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The dream of Agile as a savior - An institutional logic perspective

A qualitative study of an Agile transformation at Volvo Cars

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Abstract

The world is evolving at an extremely fast pace, leading to organizations facing a crossroads, of either change to stay competitive, or continue business as usual and risk falling behind. A management technique claimed to help organizations to change and become flexible is the well-known fashion trend Agile. This paper explores the Agile transformation of Volvo Cars and the challenges encountered when turning the large corporation with legacy from Taylorism, to an Agile structure. Building on previous studies showing how the adoption of a management fashion trend within an organization can be categorized in three categories on a firm level, we contribute by demonstrating how these categories also exist on a lower level within the firm. We point out how departments and teams adapt the Agile concept in order for it to better fit with the business context. We illustrate how these categories is an outcome of diverse challenges being encountered during the transformation, as a result of two competing logics clashing. We find the clash is of a new market logic, including Agile, entering the organization and a corporation logic which has guided the company for many years.

Key Words

Agility, Institutional logics, Market logic, Corporation logic, Management fashion trend

Introduction

Daily we hear how the development of technology is moving in an increasingly rapid pace (Robbins, S., & Judge, T. (2017). Today, the whole world is our market place and a company's customers is simply not the ones within one's own country borders, but across the globe with far different demands than the ones on the opposite side. The whole world as a market place also mean increased competition, where companies has to stay alert to remain competitive (ibid.). In an attempt to meet the current demands of the market, companies adopt management fashion trends to achieve efficiency and constant progress (Abrahamson, 1996). As an effect of a constantly evolving market, each management trend has a limited cycle time before being replaced by an improved trend (Cram & Newell, 2016). This has led to new management fashion trends constantly affecting organizational structures and behaviors, which causes both positive outcomes, for example increased legitimacy and negative outcomes for example limited organizational learning (Abrahamson, 1996). Common management fashion trends

affecting organizations throughout the years have been Six Sigma, Total Quality Management and Lean Production (Teamweek, 2018). Today one popular management trend is a mindset called Agile (Cram & Newell, 2016). Agile was developed in 2001 as an endeavor for organizations to meet customers demand in an unpredictable environment (Bridgwater, 2011). The trend is a technique for organizations to become more flexible, and to handle constant changes in a competitive way (Meredith & Francis, 2000). By working in short iterations with clear prioritization of work along with high involvement of stakeholders in an early stage, Agile is believed to help companies handling today's' evolving market (Bridgwater, 2011).

For the past decades, several researchers have explored Agile and developed theoretical frameworks for how organizations could adopt the trend (Sidky & Arthur, 2007: Sureshchandra & Shrinivasavadhani, 2008: Qumer, Henderson-Sellers & McBride, 2007: Qumer, & Henderson-Sellers, 2008). However, not many researchers provide practical insights in regard to organizations adoption of the management fashion trend, except Cram and Newell (2016) who find three levels of adoption, namely Dabbler, Tailor and Crusader. Even though Cram and Newell (2016) cover how organizations adopt the Agile concept on a firm level, they do not go beyond this point and explore if these categories exist also within an organization. To address this gap, a qualitative case study has been made at Volvo Cars. Furthermore, an extensive data collection has been made at several departments and teams within the organization to examine how the adoption has been made, and what challenges have been encountered along the way. To understand the underlying reason behind the challenges, a lense of institutional logics has been used where two competing logics, a market logic and a corporation logic, have been identified and examined. Furthermore, insights of how to minimize these challenges have been addressed. Therefore, the research question for the report has been: *What influences the adoption of the Agile management trend?*

Through our study we contribute to Cram and Newell's (2016) previous research by adding how their categorization exist as subcategories within a company. Furthermore, we find the clash of a market logic and a corporation logic being one underlying factor for the challenges arising in the adoption of Agile leading to the subcategories.

Previous research

The trend Agile

The concept of Agile is a management technique developed in 2001 by 17 software developers, who wanted to change their work method to better meet customer demands in an unpredictable work environment (Bridgwater, 2011). The concept is built on four core values namely; individuals and interactions over process and tools, working software/product over comprehensive documentation, customer collaboration over contract negotiation and lastly responding to change over following a plan (Beck, Beedle, Van Bennekum, Cockburn, Cunningham, Fowler, & Kern, 2001). In 2011 Dean Leffingwell developed the SAFe framework for companies wishing to scale Agile within their organization (SAFe provided by scaled Agile, 2017). SAFe is divided in four levels; Team, Program, Solution and Portfolio.

Depending on the size of the organization all levels are applied. The framework includes roles, tools and templates to guide the scaling. There are several Agile methods within SAFe where one of the most commonly used is Scrum (Cooke, 2012). Scrum is value-driven method focusing on timely delivery and close collaboration with customers. To overcome the difficulties of working in an unpredictable environment, Agile teams work in short iterations called Sprints, one Sprint last between 2-4 weeks (depending on company). Each sprint end with a Program Increment event (PI-event); a two days, face-to-face event occurring every 8th to 12th week where a priority working list for the upcoming period is planned (Gustavsson, 2014). The list is called a backlog and is, simply put, a list of prioritized activities and tasks which should be completed to reach a certain outcome.

The Scrum method have three distinct roles; the Team, the Scrum master (SM) and the Product owner (PO) (Gustavsson, 2014). The team is said to be the heart of an Agile organization, where everyone else work as support functions. The teams should be self-organizing which implies they have the ability and authority to make their own decisions (Moreira, 2017). The idea is built on that the ones executing the work are the ones possessing the expertise, not meaning the team can make higher company strategic decisions, as this is not their area of expertise. By pushing down the decision-making authority, decisions can be made faster. In order for these teams to function they should aim to possess so called T-shaped knowledge which implies both depth (in one field) and breadth (ability to work with more than one area of expertise) in their skills (ibid.). Such knowledge helps avoiding dependencies of one person. In this way the teams can stay robust, where the team members stay the same throughout different projects which brings benefits as psychological safety, where the team members create trust to one another. There are several principles which guides self-organizing teams; collaboration and teamwork, competency, regular growth and improvement, trust and respect, motivation, continuity, ownership and commitment (Planview, 2019). The SM can be compared with a project manager and is supposed to unite the group and make their day run smoothly (Gustavsson, 2014). The difference between an “ordinary” project manager and a SM is that a SM is servant leader for the team. Compared to the traditional command and control leader, the servant leader creates the right conditions and assure the team have the right tools to work, a guiding question is: “what can I do for you”. A servant leader does not have all the knowledge and answer her/himself but know how to coach the team member to find the answer him/herself. This leadership style applies to all leaders within the Agile organization. The tasks of a SM include daily stand-up meetings, attend diverse meetings, set agendas, manage protocols, communicate, team development, conflict management and secure resources etc. A SM is part of the team and does not necessarily have more knowledge or experience than the rest of the team. In a new team the SM should preferably work 100% as SM in the beginning but decrease as time passes and spend the rest as a team member. The balance a SM spend in the SM role and as a “ordinary team member” depends on the need from the team. The PO is responsible for the backlog and prioritize what the team should execute in each sprint and make sure the team is not overloaded (see Appendix 1) (ibid.). The PO have daily contact with the team and try to participate in the daily stand-ups. How much time being spent as a PO also depends on the need of the team.

The Scrum method includes four “ceremonies” (see Appendix 2); Sprint Planning, Daily Scrum, Sprint Review and Sprint Retrospective. Sprint Planning is held in the beginning of each sprint to review the backlog set at the PI-event. The backlog is broken down into tasks to perform during each sprint. During the ceremony the PO and the team participates. Daily Scrum is a daily stand-up meeting with the team that cover three questions; what did I do yesterday, what will I do today, and what problems are hindering my progress. The meeting serves to create transparency and to keep the team informed. Sprint Retrospective ends each sprint and the team look back to reflect upon what went well, what did not and what the learnings are for improvements. Sprint Review is also held at the end of the sprint where the key stakeholders are invited to inspect the work executed during the sprint. The team and the PO also attend. (Gustavsson, 2014)

Agile as a management fashion trend

Abrahamson (1996 p 257) describes a management fashion trend as “a relatively transitory collective belief, disseminated by management fashion setters, that a management technique leads rational management progress”. The word “collective” used in the definition does not reveal the size of the group believing a certain fashion is in the forefront and may therefore be large or small (Cram & Newell, 2016). Further, the definition provided by Abrahamson (1996) is without judgement whether the consequences of adopting a management fashion trend are beneficial or not (Cram & Newell, 2016). Abrahamson (1996) mean the reason for managers to catch attention to a management technique is guided by national norms of rationality (seen rational by a certain organizational stakeholder group) and progress (the pressure for managers to constantly achieve improvements). Which mean the fashion answers to the organizations desire to find the most efficient technique to attain desired ends. Meyer and Rowan (1977) add how the manager attain a rational appearance, by acting rational according to important stakeholders. Compared to an aesthetic fashion, management fashion cycles may last up to 20 years, after an unknown period of time the fashion will decline and be replaced by another seemingly improved fashion (Cram & Newell, 2016). The fashion setters; the ones deploying the fashion may be consulting firms, management gurus, business mass-media and academics (Abrahamson, 1996). Several studies have shed light on the outcomes of adoption of management fashion trends and have found both positive and negative ones. Positive effects mentioned includes increased firm legitimacy and long-term performance while the negative cover limited organizational learning, lower short-term performance and inefficiency.

In an article written by Cram and Newell (2016) the authors describe Agile as a management fashion trend, and classify organizations adopting this fashion in three categories; Dabblers, Tailors and Crusaders. Crusaders are organizations who adopt the concept to the letter and as an exclusive development approach. They let go of their traditional ways of working and devote to Agile techniques with minimal or no adaptations. In these organizations there is a consensus that Agile is a complete fit with the organization and they adopt for long-term. Tailors are those who adopt a majority of the concept and allow adaptations for the concept to better fit to the specific business context. Hence, Agile may work as a hybrid approach with already existing practices, or alongside traditional practices. In organizations classified as Tailors most of the

employees perceive Agile to be suitable. Lastly Dabblers, who implement a few Agile ceremonies additional to their existing work processes, having difficulties letting go of their traditional ways of working. Within an organization following a Dabbler approach the Agile concept has support from some of the employees, but there is also open opposition where the fit between the Agile approach and the organizational culture and structure is questioned. The driving force to adopt Agile in Dabbler organizations is said to be the highest management, and their aim for progress. Drawing on literature about mindful and mindless innovation, Cram and Newell (2016) find that Crusaders and Tailors possess several characteristics implying a mindful adoption while Dabblers showed characteristics of mindlessness.

Several other studies (Sidky & Arthur, 2007; Sureshchandra & Shrinivasavadhani, 2008; Qumer, Henderson-Sellers & McBride, 2007; Qumer, & Henderson-Sellers, 2008) have developed theoretical frameworks for an Agile adoption. However, few researchers cover a practical insight to what level companies actually do adopt Agile as Cram and Newell (2016). From an extensive literature review of previous case studies three articles have provided insights on the topic. Based on a study of 22 companies and 11 researchers or partner universities Rohunen, Rodriguez, Kuvaja, Krzanik, & Markkula (2010) depict how large organizations adopt Agile incrementally with mix of a bottom-up and top-down approach where incremental approach is defined as “taking gradually and continuously new practices into use” (Rohunen et al., 2010 p 83). For example, it is common to start with the practices short iterations and Sprint review and from there gradually incorporate further practices. Many of the participants in the study mentioned the importance of tailoring the Agile concept and integrate it with existing practices in order to fit in with a specific business setting. Djerv & Wendel (2018), find in their case study of three companies, how two of the companies have adopted Agile tools while the third firm have adopted the underlying values of Agile, for example the spirit of team work even though they have not made any restructures in the teams suggested by the Agile approach. Djerv & Wendel (2018) mean that all three companies have made adaptations to their contextual genesis. The two firms adopting tools is said to have adopted only some of the tools fitting in to the organization and made adaptations within those. According to a comprehensive literature review (covering research between 2002-2014) by Campanelli and Parreira (2015) the scholars mean all companies adopting Agile need to tailor the concept due to contextual differences hence, it is not possible to take the Agile concept by the book and there is no one way of tailoring it. Other studies as Korhonen, Caivano, Oivo, Baldassarre, & Visaggio (2011) investigate how far diverse study teams have come in their adoption process of Agile practices, however without mentioning if the practices have been taken by the book, tailored or is simply used by the name.

After an extensive literature research, it is evident that rather little research has touched upon the subject of how organizations adopt Agile. Furthermore, insights on how the adoption happens on a lower level within an organization seems to lack completely. In an attempt to contribute to how departments and teams practically adopt Agile, our study builds on the article by Cram and Newell (2016) and will shine light on if the three categories; Dabblers, Tailors or Crusaders do not only exist on firm-level but also inside one organization. To understand this and the reason for why organizations become Dabblers, Tailors or Crusaders, it is necessary to

investigate the underlying forces shaping the department behaviors, where institutional logics can provide us with helpful insights.

Theoretical Framework

Understanding institutional logics

The old school institutional theory has through times had its focus on institutions, stability and how institutions are subject for isomorphism i.e. organizations becoming similar, either intentional or unintentional (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). The concept of institutional logics was firstly introduced by Friedland (1985), when he described conflicting beliefs and practices within institutions of western societies (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008), in an endeavor to introduce the concept of agency to explain the micro perspective of how institutions can change (Friedland & Alford 1991). Institutional logics is defined as “socially constructed historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs and rules which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space and provide meaning to their social reality” (Thornton and Ocasio, 1999 p. 804). Friedland and Alford (1991) describes how our society is built on institutional orders which are guided by institutional logics. The authors identified five core logics; the capitalistic market, family, Christianity, bureaucracy state, and democracy. These five logics have later been revised by both Thornton (2004) and Thornton, Ocasio and Lounsbury (2012) and brought us with seven logics where the democracy logic has been removed, while the corporation, profession and community have been added and Christianity has been replaced by religion. In Table 1, it is possible to see what guides each of the seven logics.

Y-Axis:	X-Axis: Institutional Orders						
Categories	Family 1	Community 2	Religion 3	State 4	Market 5	Profession 6	Corporation 7
Root Metaphor 1	Family as firm	Common boundary	Temple as bank	State as redistribution mechanism	Transaction	Profession as relational network	Corporation as hierarchy
Sources of Legitimacy 2	Unconditional loyalty	Unity of will Belief in trust & reciprocity	Importance of faith & sacredness in economy & society	Democratic participation	Share price	Personal expertise	Market position of firm
Sources of Authority 3	Patriarchal domination	Commitment to community values & ideology	Priesthood charisma	Bureaucratic domination	Shareholder activism	Professional association	Board of directors Top management
Sources of Identity 4	Family reputation	Emotional connection Ego-satisfaction & reputation	Association with deities	Social & economic class	Faceless	Association with quality of craft Personal reputation	Bureaucratic roles
Basis of Norms 5	Membership in household	Group membership	Membership in congregation	Citizenship in nation	Self-interest	Membership in guild & association	Employment in firm
Basis of Attention 6	Status in household	Personal investment in group	Relation to supernatural	Status of interest group	Status in market	Status in profession	Status in hierarchy
Basis of Strategy 7	Increase family honor	Increase status & honor of members & practices	Increase religious symbolism of natural events	Increase community good	Increase efficiency profit	Increase personal reputation	Increase size & diversification of firm
Informal Control Mechanisms 8	Family politics	Visibility of actions	Worship of calling	Backroom politics	Industry analysts	Celebrity professionals	Organization culture
Economic System 9	Family capitalism	Cooperative capitalism	Occidental capitalism	Welfare capitalism	Market capitalism	Personal capitalism	Managerial capitalism

Table 1: Ideal types of the inter-institutional systems (Thornton et al., 2012, p.73)

Institutional logics are important as it helps us understand how individuals’ actions are conditioned by certain frames of reference (Ezzamel, Robson & Stapleton, 2012; Zheng, Shen & Cai, 2018). Hence, logics shape the decision-making within a certain field (Lounsbury,

2007), where a field is a cluster of organizations with similar product, customer or suppliers (Dimaggio & Powell, 1983). Lounsbury (2007) argue logics facilitate to solely focus on significant decision-making, which in turn strengthen strategies and the organization's identity. Institutional logics include three level of analysis, namely individuals competing and negotiating (micro), organizations in dispute and coordination (meso) and institutions in contradiction and interdependency (macro) (Friedland & Alford, 1991). Hence, Thornton and Ocasio (2008) describes institutional logics as the link between the macro and micro perspective since they shape behavior and thereby create a relation between actions and institutions.

As all organizations around us exist within an external context and many of them are driven by profit maximization, they are highly influenced by the market in attempts to stay competitive and gain profit (Thornton et al., 2012, p.73). Furthermore, market trends have come to have a great impact on companies, where information is not only easy to attain but more or less are pushed upon us due to the globalization and rapidly evolvement of social media (Rekettey, 2013; Hallak & Papadopoulou, 2015). Because the market is a major influencing force on companies to remain existing, the market logic seems suitable to study for a large company. In addition to the market logic, corporation logic is seen as appropriate for the study, as the case company, Volvo Cars, is an organization build on hierarchy structure which have shaped the individual behaviors throughout the years. We use these two logics to better understand the current work environment at Volvo Cars, as an outcome of multiple logics being acted upon by employees, to keep or attain power and influence (Hoffman, 1999; Scott, 2014; Wooten & Hoffman, 2008). Moreover, these two logics are intriguing to investigate as the market trend seems to be moving toward flat organizational structures, which stands in contrast with many old company's historical hierarchy structure. Market logic is according to Zheng et al. (2018) defined as all human activities which is being converted into merchandise possessing a monetary price. The logic is characterized by market capitalism where practices are driven by profit maximization and to attain a strong competitive position (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999). Managers main focus are therefore related to acquisition growth and resource competition (ibid.). Thornton and Ocasio (1999) further claim rank and position being less significant in the hierarchy. The corporation logic is resembling to the market logic in terms of economic value, as it strives for creating a strong market position, increase efficiency and profit maximization (Thornton et al., 2012). However, the logic differs as it favors a hierarchy structure where the authority lays at top management (ibid). Power and status are therefore attained when moving higher up in the ladder of hierarchy.

Multiple logics may exist in an organizational field. The logics may find solutions to coexist, side by side and complement each other (Egels-Zandén, Lindberg, & Hyllman 2015). Even though two or more logics coexist scholars claim one logic will be dominant and the other(s) subordinated (Reay & Hinings 2005). In other cases, the logics may be competing and stand in strong contrast to each other, and hence compete for a firm's actions and course of direction (Kim & Chung, 2018). In the case of competing logics, the logics gives rise to tension and are part of a power struggle between different parties in a company with diverse interests (Hoffman 1999; Battilana & Dorado, 2010). D'Aunno, Sutton, and Price (1991) investigated competing

logics in the mental health care sector and found organizations adopting conflicting practices due to competing logics pulling in different directions. Furthermore, as different people are influenced by different logics in diverse ways, and may therefore be novices, familiar or identified with a certain logic (Pache & Santos 2013). In an article written by Lounsbury and Marquis (2007), the authors emanate from previous literature by Lounsbury (2007) about how competing logics may result in diversified practices and behavior of distinct groups of actors. They depict how competing logics can lead to resistance and amongst stakeholders in their case about the emergence of national banks in communities. Additionally, the authors conclude that resistance can lead to organizational variety and mean the insights may provide clarity in studies about diffusion and adoption behavior, and how organizations adapt practices after context (ibid.). In this way institutional logics shed light on the concept of change which previously was not of the scope of institutionalism (Lounsbury & Marquis, 2007). Several scholars have expressed the lack of research about how organizations and individuals act and react when they are faced with multiple logics (Greenwood, Raynard, Kodeih, Micelotta & Lounsbury, 2011; Thornton et al. 2012; Pache & Santos 2013). A third way for a field to exist with multiple logics is for the logics to come together and a new logic emerge, a so-called hybrid logic (Rao & Hirsch, 2003). In Mangen and Brivots' (2015) studies about law firms they show how often competing logics as bureaucratic, commercial and professional have become hybrid logics in this specific environment.

Methodology of study

Design of study

In order to answer how management trends are being adopted in a large organization and to answer our research question: *What influences the adoption of the Agile management trend?* a qualitative case study has been completed at Volvo Cars. Performing the case study at Volvo Cars has allowed us to get an insight in an organization currently in the process of an Agile transformation, which made it possible to explore how an organization adopt Agile and what challenges arises along the process. Moreover, since Volvo Cars is a large global corporation it enabled us to also explore the Agile transformation also in China. As the study aimed to explore within an organization, a qualitative case study was suitable, as it allows the researcher to understand a social phenomenon such as an organization, a situation or everyday behavior amongst people (Skärvad & Lundahl, 2016; Silverman, 2013). The approach is seen as useful when gaining in-depth knowledge regarding what motives, motivations, thoughts and feelings are shaping behaviors (ibid.) which makes it suitable for this case. Moreover, Research Methods (2015, p 57) claims the approach is useful when trying to understand "how humans interpret their experience and the world in which they live". Flyvberg (2006) mean a case study helps evaluate how real-time situations are unfolding in practice in relation to a phenomenon which is another reason for the research design being appropriate to fulfil the aim of the paper.

Setting

The study has been conducted at Volvo Cars, a car manufacturing company with almost 100 years' experience within the industry. They origin from Sweden but are today owned by the Chinese company Zhejiang Geely Holding Group. Volvo Cars is a global company with

business in several continents and customers in more than 100 countries. All this has led to that they today is one of the most respected and well-known car brand in the world. (Volvo Cars, n.d.)

Together with many other companies worldwide, Volvo Cars are now facing a huge challenge due the rapid changes of demands and therefore need to adapt to become more flexible. The company has therefore decided to become Agile and are currently in the process of transforming several departments. However, some departments such as Procurement is facing difficulties adapting the concept to their processes and has thus not come as far in the transformation as other some departments.

The data has been gathered mainly from the Product and Quality department (P&Q) as they have come furthest in the Agile transformation but also from Procurement. Both P&Q and Procurement have teams in China and USA, but the majority are based in Sweden. Teams from both China and Sweden have been included in the study as they are the ones in the process of becoming Agile.

Collection of Field Material

The most commonly used technique to gather data within a qualitative study is interviews (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). Using face-to-face interviews as a main source of data collection, made it possible to observe non-verbal cues and to hear tone of voice allowing us to better understand the spoken message. The interviews have been of semi-structure, meaning that questions are formulated before the interview, but these can be changed in sequence, while new questions can be added or existing deleted as the interview continues (Björklund & Paulsson, 2012). Using semi-structured interviews gave us the benefit that interviewees were allowed to develop their answers not needing to follow a strictly structured form. Additionally, semi-structured interviews allowed us to change questions after new impressions and observations were obtained in order to get the most out of the interviews. The initial interview questions focused on achieving a basic knowledge foundation, over time the questions changed to being more specific to gain a deeper understanding. The interviews have been recorded, with the permission from the interviewees, for not missing out on any details. By recording the interviews, the information becomes more reliable compared to if only notes would be taken (Silverman, 2013). After each interview had been conducted it was transcribed to further secure not missing out on any details. As the transcription was performed right after the interview, eventual ambiguities laid the foundation for the upcoming interview.

20 long (30-60 minutes) and 4 short (5-10 minutes) interviews have been conducted. The short interviews were held with team members while the long interviews were held with leaders and managers from all levels. The data collected about China and their implementation is gathered through interviewees, who either live/has lived in China or are in contact with China in some way, all originally from Sweden. This mean the opinions in the report is limited to a Swedish point of view and does not include direct opinions of the Chinese employees. In Table 2, it is possible to see the titles of the interviewees. One of the interviewees worked as both a PO and

a Team manager (TM), hence the half number in the table. The majority of interviewees are leaders and managers and do therefore not represent the whole organization. In the beginning a few interviewees were recommended from the supervisors at Volvo Cars and thereafter the Snowball method was used to find further objects. The Snowball method implicates the interviewees recommend potential participants for the coming interviews (Skärvad & Lundahl, 2016). The organization have several Agile teams where solely one member per team has been interviewed, hence there is a risk the opinions are highly individual and may not represent the whole team. The interviews have taken place individually to minimize the risk of influences from another person. Only in one case has the interview been with two people and this because the manager was relatively new at his/her position and therefore also the previous manager participated. Kvale (2009) brings up the importance of creating trust which we aimed to establish by letting the interviewees know the interviews were completely anonymous.

Role	Number of interviews
Scrum Master	2
Product Owner	2,5
Team Manager	1,5
PAM	2
Transformation Leader	5
Group Manager	2
Second Line Manager	4
Team Member	5

Table 2: Interviewees for the study

To attain a better understanding of the organization, we have also participated in team- and department meetings along with COP (community of practice) a meeting directly connected to the Agile work. A lot of time has been spent on site while the interviews were executed and by being present, information has been gained from common areas where the Agile transformation has been a hot topic. As a source of secondary data, data which is useful for the research but which is not originally produced for the purpose of the research, documents from the company about the Agile transformation process have been studied to obtain information about their current situation.

Analysis of field material

To analyze the empirical data the grounded theory method has been used which is an efficient way to obtain well-structured data which can be clearly overviewed (Martin & Turner, 1986). Additionally, Glaser and Strauss (1967) mean grounded theory being useful when describing a social phenomenon. The first step in grounded theory is to code the transcribed data, where material with similar context attained the same code (Martin & Turner, 1986). The coding process was performed continuously, right after each interview was held and transcribed to get to know the material and to spread the workload. The second step includes dividing the codes into categories (ibid.). The codes from the first step were in beginning rather broad, which lead to some difficulties finding a pattern to categorize the codes in the second step. As the second

step was initiated before the first step was finalized we decided to narrow the codes to be more specific. For example, one code could initially be coded as *Resistance*, and while the later ones were coded as *Resistance autonomous teams*. The second step resulted in twelve categories where a few examples are *Agile mindset, implementation, challenges and learnings*. The last step in grounded theory is to divide the categories from step two into even broader categories (ibid.). The third step resulted in four categories; *background, transformation, one organization and outcome*. Throughout the process of grounded theory, the interview material was compared to notes from meetings and document studies. The clear overview of the data provided by grounded theory, gave us insightful knowledge of important categories in which to focus, in order to answer our research question.

The crooked way to Agile

Start of the transformation

Several attempts of becoming Agile at Volvo Cars have been done during the years where the only difference is that the attempts were never called an Agile way of working. Already in the 70s and 80s, the company removed the assembly lines and created self-organizing teams, in order to attract younger people to the industry. These attempts turned out to be successful at the time. In 1994, module teams were created, which were composed based on competence to create knowledgeable teams. The teams were given full responsibility and mandate along with financial mandate, which also turned out successful at the time. The official initiative for an Agile transformation came 2016 from the executive management team. However, employees at P&Q claim the initiative came from two streams. One stream from the top but another one from graduates who had learnt about it in school and saw the potential within Volvo Cars and started working accordingly already in 2012. The difference with today's initiative and previous is that the transformation includes the whole organization, not solely individual departments or teams.

When asking the interviewees about what the purpose of Agile is, one purpose mentioned by the majority is: to launch cars at a faster pace. Connected to this are flexibility and adaptability aiming at keeping up with the market. It is mentioned more than one time that Volvo Cars need to change to still exist, or by other words “make it or break it” (Product Owner).

It is all about admitting that we do not live in a world where it is possible to plan. Or rather that you can plan but all those plans will change continuously. You have to have an organization which is flexible. (Product Owner)

Customer involvement and feedback is also in focus. It is no longer Volvo Cars who decides what cars to produce, instead it is the market and its customers who knows what they want, and it is up to the company to deliver it. Many interviewees also talk about optimized time planning, prioritizing and working in short iterations of planning, instead of months at a time to create a better flow. Moreover, by turning to an Agile way of working the company wants to gage in empowered teams where the decision-making process are pushed down in the organization, so

that the teams can be autonomous. By creating T-shaped teams several managers talk about being able to divide the workload better.

Agile is about empowerment, it is about feeling ownership and to work together to the highest extent, to help one another when it gets rough and to muster to deliver what is most important for the company. (Team Manager)

The company wants to achieve servant leaders for these teams. Moreover, words to define Agile are “trust” and “transparency”; the team members need to be transparent to let each other help one another, and the leaders need to let go of the control and have trust for their team members to be autonomous.

The transformation

To undergo the transformation, the company has emanated from the Agile framework SAFe, where adaptations have been made to fit Volvo Cars. This “new” framework is called VCAF (Volvo Cars Agile Framework) and includes four levels; Portfolio, Solution, ART and Team level (the focus of study has been on Team- and ART level). VCAF will be used globally, however, each department is being offered a flexibility to a reasonable extent, to find practices and processes which works best for them. As of today, the departments and teams within each department have reached different degrees of maturity of the transformation. The goal is for the whole organization to be Agile by the end of 2019.

P&Q Sweden

P&Q was the first department practicing Agility and has come furthest in the transformation process. The first initiatives started at team level at a software department, which felt more or less natural since the framework originates from the software industry. Shortly, the Agile mindset was spread to the rest of the teams within the software department, eventually some hardware departments started practicing it as well. Once the official decision was made by the executive team, roles were implemented along with a three-hour lecture (basic Scrum and SAFe) for all employees. An additional lecture was later held for all SMs, POs and TMs. The transformation was in some teams made bottom-up where team members were involved in the process, a good approach according to interviewees. Today the majority of the departments within P&Q are practicing all four Scrum Ceremonies; Sprint Planning, Daily Scrum, Sprint Review and Sprint Retrospective. Additionally, P&Q attends PI events, which is held every 12th week where a backlog is planned. The backlog is global to enhance transparency. Managers have recently started applying T-shape teams by mixing teams with different types of engineers. In order to work proactively and create a shared understanding among employees, P&Q are using the so-called COP (community of practice) meetings where each role arrange individual meeting i.e. Scrum COP, PO COP and SM COP. COP was developed by Lave and Wenger (1991) with the aim to work proactively by discussing challenges, roles what have (un)successful and to share knowledge and create common solution between teams. When implementing the new roles, the old group manager role has been divided into the existing SAFe role PO and a new role developed by Volvo Cars called TM (Team Manager). TM is responsible for the wellbeing of the team, overtime, that the right competence exists within the

team and conflict management. The role is being supportive regarding technical questions when urgent matters arise. The reason for creating TM is claimed to be since Volvo Cars completed a survey which showed that only 20% of the employees had a personal development. Additionally, PO has been implemented but does to some degree differ between individuals, where some support the teams regarding technical questions while others take a more business approach. It all comes down to which experience and knowledge people have when taking on the role. Because the old group manager role required a wide range of knowledge and experience, interviewees believe dividing the role is a good change.

The role as a group manager was impossible to fill, few people have the ability to master both parts as technically responsible and staff liability, therefore I believe this change was good. (Scrum Master)

Another role implemented is SM who functions as a bridge between the teams. While the SM makes sure the teamwork runs smoothly, TM would step in if any matter would escalate when it comes to the soft aspects.

The implementation of the different roles has occurred at different occasions, for example the SMs were implemented before the TMs. This made the work task division between the roles rather unclear, because the group manager role disappeared, and the TM was yet not implemented to handle the soft aspects of the manager role. Even if this became hard to handle for the SM, they still mean it was the right way to implement the roles.

P&Q China

In China the Agile transformation started off bottom-up. When the Agile three-hour lecture was held mainly the buyers participated, sometimes also the group managers. As the managers found out, they wanted to increase their control and asked for more information. A few months later they were ready to reorganize and transform. Employees based in Sweden mean China has been very quick to pick up the Agile transformation. As soon as the Swedish teams started implementing roles their reaction was “If you gonna have a PO we should also have a PO” (PAM).

It is interesting because in China, reorganizations are everyday activities, while we [Sweden] want to stick to our foundation. In China, they have no problems creating new roles. (Transformation Leader)

Today, China are using the same roles as the Swedish teams at the team level. However, as the teams are much smaller in China one leader can have two roles i.e. being both SM and PO. China practice the Scrum ceremonies, Daily Scrum and Sprint planning and work with the same backlog as P&Q in Sweden. So far, the PO's in China have flown home to Sweden and participated in two PI-events where they also have managed to deliver successfully. During the PI-event the team members have participated via video link.

Procurement

Procurement has an Agile transformation team where some employees are dedicated full time, while others work with the transformation part time. All employees at Procurement have had the possibility to attend the same three-hour lecture as P&Q. This lecture was not mandatory and there are several employees who have not yet received it.

Procurement is divided in several sub-departments. The transformation started in September 2018, by running three pilots with one “PAM” (Procurement Art Manager) and one category team (supports several teams i.e. shared service) including category owner in each department. The pilots were an attempt to attain answers to vital questions before scaling up the Agile transformation. After the pilot projects were completed, the departments implemented the tried roles. PAM exist on an ART level and is a new role implemented specifically to Procurement to solve the issue of the 5-1 contact with P&Q, where PAM becomes the single point contact. Since the transformation, PAM has shown to be a good link in cases when the gap between P&Q and buyers at Procurement are extensive. However, when the gap does not exist, buyers may feel a PAM is redundant, and have therefore not implemented the role. PAM also makes sure Procurement is being involved earlier in the development process, to be able to influence, which previously has been an issue. The work tasks of the group manager have been divided into PAM and TM where PAM has the commercial responsibility for product development, and TM is responsible for current business. All PAMs, are attending the meeting COP.

After this stage, the way of transformation and maturity differs widely between the departments at Procurement. One department has recently taken a few steps back regarding the transformation, to reflect upon the real purpose of becoming Agile, what their needs are and how to adapt in their specific department. In this process, they have chosen to involve all employees by holding large meetings, where material is handed out for the teams to discuss and return with feedback. For example, some teams have come to the conclusion, they do not want or need a PAM. Moreover, there has been a great focus on autonomous teams and servant leaders, however nothing has been transformed so far. One interviewee means the department is alone in involving the employees to such extent. The department is struggling with how to insert their activities in a backlog and are currently working with a fictitious backlog. Another department have held workshops with representatives from each team to utilize the existing knowledge. In this way the concept has been spread rapidly to all teams, which turned out to be a good strategy to get employees onboard the transformation according to one PAM. The same PAM hope the rest of the departments at Procurement will take after them in order to get a common way of working. The same department expects to start work Agile full-scale March 2019. Already now, their PAM’s participate in the PI-event and follow the backlog of P&Q, however they do not work in the same computer system as P&Q as they have the same challenge as the other department. As Procurement are not implementing the role PO it is the Category owner who prioritize the backlog for the team.

Outcome of the transformation

Lost and Confused

The Agile transformation has put the company in a state of confusion where lack of clear directive and too little education are two great factors in many of the teams.

After a three-hour lecture they simply said, “We’re now going to work in this new way” and everybody felt “What new way?!” We hadn’t got much information and therefore the discussion got side-tracked. I believe it could have been done in a much better way. (Scrum Master)

Skepticism and resistance are risen from this confusion in combination with fear of the unknown; how will things work? What is my role in all of this? Why do we have to change? When the employees have not understood what they should do and why, they more often resist rather than follow expresses a second line manager . “We are all humans; we need to understand the reason for making a change. That is the key to success.” (Second Line Manager)

To attain a successful transformation, interviewees mean it is necessary to have directives for clarity, but along with a bottom-up approach for getting employees involved in the process to create an understanding. Today, many of the employees perceive the transformation has been pushed upon them, but they also perceived a lack of directive where everyone has attained different amount and type of directives. This shows in the different levels of maturity.

It would have helped if the foundation were set before rolling it out. So, there would be some process to follow. (PAM)

Some mean the only directive they have attained from a higher level is to become Agile. Thus, it is up to each individual group manager to make transformation happen i.e. each manager has interpreted Agile in their own way and started working accordingly without aligning with the rest of the organization. As of today, some managers have run with their teams while others have done a minimum, and perhaps solely changed name of roles and meetings but still run their business as usual. Hence, “how far each department has come depends on the ambition of each manager” (Second Line Manager). The lack of directive from a higher level can have benefits as freedom, but it also creates unclarity and inequality where processes and collaboration between departments, may be hard to synchronize efficiently. Interviewees at Procurement state that the three departments need to find similar ways of working, for attaining a successful transformation. Basic principles need to exist but where local adoptions can be applied to a certain extent.

I believe we should align one way of working... we cannot create three different ways of working within Procurement. (PAM)

The greatest advantage with Agile, is having standardized roles, so that it is possible to move between team. (Transformation Leader)

Frustration can be sensed amongst those teams who have reached a higher level of majority, as it is difficult for them to become fully Agile until the rest of the teams do. Others mean that VCAF applies for everyone. For example, how a PI-event should look, how to work as a PAM and how the collaboration between two divisions e.g. how Procurement and P&Q, should be done are set. However, freedom is offered to each individual department to design specific set ups, to fulfil their needs. Nevertheless, when talking to interviewees at Procurement about the collaboration with P&Q, they mean these routines are not followed as it is not the most efficient way for them.

Education is another important part of avoiding resistance, but rather than a three-hour lecture, employees mean a few days would be appropriate. They claim that people know about the concept Agile but does not yet understand the purpose of it and what improvements it makes in their specific tasks. By increasing the number of lectures a greater understanding will be created among employees regarding what to do, the purpose of the transformation and what each individual gains are. This will lead to a greater chance of getting people on board of the transformation. A transformation leader further insist continuous lectures are needed, as most of the teams easily fall back to old patterns. Moreover, the lectures that were held were not adapted to the group of listeners. Several interviewees mean standardized lectures have to be adapted to Volvo Cars and each specific department, to increase the understanding of how it applies.

Even me who think this [Agile] is a good thing thought it [the lecture] was really bad. It created irritation, which grew and escalated. People raised their hand and asked: "Do you have a hardware example so we can relate?". But nobody could. (Scrum Master)

By involving employees in the process and let them influence, they will most likely become positively tuned to the transformation. The teams are the ones possessing best knowledge of how their work is executed, which is a good reason for why they should be involved. Another SM contradicts saying that employees at his/her department where not given any choice and accepted it which according to him/her was a good way to avoid resistance, however this SM was the only one of this opinion.

It is a must for managers to be united and positively tuned in an early stage, or else it will become challenging to get the employees on board. Managers can convince employees the transformation is good by leading by example, show concrete examples of improvement, coaching, provide clear instructions and have continuous feedback. It is also necessary for managers to take everybody's feelings into consideration and make everybody feel seen and heard. The retrospective meetings are an opportunity to do this where employees can give feedback. A way for managers to make employees feel safe is by convincing the team the transformation is a team effort and no individual's responsibility. Once the transformation is up running, it is significant for the leader to communicate the status, motivate, inspire and guide people in the right direction. "It doesn't matter how motivated someone is if they're running in the wrong direction" (Product Owner).

Organizational Culture

One of the biggest challenges Volvo Cars has encountered is how to turn a hardware company with legacy from the Taylorism, built on a leadership of command and control, to an Agile organization built on transparency and trust, with self-organizing teams and servant leaders.

Our challenge is that we are extremely hierarchically structured. It is not usually the case to describe the organizational structure by using a pyramid and it is not steep enough if you look holistically on how the purchasing organization has looked within Volvo. (PAM)

The people showing the strongest resistance mean that Agile has its origin from the software industry and is not suitable for all sorts of departments e.g. Procurement and specific hardware departments at P&Q. For example, for Procurement one issue is to work in a backlog with 12 weeks iteration when a negotiation can take over a year. This applies for certain departments at P&Q as well who mean that in two weeks sprints, nothing will be produced.

I don't think we should work with it. I know too little about it and so far, it does not work for me. I think some areas work great but others not at all. (Team Member)

Even though the initiative came from above, one manager speculates one of the greatest challenges is for the company to power through this transformation on the higher corporate level. "Up there [higher corporate level] they have come far... in theory," (Second Line Manager). The paradox is; during the transformation the teams should be let more freedom and get into their new roles while at the same time the top management executes a "witch hunt", as expressed by a second line manager, for the teams to provide the same results as before. The implication is that the middle management fall in the middle and do not know how to act; support their teams or hold back. Many employees agree the Agile transformation is difficult as it includes the whole company. To change the power dynamics is problematic both for team members and managers. The challenge lies both in empowering the team members to become autonomous, and to make managers let go of the control. Employees are traditionally used to have a manager to ask what to do and get somewhat paralyzed when the question is turned.

In the beginning when I got a question from a team member about how something would be done and I answered, "What do you think?" It made their blood boil. (Scrum Master)

Part of becoming a self-organizing team is for the team members to possess T-shaped knowledge. To create this sort of knowledge, implicate to budge the traditional structure. An employee would no longer be seen as a developer or a tester but "simply" as a team member. According to many of the managers handling teams, T-shaped knowledge is difficult to create as people have their position because they like what they do and might have worked a long time to get there. Team members have shown an unwillingness to make this change. "It is hard to make people want to broaden [their knowledge base]" (Scrum Master). A SM who is in the lead of the Agile work at P&Q estimate it would take roughly a year for an employee to learn a colleague's work. Moreover, it would not be possible to change without delaying deliveries during the learning period, which may be one of the reasons higher managers have not prioritized and pushed for the T-shape transformation to happen. Another SM mean there is

resistance for T-shaped teams which comes from fear and stress. When people hear they should learn a new area of work, they freak out and express a lot of how's e.g. how should this work and how should I learn this etc. While T-shaped knowledge gives an opportunity to learn and develop it also removes specialists, which rise the question of how those people should be seen and stay motivated. In one team working with T-shaped knowledge, the SM explains they have solved the challenge by keeping existing roles to not make the "old foxes feel under attack". They still let individuals have their tasks in the backlog but have made it mandatory to work with a colleagues' task in order to broaden each team members knowledge base. "You don't lose your special area of competence but learn more and transfer your knowledge to others" (Scrum Master). The team need small encouraging nudges and a leader who is inclined to change and can challenge and develop the team. It is not possible to force the team to change, but instead the leader needs to show the benefits, explain the purpose for the individual and make it fun.

By self-organizing teams where the decision-making process is put on the teams to a larger extent, "the ones deciding are not 200 anymore but 10 000" (Transformation Leader). The managers are no longer supposed to have all the answers but to work as a support function to the teams who are the heart in the Agile organization. For managers, this mean letting go of your prestige and not put yourself and your position first. To readjust mentally may create a hoax with your self-esteem instead leading to a tighter grip of your position and title. As of today, there has been a small movement from second line managers into the Agile framework at certain departments. Managers who have always worked as a manager stays in their role because it is a manager position. A PO mean that this shows for example in the fact that P&Q has created TM for the group manager to take on and not feel down played.

It's very nice to have someone to call to at 11pm just to ensure one's own decision, but that role should not remain to exist. (Second Line Manager)

To get a smooth and successful transformation, interviewees at P&Q mean it is necessary to not transform everything at the same time. Instead it is important to have patience, hurry slowly, and keep in mind that nothing "happens over a breakfast" as one of the second line managers point out. "People are creatures of habits and to change those habits takes time" (Group Manager). It is very common that people fall back into old patterns because it requires energy to change and it is easier to do what we know which is comfortable and safe. Organizations also need to thoroughly think through why a transformation is desired and what changes are needed to reach that state. A transformation leader means it is desired to have a guiding coalition a group of people with high credibility who will guide and motivate the organization through the transformation specifically in an early stage. When making a transformation, one group manager means a company is divided in three shares; the ones being positive towards the transformation, the negative ones and the ones in the middle. Once winning over the majority on the positive side of the transformation, the rest eventually will follow or quit. One way to engage employees is to take advantage of early adopters who spread the word in a natural way to the rest of the organization "We start with employees who are eager and then we lure people to join" (Group Manager).

To create an Agile culture built on trust and transparency, communication and commitment are vital parts. A second line manager mention that building bottom-up is important for reaching this culture. By involving employees in an early stage and openly discuss a future state of the company, people will become enthusiastic where commitment is created. A second line manager claims a culture based on trust is created by communication “it is about communication, communication, communication”. The communication needs to be constant for people to get out of their old habits. Another important aspect for creating an Agile culture is according to an interviewee curiosity which can foster communication. Curiosity can be created by attaining an open culture, by including employees in conversations and invite everybody to speak up, where everybody expresses their thoughts and feeling.

Globally Distributed

A great challenge of transforming globally is the cultural differences. Due to China's culture of work hierarchy it is challenging to achieve a servant leadership style. The Chinese leaders use control and demand leadership and like to go in and manage in detail, instead of letting the teams the freedom they should have to make their own decisions. The culture of work hierarchy in China drives the hunt for titles, as that is how they make career and increase their salary. A natural effect of such culture the work climate is not very open and there is little acceptance for an employee to contradict a manager and speak freely. Moreover, the departments have a high number of managers per team members. This mindset stands in contrast with the Agile mindset of self-organizing teams, servant leaders and less obvious manager roles. In the same time, it is difficult to boost the team members as they expect a leader to point with their whole hand and tell them what to do and are not used to take their own decisions.

The first time I was in China I asked the group manager to gather his team so that we could talk. I asked them “How does it feel today” and “What would you like to talk about”? It got dead silent and everyone turned their heads to their manager. They were waiting for him to answer me. (Second Line Manager)

Since cultural differences exist, the transformation needs to be conducted differently in China compared to Sweden. For example, China probably need other career models compared to Sweden due to titles being an important part for them. The Swedish managers working in China have a hard time to see China reaching the same maturity level as Sweden when it comes to servant leaders and self-organizing teams, but also says it is matter of time. As changing the managers hierarchical mindset is one of their biggest challenge it has been great to have Swedish managers at place breaking up the hierarchical structure, by leading by example and guiding both managers and employees in the Agile way of working.

I tell my team, “Do your best” and “Come to me and ask as much as you want”. If you fail in any way, the employees have to know that is okay to make mistakes. (Product Owner)

Even if challenges are seen when transforming to an Agile mindset in China, it is also said that as China is a fast-moving country it might not be as big of a challenge as firstly thought. So far, it has been a great development in short time. The Chinese people are described as “doers”

and when the transformation was communicated to the Chinese departments they said, “let’s do it” and started to “run”, unfortunately a lot of the time without being exactly sure about what they are doing. However, many of the interviewees cannot determine whether this is a weakness or strength as Swedish people are described as “thinkers” and plan and discuss without getting anywhere.

I don’t think we should underestimate the Chinese claiming that they can’t learn, but it is often those who can learn. When I came back I realized that we are sitting here with our red houses and white corners and think life is lovely, at the same time there is a world out there that spins incredibly fast. (Transformation leader)

Discussion

Levels of adoption

The company as a whole built its Agile transformation on VCAF which emanates from SAFe but have several clear adaptations for the framework to fit with the organization (Cram and Newell, 2016). Employees mention the company has had a well thought through idea with the transformation and decided the departments should implement Scrum ceremonies, roles, PI and backlog etc. However, the transformation leaders continuously mention the offered flexibility to each department, with the argument how important it is for each department to do adaptations for the daily operations to run smoothly. This shows that the ones leading the transformation have a mindset of a Tailor where it is planned for the organization to adopt a majority of the practices but allowing adaptations and hybrid practices. Accordingly, at a firm level we categorize Volvo Cars as a Tailor.

Taking a closer look at each specific department provides us clarity with the spread of the Agile adoption and leaves us with several subcategories. The empirical chapter clearly shows that P&Q are the department who has come furthest in the transformation, as they have implemented the whole VCAF framework: Scrum ceremonies, PI-event, backlog and roles. The department are more or less following the Agile way of working where the only adaptation is the role TM. Not only Agile processes but also an Agile mindset appear to exist within the department, as the initiative to the transformation partly was driven bottom-up where employees seems to be positive towards the new way of working. The transformation process of using both bottom-up and top-down at P&Q is in line with previous research made by Rohunen et al. (2010) who investigates how Agile is being adopted into larger organizations. Furthermore, the Agile mindset is shown through their attempts to achieve servant leaders and self-organizing teams. As P&Q has adopted all Agile techniques with minimal adaption and there is a consensus amongst the employees who sees Agile as good fit with the department, we categorize the department as a Crusader. This is aligned with Cram and Newell (2016) theory of characteristic of a Crusaders. Despite being categorized as Crusaders, adaptations to some level seems to be necessary and there is no one way to do it which supports Campanelli and Parreira (2015) previous research. As for P&Q China, the categorization is somewhat problematic. On one hand, they are similar to the implementation at P&Q in Sweden and should in that sense be categorized as Crusaders as well. On the other hand, we have learnt they have

not come as far in regard to the Agile mindset with servant leaders and self-organizing teams due to their long history of work hierarchy, indicating the difficulties to let go of old work structures emphasized in the categorization for a Dabbler. Therefore, we categorize P&Q China as Tailors, right in the middle of Dabbler and Crusader as showing tendencies of both categories but does not fit fully into either.

When it comes to Procurement, the different sub-departments have reached different levels of maturity. In one of the sub-departments the employees have expressed open opposition against the fit of the trend of Agile and their specific business context (Cram & Newell, 2016). The sub-department struggles with how to adopt Agile and question if it is desired and necessary which can be seen for example in the case where the whole department implemented the role of PAM, and many teams within the department decided to remove the role as it did not fill any function. Hence, this sub-department is showing indications of being a Dabbler. Cram and Newell (2016) describe, the driving force for the Dabbler comes from the highest management and not from the employees which seems to be the case for this sub-department. In the other sub-department, a majority of the employees seems positive towards the change, even if they also struggle in how to make everything work. They have implemented the role of PAM to 100% and COP and attend to PI-events and follow the backlog of P&Q, even if they still have not managed to work inside the program themselves. Action indicating for this sub-department, to be categorized as a Tailor is the implementation of several of the practices but the need for clear adaptation to make Agile work with their structure (Cram & Newell, 2016).

Throughout the empirical chapter it becomes clear how some departments have found it easier to adopt the Agile concept than others. We therefore argue Dabblers, Tailors and Crusaders do not only exist on a firm-level but also inside one organization. This implies an organization could be placed within one category and include sub-categories for departments or teams. Volvo Cars is a large company and the departments differ widely in their structure, where the processes at for example Procurement may last for over a year, compared to P&Q who work in shorter iterations. Such different starting positions indicate the adoption will look differently and the departments will fall into different categories. However, throughout this study we do not see a clear cut between the different categories each department has adopted, where one department can show tendency of two or even all three categories. It is important to highlight that because the organization have yet not “completed” their Agile adoption and the departments started their transformation at different times and have hence reached different maturity levels, it is difficult to determine in what category each department will end up.

Challenges as an effect of competing logics

To unravel why these categories exist not only on a firm-level but also inside an organization, we will look into the challenges encountered when adopting the management trend Agile. One way to understand these challenges is through a lens of institutional logics by studying competing logics. First, we want to explain how Agile can be seen as part of a logic, namely the market logic. The market logic has a self-interest with focus on creating a strong status in the market, increased efficiency profit and highlight stakeholder activism (Thornton et al.,

2012). Furthermore, the market logic is characterized as faceless, meaning lacking any particular character, interpreted by us, that the means in how to achieve these goals is not defined. As the current market environment is considered to be rather unstable with constantly changing demands, flexible solutions are required for companies to follow a market logic. Agile is one way to support the driving forces in the market logic in an ambiguous market environment. We therefore mean Agile is included in the market logic when the market is unpredictable.

Several studies have shown cases where logics are able to coexist (Egels-Zandén, Lindberg, & Hyllman 2015) however, in the case of Volvos Cars where a market logic and a corporation logic exist, they appear hard to combine. The Agile mindset has its foundation to set the teams in the center of organization, where they function as self-organizing groups supported by servant leaders, this is not compatible with a bureaucratic setting which favors hierarchy. The difficulty for the two logics to coexist in this specific case is due to the market logic, including Agile, which differ completely in the ways of achieving its values compared to the corporation logic (Gustavsson, 2014; Zheng et al., 2018; Thornton & Ocasio, 1999; Mangen & Brivot, 2015; Friedland and Alford, 1991). This can be seen in Table 3 and will be exemplified further down in the discussion. Assuming the fashion trend would have been driven by a management approach as Scientific Management, the two logics might have been possible to match, supporting each other and make coexistence fully possible. Tension as an outcome of two competing logics has previously been proved by Hoffman (1999) and Battilana and Dorado (2010). It is believed the challenges are the outcome of the tension between a market logic and a corporation logic, which together shapes the organizational practices.

Y-Axis:	X-Axis: Institutional orders	
Categories	Market	Corporation
Root Metaphor	Launch cars at a faster pace	Corporation as hierarchy
Sources of Authority	Stakeholders	Board of director and top management
Sources of Identity	Loosely defined roles	Bureaucratic roles
Basis of Attention	Status in market	Status in hierarchy

Table 3: Institutional orders, inspired by Thornton et al. (2012, p.73).

The interviewees state the main purpose to adopt Agile is to become more flexible and launch cars at a faster pace to survive in an industry evolving in an extremely fast pace. The market logic can therefore be seen as the overall force convincing the executive management team that change is needed to survive. This is aligned with Thornton and Ocasio (1999) statement of market logic being driven by building strong competitive advantage and profit maximization. However, the force of the market logic is clashing with the corporation logic in the “root metaphor”. The market logic strives for profit maximization by creating value by launching cars at a faster pace and to achieve this the organization aims at becoming more flexible through a flat hierarchy. The corporation logic instead has its “root metaphor” to see the corporation as a hierarchy, making them sluggish in a fast-moving environment. For example, decisions are made by the top management causing a long administrative process before a decision can be

made to move forward. We therefore suggest the corporation logic is the competing force hindering the transformation and together with the market logic create challenges.

One challenge arising when becoming Agile is, by the interviewees, claimed to be resistance which is built on many different aspects. This is in line with Lounsbury and Marquis (2007) who mean resistance being a natural effect of competing logics. Throughout the years, the hierarchy structure (corporation logic) has been dominating the organization, for example the employees are used to obtain clear work tasks and instructions from a manager of how the tasks should be performed. When the competing market logic in terms of the Agile concept was introduced to the company, frustration of the new way of working occurred both by the employees but also by the managers. The employees became frustrated when they were asked to answer questions previously solved by the managers, while managers found it difficult letting go of the control. Illustrated in the example when an employee came to a SM, asking how to solve a certain problem, and SM turned the question around by asking: what do you suggest?. We believe this challenge could be an outcome of the difference in “sources of authority” moving down the authority for decision-making to the team member.

The corporation logic also shows in the unwillingness to adopt T-shaped teams. Employees identify themselves with a certain role, for example as a developer or a tester and risk to lose their identity by adopting T-shaped teams where they would “simply” become a team member with no further title. Furthermore, such adoption also implies losing status in the hierarchy, as everyone are seen as team member and Agile advocate letting go of expertise competence. This shows characteristics from both “source of identity” and “basis of attention”. The challenge rising from the clash of “source of identity” occurs as the market logic, including Agile, is distinguished by loosely defined roles and the corporation logic has more clearly defined roles. This is conveyed by employees more or less are freaking out and express a lot of how’s when being introduced to the concept of T-shaped teams, where one team member does not only possess one area of knowledge but is expected to expand their knowledge base. Another good example of a loosely defined role is the role of SM, who is part of the team but at the same time the coach guiding the team in the right direction. The flexibility of how much time being spent as a SM versus an “ordinary” team member, makes the role even more loosely defined. In comparison to a traditional manager being distinct from the team due to the clear division of authority. “Basis of attention” is instead shown in the case of T-shaped teams when focus shifts from creating status in hierarchy (corporation logic) to creating status in market (market logic). This shift focus from individuals who strive for status by climbing up the hierarchy latter through having expert knowledge, to teams where the tasks and responsibilities is equally divided and no individual person is highlighted. The competing logics have made the “old foxes feeling under attack” afraid of losing their status as one SM expresses it.

While the Agile concept advocate flatter organizations, managers show resistance as an attempt to maintain their power and level of control within the organization. This is aligned with Thornton et al. (2012) who mean the hierarchy structure has always been in managers favor, as it is built on position and power. Explicitly, this shows in for example a small move by second line managers to the Agile framework, and also in the creation of the role TM as a way

for managers not to feel downplayed. This once again shows the clash of “source of identity” with loosely defined roles versus bureaucratic roles.

Throughout the interviews the managers have speculated how the resistance of their team members emanates from fear of the unknown and stepping into the unknown without knowing the direction, the end state or attaining guidance. In accordance with Thornton & Ocasio (1999) who mean people organize their environment after historical patterns, it may seem natural staying in the old hierarchy structure as this is familiar and safe. Relatedly, while interviewees mean directives about routines are not followed as they are not the most efficient for a certain team or department, perhaps the reason is rather explained by convenience than efficiency. Even if a clash is not seen between the two logics in this case, we believe moving from one structure to another, creates challenges.

Based on several interviews with managers the executive management seem to be under the influence of the two logics. This appears through the following two examples; the first one is the so called “witch hunt” in the executive management desire to achieve constant progress (Abrahamson, 1996) but at the same time expect the same results as before during transformation. Secondly, managers also describe how it is hard to power through the transformation on a higher executive level, which has given mixed messages to the organization of how the transformation should be performed and put the middle management in a difficult position not knowing what way to turn. The two examples describe the difference in the source of “root metaphor” as the market logic strives for progress while the corporation logic aims at keeping the old structure.

A further challenge arising is connected to difficulties creating an Agile culture. The Agile culture is characterized by trust and transparency, which is hard to create in a hardware company with legacy from Taylorism ruled by a command and control leadership style. Before the Agile transformation, a common backlog did for example not exist and therefore it did not come natural sharing the work openly throughout the organization. The lack of trust shows in two distinct ways, both when it comes to managers having a hard time to let go of the control and to trust the teams to work as self-organizing, as well as for team members who do not have confidence in their skills and trust their own judgement. This may be an outcome from a long tradition of hierarchy structure, where the manager is telling the subordinate what to do and may be related to “sources of authority”. In an organization where the authority has always lied with the higher management with an underlying pyramid structure, trust and transparency have not been as vital due to tasks and mandate being clearly divided. In contrast the market logic, including Agile, which pushes down the decision-making authority to the teams, requiring a greater focus on trust and transparency.

The challenge of reaching an Agile culture is even harder in China where the hierarchy heritage is greater which can be seen in their strong work hierarchy, their hunt for titles and little acceptance for contradicting managers and speak freely. In the same time, China are quick to implement the same Agile processes, and roles as Sweden and are many times described as “doers” adapting to the market. The challenge in China occur as an effect of the differences in

“source of attention”, which shows by the implementation of processes and roles but where managers for examples still go in and manage on a detail level instead of giving the team freedom to make decisions on their own. China is “doing” Agile rather than the preferred “being” Agile (Forbes, 2016, July). The clash of the two logics might be the reason China will never reach the same maturity level as Sweden when it comes to Agile, which could hinder the communication and collaboration globally.

Dominant market logic

For a company wishing to pursue a dominant market logic as the executive management has decided Volvo Cars does by wanting an Agile transformation, the challenges may be over bridged by diverse actions. There are two ways to achieve such result, either to strengthen the market force or to decrease the corporation force, or possibly both. Interviewees at P&Q and Procurement who have come further in the transformation process, have offered several insights in what has went well and what could have been done better to succeed with the transformation. There is a common understanding amongst the interviewees no matter if they are for or against the transformation that a transformation requires time. As institutional logics are deeply rooted in social behavior, they are difficult to change (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999). The best thing to do is to hurry slowly and have patience. Another building block seems to be communication. Even though it is not always explicitly spoken by the interviewees the underlying message is clear; communication, communication and once again communication. Communication seem to foster the desired end regardless what that end might be. By that we mean; opponents of the transformation, hence proponents of keeping the old structure, use communication as mean to get their message across (of course there might also be silent resistance) as much as proponents of the transformation. By continuously communicating about the Agile mindset and why it is good, people create an understanding and make it easier to take in. Communication takes place in many forms and is included in education, workshops and meetings etc. which are all essential for creating understanding. Through communication the organization make sure to engage all employees in a natural way. Little by little old power structures of hierarchy may break and a new organizational structure is possible to build.

As in all transformations it is beneficial to make use of early adopters in a way to convince and win over more and more employees (Doyle, 2011). As one employee mention a group, simplified said, are usually divided by three equal parts, the positive ones, the negative ones and the ones in the middle. If the middle can be won over, the negative ones will eventually have to follow. However, we, together with a majority of the interviewees mean communication is not enough alone, there must be some sort of structure to successfully go through with a transformation. Even though bottom-up is a desired approach in a transformation as it involves and engages everyone in the firm, there still need to come an initiative and continuous guidance (directive) for people to know in what direction they should move (Rohunen et. al., 2010). As one TM wisely said, “It doesn’t matter how fast you run if you run in the wrong direction”, and with this we agree. It doesn’t matter how committed and excited you are about the Agile transformation, if you do not know how to do it as it will result

in an extremely diverse organization who cannot work efficiently. With this said, even though there is a fine line between directive and a bottom-up approach it needs to be balanced.

Finally, we would like to discuss the importance of questioning whether it is desired to follow a market logic based on a trend. Even though a certain management technique has become a trend, there is no guarantee the adoption of the trend is beneficial or not (Cram & Newell, 2016). It is easy to get caught up in a trend and it might turn out wonderfully but is equally important to look into the counteracting forces, as well as making sure a company follows the market trend for the right reasons. A trend existing within the market logic is as mentioned driven by academics, gurus and mass-media (Abrahamson, 1996) and while these people most certainly know a lot about a specific trend, it is questionable how much they know about specific companies. Not that these fashion setters necessarily have claimed to know anything about a specific company, but this fact seems to be forgotten by the executive who turn the blind eye to certain factors and simply implement, a popular at the time trend. Connections can be made to the wish for managers to appear rational and constantly hunt for progress (Abrahamson, 1996). In their aim to pursue this, it is possible they forget to look if a certain trend is compatible with their organization. Naturally, executive leaders possess more of a strategic based knowledge rather than operational knowledge as the employees working hands on. Which indicates even though there are companies who have reached beneficial outcomes (Abrahamson, 1996) from applying an Agile mindset there are no proofs the same outcomes will apply to one's own company. The ones occupying the best knowledge about the company are seemingly the employees where it has shown to exist disagreements about whether the Agile trend is desired at Volvo Cars or if it is even possible.

In the case of Volvo Cars, the organization is least to say huge, where it covers all kinds of departments from Development within software to Procurement and Manufacturing and of course Administrative departments as economy. Because it covers such different types of department, it seems to be difficult for the company as a whole to implement one widespread management methodology. Even though the managers we have spoken to might say the “correct answer” when we ask them what the purpose is of Volvo Cars becoming Agile, it is unsure if these are personal opinions or if the managers in question act as parrots repeating messages coming from above. The reason for making us question this is because many of the interviewees talk with the exact same words and phrases which sometimes seems to be sentences from a book or possibly an executive leader. More than once we have heard interviewees start off an answer with “well, now it is not me who think we should do an Agile transformation... but the purpose is to become more flexible and launch cars at a faster pace”. Many interviewees also praise the Agile mindset but end by saying it is not suitable for all departments at Volvo Cars. Hence, by listening to the employees we have spoken to everyone are not convinced following the market logic is the right way to go, not saying the organization should keep its somewhat hierarchical structure.

Competing logics have allowed us to understand one part of the underlying reasons for the categorization of Dabbler, Tailor and Crusader. However, as the same challenges have been encountered across the departments, questions are raised for future research where for example

type of work are suggested to be investigated as a further explanation for the categorization. In the case of Volvo Cars, the work setting in a Procurement department differs widely from one at P&Q. The processes at Procurement is long and relationship based, historically such departments are hierarchy ruled hence people are familiar to a more hierarchy structure and have a harder time to adopt a trend built on a low hierarchy structure. Compared to a software department at P&Q which are rather new, and many times younger people tend to work in such positions. Imagining the same people working at Procurement would start working at P&Q and vice versa, would offer more knowledge about whether the challenges depends on hierarchical forces or the structure of the work. No matter what, we can see that one company adapt different styles of Agile implementation, from a Crusader approach to Dabbler. Lastly, the fact that the departments have adopted Agile differently still remains and leaves the type of department and prominent the hierarchical heritage is as a possible explanation to as why some became Dabblers while others Tailors and Crusaders.

Conclusion

In this report we have studied a large organization during their Agile transformation. We have studied how they have adopted the Agile concept and how this adoption differs between departments and teams. By doing so we have found several challenges occurring when implementing the management trend Agile. Further we have illustrated how these challenges are the outcome of a clash of a market logic, where we have argued for Agile to be a part, and a corporation logic as they have completely different ways of achieving their values. We have identified clashes in the categories of “Root Metaphor”, “Sources of Authority”, “Sources of Identity” and “Basis of Attention” and exemplified this through our empirical findings. These clashes have in turn led to different levels of adoption. Hence, throughout the report we have shown it is possible for one organization to adopt and adapt to a trend differently thus, Dabbler, Tailor and Crusader do not only exist at a firm level, but a firm can fall into different categories in their implementation. The area of research is of interest as our contribution shows how departments and teams within one company adopt a management trend differently. This knowledge is applicable to other companies going through a transformation and provides insights in the necessity of offering departments allowance to adapt a framework differently, and that there is no one way to do it throughout a large global organization.

As we saw resembling challenges across the departments, the reason why different departments adopt Dabbler, Tailor and Crusader cannot fully be explained by the clash of a market logic and a corporation logic. We therefore suggest further research to explore factors as type of department and educational background as other plausible reasons.

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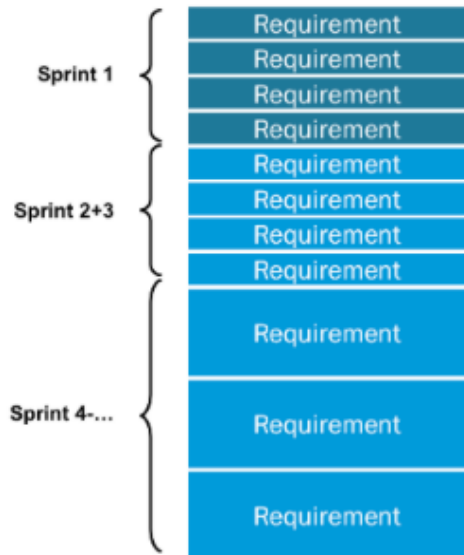
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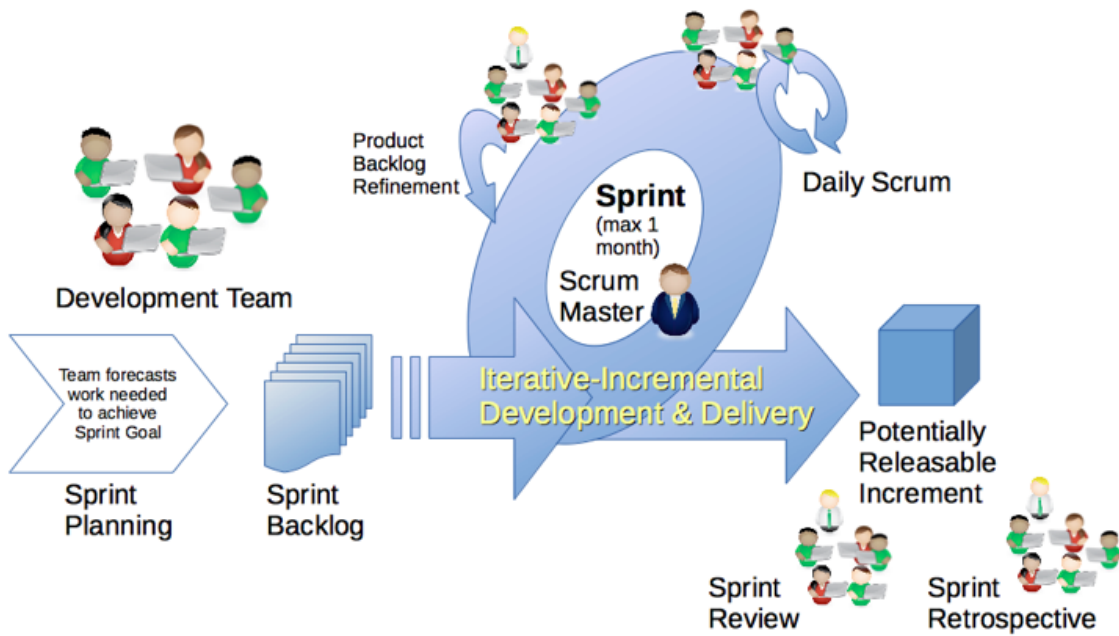
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Appendix



Appendix 1 - Backlog prioritized by the PO



Appendix 2 - Scrum Process