, a feeling of grief may occur, that can obstruct the transitional process. A committed employee will most likely be an employee promoting change, but can also in some cases be a source to resistance of change.

Finally, I have looked at how imposing too many changes at once, may ruin the initial transitional process in an organization. For a transitional process to be a success, learning is vital. How? And what is a learning organization?

2.3   Learning in organizations

Torbert offers an almost therapeutic approach by saying: "In learning organizations, openness to questioning exists, assumptions are tested, seeming mistakes are rarely punished but are a basis for further learning, new knowledge is shared and the new knowledge is gained collaboratively." (Torbert, 2004, p. 122). Slater and Narver (1994) contribute with a very business oriented definition of learning organization when saying that "Learning organizations are generally those that continuously acquire, process and disseminate knowledge about markets, products, technologies and business processes." (Ellinger, Watkins, & Bostrom, 1999). I think the main difference between these two aspects is that Torbert directs his attention *inwards* in the organization while Slater and Narver focus on factors *outside* the walls of the organization. In my opinion, both aspects are important and they influence each other. In this theory section I will focus on five different factors that influence learning, namely *psychological ownership, structure, interpersonal relationships*, *vision* and *leadership*. As I see it, most of these factors sort under Torbert's approach, but without a continuous attention to what exists outside the organization, the organization in this study will not be able to fulfil its governmental mandate.

2.3.1   Psychological Ownership

Professor in Organizational Management John L. Pierce defines psychological ownership as "the state in which individuals feel as though the target of ownership or a piece of that target is theirs" (Pierce, Kostova, & Dirks, 2003, p. 299). In the literature, I found that he provided the most relevant theory on psychological ownership and its impact on organizational development. He argues that there is a route, including three underlying motives that make feelings of psychological ownership develop.

1) Controlling the target – the ability to use and control the use of targets.

2) Coming to intimately know the target

3) Investing the self into target

He underlines that these motives are not seen as the causes of psychological ownership, but rather that they make it easier to understand why the state of ownership exist. He also argues

that the feeling of ownership is stronger if one has arrived at this state by travelling multiple routes. Psychological ownership contributes to peoples' ability to define themselves, express to others their self-identity and to keep the same "self" over time. The most obvious and perhaps the most effective way for an individual to invest him- or herself into an object is by creating it. Creation means investing time, energy and one's values and identity. When it comes to organizational development, individuals may for instance feel ownership for the products they create, the organizations they establish or bills that they draft. (Pierce et al., 2003).

What can prevent feelings of psychological ownership to develop? Pierce also took part in a research conducted on organizational structure and its impact on psychological ownership.

2.3.2 Organizational structure

"Fences – such as physical boundaries, laws, property rights, governance structures, customs and moves of society, limit the degree to which one can come into contact with certain targets, thereby affecting the degree to which these targets can be controlled, known or the recipient of one's investment" (Pierce et al., 2003, p. 98). Using the word "fence" I think Pierce et al. encompass not only the physical meaning of the word but also the metaphorical sense of it. Fence serves as a good metaphor in my opinion as it encompasses both the positive and the negative aspects of a fence. A fence can be helpful in the sense that it draws lines and limits an organization's tasks and mandate, hence serving as guidelines. It can also serve as a stabilizing design for how an organization should be operated. At the same time, a fence can represent an obstacle for creational freedom and in this sense the fence has a negative connotation.

In a research conducted on the relationship between levels of work environment structure and psychological ownership the authors argued that variations in organizational design will affect the degree to which feelings of ownership will characterize how an individual relates to its organization (O'driscoll et al., 2006). "Structured environment" was defined based on criteria of technology, work design and the organization's decision-making systems. This study confirmed that a less structured work environment, would generally provide individuals with greater autonomy and control in regards to their job and work environment, and that this in turn developed greater feelings of ownership of the job and organization (O'driscoll et al., 2006) .

The structured environment will influence level of creation and learning in organizations. But what about the interpersonal environment – to what degree will that influence such learning?

2.3.3   Interpersonal relationships

Owen, Senge and Wheatley all provide theories on how relational aspects are significant in learning and transitional processes, though with slightly different approaches to it.

When an organization in change is in what Owen calls "Open space", a place between what has been and the new, the organization has reached the moment of creation. This is where learning will take place. By asking questions in this phase, rather than making statements you will make the space even more spacious and make more room for creativity. Showing that we accept one another for who we are is important and by including challenges in questions we suggest a faith in people that they can evolve and change (Owen, 2000). With this perspective, Owen underlines the importance of relational factors for learning to take place in an organization's transitional process.

Aspiration, *reflecting conversation* and *understanding complexity* are the three learning capabilities. (P. M. Senge, 2006). *Aspiration* refers to an organization's ability to direct attention towards what people in the organization really desire. Such focus will make the organization more offensive rather than defensive in dealing with its environment. *Reflective conversation* is about creating a shared understanding and to coordinate effective action through conversation and inquiry. By *understanding complexity* Senge directs attention to how important it is for an organization that its members see the patterns of interdependency in order to succeed. (P. M. Senge, 2006).

Senge's theory on *the growth process of profound change* describes a triple loop learning process, where the second loop is called a *network of committed people*. An organization is a web of already existing relationships. This network is superior to a hierarchical network when it comes to spreading new ideas and innovations as it has credibility in a different way, since it is built on trust and relationships, rather than orders. Also, to be guided and helped by a co-worker, rather than a person on a higher hierarchical level is less threatening and promotes security. We are more likely to learn and be receptive of ideas coming from "one of our own" rather than from someone with authority (P. M. Senge, 1999).

Wheatley, the scientist among my theorists, bases her views entirely on relations (Wheatley, 1999). She claims that the reason for us not succeeding in organizations is because we have

tried to force mechanical structures into a system consisting of individuals who these kinds of structures are completely unnatural to. For things to fall into place it requires an environment that embraces what she calls *quantum world living.* People must not be controlled by descriptions and tasks that will only strangle creativity. We must learn how to appreciate and tend to growth and development. We must be stimulated to foster relationships, to improve our listening and communication skills and most importantly – to respect each other's uniqueness. She argues that a network's power is generated from its relationships and therefore we need to attend to the quality of these relationships (Wheatley, 1999) .

2.3.4   Vision

Hickman and Silva define vision as "a mental journey from known to unknown, creating the future from montage of current facts, hopes, dreams, dangers and opportunities". A clear vision is according to them a result of a profound understanding of an organization and its environment. Vision is both an offensive and defensive skill in the sense that it focuses on how an organization is part of its ever changing environment and has to adapt accordingly (Hickman & Silva, 1985).

The executive of the organization has, according to this view, the responsibility of creating a clear vision for its organization, based on an in-depth knowledge of the organization and its surrounding environment (Hickman & Silva, 1985). This view is supported by Senge who states that the skills of a leader are among others the ability to build a shared vision and to bring to the surface and challenge mental models existing among employees (P. Senge, 2000).

Hickman and Silva's theories seem very helpful and to-the-point with techniques in how to go about in creating a vision for a company. What I feel lack from this perspective is the value of employees involvement in creating the new vision.

Owen talks about the *power* of a vision (Owen, 2000). He sees vision as a mental picture of a future. In the process of reaching the vision, it is not in front of us nor is it besides us, but rather behind us, as a powerful engine, giving us the necessary push to move towards the mental picture. The fuel of this powerful engine is our passion. In order to reach the vision the "vision holder" needs to create his own path (Owen, 2000). What Hickman & Silva and Owen have in common, in my opinion, is the element of "creative responsibility" on behalf of the "vision holder". What I think makes Owen's perspective more adaptable to the modern, less hierarchical organizations is that the power of the engine depends on its size. If only one or

two members of the organization have the needed passion, the engine will not be very powerful. If every member of the organization feels the passion and gives the engine energy, then it will have a better chance at succeeding.
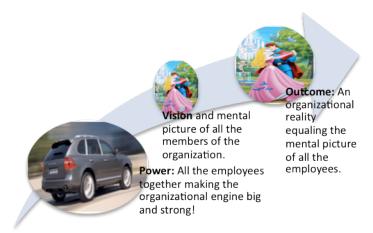

Figure 1: *The power of a common vision*

Wheatley defines vision in terms of fields based on a worldview explained from the principles of quantum physics. Invisible fields in the universe around us all co-exist and influence each other. If vision is such a field, all the other fields that exist in its environment, influence it and must be taken into consideration in order to create the vision. The vision we create will then be a power that can influence the other fields. In this perspective, the role of an organization's culture, values and purpose will determine the power of the vision (Wheatley, 1999). Wheatley's perspective, though very interesting, may seem a bit far-fetched and for an organization maybe hard to grasp, lacking the concrete tools and materials that Silva and Hickman present. What I think Wheatley can add to organizational life is *awareness*. Yes, we are surrounded by fields, and no, there might not be much we can do about it. But just by being *aware* of their influence and power we are in fact doing something by adding to our understanding of organizational life. This in turn I think, will make each member of an organization more street smart or in this case: "organization smart".

2.3.5   Leadership

Apart from being responsible for its organization's vision, leaders are also responsible for learning to take place in organizations. But not as an expert and authoritarian whose job is to teach the employees what they consider the correct views on issues (P. Senge, 2000). Senge compares the leader to a gardener making the circumstances optimal for the seed to grow. And most importantly – making the seed *want* to grow. For the seed wanting to grow, or an organization wanting to develop, profound change requires openness, localness and intrinsic

motivation. For this to happen the initiative to change needs to be driven by learning and not by authority (P. M. Senge, 1999).

A research conducted by Andrea D. Ellinger, Karen E. Watkins and Robert P. Bostrom on "Managers as facilitators of learning" shed some light on how managers contribute to knowledge creation in a learning organization (Ellinger et al., 1999). They argue that a leader of a learning organization develop, nurture and measure what they call the "knowledge capital" of the organization. The leader's *belief system* influences their *role identity*, which in turn produce what they call *triggers* for facilitating learning among employees. These triggers will in turn produce certain *behaviours* that would result in *outcomes* for both *learner* and *manager*. These outcomes combined would again have *organizational outcomes* (Ellinger et al., 1999).

The behaviours are divided into two categories: 1) *empowering* and 2) *facilitating* behaviours, where I want to look closer at the empowering behaviour of a leader. They describe the empowering behaviour as managers' behaviours of giving more power and authority to employees. One of these behaviours is that of *being a resource*, someone who removes obstacles for their employees. They quote Webber who recognizes the shift in leadership mentalities and behaviours: "…and in the most remarkable reversal of all, serve and satisfy them" (Ellinger et al., 1999).

In other words, most of the responsibility is put on the leader of an organization as to how developed the organization is as a *learning organization*. A leader's belief system serves as the starting point and determines to what extent the employees increase knowledge through their work (Ellinger et al., 1999).

What I think lacks from the perspectives of Ellinger and Watkins when they talk about *"triggers"* is Torbert's focus on the ability to reflect. Using the word *trigger*, indicate a spontaneous reaction not giving room for an exploration of untested assumptions regarding the situation you as a leader find yourself in many times a day. Torbert wants us to realize how limited our awareness actually is and train our capacity for what he calls super-vision of our awareness. By being able to be simultaneously productive and self-assessing, continually seeking untested assumptions and emotions they create within ourselves, we will be able to generate effectiveness and integrity within ourselves through *action inquiry*. Action inquiry will in turn generate *mutuality*. By embracing mutuality you embrace trustful and honest

communication (Torbert, 2004). And that is, in my opinion a key ingredient in a learning organization.

A learning organization must be defined both in regards to the processes going on within the organization and the operating environment of the organization. In this section I have looked at how psychological ownership to a job refers to level of commitment, investment and creational freedom as an employee. Organizational structures can in some incidents serve as limitations for psychological ownership to emerge or to be reduced. Good interpersonal relationships are vital and stimulate to learning, and a good vision serves as an engine to reach goals and to respond to its ever-changing environment. Last, but not least in this section I have looked at how leaders can stimulate to learning in their organizations acting more as a gardener, tending to growth on each individual plant's premise, rather than a tour guide showing only *one* way for everybody.

The theory in this chapter constitutes the framework of my research. I will now explain the methodological choices I have made before I present my findings and give a discussion on these.

3 Methodology

3.1 Method approach

Where quantitative research provides theories on peoples trends, associations and relationships, qualitative research responds to questions like

- In what context did the people take part in the qualitative research?
- What thoughts and behaviors governed the people's minds and made them answer like they did?

Where statistical data in quantitative research do not take into account the uniqueness in every human being, qualitative research is better fit to do just that. Qualitative methods are therefore better to describe human experiences (Cresswell, 2007). As the transition I have studied is in fact a set of human experiences by a staff in an organization, I find qualitative research to be the right method for this study.

When I finished the last of my interviews, the interviewee asked me if I was going to conduct more interviews. I told him, "no", and my deadline for handing in my thesis. Then he said: *"Hmmm…well maybe we should have more sessions like this here – it has been almost therapeutic."* My intention with this study was *not* to act as an amateur therapist for this organization. But if my interviews have had therapeutic effects to my interviewees I can only view that as a bonus. What I want to obtain with this research is to bring to the surface and make meaning of the emotions and opinions of my interviewees concerning their transitional process and what they have learned from it. This in turn, I hope will make a contribution to the case organization, providing it with information about their transitional process that can shed some light on the current situation of the organization.

A qualitative researcher brings into the study a personal set of experiences and opinions that will have an influence on the study. Performing a completely objective analysis is impossible. To address the opinions of the researcher is therefore important to shed some light on what perspective I, as the researcher had, going into the work with this thesis (Postholm, 2005). I did not enter this research study completely open-minded and non-opinionated. I have had similar work related experiences, working project oriented for an organization operating within the same field as Organization T/R. This was what made me so interested in this

organization in the first place, but at the same time, this very fact has probably colored my apprehension of what the interviewees have told me.

One example of this is how I can still experience the feeling I had when a project was coming to an end, with a grand, public finale where a lot was at stake. The heart beating faster and faster the more this moment approached, until it finally exploded with the ending of the project. The feeling was euphoric. Like after a good workout. Then, when it was all over the next day, finding motivation to go on doing routine work was challenging and I felt the atmosphere was almost sleeplike. Knowing this feeling so well, I may have experienced something similar when I came back to Organization T/R for my second round of interviews. If the energy I felt was right, I cannot be 100% sure of, but if it was, I could relate to their emotions very well.

Other than interest and knowledge of the professional field of the case company, I had no prior knowledge of this organization. When I met with the project manager I experienced a very accommodating person. Despite the fact that he was extremely busy and that it was his organization and responsibility that would be subject to investigation, he was eager and positive to my idea for a thesis. All the informants accepted my requests and were very friendly and helpful, fitting me into their already packed schedules. Though a bit nervous in front of the interviews they all made me relax and comfortable in the situation. Since they all provided me with lots of interesting information, I choose to believe that I might have had the same effect on them. If this information together can make for a new understanding for the case company, remains to be seen.

3.2 Research design

In this research I am studying Organization T that goes through a transition in order to become Organization R. Looking at one organization's developmental journey has clearly elements of a case study. Merriam defines a case study as a study of a "bound system". Here the researcher studies a system that is both limited in time and place. For organization T, which has a limited time-period it can almost be compared to a program or an activity so in this respect it seems natural to use this method for my study. Also for a case study it is important to describe in detail the context of which the study case operates (Postholm, 2005).

Seeing that a case study in this respect may have its limitations for my research, I want to include elements of phenomenology. A phenomenological study involves several individuals

lived experiences of a concept and the meaning experiences make. A phenomenon is defined by van Manen as "an object of human experience" (Cresswell, 2007). The phenomenon of my thesis will be the transitional process, which is not a physical object, but an object that is there because it is experienced by a group of people. What is observed in the life-world is a product of learning (Postholm, 2005). Since my thesis is to focus on learning in a transitional process, I think that to find meaning in how my interviewees experienced the transition, will be to see a process of learning. For my interviewees I realized that their experiences of the transitional process varied. Furthermore, how they experienced the status quo also depended on their experiences and situations in their private life, as well as previous professional experiences. Gurwitsch says that how a situation is perceived will depend on the set of experiences that each individual meets the situation with (Gurwitsch, 2010).

As for me as the researcher it also involves a considerable amount of what I would like to call self-exploration in order to extract the most truthful information out of the collected data. Husserl introduced the Greek term *epoche* into phenomenology. Moustakas, with his Greek background, defines the term as "to set aside our prejudgments, biases, and preconceived ideas about things". It requires that I, as the researcher, make myself transparent, so that whatever is already there in my consciousness, coloring my opinions, will go away and make room for new, naïve and open ways of seeing the things that appear in front of me (Moustakas, 1994).

For this study I conducted eight face-to-face interviews and one interview per e-mail. For the face-to-face interviews, performing epoche proved difficult. From the very first handshake of the interviewees I could feel my *un*consciousness taking out the crayons, adding color and opinions that I had not asked for. Therefore, in the analysis section, I have written, deleted and rewritten things numerous amounts of times, as I have suddenly realized that my biased, mischievous *un*consciousness was in the sentences. I really hope, however, that simply by being aware of epoche has helped me keep my own biases away to a certain extent. And if nothing else, I have with this process, had the sad self-realization that I can be rather biased and opinionated in many situations.

It emerged in these interviews that each individual's private situations, also had an impact on how they experienced the transitional process. A qualitative research method where the data collected and studied is "life documents" describing turning-point moments in individuals lives, is what Denzin calls a biographical method (Denzin, 1989). Such stories may be related

to among others, process in life course and relational models (Cresswell, 2007). To describe the transitional process in this study a turning-point in my informant's lives is perhaps over-interpreting, but that for some of my informants their work situation had big impacts on their personal lives, is a fact. This indicates that my research has elements of a biographical study as well.

3.3 Empirical collection strategy

For this research I had two types of empirical sources to collect data from: face-to face interviews and an interview conducted via e-mail with a manager of an institution in North America, similar to the case company. In addition I have used some extracts from my own journal entries from the interview processes. During conversations with the manager of the project organization, I also collected information about the history of the project organization, which I have used in the analysis.

According to Cresswell, Polkingthorne recommends that a researcher of a phenomenological study conducts interviews with 5 to 25 persons (Cresswell, 2007). Dukes, however, recommends from 3 to 10 people (Postholm, 2005). I think this number has to be seen in relation to the amount of people having experienced the phenomenon in question. Since I am doing a case study using methods from phenomenology, I only had the staff at Organization T/R as possible informants. I interviewed four people in Organization T (round 1) and three of these individuals I interviewed again in a follow-up interview (round 2) in the permanent Organization R. The fourth interviewee from round 1 was no longer there for round 2, hence not having experienced the transition. I therefore conducted the fourth interview in round 2 with a person who had the same function as the one who was no longer there. The case company being a small organization, I have interviewed approximately one third of those who experienced the transition.

As a qualitative researcher you are looking for access to experiences and emotions lying within the informants. In order to obtain this it is very important to establish a close and trusting relationship to them. This is in sharp contrast to a quantitative research where objectivity is important to the validity of the study (Worthen, 2002). As a researcher of a qualitative study I am responsible for making my informants feel comfortable and trusting me to tell me their honest feelings and experiences (Moustakas, 1994). To achieve such a trusting relationship, using the semi-structured, long interview is preferable (Postholm, 2005). As mentioned earlier, I conducted eight, planned interviews of approximately 1-1 ½ hour each,

with five different people. For round 1, all four interviews had the same, semi-structured approach, opening by simply introducing myself and then they did the same. I had planned five main themes for the entire interview, with possible follow-up questions. See interview guides, round 1 and 2, Appendixes A and B, accordingly.

Since interviewee number 4 from round 1 was no longer with the organization for the second round of interviews, this second interview with an employee holding the same position as interviewee 4 from round 1, had a different structure than the others. Not having experienced the phenomenon in question to the same extent as the others, this interview became even less structured, since I had to cancel out some of the questions that I had asked the others. But even so was this interview extremely informative and interesting. What this person provided my study with was, among others, an observation of a certain period of the transition. So even though I did not use observation as data collection for this study, I achieved some of it, though not through the eyes of me as the researcher but through the eyes of this last interviewee.

In total the interview process resulted in approximately 10 hours of planned, semi-structured interviews. All the interviews were taped and transcribed. In the thematic analysis my informants and the two managers were given the following pseudonyms for anonymity purposes.

- **Frida:** *Had worked for the project organization for only one week when I interviewed her the first time. Her job mainly concerns education and structure for the public part of the organization. In her late forties.*
- **Guttorm:** *Had worked for the project organization for approximately six months when I interviewed him the first time. Responsible for the IT-solutions of the institution. In his early thirties.*
- **Billy:** *Had worked for the project organization even before it became an organization, and was merely just a sketch on a notebook. Works with what is the core of the particular branch of the organization. Late thirties.*
- **Ragna:** *Had worked for the permanent organization for approximately ten months when I interviewed her. Administrative clerk for the permanent organization. Early forties.*
- **Pelle:** *The project manager*
- **Kåre:** *The manager of the permanent organization*

The two organizations were given the following names, for simplicity purposes:

- **Organization T:** The project organization
- **Organization R:** The permanent/ operating organization

Before continuing on with selection criteria, I will briefly describe the interview process in more detail.

Since for both personal and organizational reasons I realized that some time would pass between the first and second round of interviews, I started writing an interview journal. Some of this material is also used in the analysis.

With the interview I conducted with the executive director in North America I got a different perspective of the experience of the transition, interviewing management level. Never having met with the interviewee face-to-face, this interview has more the characteristics of a document, with only the written word to analyze.

3.4 Selection criteria

According to Cresswell, a challenge with the phenomenological approach is the selection of individuals to take part in the research. They need to be carefully chosen and must all have experienced the phenomenon that is investigated (Cresswell, 2007). I had all together five informants for my study.

When I entered the organization to start my interview process they were in the middle of employing the staff for the permanent organization. Some of the people who were in the project organization would also be employed in the permanent organization and some would not. This process, was not completed yet and therefore the results of it not official. When I chose my interview objects I could be certain that they represented a diversity in *gender*, *tasks* and *age*, but I could not be promised that they would be all there for the permanent organization, hence experiencing the transition. I order to maximize the chances of them all being there for the permanent organization, I selected informants that had central and leading positions in their respective areas of expertise. As already mentioned, I made the correct assumptions for three out of four of the selected interviewees.

Since the focus of this thesis is about the informant's experience of the transitional process, the interview conducted of the person who was only there in the project period is not suitable for this study and will therefore not be used. The person, who took this employee's place and entered the organization in the middle of the transitional process, describes some experiences that I found valid for my research and is therefore used. Details about this however, I will get back to in the analysis section of this thesis.

3.5 Methods for analysis

3.5.1 Horizonalization

"Organization of data begins when the primary researcher places the transcribed interviews before him or her and studies the material through the methods and procedures of the phenomenal analysis." (Moustakas, 1994, p.118).

To organize my data I used the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method, modified by Moustakas to organize and analyze the material. Step 2a of his 4-step method says: "Consider each statement with respect to significance for description of the experience" (Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas calls this procedure, *horizonalization* (Cresswell, 2007). To be able to compare my informants' statements more easily, I created a table like the one below.

	Frida	Guttorm	Billy
Themes from interviews			
My reflections			

For both rounds of interviews I created a table were I listed the different themes from the interview guide in the left column. Then under each informants name I listed the statements from the interviews that I found most relevant for the description of the phenomenon.

Moustakas focuses on the importance of the researcher bringing personal experiences into the study. (Cresswell, 2007) Therefore, at the bottom of the table, I had a column named "My reflections" where I wrote down my journal entries from each interview that I found relevant and thoughts and reflections that popped up in my mind while making the table.

3.5.2 Phenomenological reduction

When going through the transcribed interviews I tried first to look at all the statements with an open mind and treat them as equally important. First I saw that sometimes the same things were said several times, only in slightly different ways. I then weeded out the statements that were repetitive, but highlighted the original statement to show its importance. Then I sorted out the statements that did not describe the phenomenon and therefore seemed irrelevant for this study. Having done this, I had performed phenomenological reduction, reducing the transcribed material to only the textual meaning and the most essential statements (Postholm, 2005).

Going through these two tables, led me to four new tables. By looking at the informants' statements I saw that I could divide their statements into what I have called *positively or neutrally charged statements* and *negatively charged statements*. By indicating in the four tables who said what, I could easily see the individual differences in opinions for each category. I did this process for both rounds of interviews and seven categories of themes emerged. These categories were given the following definitions, partly based on the selected theory and partly on perspectives that emerged as significant for the categories during the interviews.

3.5.2.1 Learning categories

- **Framework/structure:** The possibilities and restrictions caused by the organization's design, political and economical dependencies, personal situation such as relationship status.
- **Psychological Ownership:** Personal commitment and involvement in own working situation, received mainly though creation and interaction with co-workers.
- **Goal-orientation/vision:** Having pictures of a future in one's mind, it being a concrete aim (goal) or the less detailed but more powerful force (vision).
- **Interpersonal relationships:** Cooperation and interaction with co-workers on and off duty.
- **Leadership:** The impact on the day-to-day lives as employees, their ability to learn and impression of own performance.

3.5.2.2 Transition categories

- **Awareness of change:** the ability to know that change will come and hence try to influence the process.
- **Grief process:** A period of uncertainty, melancholy and sadness over having lost someone or something, occurring in a period between the old reality and the new.

I filled in a table to get a better overview of the statements sorted by category. This categorical summary of statements made it easier for me to read from the transcripts which aspects of the transitional process had proven beneficial and which had proven challenging. See appendix C.

Sorting my statements based on the emotional charge of the way they were said, made it necessary for me to not only study the transcribed material, but also to go back to the original

recordings at some incidents, to get the unbiased truth about a statement. By only looking at the written words of the transcripts I caught myself sorting things incorrectly, because I added my own opinion about the statements. For example when I went through the transcript of the first interview with Billy, he said: *"I work approximately seventy hours a week"*. I thought immediately that this was awful and definitely something to list under *negatively charged*. Until I realized that it was *my* opinion shining through. When listening to the recordings of Billy I realized that he sounded optimistic and cheerful when talking about it, hence I had to list this statement under *positively charged*. Performing epoche in this incident therefore required the use of the recorded material as well.

As it emerged when I was starting to do my textual analysis based on the thematic analysis was that each category encompassed a vast area of experiences. So vast, that listing my informants' statements together in pure category sections proved inefficient, except for my findings regarding *goal orientation/vision*. As it turned out each informant's experience was so unique that when I tried to write the findings sorted only by category I lost a lot of the specifics of each informant's description of their experience. I therefore had to take a biographical approach to my textual analysis, describing each category separately for each informant, except for the findings for *goal orientation/vision*. This way I managed to include more detail in each informant's experience, giving, in my opinion, a better description of the phenomenon. For the category goal orientation/ vision it emerged from my findings in addition to very different interpretations of this as a *concept* the fact that *goal orientation/ vision* had not been a part of the transitional process. This inconsistency opened up a new explanatory dimension of this transitional process that was better suited by describing my informants' statements comparatively.

3.6   Ethical considerations

In a qualitative research, the researcher is most likely to stumble across ethical dilemmas with regard to the collection of data and when presenting the findings. The important thing to keep in mind is that above all comes the researcher-informant relationship and that it should not be sacrificed (Merriam, 2002).

Initially, I thought this research had the design of a case study as method approach. But as a case study requires a detailed description of the context of what is being studied (Postholm, 2005) this became difficult, as I fear that with such a description the case company would be

easily recognizable. Being a small organization it would then in turn take away the necessary anonymity.

Still, by choosing a case study with the use of a phenomenological approach, some information about the context of which the organization is operating within, is necessary. My dilemma in this study has been how to balance anonymity of the case organization with the amount of detail necessary in order to give a good description of the organization's context. Having promised confidentiality with Organization T/R, however, I have to sacrifice a certain amount of detail in my description of the context.

Now, when the analysis is concluded all transcripts has been deleted from my computer, the paper copies have been shredded and the recordings deleted from my recorder and iPhone.

3.7 Member checking

In order to ensure the internal validity of a qualitative research, member check is a common strategy. Member checking means having the informants comment on how you as the researcher have interpreted the raw data through interviews and observations (Merriam, 2002). After having completed the textual analysis of the study I gave each of the informants a copy to read through and give me feedback on how well they felt my analysis fit to their apprehension of reality.

4 Results from analysis

4.1 Summary of results

The following chapter represents my results from the thematic analysis. The data collection consists of two series of interviews conducted approximately two years apart. In addition I conducted one interview with a manager of a similar institution in North America, but the results of that interview will only be mentioned in the discussion chapter.

Primarily, I will give a description of the organizational context, as thorough as possible without sacrificing the anonymity of the organization and my informants. Then, I will present the data by giving a presentation of how each of my informants has experienced the different categories that was presented in the methodology chapter. In these individual sections, however, I will not include the category, *goal-orientation/vision*. What emerged from my interviews was that their goal-orientation/vision was only a part of Organization T and not part of the transitional process, making it more natural to present this analysis in a separate section at the end of this chapter.

4.1.1 Organizational context

As we are all different as human beings, so are organizations different as they consist of people. And as we all respond differently to change, so will organizations, therefore it is necessary to give a brief description of the organizational context.

Organization T/R is the result of the project manager, Pelle's, unwavering faith, conviction and commitment to the cause of the organization. In 2006 he was given an assignment by a governmental ministry to make an exposition regarding his idea for a public institution. The main idea for this exposition was to create a project proposition, establishing a timeframe and the cost of such an institution. Pelle spent his time well. Not only did he make the project proposition, but he also continued the political lobbying until he had received the necessary funding to actually start the building of the institution's localities. When the building of the institution had started up Pelle says that he felt he had "politically attached the project to the mast". By this he meant that it would now be much harder for the government to ignore the project in future state budgets. It was also now less vulnerable to a political change.

From January 2008, the organization consisted of 14 employees, all handpicked by Pelle to constitute the project organization. None of these employees, however, were guaranteed a job in the permanent organization but were all a part of the interview process that took part during the spring of 2009.

The lights of the project organization were meant to be turned off by December 31st, 2009, and the new permanent organization to see it's first dawn by January 1st, 2010. Due to several delays the project organization did not cease to exist until December 31st, 2010 and the permanent organization was a reality by January 1st, 2011 – a year behind schedule. The project, however, was launched to the public in August 2010, also almost a year too late according to plan.

The permanent, operational organization, Organization R, does now consist of 14 full time permanent positions, in addition to several part-time and temporary positions. It also has a new leader, Kåre. Naturally, having the task of building an institution made the budgets of Organization T of a much larger proportion than is the case for Organization R. The following statements by Guttorm and Frida accordingly, indicate that getting more money, if needed, was possible for Organization T as well.

Pelle was very tough, the best project manager I have ever met. He was good at looking forward and think long term. No matter what, he marched towards the goal even if it was going to cost a lot of money. (Guttorm)

I feel that this organization would not have been this innovative and cool if it wasn't for Pelle. He had almost childish guts and a belief in what he was doing that made him brave enough to think big, expensive and new and go through with it even if he did not have the funding in place at all times. Kåre has a different budget that he has to stick to so he cannot afford to think like Pelle did. (Frida)

As Frida states, once the institution was established, however, Organization R had to accept the tight governmental budgets like other similar, governmental institutions had to. These differences between Organization T and R, called for very different organizational contexts for the two organizations, something that had an impact on the employees, going from one organizational reality to the other, almost over night. The almost chock-like atmosphere this major change might have created, was described by Ragna, who started working for Organization T/R, right after the launch of the project.

It was all very quiet. Everybody was doing their own stuff, almost like they were guarding their territory. Nobody talked to each other. Nobody had lunch together. It was a gloomy atmosphere. (Ragna)

How each of my respondents reacted to the changes, can most easily be described by comparing the informants' two interviews and the energy level that came with them.

4.1.2 Analysis of data for Guttorm's transition

4.1.2.1 Psychological ownership
When meeting Guttorm for the very first time, it was easy to spot how incredibly invested he was in the project of Organization T.

I would not want to work any other place. It is so much fun to be part of creating something I have so much passion for. Something I feel is important. So I feel very privileged in that sense.

About working sixteen hours a day in addition to weekends, Guttorm explained why he did it, this way:

And of course, you should not expect people to be working fourteen to sixteen hours a day either. So, we who do it, do it because we **can** *do it and because we feel a responsibility.*

When interviewed again in Organization R, however, some of his level of engagement seems to have dropped.

For me it feels like a completely different job now, than the one I had in the project organization…My heart was in it more when it was the project than it is now. I played a very important part in the project, and even if my position now is important it is not in the same way. I feel like I don't use my potential enough now and I can get restless. But don't get me wrong. It is a really nice place to work and I like it here and most people agree with me.

In this interview Guttorm also expressed how incredibly much he had learned from the process he had been through with Organization T.

Developmentally, I have grown a lot by this process…I was just out of the university, I had little to no work experience and I was forced to learn a lot of things along the way. Now I feel a lot more confident, knowing what I know.

When Guttorm talked about Pelle's decision to leave the organization once the project was complete, another interesting aspect of the effects of a high level of psychological ownership emerged.

He was no operation kind of man and I think it was healthy for the organization that he chose to leave, once the project was launched and the permanent organization had started up. I think that it might have been healthy for the entire project team to leave and get new people in the permanent organization. We, who have been part of the project organization have our hearts in that still, and there is a tendency that the former project people can become a bit audacious at times, always "knowing what is best" since we have been a part of the creation of the institution.

4.1.2.2 Framework/Structure

Being able to work as much as he did in Organization T was something he had chosen to do voluntarily, and which seemed to suit him and his life style at the time, well.

I like the flexibility of working in the project. I work hard and non-stop almost, for a period of time and then I take time off afterwards.

But despite the fact that he liked this manner of working, I detected some uneasiness on his behalf regarding the all-consuming working environment of Organization T.

But to put it this way – my private situation would not have been like this if it wasn't for the job…It is a little bit frustrating that I spend so much time on this job, ………In that sense it is not always easy and I have had some discussions with myself about this – asking whether it is worth it or not.

Once the permanent organization was established the structural framework also changed. The staff increased, the budget shrank and the amount of work hours per employee shrank to a normal level of 37,5 hours a week. Once again Guttorm expressed both positive and negative aspects of the structural framework of the organization.

We are now a public institution, which has both positive and negative aspects to it. It is good in the sense that I feel safe and well taken care of. Things are not as insecure anymore. On the downside there is more bureaucracy, we are dependant on grants and the political situation at all times.

The old job did not have a safety net, it was more risky…Now that we are in operation everything is much more structured as far as work hours and schedules go. I feel that I hardly get anything done "only" working 37,5 hours a week.

Things are more cumbersome now. In the project we had a date in front of us that we struggled towards, and sometimes we had to drop some of the tasks, as simple as that, because we had the deadline to consider. Now we want to include everything and do everything and we don't have to necessarily meet a certain deadline.

About the process he had been through and the job he had done in Organization T, it emerged that he was glad he had been a part of it, but not anything he would do again. His private situation had also changed since then.

But I think it was a good thing that I was a naïve oddball because it made me less frightened – we just went straight towards the goal, without looking to the sides or behind us. Knowing what I know now, I would not do it again though. I am in a different situation now and I have a girlfriend…I have other priorities. It is good – I am a happier guy now, even though I still get restless every once in a while.

4.1.2.3 Interpersonal relationships

What emerged early in the first interview with Guttorm was that he experienced a great deal of interdependency and camaraderie in Organization T.

I spend a lot of time both at work and outside the office with colleagues. I look at many of my colleagues as my best friends. And that is very important. We will meet up after work to do things together, but of course we will also talk about things that concerns work. But then we will maybe talk about it in a less serious way...Having a good relationship with my colleagues is beneficial to me in many ways and it gives me a better insight into things. I am able to relate to their work situation and their tasks and they get a better insight into my working situation.

When interviewing him again in Organization R, he expressed the colleagual relationships to still be good, but not as intense.

Now we have a more normal colleagual relationship, we have normal work hours, we have more normal conversations during our lunch break and we have a wine lottery. Cooperation is not very different from how it was before, what has changed is that with only 37,5 hours a week we don't get as much done as we did before.

4.1.2.4 Awareness of change

Even though Guttorm expressed an enormous amount of engagement for his job when I interviewed him in Organization T, his expectations for his job in Organization R were not as enthusiastic.

I have always said, even before they started to hire people for the permanent organization, that the most important thing for me is to see the organization being created and stay on board until the opening. Working in this project organization and the permanent organization is two very different things.

Though, he did not expect life to be as exciting if he was to continue working for Organization R, he did see some positive aspects of it.

Working with the project is dreadful but at the same time very exciting. Working for the permanent organization I picture, is not very exciting but very comfortable.

Guttorm also seemed to be aware of the structural changes that could come with the new Organization R.

*This flexibility may not be applicable to the permanent organization but at the same time I do miss being able to plan things with friends after work, but I don't know if it is enough to want to let go of the flexibility of the way I am working now. I don't know myself well enough to know what works best for **me**.*

Though, Guttorm did not seem to agree with himself in Organization T, what kind of working environment that would suit him best, he did either way manage to predict his future quite

well. Like he had anticipated, both his job and the structural framework of Organization R were quite different from how they were in Organization T.

What my data suggest is that a shift in psychological ownership, a change in structural framework and interpersonal relationships along with his awareness of change stand for the major impacts on Guttorm's transitional process.

4.1.3 Analysis of data for Frida's transition

4.1.3.1 Interpersonal relationships

When I interviewed Frida the first time, she had just started working for Organization T, familiarizing herself with the job and her co-workers. In Organization T, Frida expressed concerns regarding interpersonal relationships versus own professional integrity.

…But I feel like I sometimes have to make professional sacrifices and let go of something I think is important in order to maintain a good relationship with my co-workers…I feel like people are a bit skeptic and that it is part of the culture here to argue. I feel like this also has to do with the background of many of the people here – most of them come from the (branch)*, and that being outspoken and not afraid of voicing your opinion is part of the culture.*

Despite the fact that she felt the tone was rather argumentative and almost quarrelsome among the employees sometimes, she still expressed a faith in the staff to make better interpersonal relationships given some more time.

But I think it will help the interpersonal relationships and the learning process in the organization, once we get to know each other and understand each other's languages and gain more respect for each other…This is exciting and I feel that I need to have an open mind about things and other people's opinions.

When I interviewed her the second time, in Organization R, Frida's skepticism was exchanged with positive experiences regarding her co-workers.

Where I have developed the most during this period is in the area of interpersonal relationships. I have learned that things can be done in different ways and still be good. I have learned that we are all different kinds of people and that there may be a lot of valuable thinking and ideas inside someone who might be quiet and not very outgoing. From that I have also learned to let some time pass before I make up my mind about people. I have also learned that if people are shown confidence and trust they will blossom.

In terms of interpersonal relationships, it emerged that Frida had a successful transitional journey.

4.1.3.2 Psychological ownership

When Frida, during the first interview, talked about her future in Organization R, she

expressed that it was in the permanent organization she would be doing the kind of work that

she really enjoyed.

I am looking forward to (branch) since that is where I enjoy being. I am looking forward to when people will be content. I am looking forward to be able to offer my services.

Though expressing more confidence in the job that she *would* have in Organization R, than

the job she was in, she also expressed an excitement over the new and unfamiliar territory of

Organization T.

There are tasks that I am not so confident in doing and I feel like I have to take a deep breath in order to motivate myself to do them…. When I was asked to do this, I felt that this was new territory for me and that I was a bit outside my comfort zone. Although a bit insecure, I started thinking that this might be fun, too.

When I interviewed her again, two years later in Organization R, she was happy to have been

given a lot of autonomy and freedom in executing her job.

I have been able to decide most of the process myself and I have been able to interview and select my own staff. I have made proposals and have been heard by Kåre on issues that I think will improve the working conditions of my staff, thus ensuring that we won't loose them right away to other jobs. And even if these are issues that cost money and that there maybe someone here who feels that this is money that could have been spent differently, I fight for my field. But at the same time I also feel like I give some, too.

Having now, in Organization R a staff she is responsible for, and having been given the power

to select it herself, my data collection may suggest that she has increased her psychological

ownership of her job from Organization T to Organization R.

4.1.3.3 Structure/ framework

When Frida described her first impressions of Organization T it emerged a longing for a more

structured working environment.

The working environment here is, in my opinion, messy – in a physical sense. The working environment also reflects the fact that there are a lot of young people working here. Young people who still do not put the dirty dishes in the dishwasher and take their lunch break whenever they are hungry and not at a certain hour…I am looking forward to life here after the launch… I like better knowing when I am going to be at work and when I am not. I do not want to have a bad conscious when I am not at work…I have a life outside of work. I don't think working from home is easy.

Making structures was also a motivating factor in her work at the time.

...Right now it is to structure all the great work that is already done in order to reach the goal. Making systems and structure things are things that motivate me.

When she talked about the future in Organization R, she expressed an excitement for things falling more into place, for the structure to come out.

It is going to be interesting, too (becoming a permanent organization) because of the history of those who work here now, what we have, is the fact that things "float". And I am curious and excited to see if the structure will come out.

Interviewing her for the second time in Organization R, Frida expressed some frustration regarding a heavy workload and that she felt she did not want to work as much overtime anymore as she had in Organization T.

...But now I don't think it's right that I should work as much overtime. I have put down a lot of work in Organization R in making good systems to ensure a good working environment. Such as planning carefully for the people I am responsible for, when they are going to work etc. But I feel like I have not finished the process of getting together the systems and routines yet, and already there are demands for coming up with new activities for the public.

What emerged from the interviews with Frida were positive experiences on the interpersonal level along with increased psychological ownership. But her predictions and wishes for the structural framework of Organization R did not quite meet her expectations.

4.1.4 Analysis of data for Billy's transition

The most dedicated and committed employee among my informants was Billy. He had a passion and an undivided enthusiasm for what he was doing and the life that came with it. The long hours and weekends as well in Organization T, seemed a natural consequence of the job territory and he did not question it.

4.1.4.1 Psychological ownership

I work approximately seventy hours a week and weekends in addition. But I do it out of my own free will. I have a "loose" situation at home since I live alone. The (branch) is my life right now.

Billy had been a part of the project since the early beginning, when the institution was only an idea about to be written down on a piece of paper.

When we started there was nothing here. No money, no house, no nothing. And then all of a sudden I have an office and a pen and I started writing. I have changed offices four times since I started working on the project and with each move it has felt like a step in the right direction. Moving into these premises, where the institution is going to have its localities feels like a big milestone. These milestones make us feel that we develop. We feel that we have increased and become more advanced.

When talking about motivation, Billy also expressed a rather high degree of freedom in his job for Organization T.

As a foundation I think it's the commitment. Then it is freedom or power that I feel has given me the right to do almost anything I want to, inside a given framework. I am creating something, almost like building Lego. I work inside a field that I consider important.

About the future in Organization R, Billy predicted a job not very different from the one he had now.

…I still would like to have a working environment characterized by an explosive manner of working inside the framework that is given us, with projects also in the permanent organization. Still, I don't have a desire to be some kind of guerilla soldier only seeking the projects. What is unique is that I have, to a certain degree, a chance to decide and create how my job in the permanent organization is going to be, since I have been a part of this project since its early, early beginning.

4.1.4.2 Structure/ framework

Meeting him again in Organization R he was still committed but some of the positive energy I felt in the first interview was gone. He expressed dissatisfaction with how Organization R was operated.

I still don't feel that we are a permanent organization in the way we are operated. I think there were more elements of operation when we were in the project organization.
The structure of the organization is different, but if things are different for real, I don't know. For those of us who have to carry out projects, we still have to do it, no matter how the structure is. There is a delay on things now, that we did not have before and I am wondering whether this has to do with the new structure or not. I sometimes ask myself, whether or not this new structure is designed to handle the kind of projects that I work with. I don't know. I sometimes feel that the expectations of what the permanent organization is, not always fit or give the best framework for the type of tasks that I work with, that were already there.

He expressed how the structural changes had contributed to a division of the staff.

.. this framework was probably established when some functions were added when we launched the project, and these are people who have their daily work that has to do with the administration of the operation. But nevertheless, we are still quite a few people in this organization who work on projects, having small goals in front of us at all times. And I think there is a….not a conflict, that is too strong a word, but rather a distinction of interests between these two groups of employees in the organization.

4.1.4.3 Grief process

In Organization T, Billy expressed a great deal of gratitude for his boss, Pelle and his ability to handle stressful situations.

We are blessed with a very good leader. He has the ability to break the problem into pieces at the same time as he tries to calm down the situation and draw the big picture and regain control. He enables us to refocus and let go of the insecurity that such a situation creates. This is important when the going gets tough.

Billy, also in the second interview, expressed a lot of respect for Pelle's leadership style and what it did to his own performance as an employee and for the organization as a whole.

By having the professional expertise in the field we work in, he expressed a confidence and a calm that made me believe in what I was doing.
(Talking about vision) *....in retrospect, I can see how much good leadership meant in the project organization and that the vision that we had was something that the entire staff lived and felt every day. With the new leader and the new organization trying to establish a new vision or ignite the one from the project, that was when I realized how great things were in the project organization.*

To summarize, what my data collection suggest is that Billy experienced a shift in psychological ownership from Organization T to Organization R, due to changes in the structural framework. He also experienced that his predictions for the future did not come entirely through. Finally, Billy seemed to suffer from grief from the life he had had in Organization T, which might have been reinforced by the departure of the project manager that he respected so much.

4.1.5 Goal-orientation/vision

The results of my analysis for *goal orientation/vision* for my informants proved difficult to fit into the individual data analysis about their transitional processes. The fact that they had different opinions on what the vision of the organization was, I had expected. I also expected them to have different apprehensions of what a vision is. What made it difficult to implement the results into the individual descriptions of their transitional processes was, that for neither one of them their described visions reached beyond the completion of the project. Their visions seemed to be the completion of the project and so the vision was not a part of the transitional process. Despite not being a part of the transitional process I think the analysis for *goal-orientation vision* can shed some light on the organizational transitional process after all. I therefore choose to present these results in this separate categorical section, instead of the individual sections of the informants.

When asking Guttorm about the vision of Organization T, his answers revealed that he did not have a clear idea about this.

It is hard to express the vision. An example of a little bit cheesy vision that has been said before is, "we are going to be a much better (type of institution) *than all the others in the world". And that is just nonsense....So instead of saying that, we may say things like "we are going to be good and we are going to execute what we were put here to do, namely (......)" - all the dry but safe (...) terms.*

Both Frida and Billy seemed to have had the same apprehension as Guttorm of a vision being closely related to the concept *slogan*.

At the seminar (for the project organization) *we had rather big discussions about what the institution's vision should be. Some said, "It is going to* (branch)*!"* (Frida)
I don't know, is it the mandate you mean...We should have had some kind of slogan now like: "Yes we can!"(Billy)

Guttorm and Billy expressed both clear mental pictures of the goal.

I experience that the colleagues here are united. We all have the same and very evident and defined goal of what we are going to do. The questions among us are about how to get there as fast as possible. No one is wondering what to do. (Billy)
The organizational priorities of the organization are very clear to me. (Guttorm)

Frida was new in Organization T and just starting to familiarize herself with the goal.
And this is something I think I can see the framework of now, where we in a way are feeling each other out on a personal level, but also the feel of what…. (institution) *is going to be.* (Frida)

Once in the permanent organization, their answers reflected that the vision had not been a part of their transitional processes.

(Whether or not the vision was the same in Organization R as it was in Organization T) *No, I don't think so. Not quite the same. We have had a new seminar where we worked with that and ended up drawing up a vision statement, which I thought was good…. It was easier to be to the point now, since we have a greater awareness of what is realistic and what is not.* (Frida).

…. yes, for those of us who continued on from the project organization to the permanent organization. However, we are an organization now, that together consist of very different types of people, tasks and ways to work and I don't think there is a vision that has that something that everybody can relate to….When the project organization ceased to exist, there was a vacuum so to speak. (Billy)

We have had some changes in the staff and besides, what we thought back then does not necessarily fit how everything turned out in the end. And I think it is a good thing that we adjust to the reality and the status quo. In ten years from now there might be other people here and the trends will be different and then the vision will have to change again. (Guttorm)

What emerged from the interviews in terms of *vision/goal orientation* was a high degree of *unclearity* about the vision, but a certain degree of conformity when describing the goal - the completion of the institution.

In this chapter I have presented the results of my data analysis, based on a categorical coding system. What has emerged is that for my three informants the categories *psychological ownership*, *framework/structure* and *interpersonal relationships* have been central as learning categories in their processes. And for two of my informants their levels of *awareness* in the

transitional process have had an impact on the outcome of it. For one of my informants, it also emerged that he was experiencing a *process of grief*, as a result of the major changes in Organization T/R. The results are summarized in a table, see appendix D. In the following chapter, this data analysis will be discussed based on the theoretical perspectives discussed earlier in this thesis.

5 Discussions

In this chapter I will discuss my findings from the previous chapter in the light of the previously discussed theoretical perspectives. In the discussion I will also use some of my findings from an interview conducted via e-mail with a Canadian manager of a similar institution as that of Organization R, having gone through a similar transitional process. For the main part, this section will contain discussions on each individual informants experienced transitional process. In order to do so, however, a discussion on the organizational differences between Organization T and R is necessary and must serve as a backdrop when discussing my informants individually. I will in the end discuss my findings regarding goal-orientation/ vision in a broader light. This because, I think the findings that emerged, was something that might have had an impact not only on each individual informant but also on the transitional process as a whole. I also think these findings can partly be explanatory for the shift in energy that I experienced when doing my second round of interviews.

5.1 Organizational differences

A less structured work environment will generally give the employees more control and autonomy in regards to their job and work environment (O'driscoll et al., 2006). More control of the target will, according to Piers give the employees increased psychological ownership (Pierce et al., 2003). Organization R was, without a doubt surrounded by more structures or fences, as Piers calls them, than Organization T. Having to adjust to a tight governmental budget, my findings suggest that due to these differences, compared to Organization T, Organization R did not, in my opinion, stand a chance in competing with the same amount of creational freedom that the employees were given in Organization T. This may not necessarily indicate that Organization R is currently operated based on controlling and restrictive principles compared to other similar institutions.

What is special for the operating terms of Organization R is the *difference* between the two Organizations T and R and for the employees comparing the one reality with the other, the difference must have seemed enormous. Using the definition of transition by Chick and Meleis these employees had to construct a new reality almost over night. And for some the changes were chosen, while others experienced them as forced. In the light of Lundin and Søderholm's theories, these employees went from working for an organization being strictly

focused around *action* to an organization based on *decision-making*. The *task*-focus of Organization T was replaced with *goal*-orientation of Organization R. The *time* aspect of the operation, which had been so crucial in Organization T, was not there anymore in Organization R. And as Ragna's observations show, the pace of the organization slowed down considerably after the launch.

For some of these people it emerged a feeling of frustration experiencing this vast change that was big and happened fast, from one day to the other. The transitional processes of each individual informant must therefore be seen in the light of the organizational differences between organization T and R. In addition to these rather extensive changes, came the fact that the project manager, Pelle, chose to leave his position soon after the launch of the project, another major change that the informants had to deal with. Supported by Guttorm's testimonial and the theories of O'driscoll and Pierce, Pelle's departure was good for Organization R. Having the history that he had with the extreme commitment to the task of Organization T, may have obstructed his ability to promote change in Organization R. At the same time, however, using Bridges' perspective, an opportune question to ask is: Was this change absolutely necessary at that particular moment? These findings suggest that this added change at that particular moment contributed to some of the frustration making the transitional process appearing even more extreme than absolutely necessary for some of the informants.

5.2 Guttorm's transition

My impression of Guttorm from both interviews was a warm, welcoming and reflective person. Whatever he expressed, positively or negatively charged initially, he always stopped and reflected over his statements and then neutralizing them with adding a different aspect, trying to see things from different angles. During both interviews he expressed an enormous gratitude for having been given the opportunity to be part of such an inspiring project, enhancing both his professional expertise and his hobby and passion. In both interviews he expressed both the limitations and the possibilities of the different organizational styles. Though, after the second interview the main impression I was left with was a shift in energy on his behalf. This is what I wrote in my interview journal:

He is still thankful and happy. He is appreciating other things now. But his presence is more that of acceptance than of passion. His passion for his work is not as it was. Is the wine lottery going to be enough to keep him on board for very long?

Based on the theory section, my findings regarding Guttorm's transitional process can best be explained by looking at a shift in *psychological ownership*, the changes in *structure and framework* and *interpersonal relationships* from Organization T to Organization R and ultimately, his *awareness of change.*

As Pierce and Kostova argue, the most obvious and most effective way of investing oneself in an object is by creating it (Pierce et al., 2003). Where as in Organization T, Guttorm's job was that of the creation of a system, his job in Organization R was maintenance and update of the system he had created. This may indicate that he was now less invested in his job and he even said straight out that there were tasks in the permanent organization that were just boring. In addition to being a different job, with less creational freedom, Guttorm himself had grown and developed since his early days in Organization T. Having been through the process with Organization T he said he had developed a lot, professionally. This contradicts Grabher, arguing that learning is a problem in project organization, since the short time frame does not enhance long-term, trusting relationships between people which is necessary for learning to take place (Grabher, 2002). First of all, as I will discuss later, Guttorm experienced closer interpersonal relationships in Organization T than in Organization R. Second of all he even claims that the increased knowledge that he and the other people from the project organization brought with them, could be a limiting factor to Organization R, as some of these people could have an audacious attitude in discussions about how things should be done in Organization R. Randi, the Executive Director of a similar institution in North America, experienced a similar situation in an interview conducted via e-mail. Having the former director on board the new organization (though in a different position) was, in her opinion not ideal as the former director had difficulties embracing the new, more business-like reality of the new organization. These findings confirm Owen's "Open Space" theory, that these highly committed workers with a high degree of psychological ownership might have obstructed the moment of creation in Organization R, by making statements based on the past rather than asking questions that could make room for creativity (Owen, 2000). This also confirms O'driscoll's theory how the highly committed worker can also act as a source of resistance to change (O'driscoll et al., 2006).

What my findings may suggest is that the change in character of Guttorm's job, combined with his heightened professional level may have caused a reduction in psychological ownership of his job. In addition, what these findings suggest is that a high level of psychological ownership can also be destructive in creational processes.

How an individual will relate to its organization, depends on the organizational design (O'driscoll et al., 2006). What Guttorm seems to appreciate with Organization R is the structure and framework. This is not saying that he did not like the structure of Organization T, rather the contrary. Guttorm thrived from the loose structural framework of Organization T, putting in an enormous amount of hours at work letting his job become his life. His investment in the target of Organization T suggests that the loose structures made that possible, confirming O'driscoll and Piers. But since then his private situation had changed and he said he is a happier guy now, with other priorities besides his job. In that sense the structural framework of Organization R suits his lifestyle better now. Though he was frustrated at how little he got done only working 37,5 hours a week he also said it was good to be taken care of with the increased structural framework of Organization R. What these findings may add to this picture, however, is Senge's theories on *aspiration* – focusing on what people in the organization really wants for themselves (P. M. Senge, 2006). And what Guttorm wanted in the second interview was having tighter structures enabling him to nurture his private life to a larger extent than what was the case before. In that sense, being controlled, to a certain extent, might signify happier employees who get better at balancing the job and the private situation.

For organizations to succeed its members must see the patterns of interdependency within the organization (P. M. Senge, 2006). Representing different kind of expertise the members of Organization T, would based on this theory feel this interdependency even stronger. While in Organization T, Guttorm reported how some of his colleagues had become his best friends, spending time together both on and off work and that this meant a lot as they would exchange important information about each other's work. This experience of friendships may be explained by Lundin and Søderholm's theories on the project team's shared commitment to the task, experienced by members of the project organization (Lundin & Søderholm, 1995). Because when in Organization R, Guttorm explained how the employees probably had a more normal colleagual relationship with a wine lottery and normal conversations during the lunch break. To add to this scenario, Guttorm had changed his priorities in his private sphere something that also had affected his involvement in interpersonal relationships at work. What these findings may suggest is that Guttorm experienced a looser connection to his co-workers in Organization R than what was the case for Organization T. Having a job characterized by more maintenance than by creation and without the constant pressure of a deadline, he is probably not as dependant on his co-workers for exchange of information as was the case in

Organization T. In the light of Wheatley's theories on *quantum world living* this may suggest that this shift in how interpersonal relationships were nurtured, has resulted in Guttorm experiencing a decrease in creativity from Organization T to Organization R (Wheatley, 1999).

A human system is adaptable, because it is *aware* (Owen, 2000) and transition is the process of surfacing awareness (Chick & Meleis, 1986). Guttorm seems to have had a high level of awareness of the transition that was in store for him. When in Organization T, Guttorm painted a very sober picture of his future in Organization R. He predicted a job very different from the one he had now in Organization T. A job not as exciting, but at the same time more comfortable. He expressed an open mind to whether or not he would stay on board for very long after the launch. The only promise he had given himself was to be a part in the creation of the project and stay on board at least until the launch. The acceptance of his life in Organization R, may suggest that his awareness of change, his predictions becoming reality, made it easer for him to adapt to the situation. Maybe not his dream come true, but it was his predictions coming true. But when Chick and Meleis argue that levels of awareness will influence level of engagement (Chick & Meleis, 1986), Guttorm's engagement was rather decreased in Organization R, despite his high level of awareness. Owen argues that awareness of change makes us able to do something about a situation (Owen, 2000), but as merely a part of an organization, a human system, Guttorm could not be expected to influence the processes alone, to make his future better for himself in Organization R. If this outcome could have been different, will be discussed later in this chapter under *goal orientation/vision*.

I want to compare my findings about Guttorm's transitional process with a journey I took to Israel with my family many years ago. We started the journey with an action filled week of travelling by bus across the country, visiting the historical and politically troubled areas. Though a bit extreme and sometimes a little too exciting, I learned more in that week than any class at school would have been able to teach me over several years. The following week, however, was set aside for sunbathing and relaxation in Eilath, in the south of Israel. As expected, a very comfortable week but compared to the previous week it was boring and I got a little restless. Guttorm's journey in Organization T and R seems to have similarities to my journey in Israel. As I was, he was well prepared for it, and as I did, he learned a lot in the first part of his journey, and as I did, he got restless once the comfortable part of the journey started. So what remains to be seen is if comfort and the thrill of the wine lottery is enough to keep this slightly restless spirit aboard Organization R for much longer.

5.3 Frida's transition

I think Frida has experienced the transitional process best of the three, though not as good as I had expected up front. When coming back from the second interview with Frida, I wrote in my interview journal:

She is not as satisfied as I had expected. From how I interpreted Guttorm in his second interview I thought the new structures of Organization R would suit her perfectly. On an interpersonal level she seems happier, though. She seems to have learned to know and appreciate her co-workers in Organization T despite her slight skepticism towards the young staff, the argumentative tone and her own feared shortcomings in the professional field of the institution.

What my findings suggest is that Frida's transitional journey can be explained based on her experiences having to do with *interpersonal relationships*, an increase in *psychological ownership* from Organization T to Organization R and the *structure/framework* of Organization R.

For learning to take place in a change process, showing through communication that we accept one another for who we are, is important (Owen, 2000). Frida's transitional journey had resulted in very good experiences on the interpersonal level. Going from, in the first interview, being somewhat concerned by the fact that she felt she had to make professional sacrifices in order to maintain a good relationship with her co-workers, she now felt that her major development had been to see that things can in fact be done in many different ways and still be good. Torbert describes what he calls the limitations of our awareness, which produces assumptions (Torbert, 2004). In the first interview, though making statements about the type of people she was working with based on assumptions, she also expressed an open-minded attitude of co-operation and communication with her co-workers. Frida had, by setting aside her assumptions, managed to see the valuable thinking and ideas that exist inside her co-workers and the people she was responsible for. Intentional or not, she had taken the early steps of what Torbert calls *action inquiry* (Torbert, 2004). Senge uses the metaphor of the gardener and the seed when describing the leader's role in organizational development, where the gardener has to make the circumstances optimal for the seed wanting to grow (P. M. Senge, 1999). And likewise, when Frida talked about her experiences as a leader, she used a flower-metaphor. She had learned that by giving people confidence and trust they would

blossom. My findings regarding Frida and her experiences about interpersonal relationships and leadership confirms the theories of Torbert, Senge and Owen.

As for Guttorm, Frida also experienced the importance of what Senge calls "understanding complexity", referring to how the members of an organization need to see the interdependency that exist between them in order to succeed (P. M. Senge, 2006). Frida's motives for seeking information among her co-workers were, though, somehow different. On the vocational level, she expressed in both of her interviews a humble attitude towards the vocation of the organization. She felt her competence, though in the same field, lacked the very specific knowledge of the particular branch of the organization. This suggests that she had to be more open and curious to what other people had to say since she needed to gather this information from others, in other words, she experienced a *dependency* on her co-workers to expand her knowledge of the vocation of the organization.

Psychological ownership enables people to define themselves and to express to others their self-identity (Pierce et al., 2003). My findings suggest that Frida acquired her psychological ownership through various processes, and unlike Guttorm especially, it was in the permanent organization Frida got to use her real potential and her professional expertise. In Organization R she had been given a great deal of freedom and power to create the team that she needed in order to execute her job, hence being able to define herself more accurately in Organization R than what was the case in Organization T.

What my findings suggest, however is that the basis for the psychological ownership she felt in Organization R, had started to develop in Organization T. Investing oneself and coming to know the target will increase psychological ownership (Pierce et al., 2003). In Organization T she had to execute tasks she was not familiar with or felt comfortable in doing, this requiring a larger amount of investment. Furthermore, using the Senge-metaphor and theory, like she herself had experienced as a leader, she had also been shown confidence by her gardener, Pelle, to grow into the employee she now was, with an increased psychological ownership to her job.

Another contributing factor to her increased psychological ownership can be explained by the theories of Ellinger and Watkins. One of the empowering behaviors that a leader can use to facilitate learning in organizations is to remove obstacles (Ellinger et al., 1999). Frida was satisfied with the fact that she had managed to create good working conditions for the people

she was responsible for. This had been made possible since she had been supported by her leader on important issues concerning structures for her staff, despite oppositions from other people of the organization. What Kåre did, was to remove the obstacle of the financial challenges of Frida's demands. By doing this, Frida became even more in control of her target – her staff. Kåre's use of facilitator for learning, may have contributed to an increase in Frida's psychological ownership for her job.

In the light of Senge's theories on one of the three learning capabilities, *aspiration*, focusing on what the people in the organization really desire (P. M. Senge, 2006), I had expected the new tighter structure of Organization R to suit Frida's life better. After listening to Guttorm's testimonial in Organization R, I had thought this new organization represented a reality closer to what Frida wanted for herself, being able to plan things more carefully and being able to nurture family-life outside of work. But, while being occupied with making the structures and working conditions good for her staff, she seems to have forgotten herself and *her* desires regarding the same. Saying she found it hard to put her foot down when the workload got too heavy, may indicate that the new structures did not work for Frida as they did for Guttorm.

Despite the fact that Frida experienced some frustration regarding a heavy workload at the time of the second interview, I feel that in time Frida will experience life in Organization R as more fulfilling than Guttorm does. Having a positive experience regarding interpersonal relationships and psychological ownership from Organization T to Organization R and feeling the support from Kåre will, I think, make her strong enough to make the necessary adjustments so that her job structure will meet her demands for a rich family life as well.

5.4 Billy's transition

Of my three informants experiencing the transition, Billy seems the least satisfied with the new status quo of life in Organization R. After my second interview with Billy I wrote in my interview journal:

What has happened to Billy? The energetic employee is still there, but he seems trapped. Trapped inside a balloon, where he and his team keep doing their stuff, but have lost some of the touch with the rest of the organization. Maybe someone should catch them and drag them in, before they get too detached?

My findings suggest that the unsettledness that I experienced in the second interview can be explained due to a *decrease in psychological ownership* and *the changes in the structural*

framework from Organization T to Organization R in addition to a *grief process* not having been completed.

When in Organization T, Billy seemed to be experiencing a high degree of *psychological ownership*, the highest I would say among my informants. This psychological ownership was acquired through several processes. In organizational development, individuals may feel ownership for the product they create or the organization they establish (Pierce et al., 2003). Having experienced and been a part of the growth process of Organization T/R, evolving from idea to a physical institution, Billy had a long and dedicated involvement in the project. He had his education in the field of the institution and a passion for the particular branch, confirming Senge's theory on *aspiration.* This project was something Billy really wanted to become reality. It was something he desired. His enormous commitment suggests that in Billy's case, Pierce and Kostova's definition of psychological ownership as "the state in which individuals feel as though the target of ownership or piece of that target is theirs" (Pierce et al., 2003) must be interpreted in the widest sense as feeling ownership to the *entire* target. Another contributing factor to the high degree of psychological ownership was the fact that privately, Billy was living alone, which enabled him to spend as much time as he wanted to on this job. And the loose structures of Organization T allowed him to do this. Seeing this in the light of Pierce's theory on how organizational fences can limit one's chances of becoming in touch with the target of the organization, working for an organization practically without "fences", increased Billy´s chances of becoming in contact with his target (Pierce, Kostova et al. 2003). This suggests that the organizational structure of Organization T also contributed to Billy's high level of psychological ownership to the task.

As all my three informants, Billy spoke very highly of Pelle, the project manager. Billy said Pelle's leadership style and his professional expertise made him (Billy) believe in what he was doing. Though none of the theoretical perspectives on leadership in this thesis suggest that the best leader is the one having the most knowledge and expertise in the field of its organization, having this particular authority was, nevertheless something Billy valued. What is interesting though, is that all three of my informants seemed to thrive from Pelle's leadership style. As the manger of a project organization containing multiple functioning areas, Pelle could impossibly have owned professional expertise in all of these areas. What is more likely to believe then is that he was, as Ellinger and Watkins points to, good at nurturing and developing the knowledge capital of the organization, hence stimulating to learning in Organization T (Ellinger et al., 1999).

Billy was the one of my informants being the most critical to the structure of Organization R. Surrounded by more fences now, Billy felt that the new structures were not compatible with the kind of work he was doing for the organization, confirming Pierce and Kostova's theories on psychological ownership depending on an ability to control and invest oneself into the target (Pierce et al., 2003). And Billy's experience was that the new structures limited his abilities to control and invest in the kind of work he was doing for the organization.

For profound change to take place in an organization both an *inner* and an *outer* shift is necessary (P. M. Senge, 1999). To argue, only based on Billy's testimonial, whether or not the organizational changes were merely outer shifts*,* but that a shift in people's values, aspirations and behaviors, an inner shift, are still those of Organization T, is not possible. Either way, by not acknowledging the changes and keep on working like he had always done, Billy was not promoting profound change to take place in Organization R. Seeing Billy as a highly committed employee his behavior might confirm O'Driscoll's theories on how such a worker can in some incidents be a resistance to change (O'driscoll et al., 2006).

Billy also experienced a division of the staff between those dealing with the administration of the operation and those working on projects. This division created a friction, which was probably a new experience for the people coming from the strong, united team of the project organization, where, according to Lundin and Søderholm's theories, conflicts are rare (Lundin & Søderholm, 1995).

But what I think made Billy this critical was mainly due to a process of grief not having come to an end. Being in what Bridges calls the neutral zone, feelings of anxiety from loss of the old, safe boundaries often arise (Bridges, 2009). Paradoxically, it was the transitions into *more* safe boundaries of Organization R that seemed to produce these feelings for Billy. Why was this? Systems of human beings have the ability to be aware of change and therefore be able to do something about it and adapt to the new reality (Owen, 2000). But what if your changed reality did not turn out the way you thought it would? Billy's expectations for the future Organization R, were not met. The scenario he had pictured for himself did not to a full extent become reality. This made him less aware of how the new situation would be, as opposed to Guttorm who predicted his future more correctly. Because he was not so aware of the change, it made him less capable of adapting. Honoring the project organization and the management of it, like he did in the second interview, bears similarities to the *memory stage* of Owen's grief at work process. By clinging on to the past, the necessary development of the

transitional process is obstructed. So despite Lundin and Søderholm's theories on how the employees in project organizations are more prepared for a transition and thus less resistant to change (Lundin & Søderholm, 1995), my data analysis suggest that a grief process may overshadow this and obstruct such a development.

The core of the behavior of the project organization is *action* as opposed to *decision-making* which is the core of behavior in the permanent organization (Lundin & Søderholm, 1995). As these are two very different organizational types so were the two interviews with Billy. During the first interview in Organization T, I learned to know a man oozing with engagement and commitment to what he was doing. He met obstacles and problems along his way, but none too difficult to overcome. He saw the goal and felt the energy from the rest of the staff and that they pushed in the same direction. When I met him again for the second interview in Organization R, I still met a highly committed worker but now more critical to his surroundings. Senge claims that the committed worker will be willing to invest in change initiatives, but that such a worker can be more challenging for the leader since he/she is independent and hard to control (P. M. Senge, 1999). If my findings regarding Billy confirm Senge's theories, which I think they do, he is a true asset to Organization R. This outspoken employee is much more fruitful to the organization than the compliant one, as creative thinking will be revealed and made useful (P. M. Senge, 1999). Therefore, if Billy is stuck inside a balloon as I indicated in my diary entry, he should be taken out and into communication again. What my findings may indicate is that having shifted from the *action*-focused project organization, to a *decision-making*-focused permanent organization, also requires a change in communication.

5.5   Transition and vision – they belong together

The discussions above, indicate that Guttorm has lost some of his energy going from Organization T to Organization R. Frida is in Organization R experiencing some frustration due to a heavy work load and Billy is experiencing a division of the staff and a slight friction between the two parts. Can this be explained due to factors concerning the vision or lack of such for the transitional process of Organization T/R?

In the process of reaching the vision, the mental picture of it, serves as an engine to get there (Owen, 2000). Though all three of my informants *talked* about a vision their answers described more mental images of an institution than those of a power bringing them beyond the actual physical creation of the institution. In Organization T, their answers reflected

mental images of the physical institution that were quite conform and might have served the purpose of Owen's powerful engine – until the launch. It emerged during this interview process that there was no clear common vision for all the informants, and a vision that also had the ability to cover both Organization T and Organization R.

As Lundin and Søderholm argue, the *task* is the reason for being in a project organization (Lundin & Søderholm, 1995). I want to ask is the task enough to serve as a vision? In Organization T the vision seems to have been the *task*. So in Organization T, Owen's engine was at its strongest – being pushed by a united staff eager to complete the task. But what was the engine like after the launch? When in the first interview they were talking about their future in Organization R, the informants *predicted* different scenarios. These findings suggest that when the project was completed so was their vision, leaving Organization R a little bewildered not getting the necessary push from a united staff pushing in the same direction anymore. Instead, all they had left when the project was complete and Organization R was starting up were their own individual *predictions* with varying degree of fulfillment.

Predictions: Somewhat different mental pictures of the future.

Outcome: An organizational reality not completely equal to any of the organizataion's members mental picture.

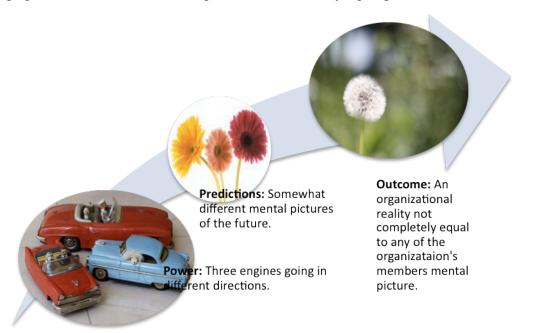**Power:** Three engines going in different directions.

Figure 2: *The limitations of individual predictions*

Vision is both an offensive and defensive skill (Hickman & Silva, 1985). Guttorm, like mentioned above, pinpointed his future quite rightly and adapted accordingly. Though with a vision embracing and re-defining his position to become something more exciting than his predictions, the organization might have been able to act more offensive, preparing for a better future for Guttorm in Organization R. With a different and more optimistic scenario in

mind, Guttorm's contribution to the engine of vision could have been stronger and kept on pushing also after the launch. Neither Frida nor Billy's predictions came 100% true. They both had predictions of their future in Organization R, reality just did not turn out as predicted. With a vision encompassing the transition into Organization R, all three informants could have shared a common vision and contributed accordingly to it being fulfilled.

Randi's, the Executive Director in North America, experiences may add to this picture. She explained how she had had difficulties in embracing the plans and crafting of the vision of the organization, since she had been hired after this work was completed. Kåre, not having been able to take part in this work either on behalf of Organization R, may have contributed to the vacuum that Billy described. This not only confirms Senge's theories of how the creation of a vision is an executive *responsibility* (P. Senge, 2000), it is also *necessary*, giving the engine a captain who knows the direction well.

My data analysis suggest that instead of having a common vision to guide them through the transition, the absence of such a common *vision* had allowed for three different sets of *predictions* to produce in my informants' minds instead. And not everybody's prediction came true. In addition, it may be the case that Pelle left as the captain a little too early, before the ship of Organization R had established the new route of its journey into the future.

In this chapter I have discussed my data analysis for each individual informant as well as the analysis for goal orientation/vision, which has been discussed generally for the organization. These findings have been discussed based on the theoretical perspectives presented earlier. My findings indicate that the individual informants have experienced the transitional process very differently and that the *vision/ goal orientation* may have had its limitations for the process. In the next and final chapter of this thesis I will draw a conclusion from these findings and answer my research questions.

6 Conclusion

In this thesis I have conducted a research on organizational learning in a transitional process. I have used case study as a method in the sense that I have looked at one organization's transitional process. Having performed in-depth interviews with three employees concerning this process, this case study also contains a considerable element of phenomenology. My research question was:

How was/is the transitional process a process of learning for Organization T/R?

6.1 Findings

Primarily, I will present my findings for the factors describing the transitional process of my informants and then those explaining learning. Further, I will answer my research questions based on this information.

6.1.1 Transition factors

I found that all three of my informants had ideas about their future, though it cannot for all three of them be called an *awareness of change*. Whereas Guttorm predicted his future quite well and adapted accordingly, Frida and Billy had predicted scenarios that did not turn out quite as expected and were therefore not fully adapted to their new reality at the time of the second interview, confirming Owen (2000). Guttorm's awareness did not, however, increase his level of engagement to his new job in the permanent organization as stated by Chick and Meleis (Chick & Meleis, 1986).

I also found that during Billy's second interview it emerged a longing for what had been, resembling the memory stage of a *grief process*, suggesting that he needs to complete the process before he can embrace the new reality (Owen, 2000).[1]

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[1] When going through the transcribed material from Billy's second interview I realized how much of the material was dedicated to the project organization and the management of it. When he did talk about the permanent organization he described a structure that did not work for the kind of work that he did in the same way the project organization had. Devoting this much time to what I considered the past made me think of Owen's *"grief process"* and how he describes it to be *"clinging on to the past"*. When doing the member check however, Billy came back to me, feeling that these two phrases were not accurate enough to describe his experience. He wanted to address that *if* what he experieneced could in any way be called grief it was not for the past, but rather for the the present and the future. The present because he felt that it did not take advantage of the potential that was in the organization from work done earlier, and the future because he felt that *his* hopes and wishes for the organization were not those of the current management. Though, this grief is of a slightly different character than the one presented in this thesis, I still consider it grief that in my opinion is not beneficial to the transitional process and should be subject to an open discussion by the organization's members.

6.1.2 Learning factors

For *psychological ownership* I found that the process had an impact on all three of my informants. Whereas Guttorm and Billy experienced a decrease in psychological ownership as a result of the process, Frida experienced an increase. I found that common for all three was that their shifts were in relation to either a reduction (Guttorm and Billy) or an increase (Frida) in creative processes, confirming Pierce, Kostova et al. (2003). This difference in experience concerning psychological ownership, I found were partially due to the changes in organizational structures.

I also found that the very different nature of the two *organizational structures* had different impacts on the three informants. In Frida's case confirms how *aspiration* is important for organizational development, (P. M. Senge, 2006) as she, when in the project organization, looked forward to tighter structures for the permanent organization, giving her a better chance at nurturing family life outside the workplace. My findings for Billy confirm how organizational structures can obstruct the development of psychological ownership (O'driscoll et al., 2006) as he felt that the new structures were incompatible with the kind of work that he was doing for the organization. Guttorm, though thriving from the loose structures of the project organization, had learned to appreciate aspects of the tighter structures of the permanent organization. Also in Guttorm's case, as for Frida, priorities outside the workplace had an impact on how he valued the structures of the organizations, thus confirming Senge as well (2006).

My findings also suggest how *interpersonal relationships* were influencing the transitional processes of Guttorm and Frida but also here, in two different ways. I found that Frida experienced a positive shift on the interpersonal level, by setting assumptions aside to give time and room to discover the valuable thinking hidden inside her co-workers, performing the early steps of *action inquiry* (Torbert, 2004). Guttorm had experienced the interpersonal relationships to be stronger when he was in the project organization, thus experiencing a decrease in engagement for the interpersonal relationships in the permanent organization. These findings confirm how the *team* in project organizations stimulate commitment (Lundin & Søderholm, 1995), and contradicts how learning in project organizations is a problem, requiring a long-term relationship between colleagues (Grabher, 2002).

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A united staff could have contributed with a powerful *vision* (Owen, 2000). I found that a vision had only been a part of the project organization and had ceased to exist with the launch of the project, hence not being a part of the transitional process. I found signs of a transitional process without the power that a vision could have provided them with (Owen, 2000) suggesting a short-coming on behalf of the leadership as to build such a vision (P. Senge, 2000).

My findings for *leadership* suggest a project manager with a leadership style driven by learning rather than authority (P. Senge, 2000), since he had the ability to inspire my three very different informants to the same degree. Leaving the organization when he did, however, and the consequences it had, suggests that Bridges theories on not making too many changes at once in a transitional process (2009) might have created a grief-like atmosphere, obstructing the transitional process.

6.1.3   How was/is the transitional process a process of learning for Organization T/R?

The first and most evident question for me to answer, based on this information, is: Is the transitional process complete in this organization? For my three informants the answers varies. I would say for Guttorm it is, Frida is about to complete hers and Billy has some way to go until he adapts to the new reality.

Yes, it is/was a process of learning for some of them, but in different ways and to different extents. Whereas Frida experienced most learning and personal development on the interpersonal level from the transitional process and made good use of that in the permanent organization, Guttorm had learned more from the creational processes of the project organization. The problem with his transitional process was that the massive amount of knowledge he had acquired from the project organization was not something he needed to execute his new job. This made him almost over-qualified for his new job in the permanent organization, and his engagement dropped. Since I consider Billy's transitional process not to be complete yet, it is also difficult to state whether or not and how he has experienced learning in this process. All the time experiencing how the new organizational structures are limiting his creational processes must, however, be obstructing his learning capabilities. Whether or not he will complete the transitional process is yet to be seen, but my impression is that his frustrations need to be addressed and subject for communication by the management if his transition it is to be complete and learning is to take place.

6.2   What could have been done differently?

Though not wanting to paint a picture of a turbulent transitional process, all in all I conclude that this process has not been a walk in the park for any of my informants and that there are issues to address by the new management in order for the new organizational machinery to run smoothly and to have a staff experiencing development through organizational learning. The main problem, as I have discussed, has been the lack of a vision covering both the project period and the first part of the operational period. The vast change in terms and operating conditions between the two organizational types seemed extreme, and a good, encompassing vision could have contributed to make the employees better prepared for this change and hence making the transitional process more smooth. The result of the lack of such a vision, is in my opinion, a slightly unsettled, bewildered and less united staff than what was the case for the project organization.

That being said, having provided me with all this interesting information these informants have shown a dedication, engagement and reflective capability that *must* be an asset to any organization. How to make each different one of these employees blossom is for the new management to figure out, but that the potential is there is beyond doubt.

6.3   Limitations of the study

I would like to address the limitation regarding the theoretical chapter of this thesis. Performing a case study research with a phenomenological approach required that I exposed as many aspects as possible regarding each informant's experience of the transitional process. Wanting to do this as accurate as possible I soon learned that many aspects surfaced, maybe too many for the scope of this master thesis. I did, however, since they all seemed so inter - connected, prioritize to include them all with only a few theoretical aspects, rather than prioritizing few aspects and many perspectives.

Another limitation to my study has to do with confidentiality where I see there might be a weakness to how these interviews were conducted. When I initially started this process, the project organization had offices in a small, open-space environment. This way it was impossible for the other employees not to notice who went to the conference room with the researcher (me). In addition to that, I as the researcher had not taken enough precautions when contacting each possible interviewee, the result being that they eventually knew of each other.

Though, I felt they spoke rather freely and uninhibited this might have put limitations to what and how they said things to me.

I do hope, however, that despite these limitations, I have been able to provide a valid description of the transitional processes of my informants that can be useful both for the case organization's future work and for future organizations facing a similar process.

6.4 Possibilities for future research

What I learned from this process was that each of my informants' stories became quite personal and that aspects on the personal level also had impacts on how they experienced their transitional processes. In addition, this process consisted of a chain of special events, which had different impacts on each informant. To be able to explore these impacts even deeper, if a similar study was to be conducted, it would therefore be interesting to use only one informant's experience of the process, using a narrative-biographical approach. This approach, focusing on a single individual's experiences of epiphanies and special events, placing them in a wider context (Cresswell, 2007), would serve well to enhance the deeper impacts on a human being going through such a process.

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Appendix

A: Interview guide, round 1

1. **Theme: Formalities and introductions**

   - I tell them about the premises for this interview

   - Introduction of myself

   - Introduction of interviewee

2. **Theme: The present**

   - Tell me about what it is like working here right now for you.

     o If busy and stressful: How are things at home?

3. Theme: Learning

   - Describe how you think interpersonal relationships affect the learning environment in this organization.

   - How is a chaotic situation handled?

     o By you personally

     o By the organization

   - Describe a situation(s) during your time here at Organization T where you felt that you and/or the organization developed – moved forward in the right direction.

     o Possible reasons why this development happened?

4. Theme: Vision

   - What is the vision of this organization?

     o Consequences for daily work

5. Theme: Motivation

   - What drives you in your daily work? / What gets you out of bed in the morning?

     o Organizational priorities

     o Anything that can ruin your motivation?

6. Theme: The future

   - How do you picture life as an employee here after the opening?

     o Anything you look forward to?

     o Anything you fear?

7. Open section: Anything you would like to tell me!!

B: Interview guide, round 2

1.   **Theme: The present**

- Tell me about what it is like working here right now for you.

- (Not for interviewee no 2) You have a new manager:

  1)   Describe him. Different from your previous manager? How?

2. Theme: Learning

- How would you describe the interpersonal relationships in the organization?

- Since you were here during the transition from project organization to permanent organization - can you describe the period when you transformed into the permanent organization?

  o   What was it like for you? Practical, emotional, developmental?

3. Theme: Vision

- Do you feel that the vision of this permanent organization is the same as it was for the project organization?

- Has the transitional process given the vision a new meaning?

4. Theme: The future

- Where do you picture yourself ten years from now?

5. Open section

- Anything you would like to tell me!!

C: Summary of statements, sorted by emotional charge

CATEGORY	Positively/ neutrally charged statements, round 1	Positively/ neutrally charged statements, round 2	Negatively charged statements, round 1	Negatively charged statements, round 2
LEARNING CATEGORIES				
Framework/ structure	6	6	7	14
Ownership	9	5	6	7
Goal orientation/ vision	13	11	7	12
Interpersonal relationships	9	10	6	4
Leadership	2	17	2	0
TRANSITION CATEGORIES				
Awareness of change				
Grief process				

D: Summary of results from data analysis

Name	Learning Category	Transitional Category	
Guttorm	Psychological ownership – minus	Awareness of change - plus	
	Framework/ structure – minus/ plus		
	Interpersonal relationships – minus		
Frida	Interpersonal relationships – plus		Vision
	Psychological ownership – plus		
	Framework/ Structure – plus/minus		
Billy	Psychological ownership – minus	Grief process	
	Structure/ framework – minus	Awareness of change - minus	