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Acknowledgement

This thesis is written as a concluding part of achieving a Master of Science in Leadership and Organizational Psychology at BI Norwegian Business School (BI). The topic of investigation is organizational change, and how and why different factors can influence a change process.

This thesis has been a great opportunity to learn and further develop our understanding of organizational change and contributing factors. The inspiration behind the subject is mainly retrieved from previous studies and own interest. We hope that this thesis can contribute to the field of organizational change, and that it gives valuable insights to what factors are important to consider when implementing change.

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Abstract

In today's business world, most organizations have to change in order to meet the required demands from their surrounding environments, e.g. because of opportunities for growth, economic trends, consumer needs or new technologies. Most organizations have settled with the phrase "change or die", which constitutes the importance of the changing. However, change is difficult to pull off, and most change processes ends in failure do to errors related to the implementation. It is important to understand which factors that can influence a change process, in order to enhance the possibility for successfully implement change.

In this thesis we examine an organizational change process faced by the Norwegian consulting firm, Scandinavian Technology Institute. They have recently been acquired by Solar Group, and are now restructuring their business and implementing Solar's knowledge arena, STI Services. By taking a qualitative approach, we investigate how the factors knowledge sharing, organizational culture and internal communication influence the change process, and why they are of importance.

Overall, we find that knowledge sharing influences how the merging companies can benefit from each other's competencies and resources, and improve their chances for succeeding in implementing change. We also find that the organizational culture is open and informal, and that it determines whether the change can be successfully implemented or not. Furthermore, find that internal communication is crucial in communicating the change vision, and develop commitment and motivation among the employees.

We further find that the factors we study influence each other. We find that knowledge sharing can contribute to improving the organizational culture, making a more positive and collective culture. At the same time, knowledge sharing can enhance STI's social capital and facilitate for interactions among employees, resulting in the production of information, new practices and competencies.

Regarding their organizational culture, we find that knowledge sharing is affected by underlying factors, such as reciprocity, relationships, and power, determining whether they share and transfer knowledge. We also find that in order to cope with

change, the internal communication has to be adjusted to the organizational culture for the sake of creating a shared understanding about the change process. We further find that organizational culture influence internal communication because it requires a communication form that is adjusted to their culture. Furthermore, we find that internal communication is important for enhancing knowledge sharing, because it provides easy access to knowledge through common arenas, networking and conversations. Finally, we find find that internal communication is essential in developing a social community, group identity and in shared understanding of the change process.

Part 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

Organizational change has been reviewed from scholars worldwide, with different perspectives on how organizations prepare for, implement and react to change (Oreg, Vakola & Armenakis, 2011; Kotter, 2007; 2012; Beer & Nohria, 2000; Ford, Ford & D'Amelio, 2008). It is particularly important to look at different factors that could influence the change process and understand how a change process can be successful, e.g. timing (Kotter, 2007), ability to adapt to its surroundings (Pardo del Val & Fuentes, 2003), strategy and vision (Kotter, 2007), organizational routines, social and political structures, conformity, limited search and complementarities between strategy, structures and systems (Grant, 2010) and communication and culture (Kotter, 2007). With taking these factors into account, it is more likely that the change process will be successful.

In this thesis, we investigate how knowledge sharing, organizational culture and internal communication influence organizational change at the Norwegian consulting firm, Scandinavian Technology Institute (STI), that has recently been acquired by Solar Group (hereafter referred to as Solar). STI was previous to the acquisition called Euro Business School (EBS). STI is currently facing the challenge of restructuring their business and implementing Solar's knowledge arena, STI Services, into STI (Scandinavian Technology Institute, n.d.). We aim to investigate the change met by STI by taking a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach can provide rich and detailed answers, insight into individual's perspectives, and flexibility (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Fisher et al., 2010).

Our contribution is threefold. First, to the best of our knowledge, we are among the first to consider how knowledge sharing impacts organizational change, together with underlying factors for why people share knowledge and how it occurs in practice. Existing literature regarding knowledge sharing and organizational change is said to be under-researched (Park & Kim, 2015). Only one-third of existing research in knowledge sharing is qualitative, even though this approach can provide a rich and in-depth examination of the organizational context in which knowledge sharing occurs (e.g. Wang & Noe, 2010). Qualitative studies can contribute to the generation of more quantitative studies, considering their concentration on specific

issues. Our study can provide valuable information and help to generate more quantitative studies. Furthermore, concerning a lack of practical based studies regarding this particular topic of investigation, we adopt a practical perspective in order to see how knowledge sharing is practiced in an organization.

Second, we look at how three factors influence each other during a change process, namely knowledge sharing, organizational culture and internal communication. As far as we know, existing literature have ignored how these factors influence each other during organizational change. Existing literature have for example looked at power, politics and sensemaking (Filstad, 2014), hierarchical distance and leadership style (Hill, Seo, Kang & Taylor, 2012), and the relationship between commitment, organizational culture, leadership style and job satisfaction on organizational change (Lok & Crawford, 1999). By analyzing the factors that we have chosen, our study can contribute to the field on how change processes occur and which factors to consider.

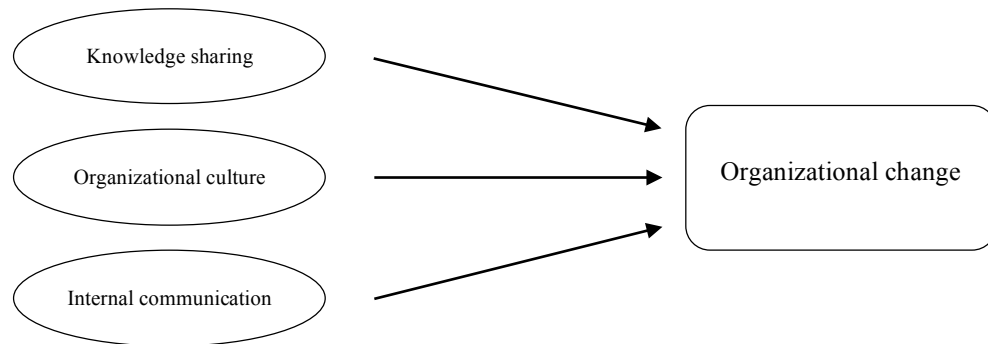
Third, we have not succeeded in finding existing literature related to knowledge sharing, internal communication, organizational culture and change in a Norwegian context. Therefore, we aim to fill this gap by investigating a firm located in Norway. It will also contribute to identify potential similarities or differences related to organizational change between countries.

1.2 Research question

The research question will explain what the research entails, and make the foundation for collection of data. A research question refers to a question with a specific purpose, it helps us to keep a clear focus during the study and it can give the reader a clearer understanding of what the study aims to achieve (Stake, 2014). Furthermore, Stake (2014) argue that the research question let us structure our interview guide, making us develop relevant questions to ensure that our research question is answered. Although we set the research question at the beginning of our study, it can change as the project goes along because of new data, or if the process does not go as planned (Stake, 2014). This leads us to the following research question, illustrated through a conceptual model (see figure 1):

“How will knowledge sharing, organizational culture and internal communication influence an organizational change in a Norwegian knowledge intensive firm, and why are they important?”

Figure 1: Conceptual model



Note: The conceptual model that illustrates the research question

1.3 Terms

We found it necessary to clarify different terms that will be presented throughout this thesis. With *organization* we refer to a social system that is consciously constructed to solve special tasks and realized specific goals (Kaufmann & Kaufmann, 2009, p. 38). Furthermore, throughout the thesis we will often mention *3M* as an arena for communication and sharing knowledge. *3M* is the organization’s monthly meeting where all employees are required to be present. The information meeting includes status reports, presentations and information from different departments and there are room for asking questions. Knowledge-intensive firms (KIF) are organizations that revolves around the use of intellectual and analytical tasks, and they often require extensive theoretical education and experience. The core activities are based on the employees’ intellectual skills (Alvesson, 2004).

1.4 Disposition

The remainder of this thesis is organized as follows: part one is an introduction, including information about the background and purpose of the thesis. Part two presents the theoretical literature, which sets the bases for our conceptual model and approach for data collection. Part three is devoted to the methodological approach that we intend to use throughout our thesis. First, we present research method, design and strategy, that include an inductive approach for qualitative research, with an emphasize on interviews for data collection. Part four will include

an extensive analysis of our data collection and findings, before we will discuss and compare these towards existing literature in part five. Part five will also illustrate our main findings through a table, before we look at practical implications. Then, we present how our study can contribute to the field, before looking into limitations and further research. Finally, we end up with a conclusion where our research question will be answered.

Part 2: Literature review

2.1 Organizational change/restructuring process

2.1.1 What is organizational change?

An organization is often characterized as something safe, stable and predictable (Jacobsen & Thorsvik, 2013). Nevertheless, several authors and researchers tell a different story and characterize the organization as “changing”, and use claims like “change or disappear” (Greenberg & Baron, 2011), “innovative or perish” (Daft, 2013) or “change and die” (Robbins & Judge, 2013). Everything is in a state of constant change and the business environment in particular. “Changes in the industry environment is driven by the forces of technology, consumer need, politics, economic growth and a host of other influences”. (Grant, 2010, p. 270). Change is the process of moving from one state to another (Beer & Nohria, 2000), in which it includes the ability to adapt to its surroundings or improve organizational performance (Pardo del Val & Fuentes, 2003). Thus, change can take many forms and contribute to the organization’s structure, culture, tasks, strategies, goals or technologies (Jacobsen & Thorsvik, 2013, p. 385-386).

Porras and Robertson (1992) define organizational change as “a set of behavioral science-based theories, values, strategies, and techniques aimed at the planned change of the organizational work setting for the purpose of enhancing individual development and improving organizational performance, through the alteration or organizational members’ on-the-job-behaviors” (p. 723).

2.1.2 Types of change

Weick and Quinn (1999) distinguish between two types of change: *episodic change* and *continuous change*. Episodic change is often used to group together organizational changes that tend to be infrequent, discontinuous, and intentional, whilst continuous change is emergent, self-organized and evolving (Weick & Quinn, 1999). The main distinction between the two lies in how the process of change is characterized, and which setting the content of change belongs to. Moreover, the intervention theories between them is quite different where episodic change is created by intention and have the structure: unfreeze-transition-refreeze, whereas the continuous change is a redirection with the following structure: freeze-rebalance-unfreeze (Weick & Quinn, 1999, p. 366). Further, Weick and Quinn

(1999) claim that in an episodic change process the leader function as the prime mover and creates the change, whilst in a continuous change process the leader can redirect employees and facilitate for sensemaking.

Nadler and Tushman (1990) present two dimensions where change may occur: *incremental* or/and *strategic change*, and *reactive* or/and *anticipatory*. Incremental change is characterized by change that happens all the time within the organization's existing frame, it aims to enhance the organization's effectiveness, whereas strategic change often has a larger scope and affects the organization as a whole. Furthermore, strategic change happens rapidly and within a short period of time. These types of changes can redefine the organization's structure, strategy and core values (Jacobsen & Thorsvik, 2013). On the other hand, change can be perceived as either reactive or anticipatory. The former refers to a direct response of an external event, whilst the latter refers to changes where senior managers anticipate for future events, in which the change itself can provide competitive advantage (Nadler & Tushman, 1990, p. 79). Moreover, Nadler and Tushman (1990) further divide the two dimensions into four types of changes including *tuning*, *adaption*, *reorientation* and *recreation*. Tuning include change that is characterized by incremental and anticipatory change, in which small moderations in the organization adapt to what is expected to be important in the future. Secondly, adaption include change that is characterized as incremental and reactive, in which smaller changes are made internally or externally. Thirdly, reorientation include changes that are strategic and anticipatory, where a typical example could be change of staff members. Lastly, recreation change includes strategic and reactive change, and is often prompted by immediate demands as an outcome of for instance external threats (Nadler & Tushman, 1990, p. 79-80).

2.1.3 Implementing change

Many ways of implement change have been used throughout the history, some with success and some without, however, Huczynski and Buchanan (2013) argue that they all offer quite the same guidance. It has been common to see change as a process, something dynamic and fluent (e.g. Weick & Quinn, 1999; Lewin, 1951; Schein, 2006). Lewin (1951) developed one of the most prominent models of the implementation of change initiatives. First, the model describes a unfreeze phase where the employees realize the need for change. The process of unfreezing is not

an end in itself, but rather a process with intention to motivate to learn (Schein, 1996; Burnes, 2004). The change occurs in the second phase, followed up by refreezing where the new changes get incorporated in practice. However, the model has gotten much criticism, because it assumes that organizations are stable structures, it is perceived as suitable only for small changes, it ignores organizational power and politics and lastly, it perceives change as top-down and management driven (Burnes, 2004, p. 977). Burnes (2004) further argue that although Lewin's theory can be criticized based on many failures of implementation, it remains as one of the most important theories within the field (Burnes, 2004). Lewin have argued that it is difficult to understand a system until you try to change it (Schein, 1996).

Kotter's 8 step model

Another contributing model for implementing change is Kotter's eight step-model (see figure 2). Based on extensive research over several years, Kotter (2012) has developed a model that explains why most change processes often ends in failure. All change processes goes through several phases that requires time, and mistakes in any of these phases can lead to failure in implementing change (Kotter, 2007; 2012), presented through eight common "change errors". The first four phases in this model entails defrosting status quo and making the organization ready for what they can expect. The next three phases (i.e. five to seven) constitutes the adoption phase and the introduction of many new practices. Phase eight ensures that the changes are anchored into the organization's culture, hence institutionalization (Kotter, 2012; Armenakis & Harris, 2002). Although the framework is still popular, it has received major criticism regarding the lack of rigorous fundamentals (Appelbaum, Habashy, Malo & Shafiq, 2012).

Step 1-4

The first step entails the creation of urgency and need for change, for instance market position or possibilities. It is important to make the employees ready for the change that is about to happen. Researchers argue that the concept of readiness for change is perhaps one of the most important factors involved in generating initial employee support for the change initiatives (Armenakis, Harris & Mossholder, 1993). In order to create this readiness, the organization must create a feeling of dissatisfaction with the status quo, so the employees are willing and motivated to

try new work processes, technologies, or new ways of behaving (Cummings & Worley, 2009). It is easy to fail since the organization do not succeed in creating cooperation and motivation among the individuals, often based on their dramatic way of communicating. The next step includes developing a guiding coalition in order to develop excitement and cooperation among participants. Establishment of employee commitment is considered as one of the most essential aspects related to successful change (Huczynski & Buchanan, 2013, Beer & Nohria, 2000).

In order for change to be implemented, there is a need for active supporters, especially from the top of the organization. The third step entails the development of the strategy that will represent common vision and goals. Without a vision the change process can result in confusion and incompatible projects. The fourth step includes communicating the vision, preferably through all available channels (Kotter, 2007, p. 97-100).

Step 5-7

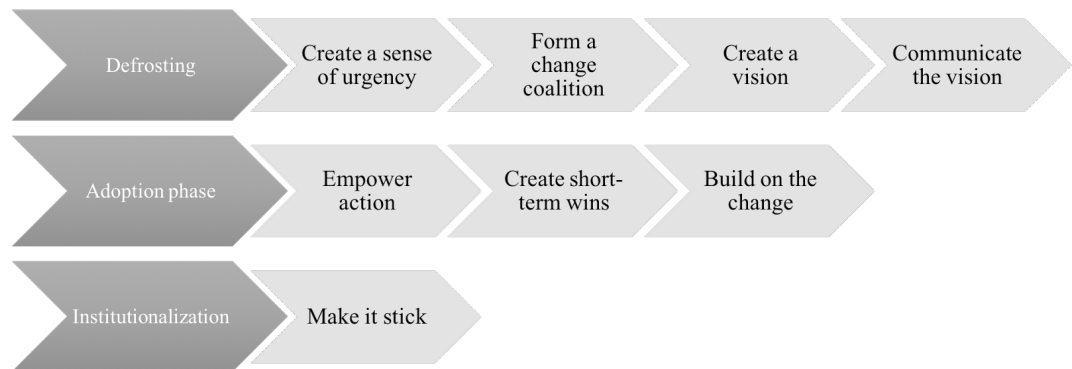
Furthermore, the fifth step includes the encouragement of others to engage in the change process (Kotter, 2007). Huczynski and Buchanan (2013) state that those people being affected by the change should be involved in the planning and implementation of new initiatives in order to reduce conflict and promote engagement. According to Applebaum et al. (2012), communication is never sufficient, and change will also require employees who will reduce the tension and obstacles related to their vision. Short-term wins are also of importance (i.e. sixth step), as it can ease the process by seeing the changes happening and working. Failure in doing so may result in unmotivated employees. For new and young employees, the adaption may not be so difficult to handle, but for the older and more experienced employees the adaption might be difficult to handle, since they might be satisfied with how they are working and find it heavy and useless to learn new working procedures – resistance to change. After undergoing change for a long time, most managers feel tempted to declare victory, however, Kotter (2007) argues that this can lead to employees stopping the change. Instead, the focus should be on solving bigger problems, including promoting and hiring the right people that functions as change agents for institutionalizing new approaches (i.e. step seven).

Step 8

Finally, the last step in the eight-step model includes the institutionalization of changes, making it “the way we do things around here” (Kotter, 2007, p. 103), i.e. making it stick. Furthermore, Kotter (2007) argues that the organization should attempt to show employees how the new approaches and following behaviors have helped to improve performance, in addition to ensure that the top management actually personify the new approaches.

Kotter (2007) uses this model as a guideline for reducing errors related to implementing change, although it cannot guarantee for success. In sum, the steps stress the importance of the involvement of people at the workplace, sensemaking of the change process, the importance of a good strategy and vision, communication and lastly anchor it all in the culture of the organization.

Figure 2: Kotter’s eight-step model



Source: Reprinted from *Leading Change* by J. P. Kotter (2012), and *Crafting a change message to create transformational readiness* by A. A. Armenakis & S. G. Harris (2002).

2.1.4 Reactions to change

Different theories of organizational and industrial change emphasize various barriers including organizational routines, social and political structures, conformity, limited search and lastly, complementarities between strategy, structures and systems (Grant, 2010, p. 281). Schein (2006, p. 292) argued that motivation for change will only be accepted if the change targets feel secure and perceive the

changes as feasible. Moreover, the change targets are more prone for new attitudes or values without feeling lost.

There is no universal definition of the term resistance. Researchers have perceived it as consisting of a variety of behaviors, thus, what is resistance may be highly subjective (Ford & Ford, 2010). Furthermore, Ford and Ford (2010) claim that resistance is a concept that includes behaviors and communications that managers perceive as dysfunctional for the change process. Resistance can arise from a number of reasons, e.g. increased workload, fear of the unknown, changing structures and power relations and loss of identity or uncertainty about consequences for personal life (Jacobsen & Thorsvik, 2013, p. 392-395).

Previous research on resistance to change perceive it as a familiar issue for most organizations (e.g. Yukl, 2012; Lawrence, 1954; Ford et al., 2008). However, more recent research celebrates resistance and claims that it can be an important factor in successful change processes (Thomas & Hardy, 2011, p. 324). From the latter perspective, resistance can function as a valuable resource for change agents as it keeps the conversation of change active (Ford & Ford, 2010), it can contribute to improving the process and conduct of change through challenging assumptions that are taken for granted (Amason, 1996; Schweiger, Sandberg & Rechner, 1989; Van Dam, Oreg & Schyns, 2008) and in providing feedback on recipients' engagement (Ford et al., 2008).

2.2 Understanding the importance of knowledge in organizations

“Knowledge is now being seen as the most important strategic resource in organizations, and the management of this knowledge is considered critical to organization's success” (Ipe, 2003, p. 337). Existing literature is concerned with different types of knowledge (e.g. knowledge management, creation, acquisition), however, we limit our study to investigate knowledge sharing and knowledge transfer in the context of organizational change, hereunder the concept of knowledge sharing. Although we are talking about knowledge sharing and knowledge transfer as intertwined concepts, we find it necessary to explain each of them. Tacit and explicit knowledge are presented as two dimensions, however, we limit our study to look at explicit knowledge because of the inability to identify tacit knowledge.

2.2.1 *What is knowledge?*

Knowledge is defined as “a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information, and expert insights that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information. It originates in and is applied in the minds of knowers. In organizations, it often becomes embedded not only in documents or repositories but also in organizational routines, processes, practices, and norms” (Davenport & Prusak, 1998, p. 5). In relation to organizations, Newell, Robertson, Scarborough and Swan (2009) refers to knowledge as “the possession of human mind and is treated as a cognitive capacity, or resource, that can be developed, applied and used to improve effectiveness in the workplace” (p. 3). Knowledge is perceived as one of the key competitive assets in an organization’s ability for growth and sustainable competitive advantage (e.g. Davenport & Prusak, 1998; Yang & Wu, 2008; C. P. Lin, 2007), and it often functions as a source of change and innovation (Hargadon & Fanelli, 2002).

Knowledge in organizations often tend to be unclear and difficult to conceptualize as it is often closely attached to the person who holds it (Davenport, DeLong & Beers, 1998), but at the same time, challenging to define, measure and manage. As knowledge can be classified in various manners, it can have several meanings (Ipe, 2003). Structural perspectives on knowledge can help to provide different types of knowledge, including knowledge as dynamic, equivocal and context-dependent (Newell et al., 2009). Newell et al., (2009) further explains that knowledge is dynamic since accepted meanings can change due to change in actors and contexts, it is equivocal as it is subjected to different meanings and interpretations, and lastly, context-dependent since it is difficult to separate from the context that it is produced within. In order for organizations to better retain, develop and leverage from internal resources, it is important to manage knowledge (Reith, 2010). Knowledge management refers to a broad range of dimensions that includes different strategies, approaches and technologies for knowledge (Alavi & Denford, 2011).

Much of existing literature on knowledge sharing is based on the foundation of tacit and explicit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is something that is not formally taught, it cannot always be explained through language (Polanyi, 1966), and is highly personal and deeply rooted in actions and context (Nonaka, 1991). Furthermore, Nonaka (1991) explains tacit knowledge through the following quotation: “A master craftsman after years of experience develops a wealth of

experience “at his fingertips”. But he is often unable to articulate the scientific or technical principles behind what he knows” (p. 98). On the other hand, “explicit knowledge can be codified and embedded in formal rules, tools, and processes” (De Long & Fahey, p. 113). Opposite to tacit knowledge, explicit knowledge can easily be shared and expressed through language (Filstad & Blåka, 2007).

2.2.2 Knowledge sharing and transfer

“Knowledge sharing is something else than but related to communication” (Hendriks, 1999, p. 92). Hendriks (1999) further argue that knowledge is tied to a knowing subject, and cannot be passed around freely. An act of reconstruction is needed if knowledge is shared and applied of a recipient, hence, knowledge sharing is dependent on a relationship between at least two parties. The first party communicates their knowledge, either willingly or forced, in some form, and the other party should perceive the knowledge and make sense of it. Although all knowledge is tied to each knowing subject, Davenport and Prusak (1998) argue that knowledge will be transferred even if not managed.

Knowledge transfer and knowledge sharing are two concepts included in knowledge management, and are often intertwined concepts (Alavi & Denford, 2011; Park & Kim, 2015). Although it has been discussed whether to separate these into two concepts, an adequate term for the combination is knowledge exchange. There are three modes for knowledge exchange within organizations: knowledge exchange between individuals, between individuals and repertoires, and between repertoires. Each of these modes can take form as knowledge transfer or knowledge sharing (Alavi & Denford, 2011). On the other hand, Wang and Noe (2010) claim that knowledge exchange includes knowledge transfer and knowledge seeking, the latter being the process where individuals seek knowledge from others. Knowledge transfer can be referred to the movement of knowledge between units, divisions, or organizations (Wang & Noe, 2010, p. 117). Furthermore, it can be explained as the transmission of knowledge from a giver so that the knowledge is learned and applied by the receiver (Ko, Kirsch & King, 2005; Bresman, Birkinshaw & Nobel, 2010). For instance, one manufacturing team may learn how to better construct a product from another manufacturing team (Argote & Ingram, 2000, p. 151). Knowledge sharing refers to a process of interactions among people (Yang & Wu, 2008), where the interaction includes provision of task information to help and

collaborate with others to solve problems, develop ideas, or implement policies or procedures (Cummings, 2004; Pulakos, Dorsey & Borman, 2003).

“Because knowledge sharing is designed to transform individual knowledge into organizational knowledge, it directly involves both individual and organizational levels” (Foss, Husted & Michailova, 2010, p. 458). At the individual level knowledge sharing includes the interaction between colleagues to help each other to improve their work tasks, better, quicker and more efficiently (H. F. Lin, 2007). If one colleague asks another about a specific task or problem, this person is requesting a transfer of knowledge (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). At the organizational level, it includes capturing, organizing, reusing and transferring knowledge so that it becomes available to all within the business (H. F. Lin, 2007). It is possible to believe that individuals in organizations always have created and shared knowledge, hence, knowledge sharing could be perceived as a natural function and happening automatically (Ipe, 2009; Chakravarthy, Zaheer & Zaheer, 1999). However, Hendriks (1999) argue that knowledge sharing is a complex process, even under the best circumstances.

2.2.3 Factors for knowledge sharing

“Without effective knowledge sharing, firms are unable to fully exploit knowledge possessed by existing employees” (Rusly, Yih-Tong Sun & Corner, 2014, p. 691). Davenport and Prusak (1998) argue that it is easier to transfer and share knowledge in large organizations, and greater the size of the organization may decrease the likelihood of knowing where and how to find it.

A critical concern considering knowledge sharing, is whether or not individuals are motivated to share their knowledge with others (Hendriks, 1999). In explaining the underlying factors, we adopt Ipe’s (2003, p. 345-348) framework where he especially highlights four motivational factors for sharing knowledge within an organization: knowledge as power, reciprocity, relationship with recipients and rewards for sharing. Moreover, previous research show that knowledge sharing often can face both individual or organizational barriers such as trust (e.g. H. F. Lin, 2007; Cabrera & Cabrera, 2005; Ipe, 2003), a gap in awareness and knowledge, and conflict avoidance (Bureš, 2003), and distance (Nonaka, 1991). These factors can further be divided into external and internal factors, the former referring to the

relationship between sender and recipients, and reward for sharing. Internal factors refer to perceived power of knowledge holding, and the reciprocity for sharing (Ipe, 2003).

Power. What power and status the recipient might have, will also influence whether the sender shares their knowledge (Ipe, 2003). In his article, Huber (1982) states that individuals with low status and power often direct their information to those with more power and status than themselves, and that individuals with high status and power often direct information toward their peers than those with lower status and power. Holding power (e.g. resource, meaning or processes) can make people reluctant to share (Hardy, 1996). Furthermore, Hardy (1996) refers to resource power as how a person can “(...) bring out desired behaviour through deployment of resources which other depends on, including information, expertise, rewards and sanctions, stature and prestige” (p. S7). Their reluctance might be because of the knowledge that they hold is critical to their perceived value as an employee. Thus, they choose to withhold it because they don’t want to lose their position or their continued tenure within the organization (Davenport & Prusak, 1998, p. 154). Furthermore, Davenport and Prusak (1998) explain that having a reputation of being a knowledge source, can lead to beneficial remarks including job security and rewards or incentives.

Reciprocity. Hendriks (1999) states that some individuals share their knowledge because they hope and expect that others will share with them in return, and that this will be useful. Individuals have to perceive knowledge sharing as a value-add to themselves (Ipe, 2003). Furthermore, Ipe (2003) and Molm, Takashi and Peterson (2000) refers to reciprocal acts as those which helps individuals and share information without negotiation of terms, and without knowing whether or when the recipient will reciprocate. Thus, “it is the expectation that those involved in sharing knowledge will be able to acquire or benefit from some of the value created by their involvement” (Ipe, 2003, p. 346). Reciprocity may also have a more negative aspect, referring to exploitation of knowledge, hence, a barrier for sharing knowledge. According to Empson (2001) individuals may experience fear of exploitation, especially under times of change, as they are being asked to give knowledge but not knowing whether they will get knowledge in return.

Relationship between recipients. The relationship between sender and recipient can be associated with an external factor for sharing knowledge. Such a relationship requires at least two critical elements, including trust and the power and status of the recipient (Ipe, 2003). “Trust exists when individuals perceive that their co-workers possess such qualities of trustworthiness and believe that coworkers would repay them by doing the same thing when they share knowledge with others” (C. P. Lin, 2007, p. 415). Trust are more likely to develop when knowledge sharing happens without negotiations and binding agreements (Molm et al., 2000), and it will influence the perceived risk and uncertainty arising from the sharing of knowledge (Roberts, 2000). It is important to remember that trust is a subject that affects all levels in an organization; from supervisors to ground-floor workers. When incorporating new knowledge or implementing change, trust can be an important resource in reducing perceived uncertainty, reducing perceived cost of sharing knowledge, or facilitate risk-taking behavior and foster constructive orientation (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Kankanhalli, Tan & Wei, 2005). Furthermore, Kotter (2007) claims that trust is often an absent construct in many organizations, and that the reason why most participants are not committed to change is because of the lack of trust in other departments, divisions or fellow executives. Thus, in order for success in implementing new knowledge, organizations are dependent on the creation of trust among all levels, so that individuals are committed to the change process, and in doing what is required of them.

Rewards for sharing. According to Ipe (2003), rewards and penalties for sharing or not sharing knowledge, can influence a knowledge sharing-process. Organizations need to introduce and design incentives and rewards in order to engage individuals in knowledge sharing (Hansen, Nohria & Tierney, 1999; Davenport & Prusak, 1998; Cabrera & Cabrera, 2005), since people are often more willing to share if they gain additional payoff (Yang & Wu, 2008). Previous research (e.g. Yang and Wu, 2008; Cummings, 2004; Hansen et al., 1999; H. F. Lin, 2007) has found that people will, often automatically, share their knowledge if payoff is high, thus, managers should offer extrinsic or natural rewards in making a cooperative and sharing culture, and focus on being explicit about the importance of sharing internal resources. By rewarding and recognizing knowledge sharing behavior, the organization sends a strong signal that they value this behavior (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2005). For instance, some may be a little reluctant to cooperate with others if they

feel that recipients benefit unfairly from the sender's knowledge (von Krogh, 2002). However, Hendriks (1999) find that factors such as recognition and challenge of work weigh more as motivational factors, rather than compensation and force. "People share knowledge because they expect or hope for recognition and appreciation of their (knowledge) work, promotional opportunities or because of a sense of responsibility" (Hendriks, 1999, p. 96).

Culture. Organizational culture can also function as a contributor to knowledge sharing. Ipe (2003) argues that all of the factors above are influenced by the culture of the work environment, making culture a potential barrier for creating, sharing and using knowledge (De Long & Fahey, 2000). "The organizational culture can create an environment in which there are strong social norms regarding the importance of sharing one's knowledge with others" (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2005, p. 728). De Long and Fahey (2000) further explains that culture shapes the assumptions about which knowledge is relevant, the degree of its importance, and creates the context for social interaction. At the same time the culture creates an environment for trust and caring, which are important factors for encouraging colleagues to share with each other (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2005).

2.2.4 Facilitating for knowledge sharing

"If individuals are not motivated to share knowledge, it is not likely that they are motivated to use tools facilitating knowledge sharing" (Hendriks, 1999, p. 91).

Knowledge can be shared and transferred both formally or informally, the former including training and learning programs, structured work teams and technological systems, whilst the latter include personal relationships and social networks, i.e. socialization (Ipe, 2003; Roberts, 2000). "The key to success in knowledge sharing is that the personal ambition should match the group ambition" (Hendriks, 1999, p. 99). Roberts (2000) further states that organizations have a central role in transferring knowledge considering commercial purposes, performance, developing employees and increase work satisfaction (Reith, 2010). In order for effective knowledge sharing, one is dependent on appropriate solutions and sequence of activities, but also a giver who is interested in transmitting the knowledge, and the receiver to apply and use it (Hong et al., 2011; von Krogh, 2002).

2.2.5 Organizational culture and knowledge sharing

Al-Alawi, Al-Marzooqi and Fraidoon Mohammed (2007) investigates the role of organizational culture in the success of knowledge sharing. The research findings indicate that trust, communication, information systems, rewards and organization structure were positively related to knowledge sharing in organizations. Furthermore, “people cannot share knowledge if they do not speak the same language” (Davenport & Prusak, 1998, p. 98). Davenport & Prusak (1998) state that previous research has shown the importance of a shared culture in order to share knowledge. If the people do not have a common ground they may not understand, nor trust each other. Thus, when facilitating for knowledge transfer and sharing, it is necessary to ensure that the method is suitable for which culture the organization has.

2.3 Organizational culture

2.3.1 What is organizational culture?

The culture of a group can be defined as a pattern of basic assumptions learned by a group as it solves its problems of external adaption and internal integrated, which has worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore, to be taught to new members, as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to these problems (Schein, 2006, p. 17). In the last couple of decades, researchers have come up with a variety of dimensions and attributes of organizational culture (Cameron & Quinn, 2005). Considering the large variety, it would be reasonable to claim that organizational culture is context dependent and an ambiguous phenomenon. A reason that so many dimensions have been proposed is that organizational culture is extremely broad and inclusive in scope, it is complex, interrelated, comprehensive and an ambiguous set of factors (Cameron & Quinn, 2005). Organizational culture often sets the foundation for internal communication, and often sets the basis for all action within the organization. This is because organizational culture is created through a shared communication and common understanding of values and norms for behavior, in addition to basic perceptions (Grennes, 1999, p. 15). According to Cameron and Quinn (2005), the concept is defined as “the core values, assumptions, interpretations, and approaches that characterize an organization” (p. 35). An organizational culture is also characterized by something deep which is less tangible and less visible than other

parts. Once the culture has developed, it covers all the group performance and influences all aspects of how an organization cope with its primary tasks and environment, in addition to its internal operations (Cameron & Quinn, 2005).

According to Schein (2006), organizational cultures are mainly formed in two ways i.e. informal and formal groups. The informal way happens when spontaneous interaction in an unstructured group gradually lead to patterns and norms of behavior that become the culture of that group. Within a formal group, it is common that an individual e.g. an entrepreneur, creates or become its leader, and thereby impose personal values, goals, visions, and assumptions about how things should be in the organization.

Schein (2006) offers a three-way model of how an organizational culture can be analyzed. He distinguishes between three different levels within an organizational culture where each level represents a degree to which culture is visible for the observer. The first level is easily seen and could be visible in organizational structures and processes. Within the second level, we find beliefs and values which could be seen in i.e. in organizational goals and strategies. According to Huczynski and Buchanan (2013), Adler and Gundersen (2008) define organizational values as “... the accumulated beliefs held about how work should be done and situations dealt with” (p. 117). The third and deepest level contains underlying assumptions where the employees’ perceptions of the world, and involves thoughts and feeling. The culture will therefore manifest itself at the level of observable artifacts and shared beliefs and values.

2.3.2 Competing Values framework

One of the most dominant and frequently used framework when analyzing an organizational culture is the *Competing Values Framework* analyzed by Robert, E. Quinn and John Rohrebaugh (1983) (see Appendix A for illustration). They argued that the framework is useful because it can be presented to selected individuals or coalitions in order to clarify the extent to which certain concept are valued (Quinn & Rohrebaugh, 1983, p. 375). The framework where initially from research conducted on the major indicators of effective organizations (Cameron & Quinn, 2005). They found out that there are two main polarities by statistical analysis that make the difference when it comes to organizational effectiveness. In other words,

an organization have to choose on the one hand whether they have internal focus and integration or external focus and differentiation. On the other hand, if the organization is desired to focus on stability and control or flexibility and discretion. However, an organization cannot have both polarities at the same time, hence they are competing values. Within these polarities, there are four quadrants that each of them contains of an organizational culture type i.e. *clan* (collaborate), *adhocracy* (create), *hierarchy* (control) and *market* (compete) (Cameron & Quinn, 2005, p. 40). The Competing Values Framework is valuable when analyzing an organization culture and its effectiveness, and it is also useful in respect to the coping with organizational change and leadership development (Cameron & Quinn, 2005).

2.3.3 *Changing the culture*

According to Schein (2006), individuals and groups seeks stability and meaning. Changing the culture is challenging considering that basic assumptions are difficult to change. On the other hand, stability is interpreted more often as stagnation than steadiness, and organizations that are not in the business of change and transition are generally viewed as recalcitrant (Cameron & Quinn, 2005). Quinn and Cameron (2005) point out that the most interesting and well-known reasons due the failing of a change process and their lack of success, is culture. He further argues that if an organizational culture has to be changed, it is a highly consuming process and highly anxiety-provoking. During a change process, it is therefore essential for a leader to figure out how to get at the deeper level of a culture, assess the functionality of the assumptions and deal with employees' anxiety when the levels are challenged. Corporate leaders who have led a successful transformation that were interviewed by Lorch and Mctague (2016), tell another story. In their point of view, culture is not something you "fix". However, a change in culture is an outcome and evolves after you have put new processes or structures in place. Following this argument, knowing the culture would be crucial for leaders to understand in a change process. The competing values framework could be a beneficial tool in enhancing ones understanding regarding this phenomenon.

Organizational climate

In the research literature, organizational climate is described with other words such as psychological climate, work climate or social climate (Kaufmann & Kaufmann, 2009). In social settings, climate could be seen as a metaphor that suggests

similarities between meteorological conditions i.e. warm, cold, sun, and psychological conditions i.e. interpersonal relationships, distance and conflicts (p. 266). Schein (2006) claims that climate as a culture phenomenon is easier to see, than a culture. A creative climate promotes job satisfaction, motivation, and overall well-being within the organization. A creative climate can help with implementing change and transformation and increasing innovation (Isaksen, Tidd & Tidd, 2006). According to Isaksen (2017), organizational climate refers to recurring patterns of behavior, attitudes and feelings that characterize the life in the organization. The organization's climate for creativity represents the set of patterns or procedures within the daily life of the organization as those are experienced. Understood, and interpreted by the people within the organization. Organizational culture, however, includes the values, beliefs, history, traditions reflecting the deeper foundation of the organization (Isaksen, 2017). An organization's culture is long-standing, deeply rooted, and usually slow and difficult to change. The climate is what member experience and culture is what the organization values.

2.3.4 Leadership, change and culture

Schein (2006) argues that culture is developed by leaders and they impose their own values and assumptions on a group, and the results of the group's performance forms the basis of which leadership style that is accepted. In respect to a change process, Schein (2006) further argues that leaders who have the ability to step outside the culture, are more fit to manage change process so that the groups can be more adaptive. Therefore, leaders are to fulfill the challenge, they must first understand the dynamics of culture. Kotter's (2008) studies show that corporate culture can have a significant impact on a firm's long-term economic performance and could determine the success or failure of the firm (p. 11).

2.4 Internal communication

2.4.1 What is internal communication?

Communication is an important area of study as it is central to understanding organizational behavior, especially as the society now require more flexibility and ability for restructuring in both public and private sector (Erlien, 2006). Erlien (2006, p. 13) further states that internal communication is highly critical during change processes, as it requires a high level of information, motivation and two-

way communication. Information constitutes an important term within the definition of communication, and can be understood as a reduction in insecurity (Grennes, 1999, p. 12). According to Huczynski and Buchanan (2013, p. 222), communication affects organizational performance as most jobs involves interacting with other people. At the same time, communication is perceived as challenging, for instance due to new technology that is radically changing how people interact and communicate with each other.

Communication can be explained as the information flow and the transmission of information, and the exchange of ideas and meanings between leaders and employees, but also between individuals and groups at different levels and departments within the organization (Huczynski & Buchanan, 2013, p. 222; Erlien, 2006, p. 17). Other explanations of communication emphasize internal relations, for instance Goldhaber (1993, as cited in Erlien, 2006, p. 17) who explains organizational communication as the process of creating and exchanging messages within a network of interdependent relationships, which makes it easier to cope with environmental uncertainty. Furthermore, how organizations communicate is central to collective and individual performance. However, both managers and employees often perceive this as a problem, especially during processes of restructuring or change (Huczynski & Buchanan, 2013).

2.4.2 The importance of internal communication

“Organizations relying on human beings to create and deliver products and services, lose serious money and see productivity eroded when errors are made” (Gilsdorf, 1998, p. 173). Breakdown or failure in communication, can be an underlying cause for why change management programs fail (Kitchen & Daly, 2002). According to Erlien (2006), internal communication includes two main areas of importance: the organization's' goals and need for communication, and the employee's' need for communication. Additionally, it is important for communication to involve both facts and feelings as it can contribute to increasing motivation, social communities and group identity, but it is also an important contributor in creating a positive culture that emphasizes trust and collective workforce (Erlien, 2006).

“Managing people requires communication” (Kitchen & Daly, 2002), thus, organizations should focus on how to communicate with their employees. First,

workload can be reduced by making the communication more effective. Second, it can prevent conflicts and discontent among the people in the organization, in addition to increasing safety, motivation and engagement. Moreover, it can increase both professional and personal development, and thereby enhance the overall organizational effectiveness and accomplishments (Erlie, 2006, p. 33). As stated by Spike and Lesser (1995), communication is often regarded as a main issue when implementing change programs, considering that communication is a tool for announcing, explaining and preparing people for change, and in preparing them for both positive and negative effects following the changes. Moreover, employees have to be fully informed in order to participate in the organization and work effectively (Kitchen, 1997).

2.4.3 Communication climate

How information is received, often depends on the organization's communication climate (Erlie, 2006). Grennes (1999) explains "communication climate as a function of socialization and structuring, i.e. the production and reproduction of systems and expectations related to resources and rules" (p. 48). In a climate based on mutual trust, a message will be received and perceived in a more positive manner than if the climate was based on insecurity and distrust. However, developing mutual trust requires time, honesty, openness and compliance. Erlie (2006) argue that open communication will contribute in creating mutual understanding and trust. Furthermore, the communication climate consists of five factors including employees gaining support from their executives, employees feel that they can influence decisions being made, trustworthy and truthfully sources of information, openness between employees and between employees and managers, and finally, explicitly conveying information about goals and expectations (Erlie, 2006, p. 84-85).

2.4.4 Communication channels

Communication is information that moves around through formal and informal channels, throughout the organization (Erlie, 2006). It is essential to create channels and arenas, both formal and informal, in order to ensure effective and rapid distribution of information and room for dialogue between people. In this thesis communication channels are the directions that transports the message between the sender and the receiver (Erlie, 2006, p. 199). According to Olaisen,

Rosendahl, Andersen and Solstad (2007), the choice of which communication channels or which combination of channels to employ, depends on the message one wish to achieve with the communication. If it is facts and information of importance or that the communication aims to influence attitudes to create motivation, one advice is to choose channels that gives room for feelings, in addition to facts.

Formal. Communication can happen in both formal and informal contexts. “Formal communication involves use of official channels; declarations and policy set down by organizational leaders; implementer’s instructions about the rate, timing, and details of change; formal responses of leaders to other stakeholder’s challenges, and questions about changes” (Lewis, 2011, p. 53). Manner, timing, message and spokesperson are all critical factors in relation to the first official announcement for the change (Smeltzer, 1995). Formal communication is often time consuming, it is binding and most often restrained (Grennes, 1999).

Informal. Informal communication includes arenas where people meet each other, randomly or planned, with other purposes than to share information (Erlie, 2006). However, although the intention may not be to convey information, such interactions may be strategic and it can enable the participant to deny ownership of what they share with others, e.g. feelings and thoughts about the change process. Interactions like these are of importance because they have the potential to shape the participant’s attitudes, engagement, reactions to change and, as a potential result the outcomes of the change process (Lewis, 2011, p. 53-54). There are mainly two communication channels: oral and written, both including formal and informal communication. Oral channels distinguish itself from written channels because the conveying of information occur in several dimensions, not just with words. Typical oral communication channels are employment conversations, agreed meetings between the leaders and managers, small meetings between colleagues or a conversation near the coffee machine. Written communication channels focus on written information, and typically includes electronic channels such as emails, intranet, reports or newsletters (Erlie, 2006, p. 199-210).

3: Methodology

In this part, we describe and explain the theoretical basis for our decisions regarding method and research design, which has been used to obtain results in this thesis. Further, we present the conduction and feasibility for our research, in addition to method and design for collection and analysis of data.

3.1 Research method

There are two approaches for investigating the reality: qualitative and quantitative methods (Johannesen, Tufte & Christoffersen, 2016, p. 95). Johannesen et al. (2016) state that the former method explains *why* something occurs, whilst the latter method explains *if* something occurs. Our aim of this thesis is to increase our knowledge of organizational change processes. Therefore, we find it appropriate to use qualitative methods. Furthermore, we want to get a deeper understanding of how and why the different factors knowledge sharing, organizational culture and internal communication, influence the changes that the specific organization are experiencing.

Since our aim is to explore the topic of organizational change further, we take an inductive approach. Inductive reasoning is more exploratory and open-ended, and often start by collecting data with the intention to identify different patterns which can result in a theory or concept, i.e. drawing inferences out of observations (Fisher, Buglear, Lowry, Mutch & Tansley, 2010; Bryman & Bell, 2011; Johannesen et al., 2016). At the end of our study, our intention is to collect data to build theory, rather than testing it. Furthermore, our research is based on individuals and their social organizations, which determines our study to be explorative (Fisher et al., 2010). Through an iterative approach, we get the opportunity to go back and forth between theory and data, which means analyzing some of our findings and searching for more literature in order to make sense of our findings (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 573).

3.2 Research design and strategy

Before we start our research, we choose what and who are going to be investigated, and how, i.e. what research design we are holding (Johannesen et al., 2016). The research design sets the basis for how we are going to answer our research question. Since the purpose of our research is to understand whether knowledge sharing,

organizational culture and internal communication can have an impact on organizational change, and how, we find it appropriate to hold a phenomenological design. In a phenomenological design we investigate and describe individuals, and based on their experiences, thoughts and meanings, tries to increase our knowledge and understanding of different phenomena (Johannesen et al., 2016, p. 78). Our aim is to find the meaning of these factors, and what these implies for the outcome of an organizational change process.

3.3 Organization of investigation - STI

In order to identify the extent that knowledge transfer and knowledge sharing, internal communication and organizational culture have on organizational change, our aim is to get insight into a knowledge-intensive firm. Such types of organizations are located within a business arena that are changing rapidly due to for instance innovations and new technology, and their competitiveness are dependent on their ability to adapt and respond fast. In this thesis, we believe that such organizations are valuable sources for information as they emphasize the importance of knowledge and learning for organizational performance.

STI is a leading training and consulting firm located in Norway. Building on their long and broad experience within different areas, they aim to help other businesses realize their fullest potential by the means of existing resources. STI's main competencies are developing leader, sales and customer service.

Furthermore, STI is undergoing a change process, due to Solar's acquiring of STI (formerly EBS). Solar's competency area (i.e. Solar Skolen) is now operated by STI, under the name of STI Services (Scandinavian Technology Institute, n.d.).

3.4 Data collection

Since the intention of qualitative research is to increase knowledge about a specific phenomenon and its context, it is important to recruit relevant informants (i.e. people who provide information) in order to achieve our goal (Johannesen et al., 2016). "Exploratory research may involve the use of a battery of research methods: interview, observations, documents and so on" (Fisher et al., 2010, p. 182). As we have chosen to hold an inductive and exploratory approach, our most important source for information and data collection is depth interviews. According to Johannesen, Tufte and Kristoffersen (2008, p. 141), Steinar Kvale (1997)

characterizes qualitative interviews as a conversation with structure and a goal, with the purpose of getting insight into the way that the informants describe their own reality, and for the researchers to construct the meaning of different phenomena. Interviewing is one of the most used methods for collecting qualitative data (Johannesen et al., 2008) as it can provide rich and detailed answers, insight into individual's perspectives, flexibility and the opportunity to interview the interviewee (i.e. the person being interviewed) over more than one occasion (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Fisher et al., 2010). Furthermore, Heizman (2011) states that interviewing is useful in understanding the social context and that the way that organizational relationships are constructed.

3.4.1 Participants

Who and how many informants are going to be a part of our study, is dependent on our research question, thus, it can have a large impact on the analysis of our data. Scientists often distinguish between two types of sampling: strategic or random sampling, the former being the most common method referring to qualitative research. Because the recruitment of participants has a clear goal of increasing our knowledge regarding a phenomenon, we find must be strategic in selecting our informants (Johannesen et al., 2016; Johannesen et al., 2008).

Concerning our research question and variables, we find it necessary to include representatives from all the lower levels within the organization under investigation: middle managers and ground-floor employees. By doing that, we are provided with valuable insight from most of the organization, which can contribute to increasing our understanding of their perspectives regarding organizational change, and the factors that can have an impact. The number of informants we want to have is based on the possibility for generalization, therefore, we want to have a minimum of ten interviewees.

In order to recruit participants for the interviews, we used our contact person in STI. We got in touch with representatives from different departments and levels within the organization, thus our informants could represent most of the organization. Thereby, we got all necessary contact information from our contact person. After getting in touch with our informants, interviews were scheduled over a two-day-period.

3.5 Interview guide

The qualitative interview can be conducted in different ways: structured, unstructured or semi-structured. Structured and semi-structured interviews are often based on interview guides, which is a list over certain topics and various questions that are asked during the interview (Johannesen et al., 2008, p. 145; Bryman & Bell, 2011). Concerning the insurance of both main issues and topics that need to be covered during the interviews, we conduct semi-structured interviews (Fisher et al., 2010). This provides us with flexibility in relation to which questions to ask, and in making the interview custom to each of the interviewees. Furthermore, we can create sequel questions in order to increase our understanding of the specific topic.

Although we have the interview guide as the bases of structure, we aim to find a balance between asking questions and in the interviewees latitude to answer in accordance with their own reality. Furthermore, we conduct one-to-one interviews as the interview guide include subjects that can be perceived as personal, and standing out from the group or what is “normal” can be perceived as negative (Johannesen et al., 2016) (see Appendix B for interview guide).

An audio recorder is used in order to ensure that we store all the information that we receive during the interviews, e.g. details as tone of voice, pauses and expressions. This is because it is impossible to remember all of what is being said by the interviewees (Johannesen et al., 2016). By doing this we can be assured that the information we have collected is correct. At the same time, one of us will take notes in order to capture sudden impressions and assumptions that we may get throughout the interview.

As with most other methods, semi-structured interviews may carry some limitations, e.g. social desirability bias (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Interviewees may answer according to what they believe is appropriate from the organization’s perspective, as well as what is socially desirable. If conducting interviews in later periods, they can answer differently from their initial interview. This can be a result of their state of mind, mood, location and so on. At the same time, it is important to remember that interviewees can communicate in ways that are difficult to interpret, which can result in the inclusion of our own subjective interpretations during the transcriptions. Concerning the location of where the interviews were conducted,

what answer we got could be different if we were sitting somewhere else. This could be a result of the presence of managers and/or colleagues. The fact that the interviews were taped could also influence how the interviewees responded to our questions.

3.6 Pre project

Our method design will mainly consist of two parts including a pre project before a more extensive data collection by conducting interviews (see Appendix C for questionnaire). The pre project consists of both quantitative survey, and a more qualitative approach including informal conversations and observations. In this way, we can get a broader insight into the organization of interest, and get a better understanding of their change process, and which factors may play a role in practice. Although literature have proven that the factors we suggest have an impact on organizational change (e.g. Wang & Noe, 2010; Balogun & Jenkins, 2003; Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991), we want to check whether this is perceived in practice in a Norwegian organization. Based on the pre project the internal reliability and validity of our final data collection may increase.

The quantitative survey was mainly focused around organizational culture and internal communication, i.e. areas that include learning, sense making, and that can have an impact on knowledge sharing and the overall change process. Furthermore, the survey was divided on 28 questions on a scale ranging from 1-6, where 1 was strongly disagree and 6 was strongly agree. In order for the process to be most efficient in STI, the organization of investigation, made the survey through their internal system, Gap Vision, which explains the 1-6 scale. The survey was sent out to the organization's 49 employees. The response rate was 72%, with 36 out of 49 responses. At the same time, we participated in several social events including informal conversations with some employees and did observations.

Our findings from the pre project indicates that there is a high general satisfaction with working in STI, but at the same time there is some extreme variations among the respondents regarding internal communication, conflict management and the degree of impact each employee has within the organization. Moreover, the employees seem to have different perceptions and thoughts about the change process. The results from the pre project determined the factors we wanted to

investigate further: knowledge sharing, organizational culture and internal communication.

3.7 Quality confirmation

When conducting research, it is important to establish a degree of quality. Since all researchers are individuals, we also have our own assumptions, perceptions and knowledge about the world. This can influence what we as researchers perceive, assume and expect regarding what we observe and how the data is emphasized and translated. Most inductive strategies of linking theory and research are associated with qualitative research approach as the intention is to explore social practices with the aim of developing theory as the outcome of research, thus, drawing inferences out of observations (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 12-13).

Reliability refers to the preciseness of the research, including data, which data that are being used, how the data are collected and how they are being analyzed (Johannesen et al., 2016). Johannesen et al. (2008) further state that the criteria for reliability is not as critical in qualitative as in quantitative research. Similar to our research, techniques for structural data collection are not usual, and it is the conversations with our informants that runs the data collection. At the same time, it is difficult for others to be included in the interpretation process since no other than us have the same experience or background. With regards to reliability, we assume that our research will not have a high extent of reliability, since their perception of their reality can change over a period of time. The interviews that were conducted were context dependent and with a “here and now”-perspective, rather than long term views.

The concept of *validity* is seen in relation to whether the method is studying what it is intended to study, i.e. to what extent our findings rightfully reflect the purpose of our research, and represents the reality (Johannesen et al., 2008). Concerning the criteria for validity, our findings represents the reality in a good manner because we have conducted depth interviews in a real organization, we have been in conversation with individuals representing different parts of the organization, our sample and sample size are sufficient and it gives a good perception of the reality. Holding a qualitative approach can entail problems regarding external validity, in which the investigation of one specific organization can limit the possibility for

generalization across social settings. At the same time, the outcome of our study may not be as valid since we are relying only on the interviewees' subjective perceptions and meanings. Fisher et al. (2010) argue that findings can be true since the researcher's interpretations and conclusions are derived from the research findings.

3.8 Data analysis

Seen from a phenomenological perspective, it is usual to analyze the meaning of our data. We are concentrated on the content in our data, and we interpret them in order to get a deeper understanding of our informant's meanings and experiences (Jacobsen et al., 2016).

We have chosen to do a phenomenological analysis, along the lines of Malterud (2011). Malterud (2011) presents four main phases, which constitutes a phenomenological analysis. In the first phase material should be read thoroughly and one should look for central topics, making an overall impression of data. This could contribute to the understanding of how informants experience a phenomenon, in this case organizational change, how they engage in knowledge sharing, what type of internal communication channels they use and so on. Furthermore, it is important to remove all irrelevant information of concentrate only on information that is central for the overall research question. The impression that the researcher acquires from the material can have a large impact on the final interpretation (Malterud, 2011). In the second phase, Malterud (2011) continues with explaining that it is important to identify the meaningful elements of the material that are central for the research question, and label it, i.e. the *coding* process. Coding will make it easier to find, remove and merge data related to one question or topic. The third phase of the analysis includes the extraction of the essential parts of the material, following the structuring of the material related to the labels (Malterud, 2011). We have chosen to categorize our material in the following topics: "organizational change", "knowledge sharing", "internal communication" and "organizational culture". We have collected the most important information within these categories, in order to present the information in an orderly manner and make it easier for us to discuss. In the fourth and final phase, Malterud (2011) presents the summary, which includes a merging of information and the construction of new descriptions of the phenomena of investigation.

3.9 Ethical considerations

When performing qualitative research, we consider potential ethical issues that may arise (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Fisher et al., 2010). Prior to the interviews all the participants will be offered a consent form where we provide information about volunteerism, ensured confidentiality and anonymity, and the possibility of withdrawal at any time during our study (see Appendix D for consent form). All recordings through audiotape or other instruments that can identify the interviewee, will be deleted after transcription. Confidentiality of the thesis must also be under consideration, depending on the organization's thoughts about publishing information that can be of concern, e.g. firm name or the collected research data.

Part 4: Analysis

In this part we present our collection of data, with the aim of highlighting information and findings that are of relevance to our research question. The analysis is based on approximately 80 000 words of transcribed interviews from ten respondents, in addition to notes from observations, and additional emails from our informants and contact person. The structure of the analysis is based on our interview guide and our transcription of the interviews.

4.1 Solar and EBS becoming STI

In 2016 Solar acquired EBS (Euro Business School) with the intention to reinforce Solar's focus on growing their service business. On the bases of improving their business, Solar School merged with EBS and developed a combined training business, operating under the name of STI Services. For EBS the acquisition could provide them with several opportunities, including expanding their business into areas where Solar was already established, e.g. Sweden, Denmark and Netherlands (Wilhjelm, 2016).

Considering that Solar is a large business group, the acquisition requires EBS to restructure their organization. Previously, EBS had a flat organizational structure making decision making and communication more effective. After becoming STI, they have a larger hierarchy resulting in changes of structure, reports, processes and routines.

When asking about general thoughts regarding the acquisition, we got various responses. Only some of the informants responded that they were informed early on in the process and were given clues about what was going to happen. One of the informants stated that *"EBS was investigating and trying to identify possible partners for a long time. Considering the fact that we are going to become a listed company, I respect that our managers cannot give us information about this all the time"* (Interviewee 9). Another informant said that they didn't get any information unless they were asking for it. Through quotations like the following, we got the impression that lack of information led to some confusion about the purpose of the acquisition: *"Why should Solar want to buy us? What has Solar to do with us? What happens now? Where are we going to sit? What are going to happen with my department?"* (Interviewee 6). Furthermore, one informant felt that she was

standing on the outside looking in, wondering why Solar acquired EBS as they have different work tasks and structures. Concerning their large difference, some find it difficult to see the potential synergies.

One respondent states the following about the meeting:

“(...) we have been bought by Solar, things will be as before (...) some information regarding Solar was given, however, I don’t have all information on this, but that is my own fault” (Interviewee 4).

Some of the informants are relatively new in the organization, and comment in the following way: *“I am actually pretty new here. Things have happened very fast, and I remember that I had many questions like: What are we going to do with the sales people? Where are we going to sit? Are we going to work as we did previously?”* (Interviewee 1). Furthermore, the interviewee states that it is important to take responsibility for the process early on, and that people cannot just wait before they get any message. One of the informants thinks that people are expectantly and are waiting to see what is happening. The informant states that *“Solar has been taking good care of from the start, and STI inhibit an involving and nice culture. There was still uncertainty regarding what each employee has responsibility of and who are doing what”* (Interviewee 7).

When questioning how the change could contribute to the future, one of the interviewee states:

“The change includes new possibilities, new countries, better use of technology, new rules and routines, and new ways to report. It was not communicated before February, (...) it was communicated in a clear manner and that decisions are going to be made on a higher level than before, but that I will relate to my nearest leader as before” (Interviewee 5).

One respondent think that the change will be harder to cope with for the older employees because they are used to be informed, take fast decisions, follow the market and that the change is a bit scary. This was supported by another respondent that states:

“It is less complicated for me to handle the change process since I am new myself, however, I think it is different for others in the organization” (Interviewee 1).

4.1.1 The characteristics of the change process in STI

Along the lines of Weick and Quinn’s (1999) theory about change, we can assume that STI are undergoing a continuous change process, which is characterized as emergent, self-organized and evolving. The change process have the structure: freeze, rebalance and unfreeze, where leaders play a large role in redirecting their employees and in facilitating for sensemaking (Weick & Quinn, 1999). As Nadler and Tushman (1990) presents, there are two dimensions where change occur i.e. incremental/strategic or reactive/anticipatory. STI’s change process is characterized by a change that involves and effect the organization as a whole, it happens all the time happens rapidly and within a short period of time, and aims to enhance the effectiveness in the organization. This suits well with the description of a strategic and incremental change process by Nadler and Tushman (1990). These types of changes can redefine the organization’s structure, strategy and core values. As argued by Schein (2006), motivation for change will only be accepted if the change targets feel secure and perceive the changes as feasible. Moreover, the change targets are more prone for new attitudes or values without feeling lost. This seems to be true as one interviewee states the following:

“Change is scary, just because it is change and everyone aren't happy about change” (Interviewee 1).

4.1.2 The structure of the change

One way to grasp how long the change process is and how it is developed, is to distinguish the change process into steps. The change process includes the involvement of people at the workplace, sensemaking of the change process, the importance of a good strategy and vision, communication and lastly anchor it all in the culture of the organization. STI has identified possible threats and developed excitement and cooperation among the employees. They are in the middle of establishing a strategy for 2020, and ensuring shared vision and goals for the future. They have facilitated for internal communication and has planned for the change in short-term basis. Lastly, the organization has promoted employees who can function as change agents, and clarified roles, in which they contribute to the

implementation of vision and in the institutionalizing of new approaches. However, one interviewee pointed out some criticism regarding the change process:

“I thought we started in the wrong end... we should have started with the goal in relation to product and services..., how are we going to achieve this, what kind of resources do we need to achieve these goals and fulfill the roles?” (Interviewee 2).

4.2 Knowledge sharing

4.2.1 Why it is important to share knowledge with each other during change?

“When is there enough knowledge sharing? That is an utopian question if you ask me (...)” (Interviewee 2).

As our aim was to increase our knowledge about what impact different factors had on organizational change, we asked our informants whether they were engaging in knowledge sharing, and if so, why. Most of the informants stated that knowledge sharing was beneficial, however, they struggled with explaining why they perceived it as beneficial. One of the interviewees stated that there hadn't been any knowledge sharing between the companies after the merging, and they weren't sure whether the two knew anything about each other's work. As a response one of the informants stated that *“I think it is important that they gain some insight into how we are working as well”* (Interviewee 7). Furthermore, most of them argued that they found knowledge sharing to be important as they could learn from each other and become a part of each other's businesses, i.e. how EBS can acquire competence from Solar and vice versa, especially since they hold different competencies. *“Solar have hard skills, whilst STI have soft skills”* (Interviewee 3), at the same time interviewee 7 stated that *“(...) I believe it is important that they get insight into how we work”*. At the same time, they stated that they found knowledge sharing to be beneficial in order to increase effectiveness and reduce work overload. It was also stated that knowledge is beneficial in order to increase one's understanding in relation to which products they are distributing, how they are distributing them or how they can develop and improve their existing concepts further. Nonetheless, although they found it beneficial, they highlighted that knowledge sharing is a complex process, even under the best circumstances, and especially under times of change.

One of the most prominent findings from the analysis was that people were more likely to share with others only if they perceived it as necessary. The necessity could be if someone completed their work tasks in a non-acceptable manner, and that it could be done in a better way. Another reason was whether the knowledge was interesting or relevant for other parties, e.g. “It has most to do with where my competence and knowledge is, and the relevance” (Interviewee 5). However, it was further argued that knowledge was both easier to share and more relevant within the different departments, since people do much of similar work tasks. For instance one interviewee stated that: “(...) *when I share I feel like the stuff I am sharing is going to be relevant, and it should be necessary for others (...)*” (Interviewee 6).

“I have nothing to lose by sharing” (Interviewee 3)

From quotations like the one above, we got the impression that some were positive to sharing knowledge with others. Since sharing could contribute to the whole organization, and increase other’s understanding of work tasks, sharing was perceived as natural to engage in. The interviewees did not see the necessity of withholding knowledge from others. However, the other half of the sample found it to be forced and too much effort. One informant expressed that he found knowledge sharing to be beneficial only towards people who were good and worth betting on, considering the fact that the process was both time consuming and required effort.

One informant stated that “(...) *some are a little less willing to share than others. To share professional knowledge... you have to ask..., I find this strange*” (Interviewee 9). Another informant stated that although the organization is perceived as open, when he started working in STI, he was surprised of how closed some of the departments were, and how some are less willing to share than others, for instance in relation to company resources like presentations. Furthermore, the informant argued that this could be seen in relation to their somewhat competitive and individualistic culture, stating that “*It can have something to say with the previous payroll system (...) It can be that you wanted the projects, and you didn’t want to share of the things that you got the projects*” (Interviewee 9).

In relation to the particular part of the analysis, we found it necessary to ask about the underlying factors for why they did or did not share with colleagues. Throughout the interviews and from our own observations, we got the impression that STI believes in openness, however, there was some unclarity about their motivations to share with others. One of the informants stated that *“(...) I am sure that I more easily share with those close to me (...) It relates to my own understanding and in being sure of that people want to listen...”* (Interviewee 1). Interviewee 1 further stated that *“I feel that the people around me most likely hold this knowledge, or that they already have an understanding of it..., so I rarely go and tell them that “listen! I have something””*. From this quotation we got the impression that although the sample expressed that there is a sharing culture, it is in fact not. Safety and trust were found to be important, identified through quotations like: *“safety... the stuff I am conveying shouldn't be laughed of (...) I should feel that it is a safe forum (...)”* (Interviewee 8).

“If I share something, I can expect something in return” (Interviewee 9)

During the interviews and observations, we got the impression that most of the individuals felt that they were surrounded by competent colleagues, and that they didn't necessarily hold more knowledge than others. This was particularly found in one quotation: *“We are working in an environment with lot of knowledge (...) I feel like most of the others have much more experience than me in certain areas, so I choose not to share”* (Interviewee 1). Some emphasized the expectancy of getting something in return if sharing knowledge, thus, a win-win situation for both parties.

4.2.2 Practices for knowledge sharing

Per today the organization didn't have any formal practices for knowledge sharing. When the informants were asked about such measures, the most prominent arenas for sharing knowledge and learning were 3M, Facebook and occasionally, theme nights. 3M was considered to be the most important arena for getting information, and in increasing their understanding and competence about other departments. Every month each department would have two to three representatives that would present their positions, work tasks and explain what they had done during a period of time. 3M had been in STI for a long time, however, some of the informants stated that they felt that the purpose of 3M was somewhat unclear. One interviewee stated:

“there is a purpose (...) but you often feel that you are forced to do it ...” (Interviewee 6). After the merging with Solar, STI did change the structure of 3M based on the involvement of their employees. Although some of the informants felt that the structure and content of the meeting was better now than before, some still felt that they didn't see the meaning of sharing what the departments did.

Facebook was also regarded as an informal arena for both academic and other types of information, however, our impression is that the particular platform functions more as a communication channel. Facebook was used to inform others of what they did out with customers, and hence, could function as a learning platform if they used it more to share presentations (e.g. e-training). Another arena that was highlighted, was theme nights and workshops. Occasionally, the organization hosted theme nights including various topics, hence an arena where the participants could gain more knowledge. However, one of the informants argued that this was a difficult measure considering its large format, thus focusing on concise tasks in smaller formats would be more beneficial (Interviewee 3). There was no formal structure on workshops, making some of the informants hosting workshops informally at the workplace. The latter arena was perceived as beneficial, however, it should be hosted in smaller scales directed towards defined goals and focus'.

Seeking knowledge

When trying to understand what type of practices the organization had for sharing knowledge, we asked about how our interviewees were seeking knowledge from various sources. One of the main findings was the impression of STI as having an open climate with a low threshold. When having a question, most informants went straight to the source and expected answers. Furthermore, we got the impression that although not everyone was positive to knowledge sharing, all of our interviewees were open for answering questions from others, thus, asking for help or feedback can be considered as important in receiving knowledge from others.

During projects most of the teams were consisting of managers, project leaders and other knowledge workers. This was highlighted by one of the informants as a great way to seek knowledge considering the short links between asking questions and getting them answered. Moreover, it was easier to identify different aspects of colleagues' mindsets related to specific tasks, e.g. strategies related to products and

services. Although STI is a KIF we got the impression that they do not focus much on sharing knowledge with each other, however, knowledge flourish between the cubicles and in the hallways, making knowledge somewhat accessible, e.g. as stated through the following quote: *“If you have your ears open, you learn something new every day”* (Interviewee 9).

4.3 Organizational culture

4.3.1 Cultural characteristics

Organizational culture often sets the foundation for internal communication and for all action within the organization (Schein, 2006), making culture an interesting aspect to consider in relation to organizational change. It is important to mention that it is highly difficult to analyze an organization’s culture, considering our short period of time observing STI. Thus, we can only pronounce ourselves regarding the culture climate. We got information about STI having a flat structure prior to the acquisition, and that their culture had a bit of an entrepreneur mentality.

“The word formal does not suit here” (Interviewee 1). During our collection of data, most of the informants characterized the culture in STI as open, informal and supportive (see figure 3). The threshold for being oneself was low, people were not afraid of making jokes and STI’s offices were often filled with positive energy. *“We have a cheering culture, and we cheer on each other”* (Interviewee 9). The following statement was often mentioned when asking about how they perceived the culture in STI. When achieving goals people ring the bell and everyone celebrates that person, persons or department. This particular routine is also highlighted as a method for knowledge sharing, since this is a great opportunity to learn about specific things.

“We are personal with each other in the sense that we give each other feedback, hugs, and we support each other (...) but not so much about our private lives.” (Interviewee 1).

From the following quotation we got the understanding that although STI has an open culture climate, however, people know most about each other through their work roles, and not as individuals. We got the impression that some of the managers

were trying to change this after the acquisition, highlighting the importance of knowing each other as private individuals. This can give the employees a greater understanding of each other's attitudes, values and behaviors. Only some of the informants were engaging in social events after work, giving us the impression that people in STI are more focused on their work relationships. However, one of the informants felt that their open culture was more closed now than before, as a result of changes in positions, roles and a more structured hierarchy.

As a result of the acquisition, the organization changed their name to STI. This was a decision that the employees were not involved in. Most of the informants did not support the new name, since they did not feel that the words technology and innovative were suitable for the organization's products or services. However, there were aiming to develop further in these areas, making technology and innovation a work in progress. Furthermore, one of the informants had got the impression that Solar was behind EBS in technology, making the acquisition unnecessary regarding this particular area. However, the change of name also required a new logo. All employees had been invited to an official meeting trying to engage them in the development of their new logo. One of the informants stated that the logo could be associated with a path and the opening of new doors, which could be related to the informant's positive perception to the acquisition. Although not all the informants felt that the values represented their core business, interviewee 1 found the acquisition to be in compliance with their vision and values, i.e. innovative considering their establishment in new markets and areas.

“(...) everyone is very focused on what we do, so we are kind of individualistic, there are many individualists here who work to get their projects noticed by others. (...) It's not necessarily evil intentions like everyone wanting to be on top, but it is because of everyone's focus on doing what they do well...” (Interviewee 8).

Although the culture in STI was described as collective and sharing, we got the impression that the culture was rather individualistic, e.g. the quotation above. Another informant characterizes the employees as highly individualistic. They focused much on results, which was also emphasized as their main goals. During the interviews some of the informants stated that people have to be structured and focused on own tasks, because no one is waiting for each other, and their work can

therefore be experienced as a little overwhelming and fast going. On the other hand, some of the informants meant that they practiced a brotherly competitiveness with real enthusiasm, and trying to help each other achieve their goals. We can assume that although they practice some competitiveness, this is not a characteristic that should be emphasized.

During the interviews we got the impression that most of the informants had a strong wish for being more involved in decisions, especially regarding projects that would affect themselves. Involvement can be an important contributor to motivation, and if people are not involved in for example budgeting, they are more likely to disclaim responsibility. One of the informants also emphasized timing of involvement, stating that they were often involved in projects after decisions were made, making it more difficult to argue or change their plans. Furthermore, there was a low threshold for presenting ideas to their managers, however, they often felt that they were not listened to. We got the impression that it was more important to be involved in decisions affecting the employees, rather than decisions affecting the organization as a whole. On the other hand, when becoming a listed company most of the decisions will be made higher up in the hierarchy, making less room for involvement among ground-floor workers.

A new provision model was going to be included as a part of the strategic plans for the upcoming years. Their open and sharing culture became prominent when asking about their thoughts related to this measure. Furthermore, one informant stated that there will be an improved focus on teamwork when implementing collective bonuses. Others feel like the collective bonus model has more cons than pros, concerning that team members can become social loafers and will not engage as much as required in certain projects.

Furthermore, we got the impression that both EBS and Solar were positive toward each other's competencies, but not necessarily how they were going to benefit from each other's work. One of the informants stated that "*so long in the process, I have not had anything to do with Solar (...) I feel like they have not required much room and space*" (Interviewee 3).

We got the impression that the two merging companies have not succeeded in merging each other's' businesses so long in the process and that this have not been a primary task, e.g. as stated through the following quote: *“We haven't established a community or fellowship other than our competencies (...) I feel like we are going to be separate business no matter what”* (Interviewee 1).

Figure 3: Organizational culture



Note: This figure shows which characteristics were most prominent from the analysis

4.4 Internal communication

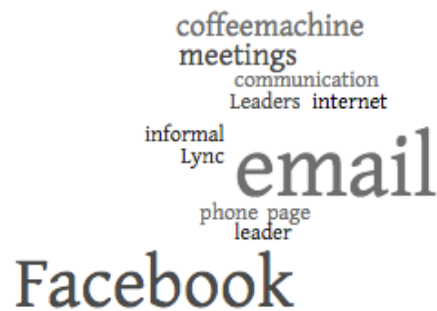
4.4.1 Communication channels

As found by most research (e.g. Kitchen & Daly, 2002; Erlie, 2006; Olaisen et al., 2007) internal communication is highly necessary for organizations worldwide. During our interviews with informants in STI, in addition to our observations, we got the impression that both managers and employees were good at communicating with each other. The communication climate was characterized as open and informal, with room for asking questions and in receiving feedback and answers. Communication was practiced through several arenas, both formal and informal, oral and written (see figure 4). The most prominent arenas for communication were clearly 3M, Facebook and emails, in relation to dialogues between colleagues, colleagues and managers, and between managers. One informant stated that STI do not have any set forums for communication, e.g. intranet or other passive arenas, however, we got the impression that most of the informants saw the need for one, especially when expanding the business to other countries. Developing a common platform for communicating across borders was considered as beneficial to exchange information and experiences.

Informal communication was highlighted as the most common communication form, understood through the following quotation: *“I am used to informal communication, so if I see the need for conveying something or ask a question, I go straight to the source.”* (Interviewee 3). Most of the conversations were flowing between colleagues within the same departments, and between people in the nearest cubicles. Regarding informal communication one of the informants stated that *“it is more in the hallways, by the coffee machine, on our way to or from lunch, yes... conversations like that”* (Interviewee 8). As we can see from this quotation, face-to-face communication was the most common communication form. However, there were various opinions related to the importance of the cafeteria and coffee machine. One of the informants stated that there had been a period where she did not participate in lunch in the cafeteria, resulting in her missing information that was conveyed throughout the cafeteria conversations. On the other hand, most of the other informants felt that these were not important forums to participate in since they got plenty of information elsewhere. We also got the impression that most of the information conveyed through these channels, were related to private life and not business, e.g. private thoughts about the change. This was also supported by our pre project and quantitative survey.

When asked about the preferred communication channels regarding the change, formal channels were highlighted as understood through for instance the following quotation: *“I think official information should be conveyed in plenary”* (Interviewee 8). This was supported by interviewee 2 who argued that managers should not communicate important information around the coffee machine or in informal forums. Emailing was emphasized as an important channel for formal communication and important information, however, some of the informants argued that emails were not that much used. Several of the informants felt that there was too much information in the emails, and that they should be more concise in order to make them more efficient and less time consuming. Besides emails, 3M was considered as the most important forum for internal communication, as 3M offers an arena for managers to convey information to their employees, and for employees to be updated on the overall business. Monthly meetings and black board meetings in different departments were characterized as beneficial, especially in relation to information that was not important for all departments.

Figure 4: Communication channels



Note: This figure shows which channels that were most prominent for internal communication

4.4.2 Communicating the change message

During the interviews we got various answers regarding when they received information about the acquisition, however, the first meeting was held in August 2016. Although they hadn't got any formal information about what was going to happen, rumours were already developed and flowing down the halls in EBS. However, the whispering and the following confusion were discovered by the managers, telling the employees that there was room for asking questions. Moreover, we got the impression that people remained calm and trusted their leaders in doing the best for the company.

“We were invited to a summer breakfast or something (...) why are we going to do that?, this is not something that we usually do...” (Interviewee 6).

The quotation above represents one of the informants' thoughts about the how they were invited to the official information meeting. This method led to curiosity and insecurity among some of the informants, as this type of event normally didn't occur. One representative from Solar in Denmark were present at the information meeting, conveying information about what the change process would entail for the organization, and how it would affect the people in it. They were also receiving information from their top manager. We got the impression that the meeting reduced some tension and confusion about the change process. As most of the employees had not received any information about what the change would entail, they were now left with relief for instance in relation to possible downsizing since no one were going to lose their job. *“This feeling were left dead right away.”* (Interviewee 1). Furthermore, the informants expressed their feelings regarding this issue. After the meeting they got explicit information about new logo, new profile

and new name. The internal communication after the official meeting, has been characterized as trustworthy, direct and honest. *“I didn’t come home after work feeling insecure and I didn’t have any questions, other than off course how the change process will influence us (...)”* (Interviewee 1).

Although most of the informants meant that the managers had handled the change in a professional and good manner, some of the informants had some suggestions. When restructuring an organization or implementing change measures, it is highly important to communicate the change message early on in the process. This was supported by the informants arguing that the change process should have started earlier: *“it is highly important with a pre project to avoid making so many decisions during the process.”* (Interviewee 7). At the same time, one of the informants stated that the whole process started in the wrong end, thus it should have started with goals related to the products and services offered, in addition to the changes in roles for the future. We got the impression that the change was somewhat surprising on the employees, and that the process goes too fast. When, how and what the informants knew about the acquisition varied among the informants, depending on their own curiosity and randomness.

4.4.3 Changes in internal communication

“We have become a large organization so it is not possible for people to have all the information at all times (...) not everyone understands that (...) we have become so complex (...) and everyone cannot be involved in all the decisions anymore.” (Interviewee 2).

The quotation above tells us something about the changes in restrictions related to EBS becoming a listed company. Most managers’ have to withhold information due to confidentiality and new owners, resulting in a dissatisfaction among the employees regarding information. On the other hand, we got the impression that there was a common understanding among the employees concerning the new restrictions. Previously, people had been involved to a larger extent than in the current situation. According to some of the informants this was perceived as a disadvantage because the degree of involvement has decreased more now than before. Most of our informants have suggested new solutions or ideas at several occasions, however, they do not feel listened to. They feel that their manager’s

responds positively, but still there is a lack of active response to their suggestions. This have resulted in a reduction in the employee's anticipations and eagerness to communicate their ideas. During the interviews we got the impression that most of the informants have engaged in strategic ideas related to the change, however, there have not been any improvements.

Part 5: Discussion

The last part of the thesis will discuss main findings in relation to relevant theory from our literature review. As stated in our research question, our main goal is to examine the following question: *“How will knowledge sharing, organizational culture and internal communication influence an organizational change in a Norwegian knowledge intensive firm, and why are they important?”*. We will also present practical implications and suggest various measures that the organization of investigation could implement in order to increase their chances for success. The purpose of this discussion will be to examine and elaborate on the relationships found in our research, and make further progress in the understanding of the topic of questions. Some recommendations for the change process in STI will also be presented. Thereafter, we will explain in what way our study can contribute to existing literature, before elaborating on the study’s limitations. Further research will be suggested, before presenting our concluding remarks of our thesis.

5.1 Summary of findings

In the previous chapter we have presented our findings from our qualitative study investigating how knowledge sharing, organizational culture and internal communication have an impact on organizational change, and why. It is apparent from our findings that all factors are important influencing organizational change, but at the same time, these factors can influence each other. It is difficult to state that STI is placed within each of the stages in Kotter’s (2007; 2012) eight-step model, however, we can only assume that they are placed between step seven and eight. In order to adapt to the process and following changes, they are setting new strategies for 2020, and they are hiring new employees with the purpose of enhancing knowledge in STI. At the same time, they are restructuring their workforce including changing and specifying roles, and structuring groups more clearly. Although we perceive the acquisition and restructuring as a process of change, existing literature have argued that change is continuous.

Knowledge sharing

The importance of knowledge sharing was emphasized differently in STI. Even though knowledge sharing was not prominent related to the change process, it was found to be of importance by several informants. A LEAN-process was conducted in relation to the acquisition of EBS, resulting in STI, in order to increase

knowledge and understanding about the process and the desired synergy effects. However, along the lines of Beer and Nohria (2000) and Lewin (1947) effective change cannot happen without everyone feeling that they are a part of the change, therefore, leaders should set the goals together with their teams and employees. This was not the case in STI, because only the leadership group and the project managers were involved in the LEAN-process, resulting in potential lack of commitment and less knowledge and understanding among the employees. Findings show that the employees in STI were involved regarding the purpose and content of 3M. Together they restructured 3M, with the intention to enhance knowledge sharing, information and unity related to the acquisition and future performance.

Furthermore, STI did not facilitate much for sharing or transferring knowledge. Most literature on knowledge management include measures on how to facilitate for knowledge transfer and sharing, for example technical structures, and communication networks (e.g. Alavi and Denford, 2011; De Long & Fahey, 2000; Davenport & Prusak, 1998). Facebook and 3M were emphasized as knowledge sharing arenas, yet findings show that informal conversations between colleagues were the most efficient arena for seeking, sharing and transfer of knowledge. This supported by research, stating that small conversations between cubicles and departments are an important measure for enhancing knowledge sharing (Davenport & Prusak, 1998).

Trust was considered an important factor, and it was clear that it felt easier for the informants to share knowledge with people in their nearest circle, or people that they were close with. The relationship between colleagues, together with the fulfilled criteria of mutual trust, have to in place in order to share. Thus, we find support in existing literature stating that reciprocity is an underlying factor for transfer and sharing of knowledge (Ipe, 2013). Furthermore, confidence of own competence (e.g. feeling insecure) could enhance knowledge sharing as it reduces uncertainty, and it is important for them that colleagues they share knowledge with think it is useful knowledge to receive. Here we can find similarities in Roberts' (2000) theory within the field. Throughout the literature review we emphasized the importance of trust especially in times of change, because it affects all levels in an organization. Similar to Morgan and Hunt (1994) we can assume that trust matters because it can reduce uncertainty among the employees and managers. STI had

successfully conveyed the benefits by being acquired by Solar, and in ensuring their employees that there would not any downsizing. Mutual trust was considered to be more important related to the change process in general, rather than knowledge sharing.

Similar to what Hendriks (1999) stated, some of our informants made it clear that they shared knowledge with others with the expectation of getting knowledge in return, therefore, reciprocity was an important factor. Furthermore, we can assume that although STI was characterized as an open organization, they do not focus much on the transferring or sharing of knowledge as an issue for improving the outcome of the change process. At the same time, findings show that some of the people in STI were more reluctant to share with others, since they are two different companies, merging into one. Moreover, they feel that Solar has different competencies than themselves, and therefore it is not natural to share, which is supported by Empson (2001).

Rewards and penalties were not issues related to the acquisition. Before the acquisition they had a measure which included “the knowledge sharer of the month”. This was perceived as a necessary measure now as there were new people in the organization, however, they had been struggling to find the meaning of this measure earlier. This method for encouraging sharing and transferring of knowledge, was no longer a practice. However, throughout the interviews we got the impression that power was into play, similar to Ipe’s (2003) findings. Even though withholding knowledge from others were not seen as a necessity by some, others perceived it as strategic in holding a better position within the organization.

Organizational culture

Findings show that STI is trying to develop excitement and cooperation in the organizational culture, because as found by Kotter (2007; 2012) this is a critical step in avoiding errors related to a change process. As a measure, STI has for example restructured 3M as an attempt to create better unity and understanding of each other's departments and projects. Moreover, the organizational culture has been influenced by STI’s new goals and vision for the future. According to Kotter (2007; 2012) this refers to the third step, in which the vision helps to direct, align, and inspire actions for the organization.

Similar to Schein's (2006) explanation of organizational culture, STI shares basic assumptions about their reality, which have been learned as a group and employed in everyday problem solving. Furthermore, the culture in STI is formed in informal and formal groups, where informal groups are developed through spontaneous interactions. This creation of groups contributes to random interactions influencing knowledge sharing and learning. On the other hand, the formal part of the culture in STI was developed by entrepreneurs, imposing personal values, goals, visions and assumptions about how things should be in the organization, supported by Schein (2006). Since STI have two entrepreneurs, they have been the foundation of the culture and have set the basis of what is acceptable or not. Furthermore, the culture constitutes the glue in STI, which is found to be of importance when implementing change. The process is dependent on having a culture that is ready for change, thus, the change will not succeed if the culture will not adapt to it (Lorch & McTague, 2016). In STI small changes such as changing the organization name and shifting the logo, negatively affected the culture because of the absence of involvement in the decision making.

We see that all three levels of the culture in STI has been affected by the acquisition. Becoming a listed company has resulted in new structures and processes, which was easily seen when coming in to STI (i.e. level one of Schein's (2006) three-way model). Because the change process also entailed new goals and strategies for the future, we can see that level two of STI's culture have been affected, e.g. new scorecards has been developed, new CRM-systems and 3M has been restructured. All these initiatives are contributing to achieving overall goals. The third level is difficult for us to grasp as it includes employee's values and beliefs of the world. Although they were expressed throughout the interviews, these do not represent the whole organization. The culture will therefore be visible when values and beliefs become observable artefacts, thus, we can say that the culture manifest itself.

As presented through the literature review, the Competing Values Framework consists of four competing values, called culture types (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983). Some of our informants' characterized the culture in STI as *collaborative*, however, the word *individualistic* was also used. Some even used the word *market-oriented*, i.e. *competing*. Such values compete with each other as the values are internally or

externally focused i.e. *collaborative* is internally focused and the *competitive* value is externally focused. Therefore, this creates a tension in the internal culture and can lead to tasks being performed in an effective way, hence goal-oriented, and can cope with the change process that happen which is supported by Cameron and Quinn (2005). In other words, they have to adapt the change to their cultural values in order to improve their chances for a successful change process.

Internal communication

Our findings show that the vision has not been communicated clearly, because the informants in STI did not see the desired synergy that was intended. Existing literature on internal communication in organizational change (e.g. Kitchen & Daly, 2002; Lippitt, 1997), argue that it can increase the understanding of the commitment to change, and reduce tension and resistance to it (Lippitt, 1997). This can relate to step five and six in Kotter's (2007; 2012) model for implementing change.

As elaborated in the literature review, Kotter (2007; 2012) developed an eight-step model that could help change to succeed. Similar to step three in the model, which is also supported by Erlien (2006), we see that internal communication is highly necessary in order to manage a successful change process, and it requires a high level of information, motivation and two-way communication. Furthermore, as stated by existing literature, internal communication is a tool for announcing, explaining and preparing people for change, including both positive and negative affects (Erlien, 2006). This was also supported by the practice in STI. In STI internal communication provides guidelines, understanding and motivation, e.g. in relation to work tasks and working against common goals. Furthermore, it can create mutual trust and reduce the assumptions that could flourish among the employees, and replace fiction with facts.

As stated by Smeltzer (1995) there are several conditions that have to be established in order to give the first official announcement for the change, including rate, timing and other details about the process. Such meetings should also function as arenas for asking questions. It has to involve both facts and feelings as it can contribute to increasing motivation, but it is also an important contributor in creating a positive culture that emphasizes trust and collective workforce. Erlien (2006) also found that time, honesty, openness, compliance and an open communication were all

important factors for building trust and safety. This was supported by our informants in STI, stating that they were satisfied with how the change was communicated. On the other hand, if STI had failed in building a safe environment for their employees, it could be difficult to establish a good communication climate and cope with the change.

Erlie (2006) presents different channels for use in related to internal communication. Which channels is being used, formal or informal, depends on the purpose and the aim of communication. Important information regarding the acquisition and restructuring in STI, were communicated through formal channels, i.e. emails and formal meetings. These were the preferred channels for information regarding change, however, some of the informants demanded that the text should be more clear and concise. Although formal communication channels are most common in conveying formal information, these are often time consuming and restrained, which is also supported by Grennes (1999). Informal channels should were also emphasized because of the focus on facts and feelings, which can increase motivation and safety, and reduce tension among employees in STI. Most of the informants were satisfied with the amount of information they got from their managers, regarding what the change would entail for STI and its employees. Informal conversations were used often in relation to projects, but not the change itself. However, most of the informants were not satisfied with the timing of information.

As we saw during the analysis, the official information meeting regarding the acquisition took place in August. According to Kotter (2007) and Erlie (2006) timing of the communication is crucial in order to create a sense of urgency. Considering the amount of time and effort it can take to create an understanding and motivation among the employees, STI should have communicated their plans earlier in the process. However, it was prominent that since they were going to be a listed company, they didn't have the opportunity to do so.

Table 1: Main findings

<i>The change process</i>	Acquisition between EBS and Solar.
	Continuous change process; emergent, self-organized and evolving.
	Overall positive reactions regarding the change
<i>Knowledge sharing</i>	STI is described as having a sharing culture
	According to findings and own impressions, we have identified a gap between saying and doing, thus, it has a potential for improvement.
	Knowledge sharing and transfer was not facilitated for in a large extent.
	Reciprocity (e.g. mutual trust), power and relationship between colleagues, were prominent factors for knowledge sharing and transfer.
	Conversations between colleagues, colleagues and managers, and between managers, were the most prominent arena for seeking, sharing and transfer of knowledge.
	Knowledge sharing can influence a change process in a positive manner, regarding the enhancement of understanding the change, gain knowledge about it entails and in developing motivation and commitment.
	They found knowledge sharing to be beneficial, however, they struggled to explain why.
	Insecurities and struggles about potential synergy effect, and how to benefit from each other's knowledge and competencies.
<i>Organizational culture</i>	The culture was characterized as open, sharing and informal.
	Perceived as individualistic and competitive, even though they have a cheering-culture.
	Culture is hard to change. Organizational climate, i.e. what is easily seen, has been influenced by the change.
	Employees did not feel involved in the change process, since they felt ignored in relation to suggestions about improvements,
<i>Internal communication</i>	Overall satisfaction to internal communication.
	The change message was communicated through an official meeting, 3M, emails and conversations.
	Under-communication of change vision, resulting in confusion about desired synergies.

5.2 Their relations

In our analysis and through existing literature (e.g. Cummings, 2004; Park & Kim, 2015; Hendriks, 1999; Davenport & Prusak, 1998) we find that knowledge sharing, organizational culture and internal communication can influence each other as well as influencing organizational change. As we have seen from the interviews, there is a higher willingness to share knowledge with colleagues in close relationships. The departments in STI seems to share with each other internally, however, not between departments. If STI facilitate for knowledge sharing and employ it in a proper manner, it can enhance the social capital and facilitate for interactions among the employees, and thereby contribute to a higher possibility for succeeding in the

change process. Knowledge sharing can enhance their social capital, i.e. interpersonal relationships, and will be a valuable resource because it facilitates interactions among the employees (Leana & van Buren, 1999). A result can be that the organizational culture will become more open and positive regarding the sharing and transfer of knowledge.

“People can’t share knowledge if they don’t speak a common language.”
(Davenport & Prusak, 1998, p. 98).

From our analysis, we found that STI’s focus on knowledge sharing was related to their culture. Even though the organization was described as having an open and sharing culture, our findings show otherwise. For instance, we identified a small gap between what is being said and what is done in practice. Reluctance, insecurity, power and reciprocity were barriers for knowledge sharing in STI, and supported by research (e.g. Ipe, 2003; Davenport & Prusak, 1998; Rusly et al., 2014). Similar to Ipe (2003) and Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) we found that underlying factors for knowledge sharing were influenced by STI’s culture, because it creates an environment of norms related to this process. Furthermore, existing research have shown that organizational culture and climate are important components in the enhancement of knowledge sharing (Park & Kim, 2015). Common language between participants, working in same areas or projects, and similar training and experiences make participants understand each other more easily (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). People in STI have a common understanding of goals, values and norms, which makes it easier for them to share and transfer knowledge based on their culture. Considering that STI is a KIF, the employees make up the foundation and glue of the company, proving that knowledge sharing is highly important for both personal and organizational growth. It appears that the importance of organizational culture lies in its ability to have a direct effect on employees' knowledge sharing behavior, as well as an indirect effect through influencing managers' attitudes toward knowledge sharing (Wang & Noe, 2010).

Furthermore, we have seen that there is a depending relationship between the way internal communication occur and the organizational culture in STI. As previously stated, the culture in STI was described as open and informal, which also influence the way they communicate. Most of the communication occurs in the office space,

between cubicles and in the hallways. Even though emails and official meetings were emphasized as formal channels, STI used a personal language and the formal information are often perceived as informal. Furthermore, the internal communication is more advanced based on a larger hierarchy, including several links and making decision-making slow. This was experienced as challenging because the change process is happening fast, therefore, it requires rapid information and communication flow. As found in existing literature, organizational culture often sets the foundation for internal communication, because culture is created through shared communication, in addition to shared understandings about values and norms (Grennes, 1999; Erlie, 2006). Through our analysis we found that the internal communication were not adjusted to the culture in STI, resulting in an confusion about the future direction and synergies between Solar and former EBS.

From our study, we have seen that internal communication is crucial in order to facilitate for knowledge sharing. STI did not have any arenas for the transfer or sharing of knowledge, other than 3M. Existing research show that communication and information systems are contributing factors that are positively related to knowledge sharing (Al-Alawi et al., 2007). Therefore, even though 3M is more of an information and communication channel, it can enhance knowledge sharing because 3M facilitates for knowledge seeking and automatically sharing of knowledge. Furthermore, knowledge sharing will be enhanced when communication networks flows freely, and people can seek and access information easily (Syed-Ikshan & Rowland, 2004). We found support in theory, since our findings shows that most knowledge is transferred and shared through conversations in STI. However, along the lines of e.g. Al-Alawi et al. (2007) and Syed-Ikshan & Rowland (2004), we see that internal communication is highly beneficial in order to share knowledge during the change process in STI, related to the employees' understanding of the acquisition.

Furthermore, we saw that STI did not have any formal communication channels other than email and 3M. This can be perceived as an advantage related to their informal culture, supported by Kitchen (1997) who emphasizes the importance of adjusting the communication to the organization's culture. By using several formal channels, STI could complicate their situation by making the culture and the

internal communication to something that it is not. Because STI did not adjust their communication to their culture, confusion about the change process arose.

At the same time, similar to what was found by Erlie (2006), the internal communication contributed to creating trust, a sense of social community, and group identity. Furthermore, change processes requires two-way communication in order to increase understanding and encourage participants to take part in the change process (Erlie, 2006). However, this was not found in the change process of STI, since most managers did not act on their employees' suggestions for improvement.

5.3 Recommendations

As found in most literature (e.g. Kotter, 2007; 2012; Ford et al., 2008; Kitchen & Daly, 2008) and from our findings, we see that organizational change is complex. Based on our literature review and findings from our study, we provide some suggestions for STI to use. By presenting these, we aim to encourage STI to facilitate more for knowledge sharing, to improve their internal communication related to the change vision, and to creating a culture that can cope with the change process in a better way. Our analysis show that employees (both EBS and Solar) struggled to see a clear vision regarding the acquisition. Thus, STI should focus more on communicating their change message in order to create a mutual understanding of the change, the purpose and what impact it will have. Commitment is highly important in order to succeed.

Furthermore, findings state that STI do not have any official arenas for the transfer or sharing of knowledge, thus, they should facilitate for knowledge sharing to a larger extent than today. This measure could give all employees easy access to knowledge, and provide further development of each and one of the employees. For instance, they should improve their technical infrastructure including technologies for communicating and sharing resources and knowledge (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). In providing such communication and knowledge platforms, assumptions may be replaced with real facts. However, there is still strong need for conversations, thus, STI should create knowledge sharing arenas such as networking, meetings, conferences etc. In order for the managers to facilitate more for knowledge sharing, it is important to build a knowledge culture, thus, make the employees motivated to share (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). Another suggestion

could be that the LEAN-process should involve more employees which could contribute to commitment and a deeper understanding of the change process.

One of the suggestions from STI's own employees, were the use of interdisciplinary teams in order to enhance knowledge sharing and create synergies. People in different departments often hold different knowledge, thus making interdisciplinarity an opportunity for embracing each other and provide new knowledge and insight. The result can be clarity of synergies, and creating a learning environment that provides high extent of the sharing and transfer of knowledge. We got the impression that many of the employees feel somewhat insecure about own competencies, and want additional support and feedback from those they are surrounded. We will also suggest that STI concentrate more on organizational climate related to the change process, rather than culture concerning the difficulty related to changing culture. Our analysis demonstrates that people vary a little in their reaction to the change, and that there are some individual differences in how they perceive the benefit of the acquisition.

As previous research has shown (Schein, 2006), it is important that the organization keep their values if the change process contain acquisition. Concerning the acquisition of EBS, the merging of two cultures may lead to incompatible cultures and resulting in a failing change process. Therefore, it is important to consider organizational culture when implementing change.

5.4 Contributions

The purpose of this thesis has been to get a broader understanding of how knowledge sharing, organizational culture and internal communication influence an organizational change process. We have found extensive literature on organizational change (e.g. Ford et al., 2008; Kotter, 2007; 2012; Armenakis & Harris, 2002), however, as initially mentioned we have not succeeded in finding literature which include the factors that we have investigated. Our theoretical contribution to existing literature is threefold. First, we look at how knowledge sharing occurs in practice, together with underlying factors for why people share knowledge and how it is facilitated for. At the same time, our study provides new insight into the field of knowledge sharing, retrieved from qualitative research. This can give valuable information and help to generate more quantitative studies.

Thirdly, by investigating a knowledge-intensive firm in a Norwegian context, thus, see whether and how these factors influence organizational change, our study can contribute to existing literature. By looking into new factors, our study can function as a valuable contributor in how to manage change processes and which factors to consider, in addition to identifying how practices occur in other countries.

5.5 Limitations

We must acknowledge that this study encompasses several limitations. Considering the wide scope of our study and the thesis' scope, the specific concepts may not have been investigated in a sufficient manner. This is something to be aware of. Furthermore, it is important to raise awareness that any concluding remarks of this thesis will be retrieved from specific context, i.e. STI Services, therefore, this study does not attempt to describe or explain how all change processes expires in practice. Second, our study was performed in Norway, and it is natural to assume that similar processes will be different in other countries as well as industries. Third, considering our small amount of informants we find a limitation related to their representativeness for the organization as a whole. Generalization is also a limitation related to our study, as our use of method often limits the possibility to apply our findings more broadly. Still, our pre project strengthen this as its enable us to generalize our findings internally, however, not externally as it is context dependent. Fourth, concerning that the interviews were conducted at a particular moment there might be some limitations regarding the informant's abilities to reflect on the past, e.g. if we are performing the interviews another day, we might get completely different answers. Thus, our study is a "here and now" picture of the change process and the investigated factors.

5.6 Future research

In order to elaborate and broaden our understanding of change, future research is needed. First, existing literature have ignored to include the relationship between organizational change, knowledge sharing, internal communication and organizational culture. Thus, it is difficult for us to provide a short and definite answer on our research question, because we have not succeeded in finding support in previous research, making us rely mostly on our own findings. Therefore, future research is needed regarding the factors that we investigate in this thesis, before it is possible to draw any conclusions on these findings. However, we believe that our

contribution gives basis for further research, and that much more can be learned about these topics related to organizational change and change management.

Second, it could be interesting to conduct quantitative research and examine the factors that we investigate in this thesis, as mediating factors. This could enhance our understanding of each of the factor's impact on change processes, and whether they are dependent on each other.

Third, our study is not sufficient in generalizing our findings because of its qualitative approach and therefore, context specific in STI and represents the reality in only STI. To make generalization possible, future research should broaden the scope of research, including for example cross-sectional studies for collecting more data on how and why the concepts are influencing change processes. Considering that organizational change, knowledge sharing, organizational culture and internal communication can differ across departments, organizations, industries and countries, it could be interesting to try to identify similarities or differences. Research considering these factors can enhance our understanding of critical factors for organizational change, and clarify how they influence a change process.

5.7 Conclusion

In this thesis, we have examined a change process in a Norwegian consulting firm. The change process is a result of the acquisition of Solar, and EBS becoming STI. In doing so, we have elaborated on knowledge sharing, organizational culture and internal communication as factors for influencing organizational change. Our research question aimed to identify how and why these factors would influence the particular change process. In order to investigate the phenomena of organizational change, we have taken a qualitative approach and conducted depth interviews to get a broader understanding.

It was apparent from our findings that the change process was not complete, and we do not know when it will truly end. Therefore, the change process can be considered as continuous, because it is recent and has not been implemented yet. Furthermore, the change involves the organization as a whole (e.g. restructuring and clarifying roles, and becoming a listed company), and self-organized (i.e. it is distributed by internal leaders and employees).

Overall, we found that knowledge sharing was not practiced as a measure regarding the change, however, it influenced how the STI and Solar could benefit from each other's competencies and resources, and in improving their chances for succeeding in implementing change, i.e. becoming STI. We also found that the organizational culture was open and informal, and that it determined whether the change could be successfully implemented or not. It was highly important to adapt the change to their culture in order to prevent failure. Furthermore, found that internal communication was crucial in communicating the change vision, and developing commitment and motivation among the employees.

Furthermore, we found that knowledge sharing, organizational culture and internal communication are important factors to consider regarding organizational change, and that they do influence each other. Knowledge sharing could enhance interactions between colleagues, and thereby contribute in making the culture more open and positive to share, in addition to provide easier access for information. We found that organizational culture could determine whether the organization shared knowledge or not, as a result of reciprocity, power, or relationships. Moreover, the internal communication was depending on the organizational culture. Finally, internal communication was found to be important in knowledge sharing, because it provided channels, networks and arenas for sharing and transfer of knowledge. It was also a contributor for developing a shared language and understanding of values regarding the change process.

6 References

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Appendices

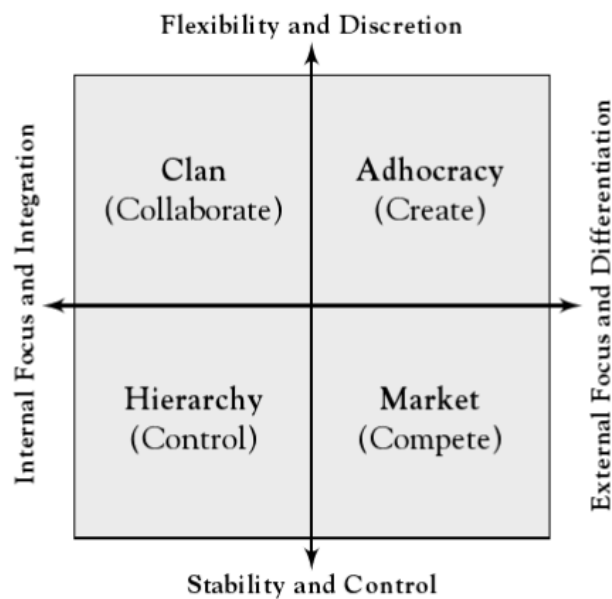
Appendix A

Competing value framework

The competing value framework for assessing organizational culture was analyzed by Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983). As we can see from the model there are two main polarities i.e. internal focus and integration or external focus and differentiation. *Clan* emphasizes an internal and organic focus, whilst *market* emphasizes an external and control focus. *Adhocracy* emphasize an external and organic focus, whilst *hierarchy* emphasizes internal and control values (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

Figure A1: Illustration of the Competing Values Framework

Figure 3.1 The Competing Values Framework



Source: Retrieved from Cameron, K. S., & Quinn, R. E. (2011). *Diagnosing and changing organizational culture*. John Wiley & Sons. Retrieved from <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.library.bi.no/lib/bilibrary/reader.action?docID=706769>

Appendix B

Interview guide - STI

Fase 1: Generell informasjon

Sted/dato:

Intervjuobjekt (nummerert):

Ansvarsområde:

Ansiennitet i organisasjonen:

Underskrevet samtykkeerklæring? Ja/Nei

Fase 2: Introduksjon

Først vil vi takke for at du tar deg tid til å møte oss i dag.

Vi er to studenter fra master i Ledelse og Organisasjonspsykologi ved Handelshøyskolen BI i Oslo. Formålet med intervjuet er for å få en større forståelse for ulike faktorer som kan påvirke endringsprosessen dere nå står overfor.

Intervjuet vil vare cirka 1-1,5 timer. På tross av at vi tar notater underveis, vil vi også ta opp intervjuet på lydbånd for å forhindre at vi kan miste verdifull informasjon. Snakk gjerne med høy og tydelig stemme.

Som nevnt i samtykkeerklæringsskjemaet vil dine svar bli holdt konfidensielle. Det vil si at ingen andre enn oss vil ha tilgang til informasjon om våre kandidater, og vi vil ikke utdele informasjon som kan gjøre at du som informant blir identifisert. Vi vil også legge til at du ikke trenger å svare på spørsmål du ikke er komfortabel med, og du kan avbryte intervjuet dersom du føler det er nødvendig.

Fase 3: Spørsmål relatert til endringsprosessen

Nummer	Spørsmål	Underspørsmål	Bakgrunn
	Intern kommunikasjon og kunnskapsdeling		
1	Beskriv kommunikasjonsklimaet under endringsprosessen.	- Enveis/toveis kommunikasjon - Mellom ledere og ansatte/mellom ansatte	Ønske om å avdekke hvordan informanten opplever kommunikasjonsflyten

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Horisontal/vertikal - Skriftlig/muntlig 	
2	Hvilke kommunikasjonskanaler benyttes for intern kommunikasjon for endringen?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formell/uformell - Hvordan fungerer disse kommunikasjonskanalene? - Hvis du hadde mulighet til å forbedre den interne kommunikasjonen, hvordan ville du ha gått frem? 	Ønske om å avdekke formelle og uformelle informasjonskanaler- og kilder.
3	Hvordan mottar du informasjon i organisasjonen, og fra hvem? Gi eksempler.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Har du tilstrekkelig informasjon tilgjengelig når du trenger det? - Beskriv hvordan du innhenter informasjon? - Hvor lenge i forkant av endringen fikk du vite om den? - Fikk du den i rett tid? - Hvis nei; hvordan opplevde du dette? 	Ønsker å avdekke kilder for informasjon, og tilgjengeligheten rundt dette.
4	Hva er din forståelse av endringen som skjer nå?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nye ledere, flere kolleger, endring av logo - Hva vet du om hva som skal skje? - Hvorfor skjer det? - Når fikk du vite om den? - Kan du beskrive hvilke endringer STI er igjennom nå? (karakteristikk, langsiktig og kortsiktig, tempo) 	Ønsker å avdekke hvordan omstillingen er kommunisert til de ansatte, og informantens opplevelse av dette.
5	Kan du beskrive en situasjon tilknyttet omstillingen dere er inne i der det har oppstått kommunikasjonssvikt eller misforståelser?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hva ble konsekvensene? - Hvordan ble det rettet opp eller ble det rettet opp? 	Ønsker å få eksempler på eventuelle svikt i kommunikasjonen, og om det er forbedringspotensialer.
6	Kan du si litt om åpenheten generelt i STI?		Ønsker hvorvidt organisasjonen er

7	Har du opplevd at det har vært stor åpenhet på arbeidsplassen i forhold til endringen?		transparent, og om det er rom for informasjons- og kunnskapsdeling.
8	Hva skal til for at du deler kunnskap med dine kollegaer, og er dette noe du gjør?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tillit - Arenaer - Vennskap - Felles forståelse 	Ønsker å avdekke hvorvidt informanten ønsker å dele kunnskap, og om dette er praksis.
Organisasjonskultur			
1	Hvordan vil du beskrive STI i forhold til andre arbeidsplasser du har jobbet i, og hva karakteriserer STI?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Konkurransen, resultat, kollektivistisk, - På hvilken måte? - Egenskaper 	Ønsker å avdekke informantens oppfattelse av organisasjonskulturen.
2	Hvordan opplever du å jobbe i STI? Begrunn svaret.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Føler du deg som en STI'er? - Verdier og egne mål 	Ønsker å avdekke identitet og tilhørighet til organisasjonen.
3	Hvordan beskriver du forholdet til dine kolleger?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arbeids/privat - Er de troverdige og ærlige? 	
4	I forbindelse med sammenslåingen med Solar og din opplevelse av omstillingen, har det oppstått ulike konflikter? - Hvordan oppstod de, og hvordan håndteres de?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kan de håndteres bedre? - Gi eksempler 	Ønsker å avdekke hvorvidt organisasjonskulturen påvirkes, og hvordan den håndterer omstillingen.
5	Hva er din forståelse av endringen dere nå er i - og hvilken rolle spiller du i denne sammenhengen?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategier - Visjoner/målsetninger - Grad av involvering 	Ønsker å avdekke hvorvidt informantene har en felles forståelse og

6	Hva skal til for at du blir ytterligere engasjert i endringen?		opplevelse av omstillingsprosessen, samt deres rolle her.
7	Hva er dine forventninger til omstillingen?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Er de redusert/ikke redusert i forkant/etterkant av endringen? - Opplever du dine kolleger og ledere som ærlig i sin kommunikasjon? - Hvordan har den påvirket ditt forhold til ledelsen? 	
8	Hvor langt i endringsprosessen har dere kommet?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hva er de fremtidige planene? - Hva er målet med endringen? 	
9	Synes du det organisasjonen gjør med endringen samsvarer med deres visjoner/verdier		
10	Hva synes du om den nye provisjonsmodellen?		
Ledelse			
1	Hvordan synes du den overordnede ledelsen håndterer omstillingsprosessen?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Hva med din nærmeste leder? - Hvis ulikt: hva er årsaken til at du har annerledes syn på ledelsen som helhet og din nærmeste leder? 	Ønsker å avdekke ledernes rolle i omstillingsprosessen, samt forventninger til og opplevelse av ledelsen.
2	Hvilken rolle spiller ledelsen i din arbeidshverdag, og hvordan forholder du deg til de?		
3	Hvordan er forholdet til dine kolleger og til din leder?		
4	Hvordan fasiliterer STI for kunnskapsdeling?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hvilke kunnskapsdelingsarenaer har dere? (eks. 3M, intranett, konferanser osv.) - Opplever du at det 	Ønsker å avdekke informantens inntrykk av samspillet mellom lederne og ansatte

		fokuseres på kunnskapsdeling?	
	Andre kommentarer		
1	Er det andre ting du ønsker å legge til?		

Fase 4: Avslutning

Vi vil nå analysere og transkribere informasjonen vi har samlet, dette regner vi med at vil ta 1 til 2 måneder.

Tusen takk for tiden din.

Du får ha en fortsatt fin dag.

Appendix C

Questionnaire from pre project

This is a presentation of our findings in the quantitative studies from the pre project in STI. The participants could rate the claims from 0-100 points, where 0 was the lowest score and 100 points was the highest score.

Table C1: Culture 1 – rated from 0-100 points

Kultur 1									
	Organisasjonen verdsetter nytenking, ideer og nye måter å gjøre ting på - folk er villig til å ta en sjanse og ta risikoer	Organisasjonen arbeider mot et overordnet felles mål	Organisasjonen er svært resultatorientert, og vil få jobben gjort raskt	Organisasjonen verdsetter lojalitet og gjensidig tillit	Organisasjonen griper fatt i konflikter - de feies ikke under teppet	Organisasjonen vektlegger måloppnåelse og prestasjoner hos de ansatte	Organisasjonen demnerer suksess på grunnlag av menneskelige ressurser, teamarbeid, ansattes forpliktelse og hensyn overfor folk		TOTALT
1	80	60	100	80	60	100	60	77,14	
2	80	40	100	60	60	100	80	74,29	
3	60	40	100	40	60	80	20	57,14	
4	60	80	60	80	80	80	80	74,29	
5	80	80	80	80	80	80	60	77,14	
6	80	80	80	100	100	100	100	91,43	
7	80	80	80	100	100	100	80	88,57	
8	100	80	100	80	40	100	80	82,86	
9	80	80	100	100	60	80	80	82,86	
10	80	60	80	40	60	60	60	62,86	
11	80	100	100	100	80	80	100	91,43	
12	100	80	80	100	60	100	80	85,71	
13	60	60	80	80	80	80	80	74,29	
14	100	100	100	100	80	100	80	94,29	
15	100	80	80	80	60	80	80	80,00	
16	80	60	100	40	40	100	20	62,86	
17	80	100	100	60	60	80	60	77,14	
18	60	60	100	40	40	100	40	62,86	
19	80	100	100	100	100	100	60	91,43	
20	80	100	40	80	60	60	60	68,57	
21	60	60	100	40	40	100	40	62,86	
22	80	60	20	60	80	80	80	65,71	
23	60	80	80	100	60	60	80	74,29	
24	60	40	100	80	60	40	100	68,57	
25	60	80	100	100	80	100	80	85,71	
26	100	100	80	80	80	80	60	82,86	
27	40	80	80	80	80	80	80	74,29	
28	80	80	80	80	60	80	80	77,14	
29	100	80	80	100	80	100	60	85,71	
30	80	40	40	80	60	100	80	68,57	
31	40	60	40	40	40	60	80	51,43	
32	60	80	100	100	80	100	80	85,71	
33	80	80	80	100	60	80	100	82,86	
34	80	100	80	100	80	100	80	88,57	
35	80	80	100	80	80	100	80	85,71	
36	80	100	100	100	80	100	100	94,29	
Totalsum	76,11	75,56	83,89	79,44	68,33	86,67	72,78	77,54	

Table C2: Culture 2 rated from points 0-100 points.

Kultur 2							TOTALT
	Jeg opplever tilhørighet til STI som gjør meg mer engasjert i mitt arbeid	Jeg opplever støtte av mine kolleger når jeg kommer med nye innspill	Jeg er trygg på mine arbeidsoppgaver knyttet til min stilling	Jeg innehar nødvendig kompetanse for å utføre mine arbeidsoppgaver på en god måte	Jeg er inkludert i avgjørelser som påvirker oppgavene jeg skal utføre		
1	100	80	100	80	100	92,00	
2	100	100	80	60	80	84,00	
3	40	60	80	80	80	68,00	
4	100	80	80	80	100	88,00	
5	60	80	80	100	80	80,00	
6	100	100	100	100	80	96,00	
7	60	80	80	80	80	76,00	
8	80	80	80	80	40	72,00	
9	80	80	80	100	60	80,00	
10	60	60	100	100	60	76,00	
11	100	80	80	100	80	88,00	
12	100	80	80	100	80	88,00	
13	80	80	80	80	80	80,00	
14	80	80	100	100	80	88,00	
15	80	60	100	80	60	76,00	
16	80	80	80	80	80	80,00	
17	80	80	80	80	80	80,00	
18	60	80	60	60	60	64,00	
19	80	100	60	60	100	80,00	
20	100	80	100	100	80	92,00	
21	60	60	40	40	40	48,00	
22	100	80	80	80	80	84,00	
23	100	80	60	60	100	80,00	
24	20	60	80	80	40	56,00	
25	60	80	100	100	60	80,00	
26	80	40	80	80	0	56,00	
27	60	60	80	80	20	60,00	
28	100	60	100	80	60	80,00	
29	80	40	80	80	60	68,00	
30	80	80	60	60	100	76,00	
31	100	80	100	100	20	80,00	
32	100	80	100	100	100	96,00	
33	100	100	100	80	100	96,00	
34	100	100	100	80	100	96,00	
35	80	100	100	80	80	88,00	
36	60	60	60	40	80	60,00	
Totalsum	80,56	76,67	83,33	81,11	71,67	78,67	

Table C3: Internal communication rated from 0-100 points

Kommunikasjon 1										TOTALT
	Jeg har tilgang til nødvendig informasjon når jeg trenger det	Jeg søker aktivt etter ny kunnskap internt i organisasjonen	STI fasiliteter for deling av kunnskap	Jeg er innforlyst med hva som skjer i organisasjonen til enhver tid	Det er kort avstand mellom toppen og bunnen i organisasjonen	Jeg tar ansvar for å informere andre hvis det er nødvendig	Jeg mottar informasjon på forhånd av at ting skjer	Jeg mottar tilbakemeldinger fra ledere og kolleger	Jeg har mulighet til å gi tilbakemelding til personen jeg rapporterer	
1	80	80	80	80	100	100	60	100	100	86,67
2	60	80	80	60	80	60	60	40	60	64,44
3	40	80	60	80	80	60	40	100	100	68,89
4	60	60	80	80	100	100	80	100	100	84,44
5	100	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	82,22
6	80	100	100	100	100	100	80	100	100	95,56
7	80	80	100	80	60	80	60	80	100	80,00
8	60	80	80	60	100	80	60	80	80	75,56
9	80	80	100	60	100	100	60	100	100	86,67
10	60	80	60	60	20	100	40	40	60	57,78
11	80	80	80	80	100	80	80	80	100	84,44
12	100	60	40	60	80	60	80	80	100	73,33
13	60	60	60	60	80	80	60	80	80	68,89
14	80	80	100	80	100	100	80	100	100	91,11
15	60	80	60	60	80	100	60	80	80	73,33
16	80	80	40	20	80	80	60	80	100	68,89
17	60	60	100	40	100	60	60	80	100	73,33
18	60	60	60	40	40	80	60	60	60	57,78
19	80	60	100	100	100	100	80	100	100	91,11
20	40	100	60	60	80	100	60	80	100	75,56
21	60	100	60	40	80	60	40	40	60	60,00
22	60	100	80	60	100	100	60	80	100	82,22
23	100	100	80	80	100	100	100	100	100	95,56
24	40	20	40	0	60	40	60	40	100	44,44
25	60	60	60	40	60	80	80	60	100	66,67
26	80	60	100	80	20	80	80	100	100	77,78
27	80	80	80	60	40	60	80	60	80	68,89
28	80	80	60	60	60	100	40	60	80	68,89
29	60	100	100	60	100	80	60	60	100	80,00
30	60	100	80	80	80	80	100	80	100	84,44
31	40	60	40	20	40	60	20	40	60	42,22
32	80	80	80	60	80	100	60	80	100	80,00
33	80	100	100	60	80	100	40	100	100	84,44
34	100	80	100	100	100	100	100	80	100	95,56
35	80	60	80	80	100	100	80	100	100	86,67
36	80	80	100	80	100	100	100	100	100	93,33
Totalsum	76,56	77,22	76,67	63,89	79,44	84,44	66,67	77,78	91,11	76,42

Table C4: Communication 2 rated from 1-100 points

Kommunikasjon 2								
	Det er vanlig å dele erfaringer og kunnskap i STI	Mine kolleger er nyttige kilder for kunnskap	Ting sies tydelig og direkte slik at alle vet hva som kreves av dem	Jeg er åpen for ny kunnska	Det er samsvar mellom ord og handling	Uformell informasjon (eks. sosialisering i kantinen) er nødvendig for å holde seg oppdatert	Jeg har mulighet til å kommunisere med hvem jeg vil for å få jobben gjort	TOTALT
1	80	100	60	80	60	60	80	74,29
2	60	100	60	100	60	60	80	74,29
3	60	80	80	60	60	20	80	62,86
4	100	100	80	100	60	80	80	85,71
5	80	60	80	80	80	60	100	77,14
6	100	100	80	100	100	60	100	91,43
7	100	100	100	100	80	60	80	88,57
8	80	100	60	80	60	60	80	74,29
9	80	100	60	100	80	80	100	85,71
10	60	80	40	100	60	20	80	62,86
11	80	100	80	100	80	80	100	88,57
12	80	100	80	100	60	40	100	80,00
13	80	80	60	80	80	80	80	77,14
14	80	80	80	100	60	60	100	80,00
15	80	80	60	100	80	80	100	82,86
16	80	100	60	80	40	20	80	65,71
17	80	100	80	100	60	80	100	85,71
18	60	80	60	100	40	80	80	71,43
19	60	100	100	100	80	0	80	74,29
20	100	100	80	100	60	40	80	80,00
21	100	100	60	100	40	80	100	82,86
22	80	80	80	100	80	60	80	80,00
23	80	100	100	100	60	100	100	91,43
24	60	100	60	100	60	100	100	82,86
25	100	100	60	100	60	100	100	88,57
26	60	60	100	40	100	20	60	62,86
27	80	80	60	100	80	60	100	80,00
28	60	80	60	100	80	60	80	74,29
29	100	60	60	100	100	40	100	80,00
30	20	40	60	100	80	60	100	65,71
31	40	20	40	60	60	40	80	48,57
32	80	100	80	100	80	80	80	85,71
33	100	100	20	100	40	20	100	68,57
34	80	100	100	100	100	80	100	94,29
35	100	100	80	100	80	60	100	88,57
36	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100,00
Totalt	78,33	87,78	71,11	93,33	70,56	66,56	90,00	78,81

Appendix D

Consent form sent to informants in STI

Skjema for samtykkeerklæring

Du er spurt om å ta del i en studie om kunnskapsdeling og organisasjonsendring i Scandinavian Technology Institute (STI). Studien blir utført i regi av masterstudiet ved Institutt for Ledelse og Organisasjonspsykologi, Handelshøyskolen BI. De personer som er ansvarlige for intervjuet er følgende:

- Maria Bø Rognan: maria.bo.rognan@gmail.com
- Marthe Skogly: marthel.skogly@gmail.com

Frivillig deltakelse:

Din deltakelse er frivillig. Du behøver ikke å dele informasjon som du ikke ønsker å dele, eller besvare spørsmål som du ikke ønsker å besvare. Du kan når som helst velge å avbryte intervjuet eller trekke tilbake informasjon gitt under intervjuet. For å samle mest mulig informasjon vil vi benytte oss av lydopptaker på mobiltelefon, og samtidig notere ned informasjon vedrørende våre observasjoner og din besvarelse. Når studien er avsluttet vil alle notater, besvarelser, og lydopptak relatert til studien blir slettet.

Anonymitet:

Våre observasjoner og din besvarelse vil bli holdt konfidensiell av intervjuer 1 og 2, og ingen andre vil ha tilgang til informasjon som avgis. Det vil ikke være noen direkte link mellom informasjonen du avgir og din identitet. Dersom oppgaven gir et godt resultat, vil den være tilgjengelig for øvrige personer i en database som Handelshøyskolen BI besitter, samt en original utgave ved deres bibliotek. Dersom oppgaven merkes "konfidensiell" vil den ikke være tilgjengelig for andre enn den aktuelle bedriften og forfatterne av oppgaven.

Samtykke:

Jeg har lest og forstått informasjonen over, og gir mitt samtykke til å delta i intervjuet og at informasjon jeg avgir kan benyttes i denne studien.

.... Jeg samtykker i at min rolle i STI kan identifiseres. Mitt fulle navn vil ikke bli oppgitt. Jeg samtykker i at jeg skal omtales som "informant 1-10" ved bruk av min besvarelse i studien.

Deltaker:

.....

Dato

.....

Navn

.....

Signatur

Intervjuer 1:

.....

Dato

.....

Navn

.....

Signatur

Intervjuer 2:

.....

Dato

.....

Navn

.....

Signatur

Appendix E

Receipt from the Data Protection Official for Research

This is the approval to collect data regarding the thesis, received from Norwegian Centre for Research Data.



Tom Rosendahl
 Institutt for ledelse og organisasjon Handelshøyskolen BI
 Nydalsveien 42
 0442 OSLO

Vår dato: 04.04.2017

Vår ref: 53439 / 3 / BGH

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 06.03.2017. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

<i>53439</i>	<i>Kunnskapsdeling og andre faktorer påvirkning på organisasjonsendringer - en studie i norsk kontekst.</i>
<i>Behandlingsansvarlig</i>	<i>Handelshøyskolen BI, ved institusjonens øverste leder</i>
<i>Daglig ansvarlig</i>	<i>Tom Rosendahl</i>
<i>Student</i>	<i>Marthe Skogly</i>

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i personopplysningsloven.

Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvernombud/meld_prosjekt/meld_endringer.html. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, <http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt>.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 01.07.2017, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Kjersti Haugstvedt

Belinda Gloppen Helle

Kontaktperson: Belinda Gloppen Helle tlf: 55 58 28 74

Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.

NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS	Harald Hørlagres gate 29	Tel: +47-55 58 21 17	nsd@nsd.no	Org.nr. 985 321 884
NSD – Norwegian Centre for Research Data	NO-5007 Bergen, NORWAY	Faks: +47-55 58 96 50	www.nsd.no	