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Master Thesis

An alternative approach on resistance to change and leadership and its resulting development of Kotter's change models.

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The world hates change, yet it is the only thing that has brought progress.

~Charles Kettering

Abstract

To stay competitive in today's business environments companies have to adapt to the fast-changing business conditions. Hereby change management plays an important role; companies and consultants often apply certain change models to plan and implement change projects. The two change models by John Kotter, published in 1996 and 2014 are one of the most famous and most often applied ones. Within this thesis, the authors developed a modified change management model where they developed Kotter's ideas further and enlarged them with new perspectives that were not included before. Resistance to change is considered in the new approach from a positive perspective, which means that it is seen as an opportunity instead of being an obstacle. Besides that, the modified change model includes several leadership aspects that were neglected in Kotter's change models. New leadership aspects are reflection, a concrete leadership style, sensemaking, as well as the different leadership characters between female and male leader. Out of these new insights, the authors developed a modified change model, which allows to plan and manage the change project better than before.

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Kalmar, 20th of May 2019

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1 Introduction

The present business environment has become much faster moving and challenging for all participants in the market. To follow the needs and to manage the demands of the clients, corporations have to adapt to developing business environments.

1.1 Background

The challenges for corporations that want to persist successfully on the global markets are rising constantly. Globalisation and technological progress are very demanding for firms and force them to change and develop their processes and behaviour. Customers around the globe are expecting innovative products with the latest technology, which leads to shorter product life cycles (Swann, 2018). Companies must become more innovative, faster, and agile in their processes and thinking. If they cannot keep the pace of their competitors, they will disappear within a short period and will be substituted by someone else. Being substituted by other market actors is an issue that has happened to many former market leaders who do not exist now anymore (Georgalis et al. 2015; Plante, 2012). To face these new challenges, companies have to change their structures, their way of working as well as their thinking and behaviour. This is the reason why in the last years 'change management' became more and more important in business. Nowadays, most businesses are more or less in a constant change, which means, that when one change initiative has been finished, a short period later a new one begins. The changes are often guided by and build on change management models, which should help the involved persons to implement the initiatives successfully (Al-Haddad and Kotnour, 2015).

Within the practical implementation of a change, literature and practical experience show similarly that resistance to change is occurring within almost every change initiative. According to literature, about 60 to 70 percent of the change initiatives are failing or not reaching the desired outcomes, wherefore resistance is considered as the main reason for not achieving the desired objectives (Erwin and Garman, 2010; Ford and Ford, 2010; Pardo del Val and Martínez Fuentes, 2003). As a result, many change models are containing steps, which should help the change agents to deal with the resistance. Most of the models propose measures to overcome resistance since they argue that it hinders the successful implementation of the change initiative (Judson, 1991; Kotter, 1996).

1.2 Kotter's change models

Within the thesis, the focus lies on two change models that have been developed out of the practical experience and research of the famous business professor John P. Kotter. His change

models focus on the successful change implementation and the reduction of the barriers these type of initiatives could have within the process. In 1995, the academic magazine *Harvard Business Review* published an article about his model and a year later, in 1996, the author published a detailed explanation of the model within his book *'Leading Change'*. In spite of the received criticism because of a lack of empirical foundation, Kotter's book became famous since that time. This first version of the model is an often-applied reference within the academic field, for instance It has been cited more than 4000 times in Google Scholar, which is one of the most famous search engines nowadays (Appelbaum et al., 2012). Furthermore, Kotter's first model has been foundation of other several books such as '*The Heart of Change'* (2002), '*Our Iceberg is Melting'* (2006), *'A Sense of Urgency'* (2008), and some years before the second model came '*Buy-in'* (2010). Kotter's models have been supported by the Harvard Business School by funding large-scale research and continue being studied by their executive students and professionals of the faculty. These facts allow Kotter's model to have a strong presence in the academic arena has established Kotter's models as a main reference in the change management field (Kotter, 2014).

Moreover, this model is also of practical importance since it is based on John Kotter's experience and observation of real companies going through changes. From this observation, the author has analysed which are the most common mistakes that have been committed during the change processes. These analyses have made the model rich in practical insights that allowed the development of a step-by-step model based on real life experience. The model avoids the most common mistakes and makes emphasis on what is necessary to finish a successful change project. Thus, this is a famous model used by companies when are facing changes. For instance, Kotter's consulting company helps firms to go through change projects by using this model. Additionally, this firm directs continuous research to improve the model and its impact as much as possible (Kotter, 2014).

Besides that, Kotter's book *'Leading Change'* has been "[c]onsidered by many to be the seminal work in the field of change management" (Aiken and Keller, 2009: p.100). Besides that, John Kotter got several awards for his research in the field of change management and several books got bestsellers around the globe. Therefore, we are convinced that Kotter's two change models are one of the most relevant that currently exist in the literature and used in the praxis and it is worth to study them deeply.

The model consists of eight steps to manage change projects successfully. The first step is about establishing a sense of urgency. The intention of this point is to create awareness about the need for a change. Within the second step, one should create a guiding coalition to conduct the project; this should be formed by the most appropriate team members to reach the desired goals. Creating a vision that convinces the employees about why the change is needed is part of the third

step. In the fourth step, this vision should be communicated as clearly as possible. Any barriers that hinder the success of the project should be removed within the fifth step. Here resistance and lack of skills are considered as blocking elements that should be eliminated. The sixth step is focused on creating awareness for the created short-term wins within the involved employees, to keep their spirit up and motivate them for the ongoing process. The seventh point is about consolidating gains and producing more change. The objective is to motivate employees to continue working further towards the change, without losing their focus. The last step has as objective to include the change in the organisational culture, in order for the employees to interpret the new scenario as normal from now on (Kotter, 1996).

In 2014, John Kotter published within his book '*Accelerate*' a development of the ideas he presented in 1996. He called the 'eight steps' now 'eight accelerators' and modified them to make them more applicable in the changing business environment of the new millennium. In general, one can summarise that the accelerators are resembling the steps, but there are slightly but essential differences. For example, Kotter proposes to not only use hierarchical structures to direct the change but to use also network like structures to be more flexible within the process. Besides that, the accelerators do not have to be used in a strict order, it is also possible to use them in a fluent transition. Additionally, Kotter recommends, including as many persons as possible in the change process to generate a so-called 'volunteer army' that supports the change initiative (Kotter, 2014).

Through deeper analysis of the model, one can identify two main presumptions. First, Kotter's model is designed from a top-down perspective, in which top managers design the change project without taking into consideration the employee's feedback. Thus, the message is propagated from the top to the bottom in the hierarchy. The second assumption is the understanding of resistance as a barrier that should be overcome or eliminated. Dismissals of certain resistant individuals is a completely valid tool if it is necessary to remove this obstacle (Kotter, 1996).

1.3 Problem discussion

Kotter's change models have the overall goal to provide a guideline, which helps the change agents and responsible persons to implement a change successfully within a company. Through a deeper analysis, it is getting obvious that Kotter sees resistance to change as an impediment that hinders the successful implantation of a change initiative. Within the fifth step of the change models, he states that one needs to overcome the occurring resistance to set the foundation for the successful execution of the following steps and the change project as a whole. He states that one has to convince all involved persons by the rightness of the plan. At the end of this stage, there should not be any resistant person involved in the project. If a person is not willing to follow the initiative, he recommends to exchange her/him or fire the person as the last consequence. These

recommendations of John Kotter lead us to the conclusion that he sees resistance to change from a negative perspective. He aims to overcome resistance and wants only the employees who support the endeavour to be included within the change initiative. He is convinced by the fact that resistance to change is hindering the success of a change and must be removed (Kotter, 1996).

In contrast to the rather negative perspective on resistance to change, one can find a different approach within the literature that considers resistance as something positive. Authors state (Avey et al., 2008; Waddell and Sohal, 1998) that resistance can be a positive element that firms and leaders could benefit and learn from. It can be seen as a natural human reaction and seems to be unavoidable in many change projects (Muo, 2014). Resistance to change can provide useful information to improve the process itself and its outcome (Pardo del Val and Martínez Fuentes, 2003).

However, what would happen, if one would approach resistance to change from this different perspective within the change models? Within this different approach on resistance to change, one would not try to overcome resistance or exchange resistant employees but working actively together with them. The change leader would try to discover the reasons for the resistant behaviours through dialogues with the employees as well as discuss their point of views. The leader is curious about new insights and uses these discussions to develop the change idea further to improve the overall outcome.

One could expect that such a different perspective has several positive aspects that will help to improve the overall outcome of the change. The leader could see the resistant behaviour by the employees as an opportunity, which offers new ideas and insights on the topics that were not considered before. Moreover, such an approach to resistance has less potential for conflicts within the company since one tries to work together with the employees and not against them and their behaviour. If one would deal with the resistance more positively, one will intensify the exchange of opinions and arguments, which could lead to better communication and helps to clarify own viewpoints.

Besides the positive aspects of resistance to change that are not considered in Kotter's change models, we also found relevant leadership aspects that were ignored in both models by John Kotter. These aspects were found through intense research in the academic literature. Besides that, we utilised our personal knowledge we gained within the master programme and has been specified through additional research in the literature. We are considering these aspects as highly relevant within the modern business to adapt as fast and the best as possible to the fast-paced business environment.

Leadership plays a major role within change processes, in particular in Kotter's change models (Kotter, 1996; Kotter, 2014). The characteristics and skills that are presented and used by the leader have a huge impact on the development of the whole initiative (Sturm et al., 2017). An

incomplete description of these characteristics and styles could lead to the wrong personnel decisions and the fact that not the most suitable persons will be responsible for the change since they are lacking skills. This could lead to lower performance and an unsuccessful outcome of the change.

But how could this problem be avoided? A more precise definition of the needed leadership and personal skills that should be mastered by the leader is a first step in the right direction. In addition to that one has to question if there are leadership styles that fit better to change projects than others. Kotter describes briefly and on the surface, which character traits and behaviours should be displayed by the leader. These traits can be found within the transformational leadership style. However, his leadership description is lacking traits that allow the leader to think outside the box, take new paths to solve problems, and implement the change project. One could use additionally specific traits from other leadership styles like the innovative or visionary leadership to use a different way of leading that has a broader approach on the follower. This could help the leader to guide the whole change in the right direction to reach the desired goals (Burke and Collins, 2001; Eagly, 2007).

Alvesson et al. (2017) show that reflexivity within a leadership process is essential. However, reflexivity does not play any role within both models of John Kotter even if the advantages are obvious. The literature presents several advantages of reflexivity that are highly relevant for change processes but are neglected by John Kotter in both change models. However, it is getting obvious that including reflection into the change process has several advantages that are definitely worth to be included in the change model. Neglecting these points leads in the end to a lower performance of the change (Boud et al., 2006).

Moreover, the literature states that sensemaking plays an important role in change processes. The personal frames of references for the affected employees have a huge impact on their attitude towards the change (Maitlis and Sonenshein, 2010). Sensemaking is used in Kotter's change models especially within the communication process of the change between the leaders and the affected employees. The problem is that Kotter tries to influence the frames of references of the employees through sensemaking but he does not seem to be aware of the fact that he recommends using sensemaking. Utilising sensemaking without knowing the importance and the impact this could have, may result in unexpected outcomes and contradictory actions. Thereof, one can argue that this process can be improved if the leader is actually aware of the fact that she/he uses sensemaking. Besides that, it would allow the leader to use tools like storytelling, which would support the creation of meaning (Brown et. al, 2012).

In addition to that, one should be aware that literature has shown that there are differences in the way of leading people among male and female leaders (Boulgarides, 1984; Chapman, 1975).

Kotter did not incorporate these gender variations in his change models. These differences also offer opportunities to lead the change better and more successful.

The above-mentioned aspects were considered neither in the eight steps of 1996 nor in the revised version of 2014 where Kotter presented the eight accelerators. Therefore, we decided to analyse how aspects like a specific leadership style, reflexive leadership, sensemaking, and the differences in leading people between male and female leaders as well as the positive aspects of resistance to change could contribute to an improvement of Kotter's ideas presented in the change models.

1.4   Research question and objective

In order for this thesis to add value to the change management field, we need to establish certain objectives and research that allow us to guide the research. Both, the research purpose and the research question will be explained in detail within this section.

Kotter's change models are an important reference, both in the academic and practical terms within the change management field. For companies and researchers could an improvement of these models represent an important competitive advantage. One can argue that as long as these models continue being applied with the currently existing gaps in relation to leadership, gender, and resistance to change, the result will continue being often different from the desired and expected outcomes. If companies continue managing changes and resistance through models such as Kotter's, then it is worth to analyse which steps of these models should be updated or changed to be more useful.

Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is to update and develop the ideas from Kotter's two change models further and increase its practical relevance. This purpose will be reached by adding knowledge to the existing gap within the literature about change management and alternative perspectives in regards to leadership, gender, and resistance to change. Thus, the research question that will be answered within this thesis is the following:

How can alternative views on resistance to change, leadership, and gender be fused with ideas from Kotter's change models to create a potentially more useful change model?

The absence of these topics within Kotter's change models creates a gap within the literature about change management and creates an image of Kotter's models to be out of date. For instance, resistance to change is an element that change management models could interpret with the opposite intention by transforming it from negative to positive. Thus, the change project would flow along with its natural forces (Cohen et al., 1973). Furthermore, their impact could be improved through different leadership skills and characteristics. Therefore, corporations would not be deprived of the advantages these findings could contribute.

By understanding the main assumptions of the models, exploring the advantages of resistant behaviours and analysing leadership aspects that have not been considered by Kotter, we will be able to identify the steps that should be improved by including the correspondent insights and therefore bringing them up to date.

1.5 Thesis outline

This passage of the thesis gives a brief overview of the nine parts of our master thesis. The introduction gives insights into the background and the relevance of the study, as well as we present the research questions and the objectives that will be answered within the thesis. The methodology chapter is about the structure of the thesis and the reasons why we chose a conceptual research design. Furthermore, we explain how the literature has been selected. The third chapter offers rather broad information about change management that is the base for the research in the following chapters. Thereafter we explain deeply the phenomenon of resistance to change and its reasons for the occurrence. Following these insights, we present and discuss the positive aspects of resistance to change.

The sixth chapter provides more information about recent developments within the leadership industry that were not considered by John Kotter within his change model. Chapter seven gives deep insights into Kotter's change model that has been published in 1996 and the modified version of 2014. Firstly, both models are described and after are deeply analysed in a second step. The findings of chapter five and six are the main base for chapter eight, where we are presenting our modified change model along with our research. Chapter nine concludes the thesis and reviews the main insights of the investigation.

2   Methodology

To guarantee the quality of the research and its findings, one of the most important factors is the selection of the methodological approach. The way of approaching the research topic influences highly the way one will carry out the data selection and interpretation. In general, one can select between qualitative, quantitative, or conceptual research designs.

2.1   Conceptual research

We have decided to follow within our master thesis a theoretical approach and to conduct conceptual research. The reason for the chosen approach is that within our research during the last weeks, we recognised that the concepts of "change management", "resistance to change", and the "positive aspects of resistance to change" as well as several change management models have been already studied independently. Besides this, we realised that change management models are the most popular form to manage changes and resistance within businesses. These models consider resistance to change but as a negative force. Since we could not find any evidence in the reviewed literature that there is a theoretical combination of change management models and the positives aspects of resistance to change, this should be created first from a theoretical point of view and then brought into practice in a future research scenario. Thus, we consider the conceptual approach as the most appropriate method for this thesis. The aim of this theoretical thesis is to create a relationship within the chosen model and the concepts of "change management", "resistance to change", "additional leadership research findings" and the "positive aspects of resistance to change". As a result, we will obtain a theoretical modification of a widely applied change model. This modification will lead to a possible more efficient implementation of change initiatives since it will consider resistance to change from an alternative perspective. This is why we argue that this approach makes sense and adds value to the change management and resistance to change field. We are aware of the fact that this theoretical contribution will not bring evidence that this modification works out in practical terms. Therefore, this thesis motivates future researchers to continue with this step. This further practical approach could then measure how the use of resistance as a positive resource could improve the performance of change initiatives. Moreover, because of the vast literature available, this approach allows us to get deep insights into the concepts of change management and resistance to change. The aim of this study is to create a conceptual basis for changing the way resistance to change has been approach in companies during the last years.

2.2 Literature selection

Change management and resistance to change are fields in which one can find vast literature available. From articles and dissertations to books and journals, these topics have been studied for more than 60 years. This fact represents both an advantage but also a risk when it comes to the selection of the right literature. It is advantageous to have enough material and findings to work with since it allows us to consider different perspectives and insights. In contrast, one should be careful to work with relevant and reliable information. Meanwhile selecting information, one can find approaches to these topics that are not relevant for this research. This could deviate the purpose of the investigation and move us away from the initial objective. In order to avoid the latter issue, the abstract of each article has been read carefully, and the article has been read further as long as it is aligned with the objectives of our research topic.

We will use the book "Leading Change" by John P. Kotter as a base for the description of the change model. Based on the descriptions we have already collected several other books, which give deeper insights into the topics "change management", "resistance to change" as well as the "positive aspects of resistance to change". Most parts of our argumentation and reasoning throughout the paper will be based on research papers. We collect them through the online database of the Linnaeus University, called "One Search". The online library of the University of Augsburg is also a valuable source for secondary data. Besides that, we figured out, that several journals, like the *"Journal of Organizational Change Management"* or the *"Journal of Change Management"* were focusing on our overall research topic, which is studied by us deeper throughout the research process. For the beginning, we also used literature reviews in papers or books to get an impression of the overall topic and to specify our further research. In addition, the search engine "Google Scholar" is helpful to get access to a wide range of literature. Especially hereby, we had to limit our data collection to certain keywords since otherwise, the range of the data available is too broad. The following keywords have been used to limit the search results: "change management", "resistance to change", "change management AND resistance to change". From these combinations, we have found that resistance to change has been studied as a negative phenomenon that managers should overcome (Kotter and Schlesinger, 1979). On the other hand, other authors such as Perren (1996) consider resistance to change as a positive influence within change processes. Therefore, further combinations of keywords continued in the following direction: "positive aspects of resistance to change", "change management AND positive aspects of resistance to change" and "advantage* of resistance to change". This literature review also revealed us that most parts of change management models try to overcome resistance to change (Sullivan et al. 2011). Literature also suggested that Kotter's model is one of the most popular models to approach change management and resistance to change (Appelbaum et al., 2012). Thus, Kotter's model was researched through the keywords

"Kotter's change model" or "Kotter's change management model". Furthermore, the theory about different leadership perspectives was searched through the keywords "New Leadership Perspectives" OR "Modern Leadership" OR "New Leadership Approaches".

All the gathered data represents a specific picture of our research topic and gives us the possibility to present a different perspective on dealing with resistance to change and on one of the most popular models to approach change management as well additional leadership aspects.

2.3 Ensuring credibility

According to Saunders et al. (2009), most parts of research studies have a probability of producing mistaken results. Thus, credibility is about reducing the possibilities of wrong results, as much as the researcher can. In this case, in order to promote as accurate results as possible, the gathered data belong only to trustable and secondary sources. One can define a trustable source as information that has been researched diligently and from different perspectives as well as that the arguments are built based on evidence from other research. Furthermore, one can recognise a trustable source when this one has a strong structure with an abstract, reference list and the length is more than one page (University of Maryland University College, 2019). This criterion was followed at the time of selecting the sources. Every of the research papers, journals, and books selected come from a trustable source. Moreover, once the information was already filtered because of its quality and then was filtered by its relevance. Only data that are related to our research objectives were considered as relevant for this study. This type of data also allows the research to be replicated in any other context, since these research papers, journals, and books are available for the public in general. In case of further research, the utilised information is available to be studied and tested. All the used information within this thesis are written on the reference list, with the aim of providing trustable and reliable research.

3 Change Management

This section gives insights into the overall topic of the thesis - change management. Besides that, we will clarify what the term 'failure' actually means within research because of the variety of definitions within the literature about change management.

3.1 Definition of change management

Change management helps the company and its members to deal with the fast moving and very agile business environment and is defined in the literature in the following terms: "Organizational change management refers to planning, organizing, leading, and controlling a change process in an organization to improve its performance and achieve the predetermined sets of strategic objectives" (Ha, 2014; p.1). Another definition can be found by Murthy (2007) who defines it as the following: "Change Management is managing the process of implementing major changes in information technology, business processes, organisational structures, and job assignments to reduce the risks and costs of change and optimise its benefits" (Murthy, 2007; p. 22). In summary, change management is about accompanying a change in the different stages, beginning with the planning process, going on with the practical implementation and the controlling, if the desired outcomes were achieved. The goal of change management is to implement the change successfully and to solve existing problems to be more competitive on the local and global markets (Ha, 2014; Murthy 2007).

3.2 Historical development of change management and its change models

Change management has a long lasting historical development starting at the end of the 1940s. At the time, the two scientists John French Jr. and Lester Coch found during observations in business that people are not always accepting changes in their business life and they resist against the new. Besides that, they realised during their research that resistant behaviour is more often occurring when the affected people are older. They defined the first measures, which should have helped to deal with the resistance, for example including the employees into the planning process as well as communicate the idea openly to all involved persons. In 1947, Kurt Lewin published the article "*Frontiers in group dynamics*" where he presents his three-step change model, which has been the first one available. The three steps are the following: Unfreeze - Move - Refreeze. Within the first step, one prepares the change, the second phase serves the change itself and within the last stage one tries to implement the change into the structures of the company that the affected employees consider the change as normal. Those three steps were base for the research of many scholars within the last 70 years and one can find the overall ideas of Lewin in many famous change models that are applied until today (Burnes, 2004).

In the 1960s and 1970s, change management became a more famous research topic and several scientists were focusing on different approaches within the field. Everett Rogers developed a five-step change model, which consists of the following steps *Awareness, Interest, Evaluation, Trial, and Adoption.* This model is still applied in some situations still today. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross tried to examine the behaviour of people from a humanistic perspective when she worked with patients in the hospital that are facing their dead. She tried to get insights into their behaviour and developed the following five steps: *Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, and Acceptance,* which can be applied for the behaviour people are showing when they are facing change, the so-called "change-curve" (Morgan, 2009)

In the 1980s, organisational change management became more relevant and was the main research topic of famous scientists like George Litwin and Warner Burke (Morgan, 2009). During the 1990s literature and praxis started to view change management from two different perspectives, on the one hand, the change leaders, who are responsible to plan and implement the change and on the other hand the employees, who are affected by the change. Besides that, the use of consultants within change processes became normal behaviour (Morgan, 2009).

In today's business world, change has become much more relevant than ever. The changes are fast paced and are needed more often than the decades before. Change leaders have to communicate their plans openly and support their employees actively to face the new situation to adapt them as fast as possible to the new situation. Moreover, many changes are related to technological change, which means that the company has to provide certain training to introduce the employees into the new technology (Naghibi, and Baban, 2011).

3.3 "Failure" in the context of change management

In the context of change management and resistance to change, one often gets in touch with the term "failure". Usually, authors do not describe into detail what they actually consider as a failure within a change implementation. In general terms, one could define a failed project as an initiative that did not reach all the defined goals in relation to the implementation of the project itself, to the perceived value of the project and to the client satisfaction in relation to the project or the affected employees in this case (Pinto and Mantel, 1990). For instance, the latter could mean that one has defined seven goals that included these previously mentioned dimensions. These goals should be fulfilled with the change, but it was only possible to accomplish six of them. Now it depends on the assessment of the responsible persons to consider this change as a failure since one did not reach all goals. The change responsible could also label it as a success since one managed to reach only six out of seven goals. Therefore, we can argue that defining a project as a failure relies mostly on the leaders. They could evaluate strictly if the objectives were met or not and thus

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generating an opinion. On the other hand, the change leaders could also consider aspects such as new knowledge, improvement of processes and any other element that occurred during the process of change and affected positively the company. Furthermore, a project that represents a success for one leader, could be interpreted as a failure by another one (Pinto and Mantel, 1990).

4   Resistance to change

This chapter gives insights into the base of our research - resistance to change. We are presenting two different perspectives on resistance, as well as different reasons why employees are resisting against changes in their professional environment.

4.1   Resistance to change in the classical approach

The concept of resistance can be understood from classical theory and from a non-classical perspective. The non-classical perspective defines resistance as positive conduct. Within the classical theory, resistance is considered as a detractor element that is always present during change events (Lewin, 1947). Furthermore, this element is described as the set of forces that create a sense of stability either in personal or social systems. When a change is happening, these forces work as regulators of stability (Cohen, 1973). Other classical definitions describe resistance to change as a response that has the objective of protecting the current status and avoid any change. It is interpreted as a source of conflict that could damage organisational health. This response is a product of different opinions that could decrease the proficiency of the company (Waddell and Sohal, 1998). Hence, resistance to change has been labelled as an important enemy of change processes, bringing along negative consequences for the corporation and the change process itself. A more complex definition of resistance states that it is a multi-faceted phenomenon that is produced by different factors. All these factors such as rationality, non-rationality, politics, and management, contribute to form the organisational stability that will oppose a new coming status (Waddell and Sohal, 1998).

4.2   Resistance to change in the alternative approach

On the other hand, resistance is seen as a natural and innate process that occurs when humans are facing changing and uncertain scenarios (Bringselius, 2014). From this alternative approach, resistance is defined as useful behaviour that can help to improve strategy and changing plans by challenging and refining them. Resistance is also identified as a response that fosters learning among every participant within the corporation (Erwin and Garman, 2010). From these definitions, one can infer that resistance is unavoidable and natural. Instead of trying to eliminate an unavoidable phenomenon, one should embrace it since it can be beneficial for both the firm and its members. Furthermore, Oreg (2006) defines resistance as an attitude composed of three different dimensions: cognitive, affective, and behavioural. The first dimension corresponds to what the individual thinks about the change. The affective dimension involves the feelings the employees have towards change. Finally, the behavioural component is about how people react when change is happening.

Since there is a variety of concepts about resistance, for the purposes of this thesis, we create a definition based on the review of the previous concepts. Thus, resistance to change is expected

human behavior when change is happening. It is a natural response that brings benefits for organisations and the change process (Bringselius, 2014; Erwin and Garman, 2010).

4.3 Reasons for resistance

During the years, employees have been pointed as resistors towards change. While it is true that individuals resist as a response to change, resistance occurs not directly to the change itself. People resist to the deeper arguments behind the change idea (Lawrence, 1969), that seems like a threat to their current and secure situation, the resistance is a symptom of strong causes that could frustrate what is planned to bring to the corporation. Most part of the times, changes represent a threat that could finish with jobs, comfortable salaries or social status, just to mention some examples. Change ideas could also seem feasible from the management perspective, but could not be the same situation from the employees' perspective (Dent and Goldberg, 2013). Muo (2014) coincides with this argument and adds more examples of situations that could be behind resisting change. According to him, individuals resist when change represents losing power, economic security or the feeling of becoming incompetent.

For instance, Curtis and White (2002) mention uncertainty as a cause of resistance. Since resistance is a force that fights to preserve stability, the uncertainty of not having clear information about the future could cause resistance. Curtis and White (2002) also point other causes of resistance; such as self-interest, different perceptions, personality, motivation, and lack of understanding, ownership, and trust are strong arguments that employees hold as their main argument to refuse change. When an employee resists because of self-interest it could be related to the fear of losing a certain benefit or element that is only of his/her personal interest. Therefore, change represents a threat to his/her current state. Different perceptions are causes of resistance when managers develop a different idea about change than the subordinates do. Even personality traits are not commonly used when managers and researchers talk about resistance to change, it could be an indicator of being more or less open to change.

Furthermore, Stapley (1996) mentions that corporations have, as individuals too, their own personality. The company's personality is made up of the interactions among each one of its members and its history as well. Since each firm is different, thus will be its personality. Understanding the corporation's traits will help to diagnose which are the causes of resistance and therefore it could be possible to develop a strategy to bring change into place. Motivation is another important cause of resistance according to Curtis and White (2002). In order to understand the reason why resistors are against change, it is necessary to understand what motivates employees and how the new situation could damage this motivation. This motivation is linked to human needs; individuals need to feel valuable and self-worthy at their workplaces. If the new project is

challenging these needs, the motivation could decrease or be eliminated. Thus, not being motivated by the new conditions could arise resistant behaviors. Lack of understanding, ownership, and trust are other important reasons for resistance. It is a possibility that people do not understand what the change is about or why is it taking place. Moreover, they could be unconfident about the intentions behind the change idea. These reasons could result in opposition to change. In addition, power influences resistant behaviours when change is introduced by authoritarian conducts. Authoritarian conducts could lead to the absence of participation by the employees, a fact that generates more resistance (Curtis and White 2002).

4.3.1 Reasons for resistance according to contextual factors

Waddell and Sohal (1998) argue that the reasons for resisting change rely on four elements: rational factors, non-rational factors, managerial factors, and political factors. Rational factors refer to concerns of the employees because they do not see the same win-win situation as managers do. Within this factor, individuals resist the change idea because for them the costs are higher than the potential benefits. Non-rational factors could be related to personal preferences, for example not being willing to relocate, or the preference for a formal instead of an informal environment within the situation could take place. Political factors refer to the resistance influenced by preferring or opposing to the change agent.

4.3.2 Reasons for resistance during the change phases

Other authors such as Pardo de Val and Martínez Fuentes (2003) go further and classify different actions that are committed by the management role at the time of experiencing change that creates resistance as a result. These actions occur during two different stages of the change process, the change formulation, and implementation. During the formulation stage, the reasons for resistance are sub-classified into three groups, which are related to clear perception, motivation, and creativity. While formulating a change project it is needed to have a clear perception about what will come up. When there is no clear vision about the future, the following issues will happen and will derive on resistant employees.

Myopia is one of the reasons for resistance within the formulation stage. It consists of the difficulty the company has to look to the future with clarity. The management team does not have an understandable idea of what they want to achieve with the new change. This can cause denial from the employees towards accepting information that is neither clear nor desired. Not having the right perception about change can also be the reason for the management team to use the same ideas repeatedly, without considering that these arguments will not be probably valid anymore since the

current situation will be changed. This perpetuation of ideas is not persuasive enough to motivate the individuals to support the change (Pardo de Val and Martínez Fuentes, 2003).

Communication is another element that could be mismanaged and end in causing rejection towards the new project. When leaders consider some assumptions as implicit or face barriers to communicate the information properly, it could generate distortion of the real facts. Having limitations in regards to the information that should be communicated is also another cause for resistance, better known as organisational silence. This phenomenon affects the course of the information among employees, resulting in taking decisions without the whole picture (Pardo de Val and Martínez Fuentes, 2003).

Another group of causes of resistance within the formulation stage is related to motivation. Here, the change is interpreted as an action that will bring more losses than benefits. For instance, taking past change failures as a reference that have not caused any benefit to the company could create the wrong frame of reference to the employees, who will express their rejection towards the new project. Another cause for resistance during the formulation phase is the fact that change can benefit a certain product but will sacrifice the success of another one. This scenario generates opposition and low motivation for change. Motivation could vary among the participants of the process, who could have different interests and each of the individuals will appreciate the potential results of the change heterogeneously (Pardo de Val and Martínez Fuentes, 2003).

The third sub-classification of causes of resistance is linked to low creativity to answer the questions and situations that could arise while formulating a change. Creativity could be diminished because of three situations: first, working in a fast and complex context could complicate the change to analyse the situation properly and then managers will provide basic and simple answers. The leader's mindset could play an important role when it comes to the generation of resistance. The belief that obstacles are unavoidable or being resigned to face difficulties along the process could result in diminishing creative responses. The last cause for the absence of creativeness occurs when managers are not evidently committed to the change strategy, or when they lack a vision in relation to the change. This situation leads to short creativeness at the time of creating responses to certain questions and issues. In the end, these three subgroups of actions could be reflected on resistant employees. The implementation stage can be defined as the moment in which the change decision is already taken and the change is incorporated as a regular practice (Klein and Sorra, 1996). During this phase, there are according to Pardo de Val and Martínez Fuentes (2003) two more subgroups of reasons for resistance. The first subgroup of triggers of resistance is related to political and cultural factors. Politics or rules could be affected by the change, detonating in resistance from the members of the affected departments. Furthermore, being strongly attached to cultural values and loyalty is also a reason for employees to resist. When they are facing the change and have considered

that the new situation is against their beliefs or organisational values, they will resist as a response. These strong beliefs could also be interpreted as a difference between solid arguments about which is the nature of the problem that is being solved with the implementation.

As one can understand, resistance can be derived out of several reasons that come either from managers and leaders or from the employees. Then, resistance works as an indicator of bigger reasons than just rejecting the new situation. The important action is to diagnose and understand the root of these behaviors and how these can be solved. Employees resist social change that influences their relationships, motivation, and needs and not to the change itself (Lawrence, 1969).

5 Positive aspects of resistance to change

If resistance to change is occurring within a project, one should consider the several positive aspects, which are resulting out of this behaviour. There has been conducted a lot of research within the last decades, but most of the researchers are mentioning that the benefits of resistant behaviours are not considered enough within the practical implementation of the changes (Ford et al., 2008). The following section will give insights into the benefits of considering resistance to change from a positive perspective.

To explain the positive aspects properly, we decided to present examples, which should help the reader to understand the benefits better. Ford and Ford (2010) present the following case, which shows that resistance to change has positive aspects and are worth to be considered. These aspects are relevant to improve the quality of the change project.

A university hospital in the United States decided to modernise their own IT systems. It was the goal to combine all functions of several old systems within one new system that will be used by all divisions and departments of the hospital. The management wanted to use only one system to have all relevant data about the patients, the health insurances as well as the accounting for the medical treatments. Before the IT has been updated, the different divisions used several different systems to gather all the needed data, which caused often problems with the accessibility of data as well as high costs for the hospital since they had to keep several systems up to date. The overall idea of the new project was to implement a new IT system where all the patient data, as well as the deduction of the medical treatments with the health insurances, could be accessed within one IT interface. They hoped to reduce the overall system costs, improve the accessibility of data as well as to standardise processes to get more efficient. The decision to implement a new system was made by the management of the hospital. They instructed the IT-department to decide for a new software and develop a plan how of this one can be utilised within the structure of the hospital. The change leader had the task to develop a strategy about how the new project is communicated to the affected employees. She decided to formulate some papers and letters, which she used to brief the leader of every single department, while the latter had the task to inform their subordinates afterwards (Ford and Ford, 2010).

After a few weeks, during some meetings, she realised that many employees were resisting against the new tool. They wanted to keep their old ones since these were still working fine and were not causing any problems. When the change leader, Alison, was digging deeper to get insights into the causes for the resistance, she realised that there were many rumours existing among the employees. They did not really know what they could expect. She found out that the company members were not informed properly by their superiors about the reasons and the purpose of the

change initiative, because many superiors were also not convinced by the new system. For instance, some rumours existed that it would not be possible to have access with the new system to old patient data or that the new program was very difficult to handle and one needs to be an IT specialist to work with it. Of course, these concerns were not corresponding to the truth. Besides that, when Alison had more conversations with the affected individuals, she got some insights about their ideas what the new program should be capable of and what must be improved compared to the old ones. Therefore, in order to inform all the employees, the change team decided to rethink their communication about the project. Besides that, they had the possibility to clarify the actual purpose of the system change and they got some wishes of the workers, which actually improved the change proposal (Ford and Ford, 2010).

This example shows the following positive aspects of resistance: At first, Alison was forced to come back to the purpose of the change. She had to clarify in detail for herself as well as for the employees of the hospital why the change is actually needed and how the new software will look like and what the consequences are. This procedure helps the change leader to clarify the underlying purposes and reasons for the change (Avey et al., 2008). Thus, the leader can improve communication to the employees in the next step. This rethinking helps to reveal mistakes and to improve the quality of the change project. Besides that, the presentation and discussion of the change initiative create awareness for the whole project, which is positive in general. The involved employees will think about the change and its consequences and will express new ideas and present insights that will help to improve the change further (Muo, 2014).

In the hospital change project, the employees clarified which functions were actually needed to improve their work and what was needed to be successful in the future. Through their resistance, employees articulated new perspectives and gave deeper insights into their personal needs. Out of these findings, it was possible to improve the quality of the change initiative, by considering the different solutions and options that were provided by the employees. Besides that, through the conversations with the employees and considering their feedback, it was possible to include the employees deeper into the process and use their personal engagement as a source for inspiration and new ideas. To summarise, one can say that the resistance helped to improve the overall change initiative, gave new input and changed the change initiative to be more successful in the future. (Ford and Ford, 2010).

In addition, it became obvious that the management team had more time to plan and adapt the change initiative since they had to make a few steps back within the process to clarify the purpose, consider feedback, and rethink some parts of their ideas. In general, resistance to change gives the responsible persons for the change more time to revise and specify their ideas, which usually improves the overall change (Ford and Ford, 2009).

Another benefit of resistance to change is getting obvious in the following example, which can be found in the paper of Ford and Ford (2010). The case works as another example of how beneficial resistance can be for the company and its changes.

In 2000, a company decided to implement a new computer communication system within a department of a big stock corporation. It became clear within the first proposal meetings to the potentially affected employees, that they did not tolerate any changes within their IT systems. When the change agents tried to figure out the reasons for the resistance, they found out, that a few years ago, another manager implemented a new IT system in this department, which was not in the interest of the employees. In order to convince them to accept the change, he offered monetary rewards that should be paid six months after the successful implementation of the system to the employees of the department. However, half a year later, when the employees were expecting their rewards, they were told that the actual financial situation does not allow paying any rewards. Instead, they would get the possibility to work extra hours if they wanted to earn more money. Besides that, the management promised to pay a reward as soon as the financial situation could allow it. Two years later, the responsible manager who initiated the change left the organisation and was replaced by his successor. The new manager was not interested in this topic anymore and did not initiate any rewards payment process. As a result, the employees were not open for any new changes since they still felt not well treated by their management and they still waited for the promised rewards. When now, about four years later the new manager came up with the change idea, they were resisting against it. They first wanted to solve the problems from the past. The responsible change agents of the new change got this information within some meetings when they tried to figure out the reasons behind the resistance. Thus, they decided to overcome those problems from the past in order to convince the employees by the rightness of the system change. They offered the workers the promised economic rewards and some other benefits on top. This new deal convinced the employees. Therefore, they did not continue resisting the new change and the implementation was a success. Overall, one can summarise that underlying problems from the past are reasons for resistance. Employees often do not speak openly about the problems or issues that cause stress for them or have annoyed them since they want to avoid conflicts with their colleagues or superiors. Resistance can be an indicator that something in the surrounding is not working well and can help to analyse the underlying reasons (Ford and Ford, 2010).

Besides that, resistance to change can also be an indicator of change fatigue, which means that the employees are tired of constant changes. If change fatigue is occurring, usually the company has tried to implement too many changes in the last time that the employees resist against another new initiative. That could be the sign for the company that the employees are yearning for a more stable environment and it might be better to relinquish for another change to stabilise the context.

This can lead to a better working atmosphere, where the employees feel comfortable and appreciate to work in. This benefits the company since its employees will work more motivated and efficiently (Garside, 2014).

Another positive aspect of resistance to change is that employees take care of the compliance of ethical principles. It could be that employees see their personal or the company's ethical values violated, which gives them the foundation for resistant behaviour. In consequence, managers can consider the employee's ethical perspective and decide if it would make sense to adapt the change initiative, to stay in accordance with the ethical principles (Piderit, 2000).

In addition, it might be, that the change agent realises through employees' resistance, that the change project is purposeless and does not institute any positive value to the company. Trough deeper consideration of the topic s/he might conclude, that the change is not needed and it would be better to keep the status quo. Resistance aids in this context avoiding the implementation of unnecessary changes, which might be challenging for all involved persons (Muo, 2014).

Bolognese (2002) mentions resistance to change as a source of innovation. In many cases, resistance leads to vivified conversations between the change leaders and the employees about the topic and its background. These talks can be used to get new inspirations for the future but also as a source of innovations since it is often the case that such conversations represent the base for future innovations. The advantage is that one can combine several different opinions and ideas and develop them further into an innovation. The decision making might lead to better outcomes since one has considered more ideas and guesses, whereby more employees feel personally connected to the change and gives them a more positive attitude towards the change. Besides that, it is also possible to discuss several different options or solutions that might be relevant to plan and implement the change successfully (Waddell and Sohal, 1998).

Overall, our research has shown that there are several reasons that make resistance to change a positive conduct. To profit from the resistance, it is very important to get insights into the (underlying) reasons for the employees' behavior. It is important to analyse their points of view and to draw conclusions out of them. Hereby, it is the main task for the change agent to communicate with the affected workers, to build up trust and get insights into their thoughts and wishes. Resistance can be seen as a warning sign that something is not working to the desired ends and needs to be reconsidered in order to be successful in the future (Muo, 2014).

6 Actual relevant leadership aspects

This chapter gives insights into new leadership research, which has been published after 1996 and has mostly not been considered within Kotter's change model. These findings are, among others, the base for the modification of the change model, which is described in chapter eight.

6.1 Definition of 'Leadership'

While searching for relevant definitions of 'leadership' within academic literature it is getting obvious that there is not one single definition available, which fits all cases and is accepted by all scholars. Alvesson et al. (2017) summarise the problems quite well within the following sentence: "[I]t is unclear what leadership means or actually entails in different situations. 'Leadership' could mean almost everything since it is seldom defined or used in a precise or careful manner" (page 2). For that reason, we decided to apply a definition and description of leadership that seems, according to our understanding, fit the best to leadership within change management in today's business environment. Alvesson et al. (2017) defined it in the following way: "[L]eadership [is] about people involved in an asymmetrical [] relationship (formally or informally, permanently or temporarily, but not only momentarily) involving followers. Leaders are interpersonally trying to define meaning [or] reality for others who are inclined to (on a largely voluntary basis) accept such meaning-making and reality-defining influencing acts" (page 8). Usually people take themselves in the follower role since they expect from their leader and his actions to be guided into a direction, which seems to create meaning for them as well as convinces them in a "practical, emotionally [or] morally" (Alvesson et al., 2017: p. 9) way. That means, that the leader is often influencing the reality, the viewpoints as well as the personal understanding of his/her followers and guides them in conclusion to a certain, from the leader desired, direction. It is important to mention that the relationship between the leader and the follower is voluntary and nobody can be forced to be part of the social construct. Besides that, in order to be a leader, one has to have at least one follower, otherwise, the social construct 'leadership' cannot be build up (Alvesson et al., 2017).

6.2 Different leadership styles

Research has shown that there are different leadership styles in theory and praxis available, which differ in their principles of operation as well as the theory behind. We are focusing on a very common leadership style, the transformational one, as well as two often recently applied ones, the innovative and the visionary one.

6.2.1 Transformational leadership

The transformational leadership style can be found in the literature since the late 1970s but this kind of leadership is still recommended by many scholars and researchers to apply it in practical

terms. According to literature, the transformational leadership style helps to increase the level of motivation and morality within the followership (Burns, 1978). The leader tries within this style to create a certain spirit among his/her follower, which generates a unity within the group that pushes all members forward. They get motivated to achieve an extra mile. Bass and Riggio (2006) describe transformational leadership with the following four characteristics:

- *Idealised influence:* The leader acts as a role model for his or her group of followers since s/he does not put own interests ahead of the ones of the follower. The leader behaves along with the ethical principles and the personal values of the follower group and puts personal needs in the background. As a result, the collaboration is affected by a high level of trust and respect.

- *Inspirational motivation:* The leader acts as a person that is highly motivated and has a positive attitude towards the project. S/he tries to pass that personal motivation over to the followers and tries to increase the team spirit within the project as well as supports the group to generate visions that should be reached in the future.

- *Intellectual stimulation:* Hereby it is the goal of the leader to increase the creativity within the followership and s/he tries to stimulate the creation of innovations. Followers should face their task or a problem from a different viewpoint and think outside the box to develop different solutions that might be better than the conventional ones. Besides that, it is explicitly allowed to make mistakes, to create an inspirational working environment, which is not characterised by the fear of making mistakes, which lowers the willingness to take risks and try new ways.

- *Individualised consideration:* That means that the leader cares about the personal development of his/her follower, provides them opportunities for the future and gives them the possibility to grow. The measures are individually adapted to every single follower, to offer the best opportunities. Besides that, communication in both ways (leader-follower and follower-leader) should be practiced, to have a vivid exchange of relevant information (Bass and Riggio, 2006; Johnson, 2009).

In general, transformational leaders are known for setting priorities on the right areas of the project, they try to build up and live shared values with their followers, as well as that they are interested in a harmonic team environment. The followers have enough freedom for self-fulfilment, which means that they get space to put their personal ideas into practice. Besides that, the leader tries to be authentic in every situation, which also includes open communication with all involved people. It is always the goal to include all followers into the change process and to boost the performance of everyone. Open and honest communication is an essential part of these measures,

to guarantee that everybody can express and discuss their own opinion. In addition, the leader has the task to influence his/her followers in the way that they decide to step back from their personal interests and subordinate their personal values for the common goal of the team. Besides that, the leader tries to increase the intrinsic motivation of his/her followers to motivate them for the change (Bass and Riggio, 2006; Johnson, 2009).

Overall, one can conclude that change initiatives, which are guided by a transformational leader, are more favourable than the ones that are guided by leaders with another approach. Usually, their groups are characterised by a strong cohesion among all team members, the willingness to work hard as well as to a higher commitment to the change itself (Johnson, 2009).

However, one can find critique on the transformational leadership style within the literature. In example, Alvesson and Kärreman (2016) state that this leadership style is often too leader centred. That means that the leader "is the centre of the organizational universe and has a far-reaching impact" (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2016: p.3) and other individuals within the company or organisation do not play a superior role. Besides that, one can often find within literature certain characteristics and traits that should display the success of the action of a leader or subordinate. It would be better if these characteristics were more specified on the certain case than keep them rather broad and general around the overall topic. Followers expect the transformational leader acting always with confidence, integrity, and resilience. Even though these traits are positive and help to effective leadership, it could also be promote the idealisation of the leader as a hero who comes to only do good (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2016).

Another critique on transformational leaders is that they often do not behave along the traits and characteristics they expect being fulfilled by their followers. Here it would be better if they act along their own statements and demands on their follower (Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999).

6.2.2 Innovative leadership

To keep the pace of the competitors on the market nowadays, companies have to create innovations steadily to develop further. Often it is needed to change products, habits, and create innovative ideas. To be successful it is important to have a leader on the top who thinks outside the box and encourages the followers to do the same (McEntire and Greene-Shortridge, 2011). Within the last century, employees were not encouraged by their leaders or the organisation to think creatively and to develop ideas that are fundamentally different to the business as usual that is practiced every day within the business. In the 21st century, this thinking has been changed leading to the need for creative and innovative thinking. That means that members of the organisation are encouraged to develop their own ideas and present different solutions to a problem (Hunter and Cushenbery, 2011).

Innovative leaders are characterised by the fact that they do not suffer any stagnation; they are always striving to make progress and to develop further. They are curious and do not fear to create new paths to solve a problem. Innovative leadership has mainly two activities, on the one hand, the development of new ideas and on the other hand the assessment of a certain idea and its practical implementation. The followers can either develop new ideas, here it is the task for the leader to identify the best ones and develop them further, but it is also the task of the leader to be creative and develop new ideas by him-/herself. To enhance the creativity of the followers it is the responsibility of the leader to create an environment, where people have enough space to think differently and develop their ideas. It is also recommended to foster an environment that is different to the usual one, for example, to establish a less formal dress code, or a start-up like office environment with less hierarchical structures (Hunter and Cushenbery, 2011). Additionally, it is also a function of the leader to come up with new visions and creative solutions for a certain problem, which will be developed further together with the group of followers (Mumford et al., 2007). It is important that the leader tolerates different opinions and is not too dominant within the process since otherwise the followers could be limited in their creativity, which leads to worse outcomes (Mumford et al., 2003).

After creating the ideas, it is the mission of the leader to evaluate these in regards of operationality and practicability. S/he has to decide whether an idea will be used or discarded. If one has decided to implement an idea, the leader is responsible for creating a plan, which shows how the proposal can be put into practice. Hereby one can also include the followers to get some valuable feedback and responses to improve their own plan (Hunter and Cushenbery, 2011).

The leader should act throughout the whole process as a role model, which gives the followers the chance to orientate themselves along with him/her and get inspiration for own working and thinking. Using unconventional methods within the change process is recommended within the literature, to inspire people and generate a more innovative input (Jaussi and Dionne, 2003).

6.2.3 Visionary leadership

The leader has to develop a vision about what the company could become in the future, which is not only his/her personal drive but also the motivator for the followers to engage as best as possible within the business. The vision is rather about the big picture of the company, as an overall goal for all affected employees and is not lost in some small details, which will be part of the whole construct. These details will be considered within the change process by time. The vision of the leader has the goal to change the status quo within the company to move further and make progress in the future to stay competitive on the market. Visionary leaders are often labelled as being pioneers in their business since they pursue new ways, which were not considered as relevant before. In many

cases, their thinking and their ideas are ahead of the time, which means that they rather think of tomorrow than of the here and now. One could name Steve Jobs as an example, who was responsible of a completely new generation of products at Apple or Martin Luther King, who is known until today for his speech "I have a dream" where he presents his vision and wishes for the future (Day, 2014).

Visionary leadership is characterised by creative and innovative thinking, which allows the leader to develop solutions and visions for the future that were not considered before. This includes also the possibility of making mistakes, the visionary leader is not afraid of making them since they are part of the business and s/he can learn from the situation. Once the vision has been developed, the leader has the necessary communication skills to impart his vision to the followers in a way that they feel carried away by the enthusiasm and get inspiration for their job and the future. Hereby the leader does not only use the right verbal language but also an appropriate body language (facial expressions and gestures), which supports the meaning of the words spoken. The main task of a visionary leader is to develop the vision for the change and communicate it in a second step to the affected employees in a way that convinces as many persons as possible by the rightness of the change and the vision (Day, 2014).

Besides that, the visionary leader tries to guide the followers into the desired direction, for example, s/he takes care that everybody stays focused on his or her task and tries to complete it as best as possible. The developed vision serves often as a kind of reference or guide which the involved employees can use as a reference for their personal acting (Day, 2014).

6.2.4 Transactional leadership

This leadership style refers to a relation of dependence between the leader and the follower. Hereby the leader gives to the followers something that they desire in exchange to receive something of value from them. Both sides, leaders and followers reward these reciprocal contributions. Furthermore, the leader becomes an influential figure since s/he is acting as the followers want, for their best interest. One can infer that this leadership style focuses on fulfilling the interests of the followers. As an example of this type of exchange, we can describe the situation of a leader asking to the employees for working overtime and in exchange, these people would receive extra days for vacations (Kuhnert and Lewis, 1987).

These transactions between leaders and followers have the objective to allow the leader to reach their performance goals, accomplish their tasks, and to keep the followers motivated since they know beforehand that good performance represents receiving rewards. The benefits are not only for leaders, but also for the followers. Hereby the employees could reduce their anxiety at the

workplace and can focus on their objectives since these should be clear enough to follow and receive the rewards (McCleskey, 2014).

Transactional leaders can be identified as the ones, which work mainly with the following characteristics: contingent rewards, management by exception, and laissez-faire. Contingent rewards refers to the act of offering rewards in exchange of good performance. Management by exception describes the act of managing teams or projects without intervening in the regular way of working unless this one is not meeting the required standards. Finally, the term laissez-faire describes the characteristic of avoiding decision making and taking responsibilities as much as possible. For instance, a leader acting with the laissez-faire characteristic would not react until a situation is truly becoming a problem and requires intervention. Before that, this person would not take any decision or responsibility to prevent that the situation becomes problematic (Bass, 1990). A positive characteristic of this leadership profile is working with contingent rewards since this could motivate employees to reach better performance levels in order to obtain rewards that they consider as valuable. However, this type of leadership has also been linked with less effectiveness within companies, due to passive characteristics such as the laissez-faire or management by exception. Additionally, in comparison with the transformational leadership style, transactional leaders tend to have less good relationships with their followers (Bass, 1990). However, there might be changes and business environments where this leadership style is more appropriate than other ones, like the transformational leadership style (Judge and Piccolo, 2004).

6.3 Leading change and sensemaking

Sensemaking is part of mostly every aspect of human beings and shapes the way we conceptualise experiences, objects, and people. The objective of this section is to explain the concept of sensemaking and its role within leadership.

6.3.1 Definition of sensemaking

First, it is important to define what sensemaking actually is and thus analyse its relationship in regards to leadership and change. Human beings create meanings of unknown situations by gathering the new data and placing it within frames of references, this is what can be recognised as sensemaking. These information or new experiences are called stimuli, which are pieces of data that can create a concept if they are all put together. One can also mention that sensemaking is about generating a construction of unknown situations or simply making sense out of certain data (Weick, 1995). Another definition considers sensemaking as cycles composed by events that occur in sequence and recurrently. The cycle begins when the individual construct assumptions and beliefs in an unconscious and conscious way. These assumptions work as a reference to predict future

situations. Subsequently, the person experiences an event, which needs explanations and understanding. The latter is created out of the assumptions acquired during the past. The assumptions are formed by context, situations that other people have experienced, cultural traits, their own experiences, and any other element that could serve as a guide in relation to the new context (Louis, 1980). The frame of reference or assumptions create a base for the person to have an understanding and a prediction for the new data. For instance, an employee who has had a bad experience during his hiring process. For him the time he was involved in interviews, assessments, and tests was long, stressful, and uncertain. Thus, this individual has interpreted that recruiting processes are exhausting and full of anxiety and risk. Then, the next time he would be facing a new job searching he will approach the situation from the last frame of reference, unless the last one is replaced by new information that changes his perspective and experience, making new sense of how being recruited looks like. The action of placing this new information into a frame of reference is called bracketing. Bracketing allows people to understand, explain, and predict the situation that they are currently experiencing (Weick, 1995).

In regards to leaders and sensemaking, Smircich and Morgan (1982) define leadership as the event in which one or more people achieve to shape and define the follower's reality. Hereby, leaders have the responsibility to define the context within the rest of the members make sense. Incorporating change processes within sensemaking theory, one can argue that any change, no matter how small or big it is, will create an alteration of meaning and value (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991), and it will interrupt well-practiced patterns requiring individuals to re-interpret their environments (Maitlis and Sonenshein, 2010).

Formulating change requires top managers to make sense of the external atmosphere in order to plan the strategy and influence middle-managers frames of references towards the upcoming change. This is important since, during the transfer of interpretations, top managers provide middle managers with important details about the new project. Middle managers will create their own reality about change and will transfer it to the rest of the employees. From these two rounds of interpretations, where middle managers act as mediators of interpretations, employees will re-enact their own environment that could be dramatically different from the initial idea. Thus, one can define change as a process with multiple voices, in which diverse interpretations are developed. For instance, change can be understood as strategic from the top manager's perspective, problematic from the middle management perspective and useless from the rest of the member's perspective. Since in this example these interpretations are discordant, it could result in new reasons for resistance (Maitlis and Sonenshein, 2010). Considering sensemaking, changes, and resistance to change from the management perspective, changes have been managed within a negative concept that interrupts the current status quo. Furthermore, resistance has been framed as a barrier to reach

the vision of the company (Ming-Chu and Meng-Hsiu, 2015). Therefore, change processes are approached from a frame of reference that dictates to reduce resistance, to fight against resistors, and to place them in a role of enemies of change. Hereby, we argue that at the time of facing change, manager's frame of reference should be renewed, not with the objective to not generate resistance, but for them to understand that changes are part of the natural business life. Furthermore, resistance should also be reframed as a positive and natural behavior that are part of the change initiatives. The positive aspects of resistance should be explained to managers in order for them to reframe its concept and the way they approach it. Since middle managers are the ones who spread the change idea within the rest of the employees, their concept about the project should be renewed. This has the objective to provide pieces of information that can help the employees constructing a less damaging meaning of change.

Moreover, we also argue the importance of having a clear vision as part of a frame of reference for employees. With a defined and clear future status quo that shows the benefits that people will obtain from change, employees can express either their support or a useful opposition to the change. Thus, the generated resistance is beneficial for the change process, since it will provide meaningful feedback and inputs rather than just standing against the new project without specific reasons.

6.3.2 Shared meanings as an instrument to create sensemaking

The sense is created through social processes that produce shared meanings. These shared meanings can promote collective action, but at the same time could be damaging to the organisation. It is important for leaders to manage these elements in order to promote a better sensemaking process during changing times (Maitlis and Sonenshein, 2010).

As Kotter (1996) mentions, creating an understandable vision is of great importance to achieve the desired results during change processes. This vision requires leaders to commit in a strong and public way. Commitment to the change vision empowers sensemaking activities by convincing employees about why the change is important and to impulse them to take action. However, one should be careful with this strong and public commitment since the visions could vary within changing contexts. Being committed to a certain vision can hinder the leader from adaptation to the new situation. When change is happening, leaders need to reduce their support to the old vision in order to embrace the new one. Therefore, it is important for top managers to define the new vision and ensure commitment by the middle managers. To avoid damage to the process, it should be clear that even old visions and goals are important, what they are fighting for is their current new goals and that is what they should be engaged to (Maitlis and Sonenshein, 2010).

Identity is another concept that is usually shared during sensemaking processes within change. Specifically related to resistance, identity is important because it could be threatened with the upcoming change (Maitlis and Sonenshein, 2010). The change could replace identities or even renew them (Fiol, 2002). While changing environments, employees and managers could change their roles within the company and this could generate issues with their understanding of their purpose within the firm. Therefore, it is important to create a common identity that allows participants to construct helpful meaning around it and avoid identity crises that interrupt a healthy change environment. As identity issues could interfere with the sensemaking process in changes, a defined and strong identity can also interrupt the creation of meaning. When leaders or employees are identified with characteristics and functions that are no longer relevant, this could create blindness that separates them from seeing current reality and its risks. As an example, one can mention a case of a manager who is strongly committed with his leading role and takes extra leading responsibilities, for the ones he lacks experience and knowledge (Maitlis and Sonenshein, 2010).

6.3.3   The role of storytelling within sensemaking

Storytelling can be defined as a way of expressing a message by telling a story that creates bonds between the listeners and the narrative that is being told. While telling a story, shared meaning and understanding is created (Delgado, 1989). Describing this concept within the organisational context, it could be explained as a system in which leaders influence the sensemaking process of their employees by the performance of stories (Boje, 2008). From these descriptions, one can observe that as a part of listening to the story the individuals create mental maps to generate their own interpretation of the story. Hereby one could link storytelling and sensemaking. Hence, sensemaking is done through shaping a story within a frame that works as a scheme for interpreting and referencing what should come next. Because of the complexity of the environments business experience nowadays, people are always creating sense out of the events they are living. Due to the pace of the events, employees could find themselves in a situation of making sense out of events that are not even completely developed. Storytelling is not only about listening to stories from others, but also about listing stories from ourselves. Answering to oneself the question about what is going on requires shaping and clarifying ideas, and by doing this one is creating a story. Therefore, creating meaning to a certain experience links the act of sensemaking with storytelling. Thus, we argue that storytelling is part of sensemaking in organisations even if leaders are aware or not of this situation. By telling stories the leaders can simplify their message and therefore the sensemaking process of the employees would be easier (Brown et. al, 2012).

6.4 Leadership and reflexivity

Research has shown that it is useful if a leader is reflecting to create awareness for own behaviour and character traits to make improvements in the daily business (Widmer et al., 2009). Literature defines reflexivity as "the extent to which group members overtly reflect upon, and communicate about the group's objectives, strategies (e.g., decision-making) and processes (e.g., communication), and adapt them to current or anticipated circumstances" (West, 2000: p. 296). Literature shows that teams, whose participants reflect regularly, show more appreciation for the overall strategy that is used to reach the goals as well as the objectives itself. Besides that, reflexive teams are usually proactive in business and try to act instead of reacting within certain situations (West, 2000).

The reflection process consists of three different stages: the reflection itself, a planning phase and the action/adaption stage and these can be used iteratively. Within the reflection phase, one is thinking about processes and working methods and tries to identify components that are not up to date anymore, redundant or can be executed more efficiently. To get these insights, one could use "questioning, planning, exploratory learning, analysis, diversive exploration, making use of knowledge explicitly, planfulness, learning at a meta level, reviewing past events with self-awareness, and coming to terms over time with a new awareness" (West, 2000: p.4). It is getting obvious that one has to analyse every situation separately and use the most appropriate approach to get the expected insights (Widmer et al., 2009).

Within the second stage - the planning phase - one defines the objectives of the reflection process and the way and measures that are needed to fulfil the plan (Widmer et al., 2009). Besides that, the literature states that detailed planning is needed to organise the way the single team participants are working. If that is not done diligent, the process will not be that effective or could end in chaotic situations, where employees do not know how to handle the situation (Sonnentag, 1998).

The third stage is about bringing the plans from the second stage into practice. It allows testing if the plans, insights, and assumptions from the first two stages were right. It is the overall goal to get improvements compared to the initial state of the project (Widmer et al., 2009).

If one scrutinises the advantages of reflexive leadership one can detect several issues where the company itself, as well as the employees, can profit. For example, if the employees, especially the leaders, are reflecting more, they have the possibility to detect possible mistakes within the change process earlier and define measures to overcome them. These improvements allow the whole process to be more successful and structured. The leader can rethink if s/he is guiding the followers in the right direction in order to reach the expected goals. If one concludes that changes are needed, one can plan and implement them within the upcoming times (Alvesson et al., 2017).

In addition to that, the leader must be aware that s/he carries a high responsibility, not only for the company and its business success but also a personal responsibility for the followers. If a leader behaves in the wrong way and makes wrong decisions, that could lead to an economic downturn within the company and end up with dismissals of employees. Reflection about personal responsibility and its possible consequences helps the leader to stay grounded and make reasoned decisions (Alvesson et al., 2017).

Besides that, reflection can lead especially in the second phase of the process to discussions with other leaders or followers who present their ideas on certain topics and present different viewpoints than one would consider alone. These discussions can be seen as a source of inspiration to develop alternative plans and solutions that might be better than the plans before (Alvesson et al., 2017).

Reflection about own behaviour can also lead to a reconsideration of the own leadership style, maybe the leader concludes that it would be more appropriate to use a different style to lead or guide the follower. It could be that one considers a different mode of organising in a certain situation as more appropriate to reach the best possible outcome, for example, one could also use management, group work, network-based peer influencing, or many other forms to organise followers and their work. Reflection helps to decide which form is the best one for a certain situation and how this could be implemented into praxis (Alvesson et al., 2017).

Reflection can also improve the time management of employees, for example, they can reconsider if it is really needed to join a certain meeting or if the way one approaches and solves a problem is really the most appropriate way. These reconsiderations help to save time in daily business since one can find potentials to improve and speed up own working behaviours. Of course, reflecting is time consuming, but in many cases it might help the person to improve own behaviour and reach a better outcome or as described above, one can also save time through reflection, if one comes to the conclusion that it is not needed to join certain meetings or can accelerate some processes (Alvesson et al., 2017).

Besides that, it could be that human beings develop some behaviour, which can be classified in so-called 'traps'. For example, it could happen that a leader sees only the positive aspects of a change; s/he interprets all development as positive and is open for positive news. This behaviour can lead in the end to major problems since one is neglecting negative issues that could influence the whole process significantly. Reflection could help the leader in such cases to be more critical and helps to reconsider if the own behaviour is appropriate or if it might be better to change the personal attitude towards the project. Another often-occurring problem is the 'hubris trap'. Hereby the involved leaders believe that they have developed the best plan to solve the problem or implement the change and everything will work out. Besides that, they are deeply convinced that

they can influence their followers with very little effort. Hereby it happens sometimes that leaders get lost in the feeling of their own greatness, that they lose the relation to the reality. Reflection helps in these cases to stay grounded and to evaluate how good or bad own behaviour actually is and if it would be useful to change or adapt some habits (Alvesson et al., 2017).

The follower has different choices to react on leadership initiatives of his/her leader, they can either be supported, discounted or reacted against them. Every reaction has a certain influence on the whole company environment. The reflexive follower takes the impact of his/her behaviour into consideration and weighs up the positive and negative aspects that could occur as a reaction. The personal reflection of the follower could lead in this case to the conclusion, that it might be better to support the change initiative of the leader to guarantee the economic success of the corporation in the future, even if it does not fulfil all personal needs of the follower. The reaction of the followers has a huge impact on the overall success of the project, whereas it is very important to introduce them into the topic of reflexivity to benefit from their reflective behaviour (Alvesson et al., 2017).

6.5 Gender and transformational leadership

Even if men and women do not represent significant differences among their leadership styles, it is a fact that there exist variations in their priorities and characteristics when leading (Boulgarides, 1984; Chapman, 1975). The objective of this section is to highlight the observed traits in female and male leadership and creating a relationship between them and the transformational leadership style, which seems to be the most appropriate for changing and challenging organisational environments (Burke and Collins, 2001; Eagly, 2007).

Due to the behaviours that compose of the transformational leadership, it has been proved to be a style that adapts easily to the conditions that companies experience nowadays (Eagly, 2007; Burke and Collins, 2001). Examples for these conditions are fast and great technological advances and fast organisational growth.

Additionally, competitivity is becoming higher in most part of the industries, the organisational missions are becoming more complex and there is increasing pressure for diverse teams (Eagly, 2007). This requires companies to be in constant change and to have leaders that work efficiently within these environments. Since business conditions have been changed during the years, companies need leaders that adapt their style to the current panorama (Kanter, 1997).

According to Eagly (2007) women show a tendency to be more aligned with characteristics that are associated with the transformational leadership style, these characteristics are related to organisational effectiveness. Women are characterised for being more oriented to build relationships

or being interpersonal oriented (Boulgarides, 1984; Chapman, 1975; Gardiner and Tiggemann, 1999).

Transformational leadership is oriented to create bonds between the leader and the followers. Traits such as being oriented to build relationships allow women to be more concerned about supporting, encouraging, and empowering their employees to work on their potential. This individual consideration fuels their coaching and teaching skills. Moreover, women leaders serve as positive role models for their subordinates and they tend to inspire their teams in order to reach common purposes (Burke and Collins, 2001). Intellectual stimulation is another characteristic that excels in female leaders, by encouraging creative problem solving and questioning assumptions within their teams.

Other important characteristics of female leadership are working with contingent rewards and management by exception (Hater and Bass, 1988). In general, women are more prone than men to work with contingent rewards, which means that they consider important providing rewards for excellent performance by their employees (Burke and Collins, 2001). Management by exception refers to not providing instructions or directions since it is not considered necessary because the old instructions are working without any problem. This characteristic does not allow followers to improve their performance as long as the team is reaching the goals (Hater and Bass, 1988).

Even most of the female leaders tend to work with this characteristic, they do it in a lower degree than most part of men, allowing teams to modify their way of working through new instructions that could provide them new insights and reach goals at the same time. It is important to mention that this behaviour is considered less effective in relation to organisational success (Burke and Collins, 2001).

Furthermore, Chapman (1975) states that females in leadership positions tend to adapt their strategies in order to reach common objectives. For instance, in general terms, they use as a strategy to form adaptative coalitions in order to reach team objectives and improve group performance. Another characteristic related to female leadership is the way they exercise control and authority. Average women lead in a non-authoritarian manner with less excessive control over groups.

In regards to male leadership, men also present characteristics related to transformational leadership, but in a lower degree than women do. One can argue that most parts of male leaders are less transformational than the majority of women leaders (Eagly, 2007). Men in leadership roles tend to focus on the mistakes their followers make, in order to meet criteria and standards. This fact means that the average male highlights and punishes his followers' mistakes in order to generate learning. Even though this act is not completely wrong, it shows a weak relation to effective leadership. Another relevant characteristic of male leadership is their passive response to solve problems, waiting for the issue to become severe before solving it. Furthermore, men show a

tendency to be uninvolved at the time of crises. With small differences, male leaders appear to dominate leadership characteristics that are less advantageous for companies and that hinder leadership effectiveness (Eagly, 2007). Another characteristic of male leadership is the use of power and authority. According to Chapman (1975) men act in a more authoritarian manner taking advantage of their power and position, acting not democratically oriented. In conclusion, female and male leadership styles are not completely different but have small dissimilarities that separate them to have the exact same way of leading (Eagly 2007). Even though literature argues that most parts of the characteristics related to transformational leadership are rather related to female figures, our aim is not to categorise these aspects into a gender classification. Our intention is to highlight the importance of both, men and women, performing the transformational leadership style with its correspondent traits. The fact that women mainly perform these characteristics, does not exclude men of the possibility of presenting them with good performance. Due to the importance of this type of leadership style within modern companies (Alimo-Metcalfe, 1995), both men and women should be trained if needed in transformational leadership skills such as coaching, intellectual stimulation, working with contingent rewards and team inspiration. The latter with the objective of having better prepared transformational leaders of both genders to cope with the challenges and changes that companies confront nowadays.

7   Kotter's change models

As already mentioned above, the thesis is focusing on the research and experience of Professor John Kotter. He created and developed within the last 25 years a famous and widely applied change model that is often applied in theory and praxis.

7.1   Relevance of Kotter's change models

Within the thesis, the focus lies on a change model that has been developed out of the practical experience and research of the famous business professor John P. Kotter. His change model focuses on the successful change implementation and the reduction of the barriers these type of initiatives could have within the process. In 1995, the academic magazine *Harvard Business Review* published an article about his ideas and a year later, in 1996, the author published a detailed explanation of the model within his book "Leading Change". In spite of the received criticism because of lacks in the empirical foundation, Kotter's book became famous since that time. The model is an often applied reference within the academic field. The model has been cited more than 4000 times in Google Scholar, which is one of the most famous search engines nowadays (Appelbaum et al., 2012). Furthermore, Kotter's eight steps are developed structurally based on the Unfreeze-Change-Refreeze guide of Lewin (Hussein et al., 2013). This last model is of high importance within change management topics since its author is considered the "father of change management". During Kotter's steps, the environment is unfrozen, and then the change takes its place and after these stages comes the consolidation of the new status quo.

Moreover, the model is based on the assumption that resistance is a detractor of change processes. In fact, the fifth step considers this element as a barrier that should be transformed or eliminated (Kotter, 1996). This point is of high relevance since authors such as Pardo del Val and Martínez Fuentes (2003) state that resistance to change is a powerful tool of information that could improve the results of change processes. Additionally, according to Gilley et al. (2009) resistance to change is a natural response when one is about to approach change. Therefore, the relevance of the choice of Kotter's model relies on updating a model that is even widely used in companies; it is not considering this alternative perspective about resistance. Improving the model with these more recent findings could increase the quality of the results of renewal projects.

7.2   Development of Kotter's change models

Kotter's eight steps change model is the result of the previous work that the author has done during the years of his career. The famous Harvard University received him as a full-time Professor in the Faculty of Business in 1980. Within the following years, he wrote several books related to leadership and management, but his initial contribution to change management and resistance to

change was in 1979. During this year, Kotter and Schlesinger wrote a paper titled Choosing Strategies for Change. Hereby, managers had access to strategies that helped to manage change and to reduce resistance. Years after, in 1995 Kotter wrote the article *'Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail'*, for the Harvard Business Review Magazine. This work was based on his experience with the observation of approximately one hundred companies and the most common mistakes they made while executing change. These experiences were the base to generate the assumptions that helped to create the model. Thus, these mistakes were transformed into eight steps to follow if managers wanted to avoid failure in their organisational transformations.

One year later, the book '*Leading Change'* was published as a detailed and depth explanation of these mistakes, that is based on the research Kotter made during the 1980s and 1990s in about 100 companies (Hughes, 2016). This first version of the model was designed within the context of hierarchical companies facing changes based on long producing cycles, which means that these processes where occasional events. Through the years, the market environment has been changed drastically, and changes are the usual factor in every day's operations. Due to the characteristics of the business context back then, Kotter proposed a change management model that was supposed to be applied from a top-down perspective, meaning that the change was implemented through bureaucratic processes. Due to the speed of the environment at that time, a top-down change system did not represent a critical risk as it does now a day. Therefore, the model was designed as a guide that managers should follow by applying the eight steps in order to achieve a new status quo. This scenario changed several years ago when companies began to confront change processes more and more often and flat organisational structures started to become more usual. Based on this fact, Kotter adapted his model to the new challenging business conditions, transforming the eight steps to eight accelerators. These accelerators try to cope with a dynamic and changing context, without losing agility and stability within the process. Moreover, these updated steps are part of a dual system that belongs to a network. This network is highly similar to the structure of a startup, and it is which Kotter claims is fundamental to speed up the change (Leavy, 2014). This new version is not radically different from the first version of the model. One can argue that the two main differences rely on the presence of a second system or network working in parallel with the hierarchy, and the evolution from steps to accelerators. Additionally, this new version keeps labelling resistance to change as negative and problematic. Therefore, it is worthy to first understand the eight steps proposed in 1996 and then to link them with the eight accelerators and the dual system.

7.3 The eight steps of the change model

The following section explains the eight steps of Kotter's change model, which have been published and explained in 1996 within the book "Leading Change" written by Professor John Kotter.

(1) Establishing a Sense of Urgency

Within the first stage of the model, one has to create awareness in the company, that a change is needed. Hereby one has to conduct dialogues and discussions with members of the company to create an appreciation for the actual situation. Hence, the manager has to make sure that the level of urgency is high enough to convince the involved people by the necessity of the change. If the level stays too low within the phase, it will cause problems within the next stages since people will not see the need for a change and it will be hard to convince them by the opposite. A crisis within the market or economy is often seen as a trigger for the change and can be used as a base for this step. Through and within the dialogues and discussions one can create a clearer picture of the actual situation as well as for future scenarios, which convince people for the need of a change. Besides that, it is important to identify those leaders, who are willing to take responsibility and will support the initiative within the next stages (Kotter, 1996).

(2) Creating the guiding coalition

During the second phase of the change process, one has to create a powerful coalition with the right people. One should involve the key players within the change, that they cannot hinder its practical implementation within the next stages. Besides that, these people have a high influence on their subordinates and followers to convince them of the rightness of the change. All members of the coalition should have certain expertise, which will be needed throughout the process. In addition, some members of the coalition should be good leaders with high influence on their followers to implement the change successfully. The group should have a clear goal, which should be reached together to motivate everybody to give the best performance. Trust is another very important point that should be generated and kept within the team members in order to have a good working climate and at least, to be successful (Kotter, 1996).

(3) Developing a vision and strategy

In this stage of the change model, the coalition, which guides the change, should design a vision, which has the goal to motivate and guide the involved people throughout the change process. Through listening to the vision the people should understand why the change is needed and how it should look like, which means that one should focus on these topics while constructing the vision.

Leaders should take some time to develop the vision since they should not be too ambitious but also not too flat. Kotter mentions that it should be possible to present the vision understandable within five minutes; to keep the content in the minds of the audience. Besides that, one should practice presenting the vision to an audience since this will be part of the next step (Kotter, 1996).

(4) Communicating the change vision

Within the fourth stage of the change implementation, one is communicating the vision to the affected employees within the firm. Hereby it is important to present the vision in an understandable language that it is possible for everybody to follow the presentation and understand the meaning of the words spoken. Rhetorical devices, like metaphors, can help to make the vision more vivid. Kotter recommends using as many ways to communicate as possible, for example, meetings in all sizes, within lunch or coffee breaks or media channels like the intranet or newspaper. Besides that, it is important to repeat the vision several times to keep them in the minds of the employees and create a certain awareness for the presented topics (Kotter, 1996).

(5) Empowering employees for broad-based action

Within this step, it is the goal to remove all barriers, which could hinder a successful implementation of the change initiative. If employees are lacking skills, Kotter recommends indoctrinating them in these areas to improve their knowledge. Besides that, he states, that one should conduct adaptations within the structure of the business if they do not fit to or support the change initiative. Additionally, one should focus on resistant people within the process. Kotter states that the change coalition should contact so-called "troublesome supervisors" who are not supporting the initiative to figure out their reasons for the resistance to convince them in a second step by the rightness of the own change process. If it should not be possible to convince them, he recommends as the last option to fire such people since their involvement in the next steps will lead to a failure of the change initiative (Kotter, 1996).

(6) Generating short term wins

To keep the involved employees motivated within the change process, it is important that the guiding coalition is not only focusing on the overall goal of their change initiative, which could take some time until it is reached but also to focus and initiate short term wins. They help the involved persons to stay motivated and to believe that the initiative is developing in the right direction. Besides that, Kotter mentions, that it also might be useful to keep some short-term pressure on the people to stay focused on the topic and to keep the pace of the project (Kotter, 1996).

(7) Consolidating gains and producing more change

Within this stage, it is important that the change initiative and the involved people do not lose the momentum to carry the change initiative further. Hereby one has to be careful to not communicate the progress as too successful; since the employees could think that from now on everything goes by itself. As a result, they could reduce their personal performance. Besides that, one should encourage and empower the people to work further on the change process to finish it prosperously (Kotter, 1996).

(8) Anchoring new approaches in the culture

In the last step of the model, Kotter claims that the changes need to be placed into the organisation's culture. This means, that the employees are confronted with the changing environment every day and the change should be seen as something "normal" where everybody is used. In addition, one should focus on the fact, that some of the key employees within the guiding alliance will develop further and will leave the organisation itself or the affected division. Therefore, one has to develop a plan for how those employees will be replaced and how one intends to train the successors. This offers also the opportunity to promote certain employees who did an outstanding job within the change process to show their own appreciation (Kotter, 1996).

7.4   Critical analysis of the eight steps

Kotter's eight steps model and its most recent version are built on his personal experience and some underlying assumptions. It is important to understand and analyse these in order to identify which are the main points that should be reconsidered and modified within this study.

7.4.1   Analysis of the main assumptions of the model

The main assumption concerning this thesis is the perception the model has towards resistance to change. Both, the eight steps as well as the eight accelerators consider resistance to change as a problem that hinders the development of change (Hughes, 2016). In fact, the fifth step of the model is designed to remove any barrier that could balk the change initiative. Within this step, resistors are considered as troublesome individuals whose attitude should be changed through leadership. This change of attitude should be executed by the guiding coalition, which has the responsibility to gain the support of these people and when it is not possible to convince them, they should be removed of the firm as a last consequence (Kotter, 1996). This assumption is coincided by Piderit (2000) and her explanation about the fact that managers label resistance to change as negative and the resistant employees are considered as rebels who oppose to manager's initiatives. Therefore, we can infer that Kotter's model suggests facing resistance to change from a negative

perspective, approaching it with the assumption that resistors are detractors of change (Armenakis et al., 2007).

Another assumption is the use of sensemaking to frame the change project as positive. In the fourth step, which is about communicating the vision, managers are advised to use metaphors and any other rhetorical devices that help to communicate an understandable and memorable vision (Kotter, 2006). Rhetoric and metaphors are utilised under the assumption that change is nothing more than desirable, urgent and positive, helping the employees to construct their meaning about the rightness of change. This assumption does not create any space to reconsider if the change is truly necessary or positive. It is true that change is perceived as a negative event, and it should be reframed as natural and part of the business cycle. However, this positive concept of change is different than considering if the change is truly needed. Thus, stability is conceptualised as the state of the organisation when nothing is happening, therefore in order to move forward, change is brought to action (Sturdy and Grey, 2003). We argue that by analysing whether the change is urgent and needed, the company could save efforts, time, and money that otherwise would be utilised for a project that fights against solidity; instead of truly solving a current issue. Furthermore, we state that in order to create a real sense of urgency, more than just generating acceptance by feelings of dissatisfaction of the current status quo (Smith, 2005) one should analyse beforehand the threats and opportunities that would come with the changing and not changing scenario. These possible threats and opportunities should also be accompanied by a plan on how to work with them. Thus, change readiness will be generated; it will be avoided to create a non-argumentative way sense of urgency, which will not provide strong arguments that support the change at the end.

Moreover, this communication stage does not consider the fact that managers and leaders of change should be aligned with what they are preaching. One can infer that another assumption is that the communication stage and sensemaking process is limited to the only and formal communication that will exist about communicating the decision. No informal channel of communication is not considered as relevant to create meaning within the individuals.

According to Kotter (1996), leaders should care about how they provide the formal message during the fourth phase of the changing plan, but he does not mention anything about the importance of supporting the communication with congruent actions and behaviors. For instance, the corporation is advocating for a cut of the budget in a certain department and therefore, some of the job positions will be eliminated. Then, managers and leaders should not spend money on unnecessary travels, expensive company cars or having informal talks with employees about how uncomfortable they feel with the new situation. Furthermore, they could have lateral conversations with the objective to improve the interpretation of the project. All these actions influence the

meaning that employees will have about the upcoming status quo and will be aligned with what has been preached during formal communications (Balogun, 2006).

The sequence of the change process is another important assumption where the model is built on. The author designed these steps to follow them when facing a change process, without taking in consideration that in real life changes, they do not follow a certain structure and that they are influenced by external factors of the environment. These influences from the environment can cause unexpected results and situations that do not allow managing change linearly (Styhre, 2002). Examples of these factors could be the economy, politics, competence, and technological advancements. Hereby, from this assumption, the model provides a practical guide that managers should follow if the change would behave in a linear way. Moreover, companies prefer guides and models, which are adaptable to their culture. For example, if one of the steps does not truly fit the way the corporation uses to work, then leaders desire a change management model can be removed or adapted to their way of working. Since the model is a guide that is supposed to be followed step by step, it is not adaptable to each organisational culture, making it more rigid and hard to follow (Appelbaum et al., 2012).

The top-down perspective and complex hierarchy are also assumptions that are characterising the model. This guide is created for companies to apply it from top management, going through middle managers and then to the rest of the employees in the hierarchy. This structure of working could be a reason for delays and cause of bureaucracy, being not that effective for today's business environment. This assumption can be observed along with the whole model, from the first step where a sense of urgency should be established and then it goes through the guiding coalition and reaches the employees, who are the final receptors of the change (Kotter, 1996).

Leadership and management are two important figures that are mentioned under the assumption to be essential to reach the change goal. Kotter (1996) makes emphasis on the fact that even both roles are needed during change processes; the leadership role is the one that carries the major responsibility. The latter could represent about 70 to 80 percent within the delegation of tasks. Hence, the management tasks are about 20 to 30 percent and are not utilised to convince people about the change, but to be in charge of administrative processes. Moreover, most of the leadership characteristics that Kotter (1996) considers important when selecting the leaders for the guiding coalition correspond to transformational leadership. Attributes such as trust, credibility, and power to influence others are issues that distinguish a transformational leader. Since the coalition step is fundamental in order to reach the change and is considered as a key principle in change initiatives (Barton Cunningham and Kempling, 2009), we argue that it should be explored deeply, which type of leadership style fits the best to the guiding coalition and changing situations. In order to obtain the maximum advantage of the coalition, the model should mention the leadership style and

behaviour more in detail. This could be created along with a plan to support the existing leaders who could improve their transformational leadership skills and to not frustrate the process itself.

Moreover, since female leadership characteristics have shown a better performance being transformational leaders it is essential to procure that the volunteer army is guided mainly by leaders that perform female leadership characteristics, no matter if they associate to the male or female gender (Burke and Collins, 2001).

7.4.2 Analysis of additional aspects of the model

Additionally to the assumptions that the model has been constructed on, there are relevant considerations that are important to contrast with different arguments within the literature. Developing a guiding coalition is one of the most important steps that Kotter's model contains. However, the author mentions the creation of this guiding team and the changing need as an event that happens just once during the process. This coalition should stay static during the whole change process, without any dynamism regarding the team members or the purpose of the group. This makes sense within a linear change process since the latter can be planned and is not influenced by external factors. This is not the scenario companies face nowadays. Since challenging business environments are the rule for today's companies, linearity is not possible and chaos is present day by day. Therefore, the need to create more than just one coalition could arise, to fulfil the constant changing needs of guidance. These different coalitions are responding to several changes that are happening during the project (Sidorko, 2008). It is up to the change leader to decide whether a second or third guiding coalition is needed or not, depending on the circumstances of the change project. Due to the different influences that companies receive, the change process can be impacted by these external forces, which could give a different direction to the initial change plan. In consequence, building several coalitions could be an instrument to cope with different situations during changing times. It is important to mention that these multiple coalitions would not be created all at once, but according to the moment and vision that they are needed for. Not only the coalition step could be modified at the time of real business life application, but also some other steps could be not relevant depending on the context. For instance, changes that require secrecy as a fundamental characteristic. Then, communicating a sense of urgency and spreading the message of change are steps that would not be part of the process and could represent a risk of breaking this needed secrecy (Appelbaum et al, 2012).

Feedback is a powerful tool that when is not utilised, it is possible that companies pay high costs of not using it. A significant repercussion of not working with feedback is the impact it could have in the quality of decision making, affecting from the top management to the rest of the employees (Tourish and Robson, 2004). Decisions taken without considering any feedback could

put the success of the project at risk. If we relate this to Kotter's model, we can observe the absence of feedback along with the eight steps. Moreover, we argue that feedback should be considered from the beginning of the model when the change is planned. In consequence, the quality of the decision taken regarding the change process could be improved by evaluating other opinions and perspectives that have not been yet explored. In this point, one can think about resistance as a way of feedback, but also any other positive and negative comments related to relevant aspects of the company. Furthermore, in the seventh and eighth step, where the focus is to keep the employees working towards the change and to consolidate the new status quo, applying feedback could be of great value to provoke a long-lasting change. Feedback could also lead to reflexivity, since listening to the opinions of others could trigger the self-conscious about leadership performance. This reflexivity step is not observed within the model. According to Kotter (1996), leaders are of high importance during the change processes, due to their role of influencing, empowering, communicating, and guiding. This leadership toil could be improved by self-reflection of the leader about his/her actions, behaviours, and traits and how these are contributing or hindering the development the followers and achievement of goals (Widmer et al., 2009). There is no suggestion within the model that mentions the need for reflecting upon the leadership acts and traits. We argue that by avoiding reflexivity the process can lose the potential improvement this act could bring for both the leader and the change itself.

One can observe that one of the main issues with this version of the model is that it is not highly adaptable to the business context that works within rapidly changing conditions (Appelbaum et al., 2012). Therefore, years after Kotter decided to create a modification of his model that could be more useful for today's firms. This new version will be revised within the next section.

7.5   The eight accelerators

The book "Accelerate" written by John Kotter and published in 2014 shows new research findings by the professor, and represents a development of the ideas from *'Leading Change'* adapted to the pace of the time. He reconsidered and modified the eight steps to make them better applicable in today's business environment. Kotter argues within *'Accelerate'* that the conventional hierarchical structures within corporations are not sufficient to sustain successful within today's markets and to implement changes prosperous. Besides that, he is convinced that the "old" hierarchical structures within companies are in most of the cases too bureaucratic and slow, as well as resistant to change (Kotter, 2012). However, that does not mean that a hierarchy has only disadvantages. Kotter is convinced that hierarchical structures are useful to define and accomplish operating cycles and they help to build up clear working relationships within the employees in the present. In addition, if the involved managers understand their job, these hierarchies help to align

the tasks of employees around the globe (in international business) and enable them to reach their goals. Kotter describes that the hierarchies help corporations to manage their day-by-day business and to reach the short-term goals but have shortcomings when it comes to innovations and changes (Kotter, 2015).

However, when it comes to success in the long-term perspective, Kotter (2012) mentions that solely hierarchical structures within a company are not up to date anymore and do not enable companies to be innovative and successful. Hierarchies are usual rather inflexible, do not enable employees to detect new opportunities and take advantage of them as well as they are too slow acting when it comes to certain threats within the business. Besides that, such hierarchical structures hinder employees to develop new strategies, which would allow the firm to adapt to the changing business environment. To be competitive on the market and reach the short-term goals but also being innovative, grasping for innovations and new ways of conducting business, Kotter proposes to establish a so-called "dual system" within the company (Kotter, 2012).

This system has the advantage, that it combines the traditional hierarchies, which allows the corporation to be successful in the present with a dynamic network, to be innovative and open to changes. Such networks are often oriented at the structures of start-ups, who are usually more innovative, very flexible and open for new opportunities and changes (Kotter, 2012). This second operation system is continuously evaluating the actual situation within the firm, but also its surroundings like the market and the competitors. The network can react faster and more agile on changing conditions within these areas than the hierarchical structures. The network consists of motivated persons from the business, who are willing to go new ways and are open for new approaches. The participants are joining the network voluntarily and can leave at any time. The network is a self-organising and creative construct, which offers freedom to develop different ideas and think in different spheres. The participants have the opportunity to think different, use other channels to gain information, and can make and implement decisions in a different and faster way to make the company more competitive (Kotter, 2014).

The corporation defines the overall framework for the project, offers budgets and resources but the rest is organised by the involved people themselves. The network is in a lively exchange with the rest of the firm to realise the newly developed ideas. The strategic direction can be quickly adapted to changing conditions and requirements on the market to stay innovative and competitive (Kotter, 2012).

The network should consist of 5 to 10 percent of the employees and managers to function successfully. The specific participants can change within the project since not everybody is needed within each stage or some people will not have time to support the endeavour the whole time. One has to mention that everybody is participating from own motivation and one takes this burden added

to the regular job on top. The network participants see their attendance as an opportunity and privilege to work with and develop their own ideas, which would not be possible within the hierarchical structure. Besides that, leadership plays an important role within the network. The leader has to awake visions and opportunities within his/her follower and conveys a certain passion for the project. Hence, the follower will feel connected to the ideas and will put all their efforts into the realisation of the project (Kotter, 2014).

However, the participants usually spend more time in the company, but Kotter mentions also that these people get more efficient and learn to manage to spend about 80 percent of their working time within the hierarchical structure and participate within the rest of their time in the network (Kotter, 2014).

Besides that, one has to mention, that the dual system is not changing the corporation. While establishing the second operation system one is only adding another level within the firm. These two systems work side by side and live from a vivid exchange. On the one hand, the network participants have all a job within the hierarchy, which creates a certain connection. On the other hand, it is very important to exchange ideas and visions between the two operating systems to profit from these ideas. It is easier to implement new ideas if both parties are involved and the more brains are involved in an idea, the more inspiration can be created, which can be used afterwards to develop a certain issue further (Kotter, 2014).

Within the book "Accelerate" John Kotter mentions eight accelerators, which should help the network system to function effectively. These accelerators resemble the eight steps from the book "Leading Change" but have fine but essential differences, which are needed to be successful with the change implementation in today's business. The accelerators help the network structure to function and being competitive within the markets.

The eight accelerators are the following:

(1) Create a sense of urgency around a big opportunity

Within this first step, one starts to establish the dual system within the organisation. One has to build up and establish a powerful sense of urgency within as many members of the organisation as possible. The sense of urgency should be built around a big opportunity, the overall goal or vision one wants to reach, the initiator and motivator for the whole project. That leads to the fact that the involved people are constantly thinking about the big opportunity and ways to reach it. Hereby they develop creative ideas and alternative ways to reach their goals. In general, there is no recipe, which always works out to create the sense of urgency, but one can summarise that there are many ways to do that and one needs a way that is individually constructed for every single case (Kotter, 2014).

(2) Build and evolve a guiding coalition

This accelerator has the goal to form a group of people who support the overall idea of the change and the big opportunity. These employees can come from all levels of the hierarchy, to get a broad cross-section of people from the whole organisation. These persons feel deeply connected to the urgency of the actual situation and support the initiative as best as possible. Members of the guiding coalition consider themselves as leaders and change agents who want to push the project forward and to motivate others to join the initiative. Such people are usually team players and experienced in group work and its problems. Within the creation of such a guiding coalition, one has to be careful that one does not build up a management hierarchy, which is already known from the other operational system. One has to foster an environment, which turns around the big opportunity and gives the member the opportunity to be different and creative. As a result, the participants of the coalition will find ways to work together, but completely different from their ordinary habits. Besides that, the members of the coalition will also figure out ways to connect both operations systems within the organisation effectively. This will increase the speed of decision-making and enables the organisation to be more agile (Kotter, 2014).

(3) Form a change vision and strategic initiatives

Kotter recommends within this step to create and specify the vision around the big opportunity. Besides that, one should choose several strategic opportunities that fit the big opportunity and enable the involved people to move agile and fast in the direction of the created vision. The strategic initiatives should be in alignment with the executive committee to avoid potential conflicts within the process. However, these initiatives differ usually a lot to the ones a hierarchy driven system would create since the smaller network has different opportunities and possibilities to create and implement solutions (Kotter, 2014).

(4) Enlist volunteer army

Within this step, the guiding coalition and volunteers that support the initiative are spreading their vision and the strategic initiatives. They try to reach as many members of the organisation as possible and to convince them of their plans. If one has implemented that step successfully, one has gained many active and passive supporters, who will help to realise the change vision (Kotter, 2014).

(5) Enable action by removing barriers

The fifth accelerator tries to foster an environment, where one tries to identify all barriers that could hinder the success of the initiative. In a second step, one tries to develop solutions about how these barriers could be removed. Besides that, one tries to create an environment that resembles the one of a start-up, being more agile and creative. Additionally, people will try to identify steps

that are already conducted within the hierarchical system to avoid double work, and not conduct them twice (Kotter, 2014).

(6) Generate (and celebrate) short-term wins

This accelerator should make sure that everybody within the network is creating bigger and smaller wins, which are recognised and celebrated within the organisation. It is very important to make the wins visible and celebrate them since they are creating a psychological power, which legitimises the dual system. The hereby-created credibility helps to develop a certain standing for the network within the organisation and can also convince people, who did not have a positive attitude towards the network before (Kotter, 2014).

(7) Sustain acceleration

The seventh accelerator serves the purpose to keep the pace of the project. It is normal human behaviour to rely on already reached progress and decrease their own working pace. This accelerator helps to keep the spirit within the employees up and motivates them further to strive for the big opportunity (Kotter, 2014).

(8) Institute change

Within the last step of the project one tries to establish the wins and the changes into the hierarchy of the organisation. It is the overall goal to integrate the change into the culture of the company and to consider the change as something new (Kotter, 2014).

7.6   Critical analysis of the eight accelerators

While reading and analysing the eight accelerators, it is obvious that they have many aspects in common with the eight steps, which are described before. However, a deeper analysis shows that the accelerators differ mainly in three points from the eight steps. The eight steps were constructed for changes that are stiff and finitely and are used in a row, while the accelerators are often used simultaneously and permanent. In addition, the accelerators try to include as many employees as possible into the change initiative to create the so-called "volunteer army", but in contrast, a few individuals implement the eight steps. At least, one can say that the steps should work in a hierarchical structure and the accelerators can only function within an agile and flexible netting (Kotter, 2012).

7.6.1   Analysis of the main assumptions of the eight accelerators

One of the main assumptions Kotter builds the accelerators on is that hierarchies are not the best way to lead and influence people within change processes. As already described above, hierarchies have advantages, for example, to have clear structures within the company to face actual challenges. However, it is also getting clear, that solely hierarchical structures are too inflexible and slow to adapt to actual challenges and to plan and implement changes. That is the reason why Kotter recommends the 'Dual System', a structure consisting of a hierarchical and a network part. The hierarchical structure has the task to face the present challenges, the daily business, and the network allows the company to be more innovative, agile and faster in order to develop and implement new ideas. Kotter sees that as an essential part of the accelerators since he claims that companies must become more flexible in their business to persist permanently in the market. Gupta (2015), who states that matrix structures within companies are more appropriate to plan and implement a change successfully, supports this. These structures offer the advantages to combine the expertise of several employees to develop the best possible solution for a problem, as well as that one can reduce costs and be more innovative.

Besides that, Kotter claims for as much leadership as possible within the company. Especially the network part within the dual system should be completely leadership driven since this offers more freedom for the employees and gives more possibilities to develop the change initiative in the best way further. One can assume that Kotter is convinced by the fact that leadership is the best option to manage change successfully. Ahn et al. (2004), who state that one should include much more leadership in change initiatives, but still keep some hierarchical structures within the corporation, support this argument. This idea is described within Kotter's ideas of the dual system.

Additionally, Kotter mentions that the sense of urgency should be created within the first step around a so-called 'big opportunity'. The big opportunity is a more developed concept to motivate the people than the vision, which should be created within the third step of the eight steps. The big opportunity shows the employees why it is worth to support the change and what they can expect from the future if they decide to follow their leader(s). The big opportunity has the goal to reach the hearts as well as the minds of the employees to convince them by the opportunities of the possible outcomes if they support the change. It shows them how the reputation of the company could be improved, how efficient one can deal with financial resources and how the ambitious goals of the initiative can be reached. This shows the development of the vision from the eight steps since there it was the goal to present the people the advantages of the change and why it is worth to support. The big opportunity seems to be more convincing since the presented data are much more into detail, give them more options for the future and empowers the people to fulfil their ideas.

Overall spoken, the whole change process is built around the big opportunity, which must be well developed to convince the people by the rightness of the project (Kotter, 2014).

Furthermore, the guiding coalition, which is built within the accelerators, seems to be bigger and more powerful than the coalition, which is created within the eight steps. Within the steps, Kotter proposes to include only the key players of the change in the alliance, which have a high influence on their followers and subordinates to convince them. Within the eight accelerators, one should not only include the key players of the change but also leaders from all levels of the organisation. Additionally, one should build up a volunteer army within the fourth accelerator step, which includes all people that are convinced by the idea and would like to support it. That makes the change initiative much more powerful than the one that would have been created along with the eight steps because there are more people included that are convinced by the ideas and spread their positive spirit within the company (Kotter, 2014).

Kotter did not change his view on resistance to change while developing the eight accelerators. Like already described above within the analysis of the eight steps, he considers resistance still as a negative issue, that must be overcome in order to be successful. The fifth accelerator step mentions again certain measures how one should deal with resistance to change to overcome it and how to deal with resistant employees (Kotter, 2014).

Sensemaking plays a role within the steps of the eight accelerators, but it seems like that Kotter uses it rather unconsciously because he does only describe that the volunteer army is influencing people within the change, for example in step five and six. It would be better if Kotter were aware of the fact to use sensemaking since the leader would have then the possibility to influence the frames of references of the employees in the right direction. Besides that, it would be useful to use tools like storytelling that support the sensemaking process since it works as a scheme for the employees to create own interpretations (Brown et. al, 2012).

Another aspect of the eight accelerators is that these are always straightforwardly orientated. That means that Kotter is always arguing from the point that the whole change process is positive and will work out as long as one considers the single step. He does not consider any mistakes made by the responsible persons throughout the process. For example, it could happen that one made some mistakes within the second step, which lead to the fact that the guiding coalition is not strong enough. It might be helpful to offer the way back within the change process to refine the problem but Kotter does not consider these options. Not considering these options could lead to a higher failure rate since he argued that the change would only be successful when all steps are implemented correctly (Kotter, 1996). Overall, one can conclude that the accelerators are more flexible and dynamic than the eight steps and help to implement changes in today's business environment more successfully than before.

7.6.2 Analysis of additional aspects of the eight accelerators

While analysing the eight accelerators more deeply, it is getting obvious that Kotter does not, as already shown above within the analysis of the eight steps, consider reflection as a tool that could improve the planning and implementation of a change initiative. Kotter does not concede that the change leaders could make mistakes or improve their personal behaviour in order to be more successful. Besides that, he is just describing which goals the leader should reach within the single steps, but not the way one can reach them. It might be helpful to describe with which measures a certain issue can be reached or recommend some behaviour patterns that could support the ideas of the leader.

Additionally, also within the eight accelerators, Kotter does not consider the different character traits of leaders based on the gender so it might be helpful, like we already did in the analysis of the eight steps, to think about the advantages and disadvantages of certain behavioural patterns, based on the different genders. Moreover, as already described in the analysis of the eight steps, are also the eight accelerators not containing any specific feedback mechanisms during the change. Indeed, within the network structure, it might be easier for employees to give feedback to their leaders that can be considered within the further steps but in general, there is not a specific feedback mechanism envisaged.

7.7 Conclusion on Kotter's eight steps and accelerators

Our analysis of Kotter's eight steps and eight accelerators have shown that the presented ideas within these two models have some shortcomings and are not completely up to date. It became obvious that especially Kotter's eight steps from 1996 are mainly based on his personal experience of the 1980s and the early 1990s, which is now about 30 to 40 years ago. The 2014 published eight accelerators represent a development of the eight steps and are definitely an adaption to the pace of the time but it is evident that he is not considering all the aspects that could help to improve a change project and make the outcome more successful. We recommend considering aspects like reflection within the planning and implementation of the change since this offers the opportunity to improve the whole process. As already described, the change leaders and members of the guiding coalition can reflect upon the progress and spot some mistakes or shortcomings that should be improved to have a better overall change. Besides that, we recommend considering the feedback that is expressed by the involved employees throughout the process. We are convinced that there is value in the feedback, which is the reason why we recommend dealing with it. Employees are usually experts in their professional field and they could detect problems within the project that might not be considered by their superiors since they do not have such a specific view on the topic. Additionally, we conclude that there exists a lack of deeper description of the needed requirements to be a

successful change leader. Kotter mentions only what the leaders have to do but not the specific characteristics that a leader should possess in order to reach their goals. For example, he is not explicitly mentioning a certain leadership style that he considers as useful to implement the project successfully. Moreover, Kotter is not consciously working with sensemaking and reframing the personal frames of references of the affected employees. As already described above, we are confident by arguing that sensemaking can influence people in their thinking and can change their attitude towards the change, wherefore we will include it into our modification of the model. Furthermore, we have shown above that there are differences in the leadership styles between the two genders, which should be considered within change management. Kotter does not distinguish between the different behaviours of men and women but we are convinced that these different behaviours can increase the value of the project if they are considered.

In addition to these points, we have shown that Kotter has developed a completely negative perspective on resistance to change and tries to remove resisting people from the change process. We have found and analysed several positive aspects of resistance to change within chapter five that are worth to be considered within the change model. These aspects will also be an important part of the modification of the model.

Overall, one can conclude that the ideas within the studied model are valid and often applied in practical terms. However, we have found several issues that were not considered by John Kotter and we will use them as a base for our modification. It is important to mention that it is not our goal to criticise or destruct the whole change models of John Kotter since the overall idea is still valid. We want to modify it rather in details where we have analysed certain weaknesses and shortcomings. Besides that, we want to add new knowledge that has not been considered by the author at the time of the creation of the eight steps but we consider as strongly relevant.

8 Modification of the model

Within this section of the thesis, we will present a modified change model that bases on John Kotter's ideas and models but incorporates all aspects that were missing or not considered to the extent that we think it might be useful. We want to present a model that is up to date and considers the most relevant aspects of the leadership theory. We decided to keep the overall ideas of John Kotter since we are convinced that his models provide a good base, which is definitely worth to be developed further.

8.1 Principles of the modified model

In order to take maximum advantage of the modified model, the intention of this section is to clarify important elements that have been included within the modification of Kotter's change models. Therefore, the user can understand how to manage these new incorporations and use it as s/he finds it more suitable to the specific context. These elements are mostly dynamic and can be used according to the need of each specific situation.

Due to the importance of reflection within leadership, which has been shown by Alvesson et al. (2017), we decided to include reflection from the second to the tenth step of the modification. The reflection can be either done in a small way, where the leader or employee is just rethinking the day, how the work has been and if there is any potential to improve or change to make the process easier for oneself or others, to save money or accelerate the initiative. Especially at the end, it is needed to reflect upon the whole project to create some lessons learned, that will help in the future to improve other processes and to rethink own habits and patterns that might be improved to be more successful in the future. But the reflection which is within the single steps of the change is the rather small one, where we want the involved people to rethink the last day or maybe the last week to discover some potentials to improve or recognise mistakes that need to be fixed to reach the desired outcomes. It is up to the leaders to decide how deep the reflection should be and if there is a step that needs more reflection than the other one, or if there is some step that does not need any reflection.

Feedback is another tool that has been added to this modified version of Kotter's model since it has an important influence on decision making (Tourish and Robson, 2004) therefore, it could help to improve the quality of the change project. Thus, within the modified model, managers should utilise feedback as a powerful instrument within any of the steps that they consider as relevant or they get feedback from the affected employees. We suggest making feedback sessions especially during the sixth step, to get impressions of the thinking from the employees. Besides that, it allows to gather further insights and make improvements in the change as a result. The other steps can have formal or informal communications in which the leaders can listen to employees' opinions,

concerns, and suggestions. These rather small feedback talks are not included in the description of every single step, but we highly recommend asking for feedback or different opinions whenever it is possible. Additionally, we recommend evaluating and including the feedback, if it seems to be valuable.

Storytelling is a communication device that we included within the modification in order to have a greater impact on the employees by the message given (Denning, 2005). Therefore, the main messages, like the sense of urgency should be expressed by storytelling. This way of communication appeals to feelings and emotions and makes it easier to remember the idea. If during the change process happens any other event that should be expressed to the audience and it is not strictly related to the sense of urgency, it can also be told through storytelling. An example of this could be a reorganisation of the team that is guiding the change or important changes in the time plan.

Furthermore, the leader should be aware of the sensemaking process of the employees during the whole change project. During all the steps the leader should maintain behaviours that support the change idea and do not contradict it. Moreover, top leaders should procure to be present as much as possible during these changing times to create the image that everyone is involved in the project, from the top managers to the normal employees.

In regards to the dual system, it is important to have a clear image of how it should look like. The structure of the dual system will remain the same as original in Kotter's model, being conformed by the hierarchical system and the network. The latter includes the guiding coalition. The network has a start-up character, which allows working flexible and agile on the change process and taking fast decisions. The whole change planning and implementation are directed from the network part of the company's structure. The hierarchical part of the dual system will continue focusing on maintaining the daily business, running the operations to continue being profitable in the near future and accomplishing short-term goals and commitments with clients, vendors, suppliers, and investors.

This modification makes a strong emphasis on conforming the guiding coalition to people from different professional backgrounds or positions within the company. The objective is to enrich the design of the change project with different perspectives and points of view. The objective of the guiding coalition is to complete the construction of the change project with different ideas and perspectives; it is relevant to consider people with different professional backgrounds. Therefore, the selection of the members should include leaders and managers, experts on the subject and final users as well as normal employees. The size of the guiding coalition depends on the scope of the project. It is not possible to define a number of members that fits every single project; therefore, we recommend including as many persons as needed to the guiding coalition. The actual amount of participants depends on the size of the change project as well as on the amount of work that has to

be handled. In the end, it is up to the change leader to define the actual number of participants. It is important to mention that also the change leader is part of the guiding coalition.

Kotter's models make a great emphasis on the role of leadership during the change process and this emphasis continues through our modification created within this thesis. The change takes place in the network part of the dual system which is leadership driven. This has the advantage that the whole construct is more dynamic and flexible to work on the change. Hierarchies do not play a superior role and everybody is seen especially within the guiding coalition as equal. Besides that, this structure will foster motivation within the employees and will empower them to work towards change (Kouzes and Posner, 2006). By giving major importance to the leadership role, it does not mean that the management figures lose their relevance within the company. The management structure stays still within the company but the focus of the change model is on leadership.

Due to its importance, we argue that it is needed to have a clear style of leading that can take the company and the followers to the desired objective through the most appropriate manner. Kotter does not mention any specific leadership style, but as it has been previously mentioned within this thesis, the few characteristics that are described correspond to the transformational leadership style. Since this style is particularly beneficial to changing environments (Eagly, 2007; Burke and Collins, 2001) we decided to use it as the main style for this modification. However, we decided to influence the transformational leadership style with certain parts from innovative and visionary leadership. These influences have relevant characteristics that enrich the process and complement the transformational leadership. Therefore, we argue that this modified transformational leadership style is the most appropriate for changing environments. The characteristics that are included within this modified leadership are explained in detail in the following paragraph.

The innovative leader is characterised by not having the fear of solving problems in different and creative ways. Furthermore, innovation within leadership takes people to always look for progress instead of remaining in the same status that does not differentiate the company from the others (McEntire and Greene-Shortridge, 2011). From the visionary leadership style, the main trait that could bring benefit to change processes is having a clear picture about what the company could achieve in the future and what the company will become (Day, 2014). Therefore, the modified transformational leadership style is influenced by having the goal of changing the current status quo within the company. Hereby the leader finds value in the future and the sense of urgency will be stronger and more evident.

In order to have a better image of this modified transformational leadership style, the characteristics of this modified leadership style are summarised in *Figure 1:*

Modified transformational leadership style		
Transformational leadership	**Innovative leadership**	**Visionary leadership**
➤ Idealised influence ➤ Inspirational motivation ➤ Intellectual stimulation ➤ Individualised consideration	➤ Creative solutions ➤ Striving for progress	➤ Clear vision about the company in the future ➤ Values future opportunities

Figure 1: **Characteristics of the modified transformational leadership style**

Source: Created by the authors

Additionally it is important to mention that this modification of the transformational leadership also includes recommendations that have been designed by Alvesson and Kärreman (2016) in order to minimise some of the weaknesses that this leadership style could have. The recommendations are the following:

- One should avoid the immediate acceptance of the idea that the transformational leader and his/her capacities are the best. Instead, it is suggested to evaluate the leadership style based on what drives the leaders and followers in the specific context.

- The leader should avoid the use of terms that are extremely negative or extremely positive, rather he/she should use vocabulary that is more neutral and does not try to seduce the followers by just manipulating the language. This allows the followers to have a more transparent message without being impacted by the "greatness" of the intentions the leader could have.

- Storytelling should be used but with the intention of reframing messages about the change and the company itself, but not to create a concept about the leader being perfect and a saviour. Transformational leaders could use storytelling as a device to self-congratulate and tell a story about own moral values and accomplishments. The wrong usage of storytelling could distortionate the sensemaking process of the followers and construct an image of perfection and greatness around the leader.

- Since this leadership style gives a high importance to relationships between the leader and the follower, goal accomplishment and company objectives could be in risk because of the time invested in bonding with the employees. This fact could also cause difficult social relationships and the expectation of a "therapeutical" leader. In order to avoid this, it is important that the leader gives the same priority to relations than to agenda setting, direction, and achievement of results (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2016).

Continuing with the leadership profile, gender is another beneficial topic to consider. (Day, 2014). Within this thesis is mentioned that there are differences between genders in regards to the way of leading people. According to Eagly (2007), women perform transformational leadership characteristics in a higher degree than men do. The aim of the modification is to include all the

genders within the guiding coalition but putting emphasis on the fact that the majority of these people execute female leadership characteristics. This has the objective to foster relationships and build up trust within the participants of the change.

However, we have to admit that one cannot generalise that our modified leadership style that has been presented above is always the most appropriate one. Different circumstances as well as cultures can require different leadership styles. In the end it should be up to the leader to decide, which style could be the most appropriate and successful one for the particular case. S/he might come to the conclusion that the transactional leadership style fits better to a particular change, then we highly recommend to use that one. Nevertheless, we are convinced that our presented modified leadership style is helpful in many cases but there might be situations where another style, like the transactional, could work more successfully.

Another aspect that is taken into consideration for modifying Kotter's model is the continuous progress of the change project. The pace of the project continues to be in the responsibility of the leader during the whole process, by keeping track of the work pace from the first step until the last one. The change leader can control the progress by reviewing if certain tasks were finished along with the time plan or if milestones were reached in time. However, the leader should not control the progress with authoritarian behaviour but more underlying and constantly.

The last consideration for the new version of the models is a different approach to resistance to change. As we have mentioned in this thesis resistance to change is interpreted as a negative conduct by the employees that should be eliminated. Since resistance to change could have several benefits for the change project (Erwin and Garman, 2010; Bringselius, 2014), we have decided to not fight against resistance within this modification and to take advantage of the benefits it could bring. Therefore, resistance to change should not be hindered within any of the steps and instead, the steps are adapted to utilise this behaviour as an instrument that provides information to improve the change. Reframing resistance to change is one of the ideas that add the most value to the modified model since it re-conceptualises the meaning of this behaviour. The result is that managers and leaders that are analysing the reasons for resistance in order to turn them in opportunities to increase the quality of the change.

8.2 Modified change model

The modification of Kotter's model is the result of our research about important aspects within the leadership and change management fields. The analysis of Kotter's models was necessary to identify which of the steps could be improved by the relevant insights that were found in the literature. Additionally, this modification does not follow a strictly linear pattern. It is not mandatory to finish a step to start with the next one. The leader can decide to work on a step in parallel to

another one. That has the possibility to make the model more agile and flexible, which facilitates the adaption to real life scenarios. In addition to that, it is also possible to deal with setbacks that might occur during the change. If the leader or the guiding coalition realises that something does not work out as it was planned or one has made mistakes, it is possible to go back to the step where the mistake has been made and start again on that point. There might be cases where it is useful to create a second guiding coalition within a change project. That could be for example the case if the change has two very different objectives or is separated into different parts. In such cases is it more helpful to create more than one guiding coalition to deal as best as possible with the challenges of the project.

(1) Preparation step

Overall, the first step of the change model serves as the preparation of the change. The intention is not to have the final details within this step, but to start conceptualising in which direction the change will take place, determining the overall frame of the change to define the direction of the change, a first structure, limitations, motivation, and purpose.

Hereby, the top management starts constructing a general idea of the following four points: objectives of the change, sense of urgency, selection of the change leader, and conditions of the change. The objectives of the change should be stated in a general and clear way and should clarify the desired outcome, for example, what does the company want to reach by changing its current status quo. These objectives help in the end to evaluate whether the change was a success or not since one can evaluate to which degree the defined goals were reached. Besides the objectives, it is also needed to define the terms and conditions of the change. The top management determines the time frame for the project, preliminary deadlines and milestones, financial limitations, as well as the personnel resources.

These objectives and limitations help the top management in the next step to create a sense of urgency. In this stadium of the process, it makes more sense to develop the sense of urgency in a broad way and develop it further in a more detailed way within the next steps of the change. The sense of urgency is needed for the next step of this phase when it comes to the selection of the change leader. The sense of urgency allows conveying him/her how important the change actually is and why it is worth to support the initiative. It should be possible to answer the following questions: Why is the change needed and which is the impact for the company by changing and not changing? What is the company risking by not changing? Which are the motives for change? Why is the change important? These questions also help to reflect if the change is truly needed or if it is just a manifestation of fighting against stability.

After the definition of the sense of urgency, the top management can go on with the selection of the overall change leader. S/he is responsible for the whole project and carries the responsibility that everything develops into the desired direction. If the change project is larger, it could also make sense to have a second or third change leader, to avoid that one person alone cannot cover all tasks and loses the overview. The selection of the change leader depends on several factors. We recommend that the potential leader should display the characteristics of the transformational leadership style with flows from innovative and visionary leadership, which is described on the principles of this modified model above. Besides that, it is useful to select an experienced member of the company who ideally has already conducted change(s) in a leading position before. It is also helpful if the leader has certain expertise in the business area, the change takes place to use his/her personal experiences to lead the project in the right direction.

After selecting some potential leaders, it is up to the top management to choose the most appropriate leader and approach to convince him/her to join the change project. The managers can use the before created sense of urgency, as well as their experiences in sensemaking and storytelling to convince the leader to join the project. After the confirmation of the leader are the top managers introducing him/her into the change project, present the reasons and objectives, as well as the limitations and resources to the leader. At the end of this step, both top management and the selected leader should have a broad idea of the change to develop it further in the next step of the change model.

(2) Early design of the change

Within the second step of the change, the newly selected change leader develops further the sense of urgency. The importance within this part of the change relies on having strong arguments that allow the leader to convince and invite people to get involved in the development of the change process. The leader develops the input from the first step further and evaluates different possibilities that are constructed from personal experiences. These measures help to concretise the overall idea of the change and the sense of urgency. The leader has to clarify for him-/herself what s/he actually wants to achieve. Besides that, one should become clear about the expected results, the reasons for the change, potential advantages, and disadvantages and why it is needed to execute the change. Out of these deliberations, the leader develops the sense of urgency further to use these ideas in the next step to build up the guiding coalition. Furthermore, the leader is developing a rough time plan with milestones, to concretise the frame of the project. Moreover, one can use these guesses already for a first reflection, if the change is right, if one uses the right approach and if there is any potential for improvements. At the end of this step, it is important that the leader has an overall idea of the project and is convinced by the idea of the change.

(3) Creating a guiding coalition

This step focuses on gathering the right people who will work together as the guiding coalition. The coalition is composed of diverse members with different positions within the company, who bring different experiences and perspectives into the project. These members will be the leaders who have the task to convince and guide people, experts that have valuable theoretical knowledge on the topic, and final users that will provide their perspective in relation to the change and how they could be affected. It is also important to select employees who work with the leadership style. We recommend selecting mainly people who work with a transformational leadership style that is influenced by innovative and visionary leadership. Besides that, it is important to select not only leaders with male characteristics but also persons who display rather female leadership traits, as explained in chapter 6.5.

To recruitment of the members for the guiding coalition is done by the change leader. S/he is choosing people from the personal network and the company that seem to bring value to the change project. The change leader should approach these persons in a personal way, to introduce them into the ideas of the change and convince them in a second step to join the guiding coalition and to support the project actively. The ideas from the previously developed sense of urgency, as well as the personal skills of sensemaking and storytelling, help the change leader to approach the colleagues in the right way and convince them to join. The leader should present the candidates a compelling story, which motivates the potential leader to join and support the change. The people can be approached either in a personal way, which is the most effective way, due to the fact that the process of sensemaking and storytelling works the best in a face to face situation. If this should not be possible, one can also contact them via telephone, e-mail, or video conference. Depending on the personal relation to the other person, it is the decision of the change leader to choose the right approach. There might be situations where personal contact is not needed since both parties are following the same path, which could mean that a short call or a brief e-mail is enough to convince the other one by the plan.

The guiding coalition gets, as already described in detail in chapter 8.1, part of the network structure of the company. It is a much more leadership driven construct where hierarchies do not play a superior role. It is part of the dual system, which is now build up, and part of the company structure. At the end of this step, the change leader has created a guiding coalition consisting of several experts in their personal field. These employees are motivated, see the need for the change and are willing to support the endeavour. Besides that, one has created the dual system within the company, which allows constructing the change in a more dynamic and flexible way.

(4) Reframing resistance to change

This step is crucial to take advantage of the positive aspects of resistance to change. Hereby, the guiding coalition should participate in learning sessions about the positive aspects of resistance. These sessions could be workshops, classes, virtual learning or any other way of learning that could result effectively in the specific context. These activities are provided with the objective of rethinking the negative perspective on resistance and reframe a new idea about this phenomenon. Therefore, the participants are learning how to cope with the effects of resistance and how to use them as a tool to improve the process. The participants should finish these learning sessions with recognising resistance to change as natural and beneficial with no need to overcome. If a member of the coalition is not joining the sessions or s/he does not reach the expected learning outcomes, it is up to the leader to decide whether s/he is still allowed to attend the coalition or not. During the learning session, the members of the guiding coalition are introduced in the reasons for people to resist and the benefits that this could bring to a change project. We suggest considering the help of an internal or external consultant to impart these teaching sessions. Besides that, the employees should receive teaching in regards to the needed leadership style, which is described in section 8.1, which can be done either by their change leader or by a consultant.

(5) Planning and presenting the change

Within the fifth step of the change, the guiding coalition gets involved in the detailed creation of the change. The change leader and the coalition prepare every aspect of the change process and design the path, which shows how to reach the desired objectives. The purpose of this stage is to create the "how" of the change process. Within this step of the change model are the leader as well as the guiding coalition fully included in the preparation of the change. They are developing the strategy, which shows how they will reach the overall goals of the change. It is important to mention that there are no hierarchies within the coalition. Everybody has the possibility to express own ideas and thoughts and discuss them with other members of the coalition to specify and develop them. Everybody can give feedback to ideas, challenge them, and give different perspectives to develop the project further. At the end of these discussions, the guiding coalition should have developed together with the change leader a concrete strategy for the change, which clearly shows how they think to reach the goals. Besides that, they have concretised the time plan from step two and define concrete milestones that should be reached at different stages of the project.

In addition to that, the sense of urgency is concretised within this step. The ideas from step one and two are the base and they are developed further through additional input from the members of the guiding coalition. It is important to consider here, as already mentioned above the feedback,

different perspectives, and ideas from the volunteers. This helps to concretise and develop the idea further.

After concretising the sense of urgency as well as the concrete plan and strategy for the change, we recommend a brief reflection for the leader and the members of the guiding coalition. They should just briefly rethink if they found the best solution or if there were made any mistakes or if there is any potential to improve.

Once the reflection is finished, it is time to inform the affected employees. It is important to include them as best as possible to the change to gain their support. We recommend developing a downgraded version of the strategy that is presented to the employees since it is more important for them to be introduced into the overall ideas and frame of the change than into every detail. It is more helpful to focus on the relevant parts of the project.

Members of the guiding coalition should present this downgraded version to all affects employees. This could be done during a meeting with all of them because it is very important to conduct this step in a personal way and not via email. We highly recommend that those members of the guiding coalition that are skilled in sensemaking, storytelling and presenting the change. They should present the employees a compelling story about the project, why it makes sense to go new ways and how every single employee can profit from the change. The presenters should try to get across the sense of urgency that has been previously developed to the employees. Sensemaking plays here a crucial role since it is the goal to influence the personal frames of references of the employees positively towards the change.

The presentation is followed by a discussion of the presented topic. The affected employees get the possibility to express their concerns and ideas about the project. At that moment resistance to change will occur for the first time. Due to their gained knowledge from step four, the members of the guiding coalition know how to deal with resistance and approach it from a positive perspective. They should see it as a form of feedback, even if the way the employees express it might not be very constructive. The leaders should take these concerns seriously and discuss with the employees to understand their concerns and perspectives. Besides that, they can provide more information if this seems to be needed. It is very important that the members of the guiding coalition take notes about the discussed topics to keep that feedback in mind. Moreover, also the members of the guiding coalition have the possibility to ask specifically for opinions or input on certain parts of the project, to get more input and different perspectives. During the presentation and discussion, the leaders should avoid any authoritarian behaviour, which could be interpreted by the employees in the wrong way.

Moreover, leaders should behave accordingly to what is preached in the relevant communications to the change project since each of their actions influences the process of

sensemaking of the employees. For instance, if the change involves a reducing the budget and therefore cutting some of the benefits that the employees have, leaders and managers should be aware of not sending the wrong message by spending money on unnecessary things.

Reflexivity is of high importance in this step since the change leaders should meditate on the feedback the employees are providing. Especially after the discussion of the change, it is important that the leaders are reflecting on their project. They should rethink their ideas and consider if the feedback is valuable or not. This reflection should take place on a personal level to set the base for the next step where the feedback is evaluated by the guiding coalition.

(6) Evaluating feedback

Within this section, the leaders dive deep into the feedback provided in the last step. The guiding coalition should discuss and reflect together about their experiences from the presentation. At the end of the session, they should have defined where they see potential to improve the change and how these improvements will look like. The goal of the feedback session is to improve the change and convince more people by the rightness of the project. The modifications can play an important role when it comes to the convincement of resistant employees. It could be that they realise that their feedback has been integrated now into the change project.

In addition to that, the guiding coalition should consider if the resistance of employees is due to their personal ethical understanding. If this should be the case, the guiding coalition should rethink the ethical accordance of the project. If they conclude that there is some potential to improve and change they should do that to eliminate this reason for the resistance and bring the project in alignment with the principles of the company.

Moreover, within this step change leaders will conduct individual feedback sessions with resistant key employees. Key employees are those who have an important role within the company and can influence others. Usually, they have additional insights into personal reasons for the resistance of other employees. During these feedback sessions, the key employees will show their concerns and leaders will get additional knowledge for their reasons for the resistance. The objective of these sessions is that these resistance employees can express their motives of resisting to change in a more private and trustable surrounding. As a result, the change leaders will have additional information, which can be used to improve the process itself.

(7) Enable action by removing barriers

All the collected feedback from the previous steps will be utilised at this stage. The leaders should decide, which are the new and relevant insights that should be included in the project. Thus, the overall change plan is transformed into a formal and official version. Additionally, it is important

that within this stage leaders create a practical environment that supports the change. This means that the working environment should be surrounded by people who are prepared to answer questions, employees should have the necessary tools that are needed to face the new challenges and training should be provided - if needed. Reflexivity plays an important role within this step, by requiring the leader to reflect upon his/her role as a leader and if any of his/her actions function as a barrier for the change or for the followers to accept the change. For instance, followers expressing their concerns because of a lack of trust in their leader. Not being trustable enough makes the followers feel unconfident to face a new status quo and therefore they are resisting the change. Hence, the leader should reflect on which of his/her characteristics could be interpreted as non-trustable and think about ways to eliminate or improve them.

(8) Launch of practical implementation

As the title already states, within this step starts the practical implementation of the change project. The guiding coalition takes responsibility and implements its strategy gradually. The progress can be controlled if the defined milestones are reached and if the timetable is accomplished. Potential problems can be solved together in the guiding coalition to react to mistakes or misunderstandings that were not observed earlier.

Besides that, it is important to involve still resistant employees actively in the change to introduce them to the new project and build up a personal connection. If employees should express any concerns or feedback for improvements, it is possible to reflect and discuss that within the guiding coalition and put them into practice if they are considered as relevant.

(9) Generate and celebrate short-term wins

To keep the involved employees motivated, celebrating short-term wins is a feature that supports the process positively. For example, one can celebrate the achievement of a certain milestone or that the first half of the project is already successfully implemented.

However, it is important to highlight the importance of keeping a balance between celebrating short-term wins and not fostering a feeling of an exceeded self-confidence. The latter could send the message that one does not need to put so much effort into the project since it is running by itself. The focus of this step relies on keeping the employees animated by showing them what they have reached so far; therefore, leaders are empowering their willingness to keep working. Reflexivity plays also an important role within this stage of the project since the leaders should reflect upon what is functioning well to continue in the same way and what needs improvement that can be fixed in the future.

(10) Institute change

The objective of this step is to anchor the change persistently within the company. The change should not be recognised as something new or different within the structure, but as the status quo that is accepted by everybody. If the change has been implemented successfully within the hierarchical system, one can dissolve the dual system and the network structure since one has reached the goal. If one expects or works already on the next change project, we highly recommend keeping the dual system and working on the new project within these structures. We would recommend that the change leader shows at the end his/her gratitude to all involved employees, especially those from the guiding coalition to show them that they did a great job.

At the end of the change project, the involved leaders should reflect on the whole initiative. They should clarify what went good and bad, there is potential for prospective improvements and what was helpful and should be kept in mind. Out of the findings we recommend to create the so-called 'lessons learned', a paper that states all these issues and helps to improve future projects.

9 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter is to summarise the findings of this research, highlight the contributions of our study to theory and praxis, and give some ideas for future research scenarios. The chapter closes with a personal reflection about the writing process of this thesis within our group.

9.1 Summary of the main research issues

We realised that Kotter's change models, published in the years 1996 and 2014 are not up to date anymore. Therefore, we decided to update the ideas from those models with aspects that were not included before to make the modified model better applicable in the practical world. Therefore, the objective of our research is to answer the following research question:
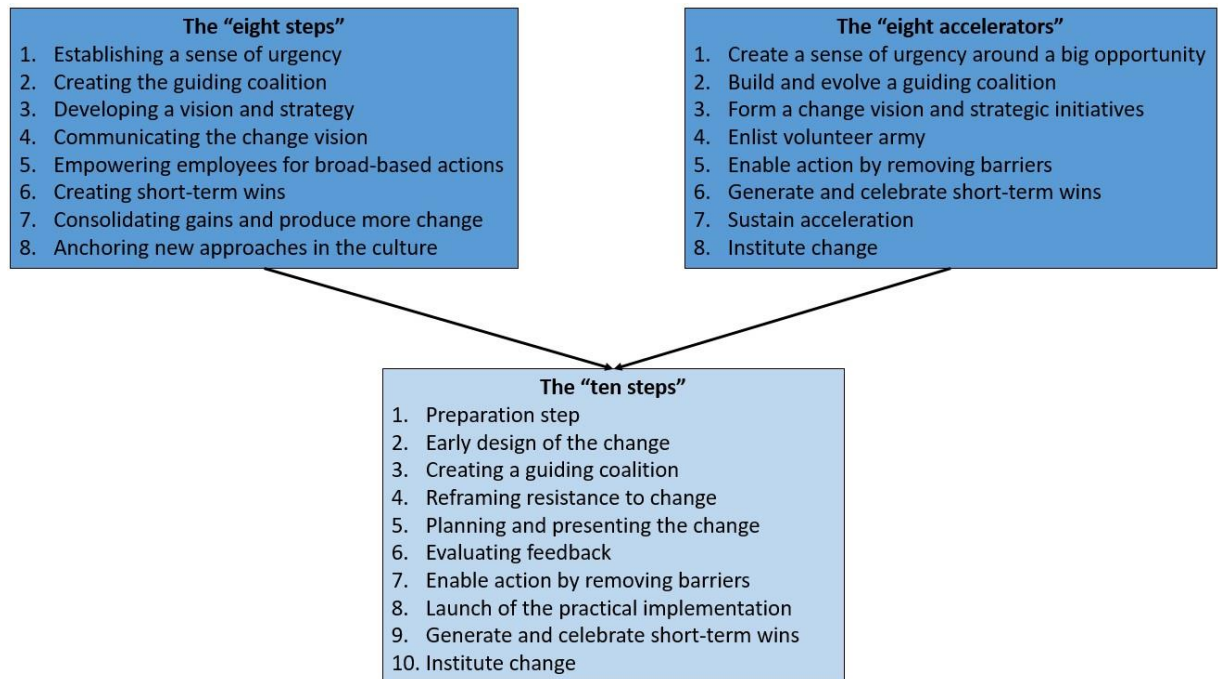
How can alternative views on resistance to change, leadership, and gender be fused with ideas from Kotter's change models to create a potentially more useful change model?

To find an answer to this question we decided first to analyse the eight step model from 1996 and then the eight accelerators model from 2014. This analysis showed us several advantages of the models we decided to keep in the modified model but also some disadvantages that offer the potential to improve. The positive aspects of the models are for example the dual system, which allows implementing the change within a leadership driven network that offers the opportunity to design the change more flexible and agile. Besides that, the idea to motivate as many people as possible to join the change is also an idea we want to keep since this makes the implementation phase much easier. Moreover, the idea of creating and transmitting a certain sense of urgency, which deals as a motivator for the change seems to be very helpful, which is the reason that we keep that within the modification. Additionally, creating and celebrating short-term wins serves the enduring motivation of the employees, wherefore we kept that in our model. The last step, to anchor the change within the company is also reasonable because the change should become the new status quo. We kept these ideas in our modified model, to profit from them.

However, we spotted several shortcomings and disadvantages within the two change models, which were also the base for the modification. As already mentioned, we decided to approach resistance to change from a different perspective since we want to use it as a helpful tool instead of seeing it as an obstacle. Besides that, Kotter did not incorporate any feedback from subordinates, which we changed because it can help to improve the change project. Moreover, we decided to go deeper into the topic of leadership, a certain leadership style and the effects of different genders in leadership since there are hidden potentials that were neglected by John Kotter. Additionally, we focused more on the process of sensemaking, which influences the frames of references of the involved employees, as well as tools like storytelling that help to support this process positively. At

least, we decided to include reflection into the change process since this offers several potentials that were neglected and not included in the two models by John Kotter.

Figure 2 below shows the two change models by John Kotter, as well as our modified ten step model.

The "eight steps"
1. Establishing a sense of urgency
2. Creating the guiding coalition
3. Developing a vision and strategy
4. Communicating the change vision
5. Empowering employees for broad-based actions
6. Creating short-term wins
7. Consolidating gains and produce more change
8. Anchoring new approaches in the culture

The "eight accelerators"
1. Create a sense of urgency around a big opportunity
2. Build and evolve a guiding coalition
3. Form a change vision and strategic initiatives
4. Enlist volunteer army
5. Enable action by removing barriers
6. Generate and celebrate short-term wins
7. Sustain acceleration
8. Institute change

The "ten steps"
1. Preparation step
2. Early design of the change
3. Creating a guiding coalition
4. Reframing resistance to change
5. Planning and presenting the change
6. Evaluating feedback
7. Enable action by removing barriers
8. Launch of the practical implementation
9. Generate and celebrate short-term wins
10. Institute change

Figure 2: **Kotter's change management models and the resulting modification**

Source: Created by the authors

The modified ten step model puts a lot of efforts into the involvement of the affected employees. They are thoroughly informed about the whole change and they get the possibility to express their personal feedback on many occasions. Leaders are taught to approach resistance from a positive perspective and try to use it as a tool that improves the change. Our modification of the models is more flexible and adaptable to the external circumstances than Kotter's originals models since we are just recommending a certain order of the single steps, which can be adapted by the change leader. Besides that, we are describing the steps more detailed than Kotter does, which leads to the result that the task for every single step is clear. In addition to that, we included a preparation step at the beginning of the change, which serves to set a base for the upcoming steps.

However, one has to mention that the planning and implementation of a change initiative with our modified change model is probably more time-consuming than using one of Kotter's models. This is because we include feedback from the employees, which must be evaluated and implemented. Furthermore, reflection can be time-consuming, too and one has to implement the new insights from the reflection into the change, which costs time and effort. Nevertheless, we are convinced that these extra efforts will have a value in the end since it allows improving the whole

change project constantly and one can expect that the overall outcome is much better than without including these aspects.

In addition, it could be a problem for some companies to have enough leaders with female characteristics. Since it is still a problem that women are not represented in an equal number within higher positions and males mostly not represent female leadership characteristics, it could be a problem to include a balanced number of the recommended characteristics within the change. As a result, one has to find a compromise, like leadership training, that helps to compensate this deficit.

Moreover, it is also gratifying how we reached more than we planned at the beginning in regards to the modification of the model. Our goal was to add improvements to the model to create an updated version. However, due to the research done in important and interesting aspects of leadership and resistance to change, we obtained a new change model that has Kotter's ideas as a base and integrates insights that are relevant for the field of leadership and change management. Therefore, we can argue that the outcome of this investigation is not limited to an improvement of Kotter's famous models, but is a creation of a new change model that is grounded on Kotter's ideas.

9.2   Contributions

This section gives a brief overview of the contribution our study does to the theoretical research field as well as its value to the practical field.

9.2.1   For the research

This thesis is adding knowledge to an existing gap within the change management literature. Our theoretical contribution allows that researchers, students, managers, and any other person interested in the field have a deep view about how can Kotter's models are adapted to relevant aspects about leadership, resistance to change, and gender. Furthermore, our research brings Kotter's change models up to date by integrating relevant theory from the change management and leadership field. Therefore, the new model can respond effectively to the challenges in today's businesses.

Additionally, as a result of this research, the transformational leadership style has been theoretically enriched with additional characteristics from innovative and visionary leadership. In consequence, these modified change management models contain a description of a leadership style that has not been described before in the literature and offers leaders within the field a possibility to develop further.

Despite intense research, we could not find any other change management model that integrates resistance to change as a natural behaviour and approaches this phenomenon positively. Therefore, this study brings value to the theoretical knowledge through offering a new change

management model with a different approach. Our research joins theories that have not been mixed before to increase the potential practical effects of Kotter's change models.

9.2.2 For practitioners

The ten steps developed within this thesis offer the possibility for change leaders to use a model, which follows a different approach than the common change models. Especially when leaders want to explore new paths in business and are curious to make new experiences, this model offers new possibilities. It includes a detailed description of every single step with recommendations for the change leader to reach the best possible outcomes. The model does not have any specific limitations in regards to region, culture or industry. The new model offers a guideline for change leaders to plan and implement their change project successfully.

9.3 Further research

The research within this thesis has been theoretical, thus future investigations could take place within the practical field. Future investigations could explore the practical impact of this new change model in a practical environment where real external forces could influence the change process. These external influences could be, for example, the economic context, the company culture, the overall culture of the country or region the change takes place as well as the personal skills of the involved people. Moreover, we suggest that it would be valuable to see if the results of a practical application of the modified change model needs some adaptations if it is applied in a certain national culture, branch or professional field.

9.4 Our learning journey

For both of us, the writing process of this master thesis has been a period full of learning and work. Even though we have both written several exams and a bachelor thesis, the last months were very challenging for us.

One of the main personal lessons that we had thanks to this thesis is that one should always consider alternative perspectives about a topic to evaluate if there is the possibility to transform a certain problem into a benefit. A good example is the evaluation of resistance to change from a different perspective and how this can change the results. Furthermore, the evaluation of our own work and constant learning is something that we also learned while writing this thesis. This was evident in the modification of the model, which we were able to update thanks to the revision and learning of theory. The analysis of the model itself allows us to consider how it could be improved and therefore we created a better version of it.

In terms of ways of working, our main concern at the beginning was related to the timeframe we had to complete the master thesis. We thought that eight weeks was a challenging period to finish

the whole research. Therefore, we agreed to construct a concrete time plan to check up the progress at any time. Besides that, we concluded that accurate planning and open communication are essential to write a high-quality thesis.

During our writing process, we were constantly helping each other to clarify doubts, to plan the next step and to agree on the ideas that we were going to write about. This way of working allowed us to take advantage of our time and as a result to finish our work within the established period without big pressure at the end. We learned to appreciate each other's critical feedback even more than we used to do during former group works. During the creation of our thesis proposal, we received valuable criticism for our ideas, which forced us to rethink our research topic. Due to this feedback, we found an interesting and feasible research topic, which allowed us to conduct research on the topic of our personal interests.

Group work requires always clear and assertive communication, to reach a result that all involved persons agree on. This is what we kept in our minds during the last months to keep a harmonic group dynamic. We met six days a week and tried to work as equally as possible. Our meetings consisted of brainstorming, writing, discussions, correction of mistakes, and searching for relevant information. We also used our time together to plan how we should continue further and consider each other's perspectives. The distribution of work was equal and is considered as fair for both of us. To maintain the quality of the thesis all along the document, we were constantly critically evaluating our progress to agree in every single point and to provide valuable feedback to each other. We were both claiming for consistent and high-quality work and we are convinced that we reached a good result.

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