

Modelling the Organisation of Organisational Change (extended abstract) ¹

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In this paper, the process of (business) organisational change is analysed in more detail. Methods used in this analysis are those of formalisation, simulation and verification. As every business process, the process of organisation change has to be organised in one way or the other. To organise such a change process, a generic organisation model for organisational change is introduced and formalised. This organisation model incorporates both multi-agent co-operation aspects and individual cognitive aspects in the form of the internal mental states (e.g., beliefs) of those involved in the change.

Given an organisation that needs to undergo change, Lewin [1] states that there are two opposing forces at work: forces that resist the change, and forces that drive towards the newly desired organisation, see Figure 1. Lewin considers the process of organisational change to consist of three stages (see the top part of Figure 1): unfreezing, movement, and refreezing.

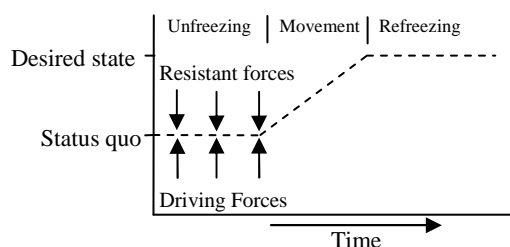


Figure 1: Movement of an organisation from a status quo to a desired state

¹ In: *Proc. of the Sixth International Workshop on Agent-Oriented Information Systems, AOIS'04*. To be published by Springer Verlag.

The approach adopted in this article for modelling an organisation is the Agent-Group-Role (AGR) approach [2] extended with dynamic expressions. Modelling the forces indicated in Lewin's model entails attributing these forces to roles. Given an existing organisation model that does not model organisation change, there are two basic choices that can be made: assigning these forces to roles already in the model, or extending the model with additional organisational elements. Attributing them to the existing roles is counterintuitive, because different roles have been identified to specify different behaviours. The resisting and driving behaviours are of a different category. The way chosen in this article, is to recognise that all agents part of the realisation of the organisation have one thing in common: they are all members of the organisation. Some members of the organisation might be in favour of change, some against, and this might change over time. This is modelled by adding the role Member to the organisation model, and attributing driving and resisting forces to that role. Given that the organisation changes from one stable situation to a new stable situation, there is a need to model the focus existing in the organisational change. For this reason the role of Change Manager is added to the organisational model. The Change Manager is attributed with driving forces. The new roles are grouped together in an organisational element called the Change Group.

In change processes the internal (mental) states of those involved in the organisation are important. Therefore, also internal states of individuals have to be part of a model for organisational change. In particular, beliefs and their changes are incorporated in the model. In addition also a distinction is made between automated and non-automated (more conscious) role behaviour. For the latter case an internal model for (reflective) reasoning about expected role behaviour is included.

References

- [1] Lewin, K., *Field Theory in Social Science*, Harper & Row, New York, 1951.
- [2] Ferber, J. and Gutknecht, O., A meta-model for the analysis and design of organisations in multi-agent systems. In: *Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Multi-Agent Systems (ICMAS'98)*, IEEE Computer Society Press, pp. 128-135.