Change

Change is the process of becoming different and can refer to people, structures, technologies or organizational processes. Change can be planned and deliberate or reactive in response to some environmental pressure.

Change is one of the most 'unchanging' aspects of all organizations. In spite of its frequency and importance, change is paradoxical. On the one hand, managers prefer organizations that are stable, i.e., that do not change a lot, but on the other hand, managers must respond to changes that affect their organization. Change may occur in a number of areas. For instance, it can take place in the people who work for the organization, in the technology it uses, in the products or services it offers, or in its structure and systems. The dynamic nature of change means that when a change occurs in one area (**structures**/systems, people, **technology** or products/services), the remaining areas are also affected and likely to experience or require some change. The figure below is adapted from Slack and Parent (2006) and illustrates the dynamic and interrelated components of change in organizations. This model is limited in its explanation of change in that it identifies the components but also presents the change process as occurring within organizations and does not mention the impact of the external environment on internal processes, people, technology or systems. The nature of the change process is not indicated by the model and so there is no indication if change is thought to be linear, chaotic or otherwise. The model also assumes change to be the same regardless of **context**.

For a number of years change was seen as a logical series of steps where managers identified a problem and then proposed a solution: this solution would involve identifying the steps that needed to be taken to alleviate the problem. In other
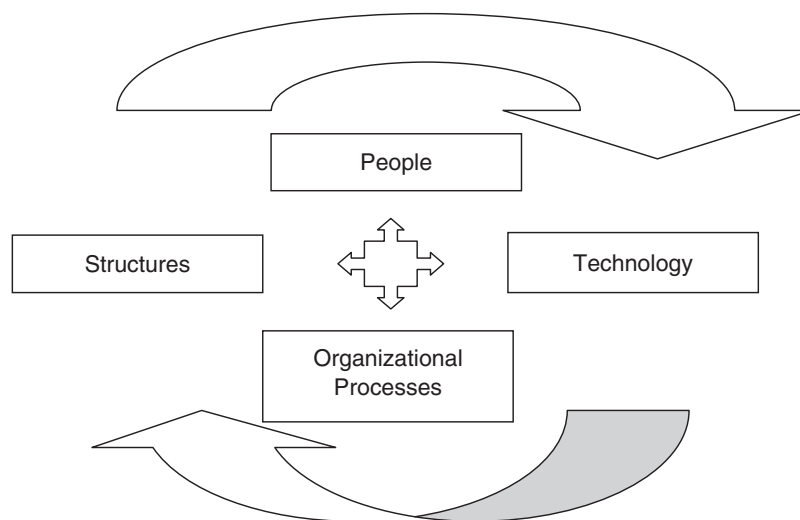

Figure 1 The Dynamics of Change Components

words, change was essentially seen as a linear, sequential process. Much emphasis was placed on the role of individuals acting as change 'agents'. However, this is now considered a 'rational' view of change and does not take into consideration different organizational **contexts** or different types of change.

In the past fifty years we have seen considerable movement in the political and economic situation of many countries. Consequently, new ways of looking at change have emerged. One of the approaches used in the general management literature is termed the contextualist approach. This emanates from the work of Andrew Pettigrew (1985) and his staff at the Centre for Corporate Strategy and Change at the University of Warwick Business School. Pettigrew's contextualist approach is best exemplified in his book about Imperial Chemical Industries, *The Awakening Giant*. Pettigrew is critical of much of the existing work on change. He suggests that it is ahistorical, aprocessual, and acontextual. Much of it, he suggests, views change as being a single event. To counteract his concerns, Pettigrew calls for a multilevel analysis and suggests that we should study changes over the period of the change process. He suggests three areas of change that we should look at, and indicates these areas as the corners of a triangle which he calls one context that he says consists of both an inner and outer context. He also suggests we need to look at the content and processes of change and goes on to look at the interaction among these three areas.

The contextualist approach uses detailed case studies of the change process in order to study change. Girginov and Sandanski (2008) employed the contextualist approach in his study of change in three Bulgarian national sport organizations. The study examined change in conceptual orientation, structures, resources, capabilities and outcomes over a twenty-five-year period from 1980 to 2004. The author suggested that the contextualist approach was useful in that it enabled an in-depth appreciation of the historical, contextual and processual factors that contributed to the changes observed as well as how these influenced the management of the sport organizations.

In contrast to this approach is the one termed 'population ecology', which has its roots in biology and particularly the idea of the survival of the fittest. It is mathematically underpinned and as the name suggests is concerned with the populations of organizations and how these will change to meet the demands placed on them. It also looks at a long change period rather than discrete change events.

Population ecologists see change as a number of phases. In the first phase of the process there is variation in the population of organizations (e.g., variation in **structure**, size, **effectiveness**, etc.). This occurs because managers will have to respond to the various contingency factors that their organization faces (e.g., competition, consumer **demand**, economic conditions, etc.). A number of these organizations will respond more appropriately to these factors. As such, those that change and respond to the contingency factors will survive while those that do not do so will, to use the language of population ecology, be selected out – that is to say, they will fail. This response to the various contingency factors is how organizations change in the population ecology approach.

Cunningham (2002) used the population ecology approach combined with institutional theory, strategic choice and resource dependence theories to examine radical organizational change in physical education and sport programmes. Resource dependence has been a popular theory among scholars, the fundamentals of which can be found in Pfeffer and Salancik's (1978) book *The External Control of*

Organizations. In resource dependence theory, the argument is made that organizations are dependent on their environment for the resources they need to operate. Resource dependence theory is not just about the dependency of organizations on their environment but also about the actions that are engaged in by organization members to ensure the continual flow of vital resources which are needed for that organization's operations. Because the environment of an organization will change, managers will have to engage in activities that will ensure this continued flow of resources. The activities that a manager may engage in are numerous, but the most important are changes in **strategy** such as merges, diversification and joint ventures.

Armstrong-Doherty (1995) used the resource dependency approach to look at the funding of Canadian intercollegiate athletics. Her work focused on the way athletic departments obtained funds. It does not however look at the techniques used by athletic departments to obtain funding. Another approach to understand organizational change is termed 'the life cycle'. As with population ecology, the life-cycle approach to understanding organizational change uses biology as its basis. In contrast to the idea of population ecology this approach looks at single organizations or small groups of organizations. It has been criticized for being too linear and deterministic. Essentially the life-cycle approach sees organizations as going through stages just as humans or animals do. These stages are referred to by various names but may include birth, maturity and death.

The life-cycle approach was developed by John Kimberly (1980) and can help to understand change. It sees this as developing from the birth of an organization, through growth, to maturity and possibly even death. Of course, organizations do not necessarily follow this life cycle in the same manner and some will be born, will grow and mature, and then through some innovation or change, will begin another period of growth. Likewise, death need not be a stage in every organization's life cycle. Kimberly (1987) referred to this method of understanding organizational change as the biographical approach. There are few studies that have substantially applied the life-cycle approach to sport organizations in order to understand the management of change. There are, however, numerous writings on organizations (e.g., Prouty's (1988) work on the US Cycling Federation, and Wolfe's (1989) work on the Dallas Cowboys) which if combined with either the life cycle or contextualist theoretical approaches could help us understand the change process using these theories.

Another approach that is currently popular is termed 'institutional theory'. In this, organizations will change because they are trying to imitate other successful organizations. Because of its emphasis on societal expectations, in the institutional approach the belief is that organizations should be studied from a sociological perspective. It has become the dominant perspective to study both sport organizations (cf. Berrett and Slack, 1999; Southall et al., 2008; Steen-Johnsen, 2008) and other types of organizations (cf. Greenwood et al., 2008; Washington and Ventresca, 2004).

The patterning of organizational elements is another approach which is used in the general management literature and it is one of the more contemporary views on organizational change. It is also the approach that has been utilized to undertake the most advanced work on sport organizations. Several studies have shown that organizations show patterns in the elements by which they are constituted. This patterning is variously referred to as archetypes, design archetypes, configurations, or *gestalts*. With the exception of archetypes this patterning looks only at the structural

change

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elements of organizations. Archetypes also look at the values and beliefs that underpin the structure. The reader should note that there have been criticisms of archetype theory (Kirkpatrick and Ackroyd, 2003) and its application in certain organizational **contexts** such as public service organizations. Kirkpatrick and Ackroyd (2003) provided a detailed analysis of the problematic elements of archetype theory and offered an alternative approach which attempted to resolve the deficiencies in the theory that they had identified.

Greenwood and Hinings (1993) have noted that developments in organizational theory over the past several years have emphasized the importance of considering **structure** (i.e., the system of roles and responsibilities) and values (i.e., statements about what kinds of behaviours or end-states are preferable to others) in relationship to each other in order to understand organizational change. An organizational archetype in this sense is a particular composition of ideas, beliefs, and values connected with structural and systemic attributes. Change occurs because there is a lack of consistency between structures and values. They are, in Hinings and Greenwood's (1988) view, 'schizoid'.

Archetypes are institutionally specific. Kikulis et al. (1989), using a group of Canadian national sport organizations, identified three kinds of organization that they termed a 'kitchen table', an 'executive office' and a 'boardroom' design. The kitchen table design is relatively unstructured, with a low hierarchy of authority and attendant values that favour a volunteer-controlled organization where membership preferences and quality service are seen to produce an effective organization. In the boardroom design there is more structuring, with an emphasis still remaining on volunteers who are assisted by professionals. In the executive office design there is a structured organization where decisions are made by professionals who operate at the mid-levels of the organization. These professionals are assisted by volunteers; for more of an explanation of the three designs see the original Kikulis et al. (1989) article or the work by Slack and Parent (2006).

Hinings et al. (1996), in studying national sport organizations, found that those in an archetypical status showed consensus in the organization's values. They also found that when organizations were in an archetype there was consensus as regards the values of the elite and when organizations were outside an archetype there was no value consensus. Amis et al. (2004), with the same sample of Canadian national sport organizations, used the concept of archetypes. They found that contrary to popular belief wide-scale rapid change was not a determining factor in whether or not an organization reached archetypal status. They also found that an early change in specific high impact systems was important if organizations were to achieve an archetypal change. They suggested that change was not necessarily linear in nature. The notion of archetypes is important for understanding organizational change and the reader can access Greenwood and Hinings (1988) work for more information on this concept.

We may well ask 'Why do organizations change?' The answer to this question will depend upon the approach from which changed is viewed. The table below summarizes the approaches discussed previously and briefly highlights their view of organizational change.

From the information it gives, it is apparent that the reason why a sport organization (or any organization) will change may come about because of shifts in that

Table 1 Approaches to Studying Organizational Change

Contextualist	Change that occurs over an extended period of time should not be seen as a single event; the content, context and process of change need to be studied to fully understand the concept.
Population Ecology	Change occurs within organizations as a result of pressures in the external environment and it is the impact of this environment on whole groups of organizations that should be studied in order to understand how change occurs.
Resource Dependence	Organizations are wholly dependent upon resources in their external environment, and change occurs in response to the availability of resources. The steps the organization takes in order to secure the necessary resources are an important factor in how the organization may change.
Life Cycle	Change is akin to the biological process of life in that organizations are born, develop, and decline, and finally cease to exist.
Institutional Theory	Organizations change according to pressures from their institutional environment which indicates the appropriate structures and systems to adopt for their successful and legitimate operation.
Archetype Theory	Change occurs within archetypal forms and is specific to institutional environments. Archetypes represent consistency in values and change from one archetype to another indicates a significant shift in values.

organization's external environment, or alternatively this may arise from within the organization itself (from what are known as change agents). Those who study organizations from the population ecology or institutional perspective stress the role of the external environment in the change process. Those who study organizational change from the resource dependence or contextualist approaches stress the role of internal factors and their interaction with external factors in the change process. **Sport organizations**, like other organizations, do not like to change. Change may be resisted because the culture of the organization may work against the shifts that are proposed. Organizations do not change because they may have sunk costs into the way they currently operate. Members of organizations will not want to change if they perceive that change may result in them having less power. Alternatively those who perceive that change will bring them more **power** will favour the change.

As a result of power relations, managing change often involves managing **conflict** between individuals or groups. However, managing change and managing conflict have primarily been treated separately by researchers and so we shall refrain from examining conflict here and include it as a separate concept to be examined later.

To understand change more fully the reader may refer to the concepts of **structure**, **technology**, **context**, **power**, **sport organizations**, **conflict** and **strategy** that can be found elsewhere in this book.

FURTHER READING

For some further reading on this concept, we would recommend the following:

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