

VOICES IN TRANSITION

A qualitative case study examining the relationship between perceptions of change communication and employee resistance to change throughout the implementation of the 2015 police reform

AUGUST LIDÉN

PHILIP ERIK BÖRJESSON

Bachelor Thesis

Stockholm School of Economics

2024



Abstract

The Swedish police reform 2015 has been considered a failed change attempt by many past researchers, pointing out a widespread resistance to change among employees. Most scholars argue that this was due to inappropriate structural changes imposed by the change agents. This thesis employs a qualitative retrospective study to assess what role change communication had on employee's resistance to change before, during and after implementing the police reform in 2015. The sample includes 10 respondents from different parts of the organization. In order to understand and analyze the collected data this study develops two tentative models by applying compiled theory, surrounding communication and trust as well uncertainty, on Lewin's three-step model of change. By including various perspectives that relate to change communication and resistance to change, the study deepens the understanding of the factors influencing this relationship. The study reveals that change communication had a significant role on employees' resistance to change before, during and after implementing the police reform in 2015 and this significant effect was mediated by trust and uncertainty. The implications derived from the study therefore suggest that further research examines specific communicative strategies for building trust and reducing uncertainty and assess how other contextual factors influence the studied relationship.

Keywords

Police, Change, Resistance, Communication, Perceptions

Authors

August Lidén (25437)

Philip Erik Börjesson (25504)

Supervisor

Filip Wijkström, Supervisor Associate, Department of Management and Organization

Examiner

Laurence Romani, Associate Professor, Department of Management and Organization

Bachelor Thesis

Bachelor Program in Business and Economics

Stockholm School of Economics

© August Lidén and Philip Erik Börjesson, 2024

Acknowledgements

We extend our deepest gratitude to all the participants of this study who generously shared their stories, insights and ultimately made this study possible. We would also like to thank our course director, Laurence Romani, for her continual guidance and expertise. We also owe a debt of gratitude to our supervisor, Filip Wijkström, and our supervisory group, whose invaluable feedback guided us all the way to the end.

We would also like to thank Stockholm School of Economics for providing us with a stimulating educational environment and for bringing us two together.

August & Philip

Stockholm, May 13th

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	5
1. Introduction	7
1.1 Background	7
1.2 Research Gap	8
1.3 Aim and Research Question	8
1.4 Main Focus and Delimitation	9
2. Literature Review	10
2.1 Implementation Committee	10
2.2 Perceptions of the 2015 Reform	10
2.3 Resistance to Change	11
2.4 Importance of Trust during Organizational Change	12
2.5 The Role of Communication during Organizational Change	13
2.6 Change Communication during the 2015 Reform	13
2.7 Uncertainty during Organizational Change	14
3. Theoretical Framework	15
3.1 Stages of Change	15
3.2 Developing a Tentative Model on Trust and Communication	17
3.2.1 The Effect of Perceived Communication on Trust	17
3.2.2 The Effect of Trust on Perceived Communication	18
3.3 The Impact of Uncertainty on the Link Between Communication and Resistance	19
3.4 Theory Discussion	20
4. Methodology	21
4.1 Research Approach	21
4.1.1 Research Strategy	21
4.1.2 Research Design	21
4.2 Data Collection	22
4.2.1 Sample Selection	22
4.3 Interview Process	23
4.4 Data Analysis	23
5. Empirics	26
5.1 Resistance to Change	26
5.1.1 Trust	26
5.1.2 Perceived Communication	28
5.1.3 Uncertainty	29
6. Analysis	31
6.1 Resistance to Change	31
6.1.1. Trust	31
6.1.2 Perceived Communication	33
6.1.3 Uncertainty	34
7. Discussion and Conclusion	37
7.1 Answer to Research Question	37

7.1.1 Contributions	38
7.1.2 Implications	38
7.1.3 Discussion of Limitations	39
7.1.4 Recommendations for Future Research	39
7.2 Conclusion	40
References	41
Academic Journals and Literature	41
Digital Sources	48
Appendices	50
Appendix 1. Email to Prospective Interview Subjects	50
Appendix 2. Information About the Interviews	51
Appendix 3. Interview Guide for Police Employees, Translated to English	52
Appendix 4. Overview of respondents (Swedish Version)	54

Executive Summary

This study investigates the critical role of perceived communication during organizational change on employee resistance before, during, and after the implementation of the 2015 Swedish police reform through a retrospective case study. The study conducted semi-structured interviews with 10 respondents across the organization. This data was later analyzed through two tentative models based on communication, trust, and uncertainty. Given the widespread recognition of this reform as a substantial organizational change, being one of the biggest governmental reorganizations in Swedish history, as well as having received widespread criticism it provides an ideal case study to explore the dynamics of resistance to change.

The findings of this study reveal that the manner in which change is communicated significantly impacts attitudes to change, either through creating resistance or through building positive perceptions. When communication lacks clarity, consistency, such as with keeping promises, and fails to engage those affected by the suggested change, widespread dissatisfaction and opposition may follow. This resistance may not always be outspoken but can manifest itself in a number of ways. For instance, employees may remain passive throughout implementation, revert to old ways of working, or inhibit silent feelings of frustration, anger or anxiety rather than actively opposing the change. As a result of this, the authors point to the importance of continuously measuring the feelings and attitudes among employees as they may not be apparent but instead take more subtle forms. If this is not adhered to it could lead to a discrepancy between the change agents and the change recipients about where they perceive to be in terms of readiness and acceptance within the change process. Such a discrepancy and lack of insight of employees' attitudes could pose a risk of change agents failing to take measures against restraining forces and adhering to employee needs, which could fuel resistance even further. These needs could include additional information and support functions that are necessary for employees to progress in the change process.

This study further identifies the importance of continuous and coherent communication when moving through different steps in a change process. The authors found that disseminating information throughout the planning process is not enough if the communication ceases to exist when the proposed changes are to be implemented in practice. This step includes

employees having to adapt to new practices and without communication and assistance for employees during that stressful point in time the organization risks reverting to old ways of working. Coherent communication is equally important, where effective communication strategies could include setting realistic expectations and presenting the change process as manageable, as this can help prepare employees for transition. However, failing to fulfill these communicated expectations can lead to employee resistance, as the actual experience may not align with the initial promises, thereby undermining the change process.

Furthermore, it is found that trust and uncertainty take on a mediating role in the relationship between perceived communication and resistance to change. This means that the way in which change agents communicate change can and will impact the uncertainty experienced and the trust employees have for these agents, which in turn influence employee attitudes to the change. These findings serve as important implications for managers, highlighting that the success of change initiatives can be boosted by focusing on transparent, consistent and inclusive communication strategies, as this would help in building support and acceptance of the change. In line with this, organizations might consider developing formal policies that standardize how changes are communicated, including stipulating requirements for transparency, regular updates, and feedback mechanisms, ensuring that all employees receive consistent and clear communication. This could include the use of clear feedback channels during change where employee concerns and suggestions are heard and addressed, enabling continuous refinement of the change process based on real-time input. Overall this could significantly reduce resistance and uncertainty, fostering a more engaged and responsive organizational environment.

Lastly, this study found a significant difference between one-way information and two-way communication in reducing uncertainty and consequently resistance to change. It was found that simply distributing change related information is not enough to reduce uncertainty as employees need to actively engage with it and comprehend the available information, the latter of which demands that communications is perceived as adequate in quality. Hence, the authors suggest that change agents should employ two-way communication strategies, fostering meaningful dialogue to ensure that information has been absorbed and understood, reducing uncertainty and ultimately resistance among employees.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

It is estimated that over 60% of all organizational change programs fail to achieve their intended results (Burnes, 2009). Numerous factors contribute to this high rate of failure, including organizational culture, the timing of change efforts, and the effectiveness of change agents (Bennebroek Gravenhorst et al., 2003). It is also widely acknowledged that, during a reorganization, motivation is often lacking. This frequently results in resistance to change, which will affect the outcome of the reorganization. Therefore, the attitudes of employees towards the change are essential for the success of any reorganization effort (Armenakis et al., 1999).

Effective communication is another paramount factor for the successful implementation of organizational change (DiFonzo & Bordia, 1998; Lewis & Seibold, 1998; Bartunek et al. 1999; Lewis, 1999). Mismanaged communication during change processes often leads to the spread of rumors and resistance, amplifying negative perceptions of the change (DiFonzo & Bordia, 1998; Smelzer, 1991). Additionally, Robertson et al. (1993) emphasize the critical role of communication in organizational change, noting that the success of change efforts depends on effectively altering individual employee behaviors. In other words, effective communication is vital for explaining the change's nature and rationale to employees, making it a central component of change strategies.

In 2015, the Swedish Police underwent a major reform to centralize its structure, aiming to enhance organizational efficiency (Ivarsson Westerberg, 2020). This reform was spearheaded by an implementation committee (Genomförandekommittén) and more specifically sought to eliminate the obstacles that previously existed in meeting the government's demands for higher quality, increased cost-effectiveness, greater flexibility, and significantly improved operational results (Statskontoret, 2018).

The reform met widespread criticism, leading to an evaluation by Statskontoret. Their assessment described several shortcomings, in essence portraying the reform as falling short of its pre-established goals due to discrepancies between directives and operational realities, miscalculations, and internal resistance to change (Statskontoret, 2018).

Employee dissatisfaction was noted as employees and union representatives were not adequately involved or communicated with during the development of changes, leading to extensive criticism (Ivarsson Westerberg, 2020). Beyond noting this, little research has been done on how the communication aspect was used to prepare employees, build positive perceptions and mitigate resistance to change. A survey conducted on the Swedish Police Authority found that only 15% of employees felt that managers effectively explained the change process's impact on the police force, and 27% felt managers clearly communicated its implications for their personal work group. Additionally, only 54% of managers believed they were well-informed enough to brief their teams about the changes (Demoskop, 2016). With this background acting as a foundation, this study aims to further explore what role change communication had in shaping attitudes towards the 2015 reform.

1.2 Research Gap

Previous studies have examined the impacts, deficiencies, reasons, and to some extent, attitudes toward the 2015 police reform (Ivarsson Westerberg, 2020; Haake et al., 2015; Statskontoret, 2018; Eklund & Landström, 2019). However, these studies only briefly address communication, an aspect criticized by employees throughout all levels of the organization (Demoskop, 2016), suggesting a need for further exploration in this area.

Research has repeatedly shown that effective communication leads to several beneficial outcomes for employees, including enhanced trust (Men et al., 2020; Rawlins, 2008), as well as stronger relationships between employees and organizations (Men & Stacks, 2014). Despite these findings, the role of communication in driving organizational change requires further research (Yue et al., 2019). Moreover, the potential of organizational resources like internal communication and leadership in building trust among employees, especially during periods of change, remains underexplored (Yue et al., 2019).

1.3 Aim and Research Question

The purpose of this study is to contribute to and strengthen the research on change communication and how it shapes employee attitudes towards organizational change, using the 2015 Swedish police reform as a case study. Bordia et al. (2004) emphasize the

importance of effective change communication in promoting openness and positive attitudes towards change and state that it is the perceived quality of the information that shapes employees' evaluation of the change. Therefore the authors of this study aim to understand employee perceptions of the change communication during the 2015 reform and assess how that in turn influenced resistance to change among employees. To achieve this aim, this paper will answer the following research question:

What role did change communication have on employees' resistance to change before, during and after implementing the 2015 police reform?

1.4 Main Focus and Delimitation

This study is limited to examining employee perceptions of the change communication made by the implementation committee leading up to, during and after the implementation of the Swedish 2015 police reform. Hence, this study will be limited to one specific case study. By focusing on perceptions of the change communication this study aims to uncover how the change communication efforts made by the implementation committee were perceived rather than their expressed intentions. The perceptions of the change communication will be collected from employees that were employed within the Swedish Police Authority before, during and after the reorganization. The included respondents will vary in positions and departments. This diverse inclusion of participants will aim at increasing the understanding of and to identify the range of the change communication throughout different parts of the organization. This also contributes to the diversity of the data collection and helps to identify patterns, similarities and differences in perceptions across the organization, facilitating the identification of factors that drive perceptions. This study will not explore the components of the reform in depth, since the aim is not to analyze the structure of the change itself, but to understand the impact of communication on perceptions of the change. The research question also excludes an analysis concerning the reasons behind the reform, and whether the reorganization is considered successful or not.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Implementation Committee

In December 2012 the Swedish government decided that the Swedish Police were to be reorganized on the 1st of January 2015. At the same point in time the government appointed the so-called implementation committee, knitted together by officials and external experts, who were responsible for designing the new organization (Ivarsson Westerberg, 2020). Beyond designing the actual structure of the reorganization, the implementation committee was occupied with setting up concrete goals to be achieved through the reform (Statskontoret, 2018).

From the outset, the implementation committee pledged to follow the precautionary principle (försiktighetsprincipen) throughout the change process, a guideline promoted by the former attorney general. This principle refers to the knowledge that large-scale changes within organizations often lead to operational disruptions where efforts are at the expense of core operations that are not in need of change (Ivarsson Westerberg, 2020).

2.2 Perceptions of the 2015 Reform

The 2015 reform met widespread resistance shown by police employees quitting their jobs, various protests and employees refusing to adopt decided changes (Ivarsson Westerberg, 2020). The Police Union was initially positive towards the change and collaborated closely with the implementation committee. However, as the change process continued their stance gradually shifted and several disagreements between the two took place. In 2015 the police union sued the government in labor court for having infringed on Medbestämmandelagen, a law whose purpose is to increase participation and influence for employees (Ivarsson Westerberg, 2020).

Many individual employees voiced their resistance through channels such as interviews and articles in newspapers, open letters and social media. One notable comment in the media came from a police officer who declared that all well-functioning teams had been dissolved, and that nothing new had been built (Ivarsson Westerberg, 2020). Ivarsson Westerberg (2020)

further states that the organization regressed to old ways of working and failed to adapt to the new changes, showcasing another sign of resistance.

Statskontoret (2018) identifies several reasons for why the reorganization goals were only partially met. Firstly, the implementation proved more challenging than expected, with employee resistance and low trust complicating the process. Secondly, the lack of clear impact analysis during planning and implementation stages, coupled with inconsistent initial communication efforts, also hindered progress.

2.3 Resistance to Change

Managing resistance to change is crucial in today's dynamic organizational settings. Deeply embedded in organizational development, resistance has been extensively studied, significantly affecting the success or failure of change initiatives (Warrick 2023).

Coch & French (1948) emphasized the pivotal role of participation in managing change. Their research highlighted that resistance often stems from environmental or contextual settings, such as the lack of participation, rather than just individual characteristics. This aligns with Lewin's field theory, which posits that behavior is a function of both the person and their environment (Lewin, 1941). Schmuck & Miles (1971) continued the research, determining that the extent of employee participation in a change initiative correlates with the emotional effect of the change on the individuals involved. Oreg et al. (2011) support this view stating that change recipients who experience high levels of participation indicate higher readiness and acceptance of change, evaluate change as less stressful and show support for change.

Inappropriate strategies for addressing resistance can harm morale, escalate absenteeism and turnover (Cutcher, 2009; Lawrence, 2015; Metz, 2021). Warrick (2023) expands on this by asserting that perceptions of resistance are significantly impacted by how resistance is managed. Resistance, when managed effectively, can provide valuable feedback and inform the change process, while mismanagement can lead to wasted resources, reduced productivity, and loss of confidence in leadership. Furthermore, Warrick (2023) notes that

resistance to change is multifaceted, with personal, organizational, and change-agent-related factors all playing contributory roles.

While scholars have explored various frameworks for understanding resistance to change, contemporary perspectives emphasize its complexity as a multidimensional construct. Specifically, Oreg (2006) articulates resistance to change as encompassing three interrelated dimensions: affective, behavioral, and cognitive. He describes the affective dimension as the emotional responses to change, such as feelings, anxiety or anger. The behavioral dimension refers to the actions or intended actions that express opposition to change, ranging from passive resistance to active sabotage. Lastly, the cognitive dimension involves negative beliefs or perceptions about change, including doubts about its necessity or potential benefits. This holistic view underscores the complex nature of resistance, highlighting how feelings, behaviors, and thoughts collectively shape an individual's response to organizational change.

While the resistance of change recipients and strategies to manage it have been extensively explored, the significant impact of change agents and their communication is equally crucial (Armenakis et al., 1993, 1999; Dent & Goldberg, 1999; Klonek et al., 2014; Oreg & Sverdlik, 2011). Research indicates that the effectiveness of change agents can significantly affect resistance and change outcomes, with their reputation and communication methods being pivotal (Klonek et al., 2014; Oreg & Sverdlik, 2011). It is further suggested that effective agents keep their promises, honestly communicate reasons behind the change and internalize feedback and resistance (Klonek et al., 2014; Oreg & Sverdlik, 2011).

2.4 Importance of Trust during Organizational Change

There has been an extensive amount of studies made on organizational trust (Six & Nooteboom, 2003; Möllering, 2006; Schoorman et al., 2007). Sørensen et al. (2011) contend that within an organization, trust facilitates successful change while distrust impedes it. Furthermore, Kotter & Schlesinger (1979) identified lack of trust within an organization as a key reason for employee resistance, emphasizing that trust is crucial for employees to feel confident in management's actions during major changes. Shah (2014) further underscores the role of trust, arguing that developing a high level of trust among employees within an organization is a strong catalyst to develop positive attitudes and behaviors towards change.

In a similar manner, adopting a trust-based approach can also effectively diminish resistance from employees and accelerate the success of change processes within the organization (Shah, 2014).

2.5 The Role of Communication during Organizational Change

There is a mutual agreement among researchers that communication, or the provision of information, is a crucial element of successful implementation plans (Schweiger & Denisi, 1991), where Lewis & Seibold (1998) explain that implementation failure is primarily due to lack of communication. Despite this recognition, management often fails to provide adequate information to employees during organizational change (Smeltzer, 1991), leading to uncertainty and information-seeking behaviors among employees. However, simply providing information may not be enough to reduce employee uncertainty; instead, it is the perceived quality of the information that shapes employees' evaluation of change (Bordia et al., 2004). Goodman & Dean (1982) further clarify that significant change hinges on shifts in members' behaviors, which are heavily influenced by how information is communicated.

Moreover, Schulz-Knappe et al. (2019) emphasize that transparency, consistency, and inclusivity are key to enhancing perceived quality and effectiveness of communication during change processes, reducing uncertainty, and mitigating resistance. Involvement can transform passive receivers of information into active participants, fostering a more supportive attitude towards the change. Morgan & Zeffane (2003) and Zainab et al. (2020) further state that transparency and encouraging behavior from leaders enhance employee trust and acceptance of change.

2.6 Change Communication during the 2015 Reform

Change communication involves informing and engaging employees within an organization during periods of change. The implementation committee spearheaded communication efforts for the 2015 reform, employing various mediums such as movies, texts, slideshows, and posters. Newsletters were published biweekly on both the Police's internal website and the committee's web-platform. According to the committee's summary statement, 179 newsletters and 44 short movies were released regarding the reorganization between March 2013 and

January 2015. The implementation committee stated that transparency was crucial and hence made every important decision public by publishing them on their website. Ivarsson Westerberg (2020) argues that although the change communication was objectively transparent, recipients of the information must still actively participate in it, which was not always the case. Furthermore, a disconnect between the communication, which primarily focused on the envisioned future of the Police Authority post-reorganization, and the guidance needed to achieve these goals was identified. More specifically, it was mentioned that there was an absence of a master plan detailing the transition from the current state to the desired future state (Statskontoret, 2016).

Ivarsson Westerberg (2020) also mentioned that the work that had been done by the implementation committee was only preparatory and when the implementation was rolled out in January 2015 their work and communication ceased to exist, something Statskontoret (2016) also describes.

2.7 Uncertainty during Organizational Change

Research on organizational change has shown that uncertainty frequently arises as a significant consequence for employees (Ashford, 1988; Schweiger & Denisi, 1991). Specifically, this uncertainty typically stems from not understanding the underlying reasons for the change, the specifics of its implementation and the anticipated outcomes (Jackson et al., 1987). Research indicates that employees may experience uncertainty surrounding the security of their position together with future roles and responsibilities. Because of this, organizational change becomes a significant stressor in which employees strive to predict and understand events to reduce their uncertainty (Bordia et al., 2004).

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Stages of Change

Several authors divide change management into stages, where Kotter (1996) divided the leading of change into an 8-step process and Hiatt (2003) divided successful change into 5 milestones. Much earlier in 1947, Lewin described a three-step change process that entails creating a perception of why change is needed, moving to a new level of desired behaviors and then solidifying these behaviors:

1. Unfreeze or unlock the existing behavior
2. Move to a new level
3. Refreeze behavior at this new level

Lewin's three stage model has been criticized by several authors for being overly simplistic and mechanistic, not accounting for the continuous nature of change processes (Dawson, 1994; Garvin, 1993). This criticism suggests that Lewin's three-step model is outdated and unreliable in explaining the change process and some critics mistakenly saw the three stages as a departure from his earlier theories (Bartunek & Woodman, 2015; S. Cummings et al., 2016). However, according to Burnes (2020), this model was neither simplistic nor a departure but rather a relabeling of the fundamental aspects of his field theory, which Lewin had been developing and refining since the 1920s. In other words, Lewin's model is founded on rigorous research and offers a comprehensive framework for understanding and effecting change in human behavior.

To further address the claims criticizing the model's linearity and simplicity it is worth noting that the conventional depiction of the model as a static and linear sequence is misleading (see Figure 3.1). Lewin never outlined his model in this commonly assumed way; instead, he viewed the change process as iterative, involving continuous cycles of fact-finding, action, and further fact-finding. In other words, the stages of unfreezing, moving, and refreezing are not just one-time events, but may need to be revisited based on the results and learnings from each iteration. This iterative approach helps to refine and solidify the change, allowing

adjustments to be made that better align with the goals and realities encountered during the change process (Burnes, 2020).



Figure 3.1 *Conventional depiction of Lewin's three-stage model, (Burnes, 2020), edited by Börjesson & Lidén, 2024*

More specifically, Lewin's initial phase of change requires readiness within the organization to acknowledge the necessity for change. This entails dismantling the current status quo before establishing a new operational approach (Hayes, 2022). Central to this process is crafting a persuasive message that highlights the unsustainable nature of the current practices, creating a sense of urgency (Kotter, 1995).

Lewin's second stage focuses on moving to a new level by modifying the balance between driving and restraining forces. These forces can vary widely but often manifest as behaviors that influence performance (Ford & Greer, 2006). Movement is therefore often accomplished by altering attitudes and beliefs, and altering the processes, systems, and structures that influence behavior (Hayes, 2022).

Lastly, the freezing process ensures that the changes in behavior are congruent and reinforced by the individual's overall behavior, personality, and environmental context, thereby preventing regression (Lewin, 1936a, 1941; Schein, 1996). Lewin emphasized that effective social change requires collective transformation, meaning that group norms and routines must evolve alongside individual behaviors for change to be sustainable (Lewin, 1947a, 1947b). In organizational contexts, this typically necessitates modifications to culture, policies, practices and norms (Mossholder et al., 2000; Cummings & Huse, 1989). Additionally, the degree of participation during the change process greatly influences the outcome of freezing, supporting a more inclusive and democratic approach (Burnes, 2017b; Lewin, 1942b, 1943b, 1947a, 1947b).

3.2 Developing a Tentative Model on Trust and Communication

In understanding organizational change, Kurt Lewin's three-step model provides a foundational structure, presenting the processes of unfreezing, changing, and refreezing. This model has long served as a paradigm for conceptualizing change management in organizational contexts. However, while Lewin's model effectively outlines the stages of change, it does not fully cover all dynamics that affect these stages, such as the critical role of change communication and trust, failing for instance to recognize that trust plays an important role in shifting behaviors (Shah, 2014). To address this gap and offer a more nuanced understanding of organizational change, the authors find it important to integrate a trust-based framework into the analysis.

3.2.1 The Effect of Perceived Communication on Trust

Lines et al. (2005) emphasize the significant role of communication through participation in organizational change processes. They state that involving employees in all stages of change leads to better decision-making, reduced resistance, and positive attitudes toward change. They also suggest that participation is positively related to trust in management, highlighting that when employees are able to voice opinions and actively engage in the change process, it signals a trust in their capabilities and judgment from management, in turn encouraging employees to reciprocate trust towards their leaders. Lines et al. emphasize that participation does more than inform employees about changes; it engages them in meaningful dialogue, empowering them to influence outcomes. This engagement is shown to reduce uncertainties associated with change processes and enhance the perceived integrity and competence of leadership, fostering a supportive environment for change. This perspective aligns with and extends the findings of Shah (2014), who notes the positive relationship between employee trust in management and readiness for change.

3.2.2 The Effect of Trust on Perceived Communication

Kunnel (2021) explores the impact of trust on perceived communication, arguing that trust fundamentally shapes how communication is received and interpreted. When individuals have trust in the source or communicator, communication is often seen as more credible and reliable. Conversely, a lack of trust can lead to skepticism and questioning of motives, undermining the perceived validity of the communication (Kunnel, 2021). This cyclical relationship between trust and communication underscores how essential trust is not only in facilitating understanding and acceptance, but also in creating an environment where communication can be effective and constructive.

To explore the 2015 reform within the Police Authority through the lens of this cyclical relationship between trust and communication the authors have developed a tentative model (see Figure 3.2) that will be used for understanding how the communication of change was perceived and how this in turn affected resistance to change. The cyclical relationship between trust and change communication is complemented with Lewin's three-stage model in understanding how the reinforcing nature of trust and communication helps or hinders the implementation in moving through the three stages: unfreeze, move and refreeze.

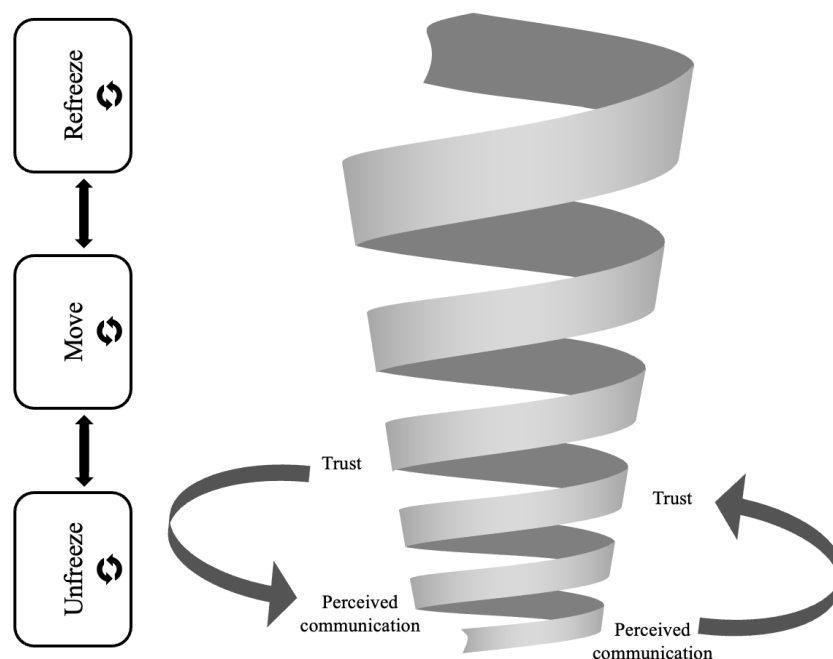


Figure 3.2 *Tentative model on trust and communication (Börjesson & Lidén, 2024)*

3.3 The Impact of Uncertainty on the Link Between Communication and Resistance

Beyond examining the relationship between trust and perceived communication the authors also want to assess the effect that perceived communication has on uncertainty and how that in turn influences resistance to change.

During periods of organizational change, employees must leave behind traditional procedures, take on new roles, and align with fresh organizational objectives which normally causes uncertainty among employees (Moutousi & May, 2018). Lind & van den Bos (2002) further state that reducing uncertainty is correlated with positive employee attitudes and behaviors towards change. This is supported by Rafferty & Griffin (2006) explaining that reduced uncertainty will improve reactions and change outcomes. Allen et al. (2007) findings suggest that change-related uncertainty fully mediated the positive relationship between quality change management and openness to change.

Zhu et al. (2023) also studied the effect of perceived uncertainty on employee resistance to change and found a positive relation between the two. They state that as change is filled with uncertainty and because employees are inherently averse to uncertainty they seek mechanisms that mitigate it. Ultimately, it was suggested that reducing perceived uncertainty among employees is crucial in mitigating resistance to change.

Building on prior research, the authors have developed another tentative model to explore the potential mediating role of uncertainty on the relationship between perceived communication and resistance to change (see Figure 3.3).

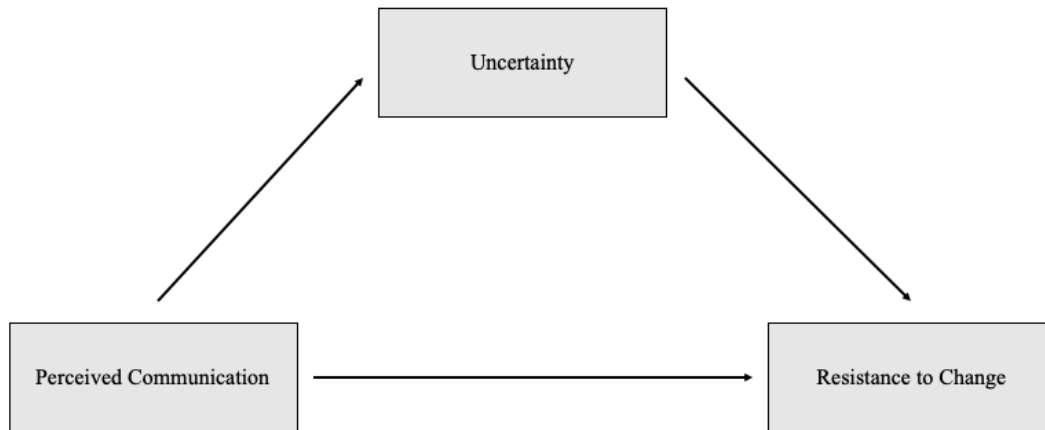


Figure 3.3 *Tentative model on the mediating effect of uncertainty on the relationship between perceived communication and resistance to change (Börjesson & Lidén, 2024)*

3.4 Theory Discussion

The authors have proposed a theoretical framework that incorporates Lewin's theories, despite recent criticisms of his work as simplistic and linear for contemporary organizations. However, they argue that such criticisms are unfounded, citing Burnes (2020), who demonstrates that the research underpinning Lewin's three-step model is extensive. Other authors propose criticism that it does not comprise a naturally occurring sequence (Bartunek & Woodman, 2015; Palmer & Dunford, 1996). This, however, has been refuted by Elrod & Tippett (2002) who discovered strong evidence supporting that Lewin's sequence of unfreezing, moving, and freezing aligns with a naturally occurring process having compared it against 15 established change models.

Dawson (2003) and Kanter et al. (1992) argue that organizations need to be fluid and adaptable and that it would be counterintuitive for them to be frozen into some given way of functioning. That being said, Ford & Greer (2006) found that organizations with lower implementation success had significantly lower usage of refreezing activities compared to those with higher success levels indicating its overall importance. Lewin (1951) himself stated a need not just for achieving but maintaining new states as long as they remain relevant, to prevent regression and ensure lasting change.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Approach

4.1.1 Research Strategy

The ontology that was used in this research is that of subjectivism, a philosophical perspective emphasizing the primacy of subjective experience in understanding reality. It argues that perceptions and actions of social actors together constitute the social phenomena (Saunders et al, 2019). This study aims to understand perceptions of change communication, which is rather relativistic, meaning they are tied to each individual's relationship with the situation, rather than adopting an absolutist perspective. Consequently, allowing the study to consider subjective perceptions of change communication and appropriately answer the research question from the subjects' point of view (Saunders et al., 2019). Moreover, the study adopts an interpretive approach that focuses on exploring the reasons behind, and how, human perceptions unfolds. This epistemology is selected primarily because the thesis' theoretical framework addresses how interactions between the implementation committee and employees shaped perceptions (Saunders et al., 2019). The research has been conducted with an abductive approach to analyze individual perceptions of the change process. The abductive approach, a mix of deductive and inductive, is suitable when the collection of data and theory are made back and forth (Saunders et al., 2019). This approach enabled the authors to integrate new information as it emerged, allowing for the refining and testing of theory as new insights from the data collection and ongoing research unfolded. Following this, the authors could make targeted observations and, ultimately, formulate generalizations based on recurring themes and patterns identified in the data (Saunders et al., 2019).

4.1.2 Research Design

This research has utilized a qualitative approach where data has been collected through the use of semi-structured interviews. This, to explore attitudes, behaviors and personal experiences in relation to organizational change and more specifically change communication during the reform (Saunders et al., 2019). Thus our study takes the form of a single case study looking at the Police Authority and the 2015 reform. The study has been designed to engage

with the complexities and nuanced realities of the subjects. This approach ensures that the collected data could be compared between subjects by asking enough similar questions. The semi-structured interview format enables the use of follow-up questions to explore expressed thoughts that might be overlooked in more rigidly structured interviews, thus leading to a deeper understanding of perceptions (Saunders et al., 2019). The data was collected to explore past perceptions throughout the change process, opting for the study to take a retrospective approach (Miller et al., 1997).

4.2 Data Collection

4.2.1 Sample Selection

The semi-structured data collection involved a sample of 10 individuals from various sectors of the police organization, active before, during and after the reform. It was made sure that these 10 individuals differed in terms of ages, roles and years of service. This, with an intention to obtain a diverse data set. To maintain the neutrality of the study, interview subjects were not predetermined, and the authors aimed to ensure that there were no close relationships between respondents that could bias the responses.

The conducted interviews were held remotely through the use of microsoft teams and google meet and interviewees were primarily contacted through email and LinkedIn (see Appendix 1). After a couple of conducted interviews, the authors used the snowball technique to find more respondents by letting the interviewees recommend additional interview subjects for the study (Saunders et al., 2019). The data collection took place during the period 2024-02-15 to 2024-04-10 and each interview were about 40 minutes long. The interviews were transcribed using Turboscribe after they had been conducted, recorded and permission had been given. The set of interview questions were centered around their past perceptions of the reform and the change communication leading up to, during and after the implementation of the reform. Thus, our research is a retrospective study looking back at and analyzing events that have already occurred (Miller et al., 1997), in this case the 2015 reform.

After 10 interviews had been held, it was concluded by the authors that sufficient saturation had been reached, meaning that additional data collection ceases to reveal any new properties

relevant to the studied category of interest (Saunders et al., 2019). An overview of the sample is summarized in Table 4.1 and Appendix 2 (for roles in Swedish, see Appendix 4).

Table 4.1. Overview of respondents

Role during the reform	Current role	Age	Years of service	Code name
Teacher at Police Academy	Teacher at Police Academy	50+	20-30	P1
Patrol Commander	Patrol Commander	35-50	10-20	P2
Superintendent	Superintendent	35-50	20-30	P3
Response Police Officer	Municipality Police Officer	50+	20-30	P4
Response Police Officer	Crime Scene Investigator	35-50	10-20	P5
Station Commander	Operations Planner	50+	30-40	P6
Head of Unit	Head of Unit	50+	20-30	P7
Criminal Investigator	Retired since 2018	50+	40-50	P8
Investigation Leader	Retired since 2018	50+	40-50	P9
Teacher at Police Academy	Education Coordinator	35-50	20-30	P10

4.3 Interview Process

In consistency with the chosen outline of semi-structured qualitative interviews, the authors developed an interview guide. This interview guide (see Appendix 1) was designed in accordance with the topics explored when the literature review and theoretical framework were established. The same interview guide was used for all interviews although they differed to the extent that they allowed for deviation beyond the scope of the set interview questions. Both authors were present during all of the interviews and alternated between asking questions and taking notes, which allowed for a more detailed observation of non-verbatim data. All interviews were held in Swedish due to interviewee's preferences to share their thoughts in their native language. The quotes were then carefully translated into English to preserve their correct meaning.

4.4 Data Analysis

The analysis took a thematic approach as suggested by (Saunders et al., 2019) to be regarded as flexible yet orderly and systematic. Through the analysis, patterns in the data such as

repetitions, similarities and differences were identified. These were later sorted and codified into one aggregate dimension, and three second-order themes, which provided a holistic view of the empirics detailed in Figure 4.1. The analysis revealed that the use of broad and numerous questions enabled the researchers to uncover several intriguing insights previously underexplored. Furthermore, the discoveries made through collecting data and identifying patterns further influenced the selection of subsequent theories that were integrated into the study's theoretical framework.

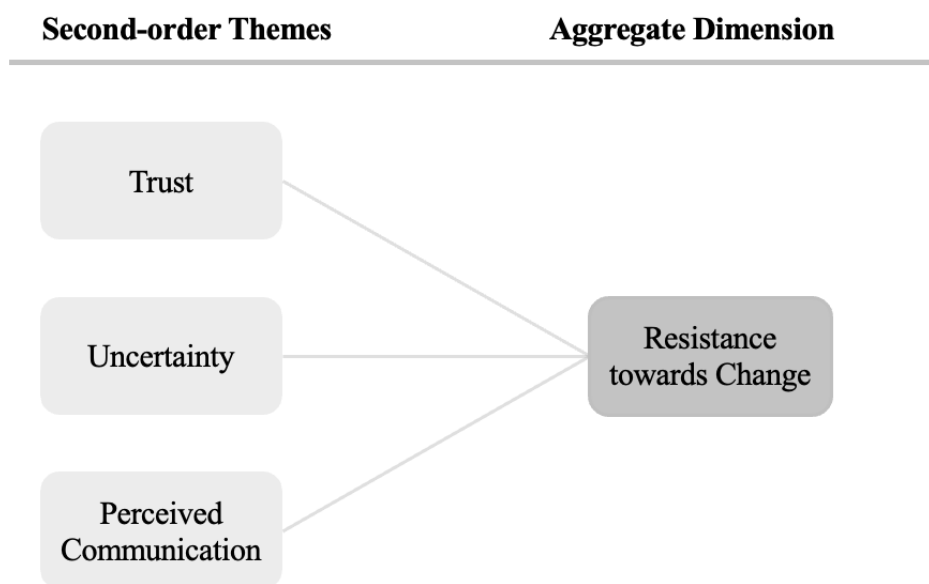


Figure 4.1 *Overview of Coded Empirical Findings (Börjesson & Lidén, 2024)*

4.5 Method Discussion

The study's trustworthiness was ensured by considering the interpretive paradigm's criteria of credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The sample size of 10 respondents could be regarded as decreasing the study's confirmability and transferability and it could be argued that a larger sample would provide a more reliable result. Saunders et al. (2019) also assert that the semi-structured approach reduces the comparability between interviews. However, the authors experienced sufficient saturation in answers from the respondents where clear patterns could be derived with relative ease, indicating that the sample was adequate. This is stretched even further as saturation was reached while using semi-structured interviews, meaning patterns were found without necessarily asking about them. The conducted interviews were also held in Swedish to later

be translated to English in the transcription process. There could thus be a possibility that the translated citations do not exactly carry the same meaning as originally intended by the subjects. To enhance the study's dependability, the authors documented and preserved all research materials, including notes and transcribed interviews, throughout the various phases of the research.

As this study employs a retrospective perspective, measuring past perceptions of the reform, there is a risk of recall bias, meaning respondents may not accurately recall the past (Golden, 1992; Wolfe & Jackson, 1987). Azar (2000) further states that retrospective studies face the risk of a change in judgment when the outcome of an event is already learnt. The 2015 reform has often been depicted as a failed change attempt in the media, which could further contribute to a potential change in judgment. However Miller et al. (1997) suggest that retrospective study is a viable research methodology if the right measures are taken.

4.6 Ethical Considerations and Implications

This study deals with interviewee perceptions raised during the conducted interviews and thus sensitive data was handled. To comply with standards for privacy and data protection this study has adhered to the ethical guidelines set out by GDPR and Stockholm School of Economics by letting the interviewees sign a consent form in accordance with these regulations (Saunders et al., 2019). The interviewees participated voluntarily and were informed of their option to withdraw from the process at any time. Moreover, the authors informed the interviewees of the aim and purpose of the study and to promote confidentiality and anonymity all subjects were held anonymous throughout the process (Saunders et al., 2019).

4.7 Implementation of AI

AI has been used in this study to: 1) summarize articles and studies, 2) transcribe interview recordings, 3) text translation and 4) refining and improving the text. The AI tools used for the above stated purposes are ChatGPT and Turboscribe. To ensure credibility of the study, source criticism has been applied constantly.

5. Empirics

The following section will present the empirical data, serving as a foundation to assess employee perceptions of the change communication surrounding the 2015 reform. The empirical data from the 10 semi-structured interviews was divided into a thematic framework with three second-order themes aimed at displaying a variety of aspects that help to understand the relationship between the change communication and employee resistance to change during the reform, shown in Figure 4.1.

5.1 Resistance to Change

The interviewees expressed that the reform was seen as an overall necessary change. Yet, different forms of resistance to change were expressed in relation to lack of trust throughout parts of the change process, perceptions of inadequate communication, and perceived uncertainty.

5.1.1 Trust

For any type of change management process it is crucial to have trust between those in charge of planning the change implementation and the employees who in the end are affected by the suggested changes in practice (Sørensen et al., 2011). In this section respondents were therefore asked about their trust towards the implementation committee and their communication throughout the reform.

When examining the level of trust interviewees had for the implementation committee in the beginning of the change process it became evident that the majority of respondents were skeptical of the implementation committee. This, because the committee was composed of change agents who lacked significant experience within the organization, leading to concerns among respondents about their ability to effectively address problems within the Police. Their doubts are reflected in the following quotes:

/.../ It was very clear from the beginning that the people responsible for solving everything (the implementation committee) hadn't worked within the Police before and that made us question how they possibly could make this happen in a good way. – P3

The committee sought help from a consultancy firm on how to design the change and that made me question their reliability /.../ To fix the organization you need to understand the organization and the Police is a complex one where you can't just apply any models. – P8

Although it was apparent that respondents were skeptical of the implementation committee and their lacking experience at the onset of the change process, a pattern was found in that these skeptical thoughts seemed to abate throughout the planning process. This is because the majority of the interviewed respondents recognized that change was necessary and developed trust in the committee. The committee further gained trust by promising to involve employees in designing and impacting the change process. Three of the respondents also brought up the precautionary principle, another promise from the committee that increased their willingness to trust the committee's intentions. This is shown by a quote from P5 below:

I must say that I was skeptical in the beginning towards their ability to lead this change /.../ I think that they lacked the right experience and knowledge. But then they started talking about involvement, they said that they would listen to us and involve us in this change which I found promising – P1

I originally doubted their ability to achieve such a major change within the Police and I was afraid that it would affect the stuff that already worked very well /.../ but then they promised to follow the so-called precautionary principle which assured me that they would protect many of our core strengths – P5

However it became clear from respondents' answers that this trust was not sustained. Although realized at different points in time, the answers illustrate a gradual decline in respondents' trust towards the committee as the implementation was coming up.

Early on, involvement was more frequent and we were asked to share our thoughts and suggestions /.../ As we got closer to the implementation in January 2015 we felt more and more left out and many questions were unanswered /.../ It felt like a waste of time when we didn't see our suggestions being taken into account. – P1

It was also evident from the conducted interviews that this affected respondents' resistance to the change when it was going to be implemented. More than half of the respondents expressed negative attitudes towards parts of the change and the way it was communicated as a direct result of respondents' perceptions of the committee not living up to their made promises. These promises mainly included listening to employees and implementing the change bottom-up as well as to follow the precautionary principle. The below quotes are used to represent this expressed resistance.

As we realized that they hadn't listened to our ideas and insights, which we were told would have a big impact on the change, me and my colleagues lost faith in their proposed changes and I remember that it made me very angry and unmotivated to embrace the new practices.

– P6

I worked in a well functioning team serving an important purpose. Then the reform came and my team was dissolved, to me that is not following the precautionary principle at all. /.../ They really turned every stone, even the ones they were not supposed to be turned and that made me and my team very frustrated. – P8

5.1.2 Perceived Communication

The below section will look at respondents' perceptions of the change communication conducted by the implementation committee throughout the change process. In contrast to the former presented second order theme, trust, this section will delve into and show respondents perceptions towards the structure and forms in which communication was conducted rather than their underlying meaning and messages.

Generally speaking, all respondents agreed on the fact that communication is an important part of implementing change. More specifically, several respondents spoke to the need of involving employees for implementation to be a smooth and effective process, where unity surrounding changes is created and employees' views are captured and utilized. In all cases communication was described as one-sided, meaning that information was distributed, but with little to no room for real-time Q&A since said information was predominantly published on the Police's internal website. This meant that those affected were unsure how to interpret

new updates on changes and how these would be incorporated. On this topic the following quote captures the essence of all but one respondents' answers:

I usually distinguish between information and communication, and throughout the reorganization it was much more informative /.../ I like change where one can have an influence, but this came from the top /.../ and there was no way to provide feedback and tell them what you thought /.../ If an idea comes from below, it is always discussed, and if it comes from above, it gets implemented. – P6

5.1.3 Uncertainty

Several respondents criticize the change communication in that the implementation committee focused on areas where change was going to happen but seldom communicated what the implication for the positions in those areas would be in practice, causing uncertainty for employees. This, seemingly due to low perceived transparency in the change communication, which in turn increased respondents' uncertainty. It is also evident, from the below quotes, that this uncertainty had a big explanatory factor towards respondents' negative attitudes towards the change.

One major issue was not understanding how my role would change in the new organization. Adjusting took a long time, and I wished they had been more transparent earlier on how people would be affected. /.../ I think this was the biggest reason for my negative opinions about the reform. – P3

I soon realized that the reform would be more extensive than what was first communicated, and that there was not going to be any precautionary principle, and I remember that feeling when you knew you would be affected but no one told you in what way, so it was impossible to prepare, and that made me feel pretty stressed and frustrated. – P2

From the answers above it becomes clear that the uncertainty regarding roles and responsibilities caused negative attitudes towards the change process. The respondent below further criticizes this issue, emphasizing the need to ask clarifying questions to understand how the suggested changes would affect their specific roles and duties, but points out that they did not receive any clear answers.

The problem was never the amount of information, but it was so damn abstract and when you asked your bosses what it actually meant no one had any answers. We were told to ask questions in different forums where members of the implementation committee could clarify instructions but they never got back to us. – P7

When the process of actually implementing the changes planned by the implementation committee started, respondents expressed troubles understanding how the suggested changes were to be incorporated into their daily routines. While there was plenty of information posted on the Police's internal website and so-called steering documents were provided, detailing new ways of working and expectations, employees struggled with the lack of precise instructions on how to apply these new guidelines in practice. In some cases this led employees to disregard the new procedures and adhere to their previous working methods. This is shown by the quote below:

You know in the beginning (of the implementation) I really did my best to understand and try to adjust to the proposed changes but no one enabled me to do so, I tried seeking help and support but it felt like the more I reached out the more I understood that no one really knew how this would work in practice and at some point I stopped trying to change as I simply didn't know how. – P6

Lastly, several respondents expressed transparency to be low in regards to why some changes were being made and how it would fit into the general goals of making the Police Authority more centralized. Interviewees explained how this made them feel skeptical, nervous and unsure about the future and how making large changes without explaining the reason, once more infringed on the promise of adhering to the previously mentioned precautionary principle.

The overall goal was clear. The Police were going to become more centralized, but why did they have to relocate staff and disband working groups who were central to engaging closely with citizens? We were never given an explanation. Everything was just to be turned upside down and changes were seemingly made for the sake of change which made me nervous and questioning. – P4

6. Analysis

In this section the empirical data is analyzed with the aim to answer the research question. The empirics revealed two distinct patterns causing resistance to change. First, a clear pattern between the level of trust and perceptions of communication. The other detected pattern was that of the relationship between the communication, uncertainty and resistance. These two patterns will be analyzed below through the two tentative models developed by the authors.

6.1 Resistance to Change

Oreg (2006) describes that resistance to change can manifest itself in several ways. In the case of interviewed respondents, affective, behavioral and cognitive resistance are identified. Emotionally, they exhibited anxiety, stress, and frustration. Behaviorally, there was a passive resistance shown through a reluctance to implement new changes. Cognitively, negative beliefs and perceptions about the change were prevalent, fueled by uncertainty and a sense of distrust in that employee suggestions were not genuinely considered. Thus, it is evident that the empirical responses can be found within these three dimensions, illustrating a direct link between perceptions of communication, uncertainty, trust and resistance to change.

6.1.1. Trust

Early on, most respondents were skeptical of the implementation committee and what they perceived as a lack of relevant expertise and practical experience from within the organization. However, this changed when the implementation committee made promises of high employee involvement in helping outline the reform. As mentioned by past researchers, effective change agents are those who deliver on their promises and that broken promises may foster resistance (Oreg & Sverdlik, 2011). In the case of the reform, and according to the respondents, the latter is what occurred when involvement was perceived as lacking and unfruitful. That is that respondents did not see any results from their own involvement although attempts at providing the implementation committee with feedback and suggestions were made. Several respondents showed their resistance through frustration, feeling less trustful due to the reform being implemented with a top-down approach, contrary to the bottom-up method they expected and had been promised. The same resistance is also found

in relation to the perceived broken promise of adhering to the precautionary principle, meaning that the implementation would be done in steps as described by Ivarsson Westerberg (2020). This can be linked to previous literature by Oreg et al. (2011) saying that change recipients, when actively involved, generally demonstrate greater readiness and acceptance of change. They also perceive change as less stressful and display greater support for the initiative, something that Schmuck & Miles (1971) confirms, stating that employee participation in change initiatives correlates with positive attitudes towards change.

Previous research by Kunnel (2021) indicates that high trust positively influences perceptions of communication. Similarly, Lines (2005) found that employees' possibilities for active involvement in change processes boosts their trust in management. The data suggests that this relationship is reciprocal. Specifically, when communication was perceived as lacking both before and after the reform's implementation, trust in the implementation committee and the reorganization decreased, which made employees less receptive to subsequent communication. This observation aligns with the tentative model developed from the data, which illustrates that perceived communication and trust can mutually reinforce or undermine each other.

This could serve as vital in understanding how trust and the deterioration of trust affected resistance and thus the movement through the three steps outlined by Lewin. The initial phase of change requires readiness within the organization and movement is possible through altering attitudes and beliefs (Hayes, 2022). Kotter (1995) therefore states it to be of utmost importance to create a persuasive message. It could be argued from the data that the appealing promises made by the implementation committee served as this message. This created readiness among employees by altering their initial beliefs of skepticism for the committee which enabled them to move to the next step, move, with relative ease. However, the breaking of these promises led to resistance and a regression in employee attitudes, hindering progress in the change process.

Sub-conclusion: Visualizing respondent's views on trust through the model (Figure 3.2), it appears that the Police initially advanced from the first to the second stage of Lewin's three-step model. This, due to initially positive perceptions of communication, which built trust, enhancing the openness to new communication even more, resulting in an overall readiness for further change. However, this progression was based on false pretenses as

promises surrounding adhering to the precautionary principle and involving employees were not fulfilled according to respondents. This, coupled with perceptions of poor communication later on, led to a deterioration in trust, which in turn made employees skeptical of new communication. As such, employees seemed to have regressed from stage two back to stage one, reflecting a setback in the change process from their perspective and a sign of resistance.

6.1.2 Perceived Communication

The findings on perceived communication are closely connected to the sections on uncertainty and trust. Empirical evidence consistently showed that communication by the committee was perceived as one-way information rather than two-way communication. Moreover, there were limited ways for respondents to participate in the change, something that several past researchers have identified as a key factor for resisting change (Schulz-Knappe et al., 2019; Morgan & Zeffane, 2003; Oreg et al., 2011). When respondents disagreed or simply failed to understand what had been communicated by the implementation committee they tried voicing their concerns. This is in line with Zhu et al. (2023) stating that, as change brings uncertainty, and since employees are naturally averse to uncertainty, they look for ways to mitigate it. However, as employees attempted to raise concerns and communicate with the implementation committee, they found no clear channels to reach those in charge of the change, leading to resistance, in the shape of frustration.

Further the empiric material suggests a discrepancy between the implementation committee and employees as they appeared to have been at different stages in Lewin's three-step model. When the implementation was rolled out employees could not voice their resistance and reverted to old working habits instead of following the new structure, suggesting that they were not ready for the refreeze stage, as will be shown in the next section. At the same time, the committee kept moving forward to the last stage, seemingly unaware of this underlying resistance. This led to what seems to have been a misinterpretation of employees attitude towards the change resulting in a continued ineffective communication furthering the resistance to change even more.

Sub-conclusion: The empirical findings show a dominant use of one-way communication and lacking feedback mechanisms leading to employees feeling unheard and disconnected from the committee, fostering frustration and resistance. Applying the tentative model showing a

cyclical relationship between communication and trust (Figure 3.2), an erosion of trust can be found when employees felt ignored and thus reverted to old habits in passive resistance. A misalignment was also found with Lewin's three-step model in that when the committee moved forward, employees were not fully engaged and thus reverted backwards. The perceived ineffectiveness of the one-way communication also contributed to uncertainty, which in turn fueled resistance to the change (Figure 3.3).

6.1.3 Uncertainty

Jackson et al. (1987) states that frequent catalysts for uncertainty include not understanding the underlying reasons for change, the details of its implementation and the expected outcomes. This can be seen leading up to the 2015 reform as respondents understood that they would be affected but were not clearly informed on how. This was due to the implementation committee failing to communicate what the implications of the change would be in certain areas, causing significant stress, anxiety and overall uncertainty among employees.

Schulz-Knappe et al (2019) identified three key factors that enhance the perceived quality and effectiveness of communication during change processes. They argue that being transparent, consistent, and inclusive have a critical role in reducing uncertainty and resistance. In the trust section it is stated that the empirics showed a lack of inclusivity leading to distrust and resistance. It can further be argued that this lack of inclusivity also increased the uncertainty during the change process. When it comes to transparency surrounding the changes, data showed that respondents were unaware of the practical implication of the changes but also of why certain changes were being made, something that Morgan & Zeffane (2003) and Zainab et al. (2020) argue diminish employee acceptance of the change process. This is interesting to zoom in on as the implementation committee expressed that they valued transparency and declared it crucial. They therefore made every important decision public and transparent by posting it on both their own and the Police's internal website. So how come respondents, as found in the empirics, perceived the transparency to be low and thus uncertainty to be high? An explanation to this can be found from Ivarsson Westerberg (2020) stating that it is not enough to distribute information, recipients must still actively engage in it. Another explanation can be linked to Bordia et al. (2004) stating that simply providing information may not be enough to reduce employee

uncertainty but it is rather the perceived quality of information that shapes employee uncertainty, pointing to the need of information being comprehensible. Looking at the empirical findings through this lens could point to a discrepancy between the intended, actual and perceived communication serving as a significant explanatory factor for employee uncertainty.

When it comes to uncertainty stemming from communication during and after the actual implementation of the change, the empirical findings show that the change communication ceased, leaving employees uncertain on how to implement the proposed changes. More specifically, it is brought up that there was a lack of sufficient communicated guidance and support on how the changes were supposed to be implemented in practice. This can be linked to Rafferty & Griffin (2006) and Zhu et al. (2023) stating that when uncertainty is present, such as when employees do not understand their roles, they are more likely to perceive organizational changes negatively, as they struggle to determine how these changes will affect their responsibilities and workflow in practise. As found in the empirics, this uncertainty led employees to revert back to old ways of working not merely as a consequence of unwillingness to change but rather due to inability through insufficient communication. Connecting this to back Lewin's three stages of change it becomes important to note that simply reaching a new state is not sufficient and without efforts to maintain and solidify the advancements the organization poses risks of regression.

All of the above mentioned cases of uncertainty did in one way or another impact the employees thoughts and feelings about the change. It was found in the empirics that respondents frequently expressed that the way in which the change process was conducted, in terms of communication and uncertainty, caused frustration and stress. Others expressed feeling anxious or demotivated as a result of the perceived uncertainty. These expressions are not inherently signs of resistance to change, but rather reflect feelings and beliefs about the change. This aligns with the work by Oreg (2006) describing resistance to change in a holistic way encompassing the three interrelated dimensions previously mentioned. It is thus evident that the empirical responses can be found within these three dimensions, hence the relationship between change communication, uncertainty and resistance to change can be identified.

Sub-conclusion: It is evident that ineffective communication by the implementation committee led to significant uncertainty among employees. This is substantiated by the lack of clarity regarding the implications of the changes, and although the committee advocated transparency and publicized decisions the information provided were still perceived as insufficient. This suggests that effective communication is not just about the dissemination of information but also about ensuring it is engaging and comprehensible. The failure to ensure that employees understood the practical implications of the changes further exacerbated uncertainty as it led to confusion. This together with a lack of guidance on how to adapt to new practices or processes, ultimately fueled resistance. Thus, despite not inherently opposing change, employees' anxiety, frustration, and stress, stemming from uncertainty, translated into resistance as shown in Figure 3.3, where uncertainty is determined to have a mediating role on the relationship between perceived communication and resistance to change.

7. Discussion and Conclusion

7.1 Answer to Research Question

Through the use of a qualitative study, the authors have aimed to study and answer the study's research question: *What role did change communication have on employees' resistance to change before, during and after implementing the 2015 police reform?* Empirical data was analyzed through the lens of a theoretical framework, including two tentative models based on literature on trust, perceived communication and uncertainty during change. The analysis chapter revealed multiple ways through which communication affected employee's resistance to the change, all of which could be derived to either trust or uncertainty. Thus, a conclusion could be made that the effect of communication on employee resistance during the reform was mediated through uncertainty and trust.

The authors found that perceived communication and trust have a cyclical relationship that, when managed, can reduce resistance and thus progress forward in a change process. As the implementation committee failed to deliver on made promises this cyclical relationship spiraled downward leading to distrust and negative perceptions of further communication. This made employees regress from stage two back to stage one of Lewin's three-step model, reflecting a setback in the change process and a sign of resistance. Employees also perceived the communication by the implementation committee to be unclear and inaccessible creating uncertainty surrounding the implications of the change. The uncertainty stemming from the communication together with an absence of guidance in how to adapt to new roles and processes in turn fueled resistance in the form of anxiety, frustration and stress.

Thus an answer to the research question can be made that: change communication had a significant role on employees' resistance to change before, during and after implementing the 2015 police reform and this significant effect was mediated by trust and uncertainty.

7.1.1 Contributions

Several studies have been made on the 2015 police reform and its widely discussed shortcomings (Ivarsson Westerberg, 2020; Haake, Rantatalo & Lindberg 2015; Statskontoret, 2018; Eklund & Landström, 2019). These researchers have explored resistance to change during the reform from a structural perspective, focusing on the inherent characteristics of the imposed changes themselves to assess their effectiveness and to identify the underlying reasons for resistance. In this study the authors instead look at perceptions of the reform through a communication perspective to assess how the communication throughout the change process contributed to employee resistance. This was done by building on the existing body of literature on the importance of communication during change. The authors of this study have examined the relationship between communication and resistance throughout the change process, concluding that resistance to the change was never static but rather related to the changing perceptions of communication during different stages of the reform. This was found by utilizing Lewin's three-step model to understand the relationship between communication and resistance throughout these different steps, assessing how communication can contribute to fostering or hindering progress within a change process. Lastly, previous literature on the 2015 reform have focused on resistance to change in terms of unwillingness to change, whereas our study conclude that resistance can take other forms, one being inability to change as a direct consequence of inadequate communication.

7.1.2 Implications

The Swedish police reform of 2015 is one of the biggest governmental reorganizations in Swedish history. As such, it has received significant attention and has been the focus of considerable scholarly research, including this study. This, since the authors believe that many of the insights drawn from studying this change are transferable to the larger body of change management literature. By developing two tentative models the authors have combined insights from previous literature to understand the complexity of the relationship between change communication and resistance. This further allowed the authors to find the mediating role of trust and uncertainty and their implications. The study finds trust crucial in mitigating resistance and enhancing communication effectiveness. Effective communication strategies that build trust could thus significantly reduce resistance, as shown by the data of

the studied reform. It is further suggested that such strategies include transparent, consistent, and inclusive communication that address employee concerns throughout the change process, not merely during the initial stages. The models furthermore suggest that managing uncertainty through effective communication is essential for reducing resistance as it helps to reduce uncertainty and lack of guidance surrounding the practical implications of the change for employees.

7.1.3 Discussion of Limitations

Although this study presents a number of interesting findings it is relevant to mention a number of limitations. Firstly, this study employs an interpretive approach, which inherently shapes the presentation of the empirical data according to the authors' interpretations. Consequently, the authors' perceptions and potential biases could influence the objectivity and balance of the empirical data presented. Secondly, the sample size of 10 interviews is relatively small and thus an increased sample size could have helped to improve the reliability of this study by providing more insights and a more nuanced picture of communication on resistance throughout the organization. Thirdly, the adoption of a subjectivist ontological position, which seeks to comprehend individual subjective experiences, may render the sample non-representative. Consequently, the findings and responses to the research question might not be applicable to all employees within the police organization. Lastly, it is worth mentioning the limitation in that this study investigates a narrow part that has contributed to resistance to the 2015 reform. Thus it is worth to note that there may exist several other reasons for resistance which have not been covered in the light of this study.

7.1.4 Recommendations for Future Research

While this study has found that the role of communication, mediated by trust and uncertainty, have a significant role in fostering or hindering resistance to organizational change, further research should examine specific communicative strategies for building trust and reducing uncertainty. Additionally, in order to improve the study's transferability further research could incorporate more contextual factors to examine how perceptions of communication during change affects resistance. For instance it could be the case that the Police Authority

posits specific contextual factors, influencing the studied relationship. Hence, it would be interesting to study this relationship in other industries and organizations. This could reveal differences and clarify how different contexts impact the relationship between perceived communication and resistance to change.

7.2 Conclusion

This thesis has explored the critical role of change communication on employee resistance during the Swedish police reform of 2015. The study reveals that the change communication by the implementation committee during the change process had a significant effect on employee resistance. It was found that ineffective communication during the change process fostered resistance primarily by failing with transparency and inclusivity, two elements deemed crucial in establishing trust and reducing employee uncertainty. It was found that trust and uncertainty mediated the relationship between perceived communication and resistance. Further the study found that inconsistencies in communication at different stages of the reform exacerbated resistance, highlighting the necessity of continuous and coherent communication strategies throughout the change process.

References

Academic Journals and Literature

Allen, J., Jimmieson, N. L., Bordia, P., & Irmer, B. E. (2007). Uncertainty during Organizational Change: Managing Perceptions through Communication. *Journal of Change Management*, 7(2), 187–210.

Armenakis A. A., Bedeian A. G. (1999). Organizational change: A review of theory and research in the 1990s. *Journal of Management*, 25, 293-315.

Armenakis, A. A., Harris, S. G., & Mossholder, K. W. (1993). Creating readiness for organizational change. *Human Relations*, 4, 681–703.

Ashford, S. J. (1988) Individual strategies for coping with stress during organizational transitions, *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 24(1), pp. 19–36.

Azar, B. (2000). Blinded by Hindsight. *Monitor on Psychology*, 31(5), 28-29

Bartunek, J. M., R. M. Krim, R. Necochea, M. Humphries. 1999.
Sensemaking, sensegiving, and leadership in strategic organizational development. *Advances in Qualitative Organizational Research*, Vol. 2. JAI Press, Stamford, CT, 37–71.

Bartunek, J. M., & Woodman, R. W. (2015). Beyond Lewin: Toward a temporal approximation of organization development and change. In F. P. Morgeson, H. Aguinis, & S. J. Ashford (Eds.), *Annual review of organizational psychology and organizational behavior*, (Vol. 2, pp. 157-182). Palo Alto, CA: Annual Reviews.

Bennebroek Gravenhorst, K. M., Werkman, R. A., & Boonstra, J. J. (2003). The Change Capacity of Organisations: General Assessment and Five Configurations. *Applied Psychology*, 52(1), 83–105.

Bordia, P., Hunt, E., Paulsen, N., Tourish, D. and DiFonzo, N. (2004), "Uncertainty during organizational change. Is it all about control?", *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 13 No. 3, pp. 345-365.

Burnes, B. (2009) *Managing Change* (5th ed). London, England: FT/Prentice Hall.

Burnes, B. (2017b). *Managing change* (7th ed.). Harlow, England: Pearson.

Burnes, B. (2020). The Origins of Lewin's Three-Step Model of Change. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 56(1), 32–59.

Coch, L., & French, J. R. P.Jr. (1948). Overcoming resistance to change. *Human Relations*, 1, 512–532.

Cummings, T. G., & Huse, E. F. (1989). *Organization development and change* (4th ed.). St. Paul, MN: West.

Cummings, S., Bridgman, T., & Brown, K. G. (2016). Unfreezing change as three steps: Rethinking Kurt Lewin's legacy for change management. *Human Relations*, 69, 33-60.

Cutcher, L. (2009). Resisting change from within and without the organization. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 22(3), 275–289.

Dawson, P. (1994). *Organizational Change: A Processual Approach*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing.

Dawson, P. (2003). *Organisational Change: A Processual Approach*. London: Chapman.

Dent, E. B., & Goldberg, S. G. (1999). Resistance to Change: A Limiting Perspective. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 35(1), 45–47.

DiFonzo, N., & Bordia, P. (1998). A tale of two corporations: Managing uncertainty during organizational change. *Human Resource Management*, 37(3–4), 295–303.

Eklund, N., & Landström, L. (2019). Effektivare för vem?: Chefsuppfattningar om den nya styrningen av svensk polis. *Nordisk Administrativ Tidsskrift*, 96(1): 35-55.

Elrod P. D. II, Tippet D. D. (2002). The “death valley” of change. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 15, 273-291.

Ford, M. W., & Greer, B. M. (2006). Profiling Change: An Empirical Study of Change Process Patterns. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 42(4), 420–446.

Garvin, D. A. (1993). Building a learning organization. *Harvard Business Review*, July–August, 78–91.

Golden, B. R. (1992). The Past Is the Past--Or Is It? The Use of Retrospective Accounts as Indicators of Past Strategy. *Academy of Management Journal*, 35(4), 848–860.

Goodman, P. S., & Dean, J. W. Jr. (1982). *Change in Organizations: New Perspectives on Theory, Research and Practice*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Haake, U., Rantatalo, O., & Lindberg, O. (2017). Police leaders make poor change agents: leadership practice in the face of a major organisational reform. *Policing & Society*, 27(7), 764–778.

Hayes, J. (2022). *The theory and practice of change management*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Hiatt, J. (2006). *ADKAR: A Model for Change in Business, Government, and Our Community*. Prosci.

Jackson, S. E., Schuler, R. S., & Vredenburg, D. J. (1987). Managing stress in turbulent times. *Occupational stress and organizational effectiveness*, 141-166.

Kanter, R. M., Stein, B. A., & Jick, T. D. (1992). *The challenge of organizational change*. New York, NY: Free Press

Klonek, F. E., Lehmann-Willenbrock, N., & Kauffeld, S. (2014). Dynamics of Resistance to Change: A Sequential Analysis of Change Agents in Action. *Journal of Change Management*, 14(3), 334–360.

Kotter, J.P. (1995) Leading change: Why transformation efforts fail, *Harvard Business Review*, 73 (2): 59-67.

Kotter, J. P. (1996). *Leading change*. Harvard Business School Press, Boston, MA.

Kotter, J. & Schlesinger, L. (1979). Choosing strategies for change, *Harvard Business Review*, 106-114.

Kunel, A. J. (2021). *Trust and communication: foundations of interconnectivity*. Peter Lang International Academic Publishers.

Lawrence, P. R. (2015). *Leading change: how successful leaders approach change management*. Kogan Page.

Lewin, K. (1936a). *Principles of topological psychology*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Lewin, K. (1941). *Regression, retrogression and development*. In D. Cartwright (Ed.), (1952): *Field theory in social science: Selected theoretical papers by Kurt Lewin* (pp. 87-129). London, England: Social Science Paperbacks.

Lewin, K. (1942b). *The relative effectiveness of a lecture method and a method of group decision for changing food habits*. Washington, DC: Committee on Food Habits, National Research Council.

Lewin, K. (1943b). Forces behind food habits and methods of change. *Bulletin of the National Research Council*, 108, 35-65.

Lewin, K. (1947a). Frontiers in group dynamics: Concept, method and reality in social science; social equilibria and social change. *Human Relations*, 1, 5-41.

Lewin, K. (1947b). Frontiers in group dynamics: II. Channels of group life; social planning and action research. *Human Relations*, 1, 143-153.

Lewin, K. (1951) *Field Theory in Social Science*. New York: Harper & Row.

Lewis, L. K. (1999). Disseminating information and soliciting input during planned organizational change: Implementers' targets, sources, and channels for communicating. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 13(1), 43–75.

Lewis, L. K., & Seibold, D. R. (1998). Reconceptualizing Organizational Change Implementation as a Communication Problem: A Review of Literature and Research Agenda. *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 21(1), 93–152.

Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E.G. (1985) *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Lind, E. A., & van den Bos, K. (2002). When fairness works: Toward a general theory of uncertainty management. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 24, 181–223.

Lines, R., Selart, M., Espedal, B., & Johansen, S. T. (2005). The production of trust during organizational change. *Journal of Change Management*, 5(2), 221–245.

Metz, M. (2021). Overview of Change in Organizations. Resistance to Change. A Literature Review. “Ovidius” University Annals. *Economic Sciences Series (Online)*, XXI(1), 611–620.

Men, L., & Stacks, D. (2014). The Effects of Authentic Leadership on Strategic Internal Communication and Employee-Organization Relationships. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 26(4), 301–324.

Men, L. R., Yue, C. A., & Liu, Y. (2020). “Vision, passion, and care:” The impact of charismatic executive leadership communication on employee trust and support for organizational change. *Public Relations Review*, 46(3), 101927.

Miller, C. C., Cardinal, L. B., & Glick, W. H. (1997). Retrospective Reports in Organizational Research: A Reexamination of Recent Evidence. *Academy of Management Journal*, 40(1), 189–204.

- Morgan, D., & Zeffane, R. (2003). Employee involvement, organizational change and trust in management. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 14(1), 55–75.
- Mossholder, K. W., Settoon, R. P., Armenakis, A. A., & Harris, S. G. (2000). Emotion during Organizational Transformations: An Interactive Model of Survivor Reactions. *Group & Organization Management*, 25(3), 220–243.
- Moutousi, O., & May, D. (2018). How Change-related Unethical Leadership Triggers Follower Resistance to Change: A Theoretical Account and Conceptual Model. *Journal of Change Management*, 18(2), 142–161.
- Möllering, G. (2006) *Trust: Reason, Routine, Reflexivity*. Oxford: Elsevier.
- Oreg, S. (2006). Personality, context, and resistance to organizational change. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 15(1), 73–101.
- Oreg, S., & Sverdlik, N. (2011). Ambivalence Toward Imposed Change: The Conflict Between Dispositional Resistance to Change and the Orientation Toward the Change Agent. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96(2), 337–349.
- Oreg, S., Vakola, M., & Armenakis, A. (2011). Change Recipients' Reactions to Organizational Change: A 60-Year Review of Quantitative Studies. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 47(4), 461–524.
- Palmer, I., & Dunford, R. (1996). Conflicting uses of metaphors: Reconceptualizing their use in the field of organizational change. *Academy of Management Review*, 21, 691-717.
- Rafferty, A. E., & Griffin, M. A. (2006). Perceptions of Organizational Change: A Stress and Coping Perspective. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91(5), 1154–1162.
- Brad L. Rawlins. (2008). Measuring the relationship between organizational transparency and employee trust. *Public Relations Journal*, 2(2).

Robertson, P. J., Roberts, D. R., & Porras, J. I. (1993). Dynamics of Planned Organizational Change: Assessing Empirical Support for a Theoretical Model. *Academy of Management Journal*, 36(3), 619–634.

Saunders, M. N. K., Thornhill, A., & Lewis, P. (2019). *Research methods for business students*.

Schein, E.H. (1996) Kurt Lewin's change theory in the field and in the classroom: Notes towards a model of management learning, *Systems Practice*, 9(1): 27-47

Schmuck, R.A. & M. Miles (1971). *Organization Development in Schools*. Palo Alto, CA: National Press Books.

Schulz-Knappe, C., Koch, T., & Beckert, J. (2019). The importance of communicating change: Identifying predictors for support and resistance toward organizational change processes. *Corporate Communications*, 24(4), 670–685.

Schoorman, F. D., Mayer, R. C., & Davis, J. H. (2007). An Integrative Model of Organizational Trust: Past, Present, and Future. *The Academy of Management Review*, 32(2), 344–354.

Schweiger, D.M. & DeNisi, A.S. (1991), Communication with employees following a merger: A longitudinal field experiment. *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 34 No. 1, pp. 110-135.

Shah, N. (2014). The Role of Employees' Trust in Management and Supervisors on Developing Attitudes and Behaviours for Organisational Change. *International Journal of Management Sciences*. 4. 333-342.

Six, F., & Nooteboom, B. (2003). *The trust process in organizations: Empirical studies of the determinants and the process of trust development*. Edward Elgar.

Smeltzer, L. R. (1991). An Analysis of Strategies for Announcing Organization-Wide Change. *Group & Organization Management*, 16(1), 5–24.

Sørensen, O. H., Hasle, P., & Pejtersen, J. H. (2011). Trust relations in management of change. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 27(4), 405–417.

Warrick, D. D. (2023). Revisiting resistance to change and how to manage it: What has been learned and what organizations need to do. *Business Horizons*, 66(4), 433–441.

Westerberg, I. A. (2020). *Reform i uniform – Polisens stora omorganisation*. Stockholm. Studentlitteratur.

Wolfe, J., & Jackson, C. (1987). Creating Models of the Strategic Decision Making Process Via Participant Recall: A Free Simulation Examination. *Journal of Management*, 13(1), 123–134.

Yue, C. A., Men, L. R., & Ferguson, M. A. (2019). Bridging transformational leadership, transparent communication, and employee openness to change: The mediating role of trust. *Public Relations Review*, 45(3), 101779

Zainab, B., Akbar, W., & Siddiqui, F. (2022). Impact of transformational leadership and transparent communication on employee openness to change: mediating role of employee organization trust and moderated role of change-related self-efficacy. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 43(1), 1–13.

Zhu, Y., Long, L., Liu, W., Shu, P., & Chen, S. (2023). How and when does authentic leadership reduce employee resistance to change? An explanation from uncertainty management theory. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 44(8), 969–993.

Digital Sources

Demoskop. (2016). Resultat för hela Polisen: Information om ny polisorganisation 2015. Demoskop. Viewed 2024-03-12, <https://tidningensvenskpolis.se/arkiv/hallarsida-aldre-artiklar/2016/nr-12016/fler-behover-bli-delaktiga-i-forandringen/>

Statskontoret. (2016). Ombildningen till en sammanhållen polismyndighet. Delrapport 1 om genomförandearbetet. Stockholm. Statskontoret. Viewed 2024-03-05, <https://www.statskontoret.se/siteassets/publikationer/2016/201622.pdf>

Statskontoret. (2017). Ombildningen till en sammanhållen polismyndighet. Delrapport 2 – om den nya organisationens genomslag. Stockholm. Statskontoret. Viewed 2024-03-05, <https://www.statskontoret.se/siteassets/rapporter-pdf/2017/201710.pdf>

Statskontoret. (2018). Ombildningen till en sammanhållen polismyndighet. Slutrapport. Stockholm. Statskontoret. Viewed 2024-03-05, <https://www.statskontoret.se/siteassets/rapporter-pdf/2018/2018-18.pdf>

Appendices

Appendix 1. Email to Prospective Interview Subjects

Hi [Name],

Our names are Philip Börjesson and August Lidén, and we are currently writing our bachelor thesis in management at the Stockholm School of Economics. We are studying the 2015 police reform and employees perceptions of the change process. We are thus reaching out to you to see if you would be interested in sharing your perceptions of the reform as it would provide valuable insights for our study.

Previous studies have mostly focused on how structural changes shaped employee perceptions of the reform. With this background in mind, we instead aim to look at the role of change communication during the change process and how it has influenced employees perceptions of the reform.

We would be very glad to get to meet you for an interview to hear about your perceptions from this point in time. We are flexible regarding the time and place for the meeting but preferably through a video call as soon as possible. The study will of course be anonymous for you as an interviewee.

We look forward to hearing from you to book an interview,

Kind regards,

Philip Börjesson | 25504@student.hhs.se | 072 194 78 28

August Lidén | 25437@student.hhs.se | 072 731 93 21

Appendix 2. Information About the Interviews

No.	Code name	Date	Place
1	P1	2024-04-12	Video Conference
2	P2	2024-04-17	Video Conference
3	P3	2024-04-15	Video Conference
4	P4	2024-03-26	Video Conference
5	P5	2024-04-16	Video Conference
6	P6	2024-04-11	Video Conference
7	P7	2024-04-12	Video Conference
8	P8	2024-04-09	Video Conference
9	P9	2024-04-08	Video Conference
10	P10	2024-04-15	Video Conference

Appendix 3. Interview Guide for Police Employees, Translated to English

Ethics

1. In our study, which is our Bachelor thesis in management at Stockholm School of Economics, you as a participant and your employer will be anonymized.
2. Also, we will not disclose any other participants in the study, neither to the employer nor other participants.
3. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may interrupt and/or leave the interview at any time and without disclosing the cause to us.
4. We would like to ask whether we have permission to record the interview, so we can transcribe it afterwards?
5. Before we start, do you have any questions for us?

Background

1. Could you tell us a little bit about yourself?
2. Could you tell us about your journey within the Police?
3. What is your current role?

The 2015 Police Reform and perceptions of it

1. What was the purpose of the reform in your opinion?
2. How was your role affected by the reform?
3. What was your attitude before, during, and after the implementation of the reform?
4. Did you have confidence in those responsible for leading the change?
5. Did the 2015 police reform result in any challenges or problems in your mind?
6. What has, in your opinion, worked well since implementing the reform?

Perceptions of the Change Communication during the Reform

1. Do you think change communication is important during a change process?
2. How was the change communicated before, during and after the implementation?
3. How would you describe the quality and effectiveness of the communication from the implementation committee throughout the process?
4. After the reform was rolled out, were there any control functions in place to ensure that the new procedures were followed?

5. What were the opportunities for lower levels to participate in shaping the reform?
6. How was the change communicated regarding its impact on specific roles and responsibilities within the organization?
7. Did you feel adequately prepared for the changes?
8. Were there mechanisms in place for you to give feedback or raise concerns about the reform?

Appendix 4. Overview of respondents (Swedish Version)

Roll under reformen	Nuvarande roll	Ålder	År i tjänst	Kodnamn
Lärare på Polishögskolan	Lärare på Polishögskolan	50+	20-30	P1
Yttre befäl	Yttre befäl	35-50	10-20	P2
Kommissarie	Kommissarie	35-50	20-30	P3
Ingripandepolis	Kommunpolis	50+	20-30	P4
Ingripandepolis	Brottsplatsundersökare	35-50	10-20	P5
Stationsbefäl	Verksamhetsplanerare	50+	30-40	P6
Gruppchef	Gruppchef	50+	20-30	P7
Brottsutredare	Pensionerad sen 2018	50+	40-50	P8
Undersökningsledare	Pensionerad sen 2018	50+	40-50	P9
Lärare på Polishögskolan	Utbildningssamordnare	35-50	20-30	P10
