Integrated Conflict Management Systems as Cure and Cause: How Leaders Address Cultural Change and Conflict in Their Organizations

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Integrated Conflict Management Systems as Cure and Cause: How Leaders Address Cultural Change and Conflict in Their Organizations

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Abstract

Organizations experience the bottom line impact of internal conflicts daily. Conflicts between employees simply drain organizational resources. The idea of Integrated Conflict Management Systems (ICMS) has been introduced to help minimize the impact of these conflicts. ICMS, through the development of policies and procedures to address conflicts, are actually attempting to change the organization’s culture, and when organizations attempt cultural changes, conflicts are likely to occur. The primary component of cultural change is the organizational leader.

The study interviews organizational leaders about the conflicts that occur when organizations change cultures and the methods that leaders use to work through those conflicts. One finding was that though leaders viewed most conflicts as relational, they may in fact be values conflicts requiring different interventions. The study found that leaders identified three primary components for dealing with conflict during change. They are dialogue, one-on-one conversations, and direct and consistent messaging.
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I. Introduction

Integrated Conflict Management Systems and other organizational change initiatives can themselves produce the very conflict they set out to address. This study attempts to find more specific answers to the questions:

1) What conflicts occur during organizational cultural change initiatives?
2) What do leaders do to work through those conflicts?

To address this, the literature review for this thesis will examine the intricate relationships among three very complicated subjects – organizational culture, Integrated Conflict Management Systems, and leadership. The literature on Integrated Conflict Management Systems gives some important details about the proper components for these systems but does not provide much insight into the methods and strategies used to implement such processes. Because of this fact, the hope of this study is to provide insight that can be used to improve the effective implementation of Integrated Conflict Management Systems (ICMS).

The literature review for this study will explain the relationship between organizational culture, ICMS, and leadership. This review will help to show that even a basic understanding of the relationships among these expansive subjects can be valuable to conflict practitioners. The independent research in this study
will provide some insight into initial steps that practitioners can use to begin to address these issues.

Conflict is a vital part of organizational life. It can be both positive and negative. From a bottom-line perspective, conflict can be incredibly harmful to employee morale, leading to losses such as employee theft or even, in the worst case scenario, homicide. For example, the restaurant industry sees between $15 billion and $25 billion in losses per year due to employee theft (Greenberg and Baron, 2003).

According to Luthans (2008), homicide is the second leading cause of death in the workplace and is often related to conflicts caused or influenced by employee frustrations. These facts create some staggering concerns. Fortunately, Conflict practitioners have offered some methods for reducing these costs through the use of Integrated Conflict Management Systems (ICMS).

The goal of ICMS is to give employees methods for addressing the underlying issues that lead to stress and frustrations in the workplace. For example, after facing a rise in employee violence, the United States Postal Service (USPS) created a Conflict Management System that uses mediation to address discrimination complaints. One of the goals of this program was to improve the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) complaint process to give employees a faster and more effective outlet for their complaints (Bingham, 2002). Additionally, she found that the program helped to reduce the number of formal EEO complaints filed by more than 17 percent (Bingham, 2002).
The fundamental aspects of ICMS are to alter the ways that individuals view conflict in their day-to-day work. These systems attempt to change the perception of conflict from something that is bad and should be avoided at all costs to something that is actually good for the organization when properly addressed.

Conflict Management Systems give employees multiple options for addressing any type of conflict they may face in the workplace. For instance, the organization may offer dispute resolution resources, such as third-party intervention techniques of mediation, arbitration, and coaching. Many studies have shown these third-party interventions to be effective.

The problem that Conflict practitioners find is that these resources are often ignored in situations where they could be truly helpful. An examination of the organization’s culture could provide insight and solutions into resolving this problem. If organizations properly address cultural aspects, Conflict practitioners may find their ICMS to be more effective, and one method for doing this is to work closely with the organization’s leaders.

Organizational culture is most basically defined as “the way we do things around here” (Deal and Kennedy, 1982). Culture defines how employees do their jobs, as well as the way they behave within the organization. The most concrete examples of an organization’s culture can be seen in its policies and procedures. Beyond the written policies, reinforced behaviors also influence culture. When an action has been proven to work, employees will likely repeat it. Over time, these
repeated behaviors become an integral part of the culture and eventually become how people expect each other to act.

With this in mind we can begin to see how cultural aspects can impact the success of ideas such as ICMS. If the organization’s culture views conflict as purely bad and strives to avoid it at all costs, then introducing a concept that suggests admitting and confronting conflict will likely shock the organization. In fact, due to the stresses created by change initiatives, organizations could find that new policies and procedures, even those that are intended to address conflict, actually increase conflict.

The good news for Conflict practitioners is that change is seen as a natural part of organizational life. Greenberg and Baron (2003) tell us that the most successful organizations have senior managers who support organizational change. “The world is changing, and those companies that fail to change when required find themselves out of business as a result” (p. 589).

The cultural change that results from implementing an ICMS is very difficult for many employees, because they are being asked to change the way they have always done things. However, if organizations properly address employees’ concerns about change, then it will likely lead to a regularly utilized ICMS.

Organizations should begin by working with the leadership if they plan to make any type of change. Leaders are responsible for establishing culture when they start the organization and they play a vital role in any attempts to change it.
If the leaders do not have buy-in and continue to push new concepts, then organizational members are unlikely to follow through.

Just like all organizations have different cultures, leaders have varied styles and methods. There is no one cookie-cutter approach to leadership; however, leadership strategy should be a primary consideration in any change initiative. Schneider (1994) insists that “alignment between strategy, culture, and leadership is critical” (p.6).

This paper will examine cultural typologies, organizational change, leadership styles, and organizational ICMS. By doing so we will gain a greater understanding of how culture and leadership play a vital role in the effectiveness of ICMS. We will see that change within organizations can be very difficult and leaders play a vital role in this process. We will address the specific questions of: What conflicts occur when attempting to change an organization’s culture? And what methods do leaders use to overcome these conflicts?

In the conclusion, we will see how Integrated Conflict Management Systems can be both a cause and a cure for organizational ailments. In addition, we will make recommendations for Conflict practitioners as they move forward in building Integrated Conflict Management Systems for organizations.
II. Review of Relevant Literature

Integrated Conflict Management Systems

The context for this thesis is set around organizational change and the implementation of Integrated Conflict Management Systems (ICMS) within organizations. The literature on ICMS gives us some basic ideas of the principles of designs of these systems. The goal of this review is to illustrate the relationship that organizational culture and leadership have with ICMS. We will begin by looking at organizations and ICMS as well as look at why organizations need ICMS.

Bolman and Deal (2003) tell us that organizations are complex, because they are different and difficult to understand and predict. They are surprising and deceptive, because they rarely display what one would expect. In an attempt to understand, predict, and manage the frustrations that some organizations create, we can examine systems that positively affect organizations. These systems can focus on any number of the organization’s aspects such as increasing clients, improving employee morale, or improving effectiveness.

The idea of a system suggests that the collection of parts must work together to achieve an overall goal. A system does not function as intended if all parts are not working together toward the same goal. All units or departments (i.e.
billing, front office, customer support, service providers) must function together with the same goals if the organization is to operate well. Although each department may function highly individually, the organization will not operate as intended if interactions among the departments are dysfunctional (McNamara, 2009).

The link between organizational systems and organizational culture is important. First, we will discuss a variety of organizational systems with a focus on Conflict Management Systems. Organizations must consider how many variables are involved in organizational culture when they add any new system.

**Types of Organizational Systems**

There are many theories about organizational systems. For the purpose of this study, we are referring to systems as initiatives that are intended to change parts of or an entire organization. In this case, they are in the form of corporate initiatives. Collins and Porras (1998, p. 2) lists these theories as “total quality management, reengineering, right-sizing, restructuring, cultural change, and turnarounds,” where the goal is to “cope with a new, more challenging market by changing how business is conducted.” Schneider (1994) continues the list, adding quality circles, participative leadership and management, self-directed teams, benchmarking, flexible organization, empowerment, quality of work-life, management by consensus, high-performance work teams, and core competencies. Additionally, Dauer (2005) suggests alternative dispute resolution
processes, which he relates to “risk management, human relations, compliance
system design, and even preventive law” (p. 1030).

The numerous buzzwords, initiatives, and theories demonstrate the
complexity of options that organizational systems offer, but the bottom line is that
all of these processes focus on aspects of organizational life and/or functioning.
They solicit better ways to manage employees, processes for increasing profits,
and ideas for streamlining sales and product management. They suggest how
people in the organization should act and attempt to transition the organization
into something “better.” Deal and Kennedy (1982, p.4) tell us that culture is
defined as “the way we do things around here.” All of these initiatives, in one way
or another, impact the way things are done in the organization, which gives a
strong indicator that these efforts may, in turn, impact the organization’s culture.
Organizational culture will be discussed in more detail below.

**Integrated Conflict Management Systems**

Organizations have many different options, such as team-building, risk
management, human relations, total quality management, whistle-blowing,
compliance-system design, re-engineering, and even preventative law, available
for handling various conflicts. Lipsky, Seeber, and Fincher (2003, p.119) state
that “the choice of an organization’s conflict management strategy often reflects
the decision makers’ dominant disposition regarding the nature of conflict.” This
shows that the leaders play a vital role in determining the methods used to work through the conflicts. The role of leaders will be discussed below.

The field of Conflict Resolution offers ICMS as an option for reducing the financial and emotional costs of conflicts within organizations. Tjosvold (1983, p.3) tells us that “since they can have such highly constructive or highly destructive effects on organizational functioning, being able to promote conflicts and capitalize on their constructive outcomes is an essential skill of organizational members.” The idea itself is simple – create specialized processes within organizations that give employees multiple and specific options for productively and constructively addressing all types of conflict. These systems can include anything from simply training staff on negotiation and problem-solving skills to offering the use of external facilitators, mediators, coaches, and attorneys as resources.

First, we will discuss what organizational conflict is. Then, we will go into greater detail on the finer aspects of Conflict Management Systems.

*What is conflict?*

As we begin to examine conflict in organizations, we must recognize the various interactions that happen within organizations. Greenberg and Baron (2003) explain five types of interpersonal behaviors that occur in organizations. These behaviors can be viewed on a continuous spectrum that ranges from working with others to working against others. See Figure 1 below for the graph.
As illustrated in Greenberg and Baron’s graph, the five types of interpersonal behavior are pro-social behavior, cooperation, competition, conflict, and deviant behavior. According to Greenberg and Baron (2003, p. 416), conflict is “a process in which one party perceives that another party has taken or will take actions that are incompatible with one’s own interests.” He places conflict toward the end of the spectrum of working against others. He even shows how conflict can lead to deviant behavior if not handled properly.

Conflict practitioners point out that defining conflict strictly as working against others is a shallow definition. Below, we will discuss how a more open interpretation of conflict can actually lead to productive outcomes.

Conflict has many definitions and is viewed in many different ways. Some definitions discuss its negative impacts; some look for its positive impacts; some
try to explain its root causes; and others view it as a process. Sometimes, conflict is discussed in terms of how it impacts various systems and other times it is viewed as a system itself. When viewed as something that impacts a system, we can discuss management, prevention, and resolutions that can alter the bottom line of organizations.

Greenberg and Baron (2003) say that the biggest problem with conflict is that it creates strong, emotional reactions. These reactions can create a chain of negative effects in organizations, such as diverting people’s attention from an organization’s goals. These distractions cause people to focus more on the conflict and less on the important aspects of their jobs. Greenberg and Baron say, “Organizational conflict has costly effects on organizational performance” (p.418). On the other hand, conflict can have some positive consequences, such as improving the organization’s ultimate decision or putting previously ignored problems on the table so that they can be addressed (Greenberg and Baron, 2003).

According to Moore (2003), there are five primary types of conflict – data, relationship, interest, structure, and value. Organizations experience data conflicts when employees disagree over specific information. This can consist of missing information, lacking information, different views or interpretations, or varying procedures for assessing data. To overcome a data conflict, individuals must come to an agreement on the importance of the available data or develop common criteria for assessing the data.
Strong emotions, stereotypes, miscommunication, or continued negative behavior cause relationship conflicts. Organizations can manage these conflicts by allowing or restricting emotions through rules or procedures, improving the quality of communications, or encouraging positive problem-solving attitudes (Moore, 2003).

Competition, procedures, or psychological needs cause interest conflicts. Possible methods for working through interest conflicts consist of focusing on interests instead of positions, developing solutions that address everyone’s needs, or finding trade-offs to satisfy differing interests (Moore, 2003).

Behavior patterns, unequal resources, power differences, environmental factors, or time constraints cause structural conflicts. Organizations can work through this type of conflict by defining roles, replacing destructive behaviors, managing control issues, or establishing mutually acceptable decision-making processes. Also, altering the environment or changing time constraints can be helpful (Moore, 2003).

Value conflicts exist when there is no consensus about norms or ideals. These revolve mostly around different ways of life, ideology, or religion. Values touch on individuals’ most core beliefs, and because of this, value conflicts are the most difficult to overcome. Some suggested methods for working through value conflicts are to allow individuals to both agree and disagree, create spheres of influence in which one set of values dominates, and search for common interests that all individuals share (Moore, 2003). Because value conflicts are the
most difficult to overcome, it is important to note that values form organizational culture. To change culture, we must address the organization’s value system.

Culture will be discussed in more detail later. However, it is important to recognize that any of these types of conflict could easily occur during a change initiative. For instance, relationship conflicts occur if the organization does not communicate the purpose of the change clearly and individuals disagree over definitions. This same scenario could result in data conflicts if different information is communicated to different people or not all of the information is communicated. Interest conflicts result if the change impacts procedures or threatens something to which individuals have a psychological attachment. Changing offices or shifting power can create structural conflicts. If the change is so big that the organization’s priorities shift, such as changing a mission statement, value conflicts will likely result.

**What are Organizational Conflicts?**

People view and react differently to conflict. On an organizational level, conflict can have a greater impact than most even realize. There are many types of conflict such as substantive, affective, and process (Greenberg and Baron, 2003). Differences in viewpoints and opinions cause substantive conflict; differences in personalities or interpretations cause affective conflict; and differences in the allocation of duties or responsibilities cause process conflict.
According to Greenberg and Baron (2003), organizations face several causes of conflict: perceptual distortion where individuals tend to see situations, including conflict, in their favor; grudges where people who have lost face in a situation attempt to get even; distrust where someone suspects that others are out to get them and therefore do not trust them; competition over scarce resources such as office space or money; and destructive criticism such as negative feedback that hurts the recipient rather than helps.

Luthans (2008) discusses interpersonal conflict that occurs in the workplace. These conflicts consist of personal differences, information deficiency, role incompatibility, and environmental stress. Personal differences boil down to personality differences, and value differences between individuals and information deficiency result from communication breakdowns in the organization. These are the same as Moore’s data conflicts. Role incompatibility takes place when people’s responsibilities overlap in ways that conflict with each other, and environmental stress refers to factors such as loss of resources, downsizing, and competitive pressures.

Conflict can be seen as both positive and negative. It can be a hindrance that brings employees and the bottom line down or it can be a constructive process that enables organizations to learn more about themselves and develop a stronger infrastructure. As we will examine now, it is the bottom line cost of conflict that is of true interest to organizational leaders.
Cost of Conflict

We have taken a brief look at the types of conflicts that organizations face. Now we will examine how those common conflicts impact the organization’s bottom line by looking at the costs of conflict.

Poorly managed conflict can cause an organization to self-destruct. The Dana Measure of Financial Cost of Organizational Conflict (Dana, 2005) gives us eight cost factors that are the results of organizational conflict. These cost factors are:

1. Wasted time,
2. Reduced decision quality,
3. Loss of skilled employees,
4. Restructuring,
5. Sabotage/theft/damage,
6. Lowered job motivation,
7. Lost work time, and
8. Health costs.

Simply put, these cost factors boil down to a major bottom-line impact on the organization. Stolen time equals wasted money paid to distracted employees. Reduced decision quality results in employees making poor decisions and incurring additional stress. The additional stress on individuals lowers motivation, impacts actual work time, and even results in additional health problems. Some skilled employees seek work elsewhere when their frustrations are not addressed properly. The upset employees who do not seek jobs elsewhere are more likely to steal or damage company property. As a result, organizations may attempt to repair cosmetic issues that they cannot accurately identify.
Thomas (2002) poses that in evaluating the costs of unresolved conflicts we need to consider morale, gossip, distractions, absenteeism, employee attrition, stress-related medical conditions, workman’s compensation, theft, sabotage, violence, and lawsuits, as well as destroyed relationships, broken families, and loss of public confidence. “It is easy to see that the costs are staggering” (Thomas, 2002, p. 1). Lynch (2001, p. 210) explains that the costs of “grievances, litigation, and settlements are usually the strongest factors driving an organization to make a change.”

After considering the way conflict manifests itself in organizations and the negative impact it can have, it is difficult to imagine how it can be considered something positive. On the other hand, this view provides necessary insight into the reasons it must be properly addressed. Integrated Conflict Management Systems use various techniques and strategies to address conflict. Through the use of these techniques, conflict’s costs can be greatly reduced.

**Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Techniques**

We have seen the cost factors that are associated with conflict within organizations and how conflict can actually be positive and helpful. Now, we will take a look at the processes connected to Integrated Conflict Management Systems and how they can actually help. Luthans (2008, p. 259) states that “through effective conflict management, the efforts of all concerned can be directed toward common goals that hopefully will be beneficial to both the people
involved and the overall organization.” Luthans (2008) suggests that “most experts emphasize a cost-benefit analysis of conflict and then setting up a dispute-resolution system” (p. 262) to address these concerns.

Integrated Conflict Management Systems incorporate the spectrum of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) techniques, which Constantino and Merchant (1996) break into six broad categories. Those categories are preventive, negotiated, facilitated, fact-finding, advisory, and imposed. Preventive measures are intended to “channel disagreements into a problem-solving arena early enough that escalation into full-blown disputes can be avoided” (p. 38). This includes processes that are decided in advance, such as giving notice, negotiating, mediating, and then submitting any unresolved issues to an arbitrator.

Negotiated options include interest-based discussions and the parties’ attempt to work out issues through direct discussions without the help of a third party. Facilitated methods use third-party neutrals to facilitate a resolution, using processes such as mediation. Fact-finding options use a third-party or technical expert to review facts and provide information on issues such as asset valuation or actuarial statistics. Advisory methods use processes such as evaluation, non-binding arbitration, and mini-trials. In mini-trials, a third party advises about the likely outcome of an actual court case and facilitates a settlement. Imposed methods, such as binding arbitration, take place when the third-party neutral makes a binding decision regarding the merits of the case (Constantino and Merchant, 1996).
These processes give people multiple options and help to address the true underlying issues and interests that are inherent in conflicts. By addressing their underlying issues, we can help employees truly move beyond the conflict and even find greater satisfaction in their work. An employee may also gain confidence in his organization’s ability to act in his best interest. “In general, a major goal of management should be to eliminate the barriers (imagined, real, or potential) that are or will be frustrating to employees” (Luthans, 2008, p. 257).

A report for the Society for Professionals in Dispute Resolution (SPIDR), now the Association for Conflict Resolution (ACR), (2003) summarizes the five characteristics of an Integrated Conflict Management System. These characteristics are scope, culture, multiple access points, multiple options, and support structures. The scope of a system should be broad and available to all people in the organization, as well as address all types of issues.

The system must have multiple access points, so people can identify and access the most appropriate entity to help the person through the conflict. This includes the ability to access the system at multiple levels within the organization, giving individuals the ability to identify the most appropriate access point in terms of authority, knowledge, and experience, based on their needs and the conflict.

The system also should provide as many ways of dealing with disputes, including rights-based and interest-based methods, as possible. These options include, but are not limited to, mediation and arbitration. Also, the system should have support structures in place that are capable of coordinating and managing the
multiple access points and options. These structures should integrate effective conflict management into the organization’s daily operations.

The culture is the most important aspect for this review. The ACR report states that the culture of a system “should welcome dissent (or tolerate disagreement) and encourage resolution of conflict at the lowest possible level through direct negotiation” (as cited by Libsky, Seeber, and Fincher, 2003). In most cases, this requires the organization to change its culture. As we will discuss, if the organization’s culture and people do not welcome dissent, the conflict management system is less likely to be used.

Libsky, Seeber, and Fincher (2003) tell us that “in U.S. organizations today, a system as prescribed by ACR is more the ideal than the reality” (p. 18) and lay out several other characteristics of exceptional organization systems including:

- **A proactive approach:** The organization’s approach to conflict management is proactive rather than reactive. The organization has moved from waiting for disputes to occur to preventing (if possible) or anticipating them before they arise.
- **Shared responsibility:** The responsibility for conflict (or litigation) management is not confined to the counsel’s office or an outside law firm, but is shared by all levels of management.
- **Delegation of authority:** The authority for preventing and resolving conflict is delegated to the lowest feasible level of the organization.
- **Accountability:** Managers are held accountable for the successful prevention or resolution of conflict; the reward and performance review systems in the organization reflect this managerial duty.
- **Ongoing training:** Education and training in relevant conflict management skills are an ongoing activity of the organization.
Feedback loop: Managers use the experience they have gained in preventing or resolving conflict to improve the policies and performance of the organization.

These characteristics form the core foundation of Integrated Conflict Management Systems and set them apart from other types of systems. When all of these features are properly used, these systems are able to “foster an environment in which managers are expected to prevent, manage, contain and resolve all conflict at the earliest time and lowest level possible. To support this goal, integrated systems give managers the skills to do so and create performance incentives that make managers accountable for doing so” (Lynch, 2001, p. 212).

Brahm and Ouellet (2003) add to the characteristics of systems above and discuss the six principles of a Conflict Management System that should be considered in the design phase. The first is putting the focus on interests where the parties use problem-solving and interest-based methods for addressing issues. The second principle is to provide low-cost rights and power backups such as arbitration, voting, and protests. Third is to build in “loop-backs” to negotiation where parties can return to previous parts of the process. Fourth is to build in consultation before and feedback after where consistent and reliable methods of sharing information are present. Fifth is to arrange procedures in a low- to high-cost sequence. Finally, sixth is to provide the necessary motivation, skills, and resources.
Thomas 2002 (p. 3) takes a more simple approach and states that “a well-designed Conflict Management System consists of three interrelated components that are essential to its success.” The vital components are training, neutral third-party interventions and a supportive infrastructure. The training is intended to raise employees’ conflict awareness and reduce the negative impact of conflict. Neutral third-party intervention provides professional resources early in the conflict cycle, which help to constructively resolve disputes before they cycle out of control. Finally the supportive infrastructure provides internal procedures and processes to support the organization’s ability to constructively manage and minimize the harmful effects of conflict in the organization.

Constantino and Merchant (1996, p. 24) list what they believe to be the characteristics of Conflict Management Systems, which include:

- **Boundaries** that separate one organizational system from another.
- **Purpose**, which is the resolution of various types of disputes between the organization and internal or external claimants.
- **Inputs** that fund and support organizational components intended to perform the conflict resolution tasks.
- **Transformation of disputes** into resolutions and impasse into results through processes such as dispute and case intake, information-gathering, investigation and fact-finding, meetings, oral and written arguments, negotiations, litigation, and court appearances.
- **Outputs** such as the endings of disputes.
- **Feedback** through customers, constituents, and employees regarding the adequacy, quality, cost, and perception of fairness about dispute resolutions and results.
From a systems perspective, “it is the appropriate, skilled management of conflict, not just conflict, that contributes to the success of organizations and individuals” (Tjvosvold, 1983, p. 5).

**Summary**

The value of Integrated Conflict Management Systems is seen in the way they reduce the negative impacts of conflict and create positive culture change within organizations. The section on organizational culture will discuss how any system that is introduced to an organization with the intention of changing the way things are done has a strong impact on the culture. At the same time, culture can affect the success of the system in both positive and negative ways, depending on how well organizations address the cultural aspects during system implementation. Finally, because of their role in shaping culture, leaders can play the most valuable part in creating systems within their organizations.

Now that we have an understanding of the concept of Integrated Conflict Management Systems, we can begin to look into concepts that could help to ensure the success of such system. First, we will examine culture. Then we will look at how organizational leaders shape and transform culture.

**Culture**

As we begin to look into the effectiveness of Integrated Conflict Management Systems, we must understand some of the key factors that will play a role in when and how organizations use these systems. First, we will examine
organizational culture as a key component. Culture is truly the foundation for anything related to organizational function. As we will begin to see below, culture truly defines an organization.

The word “culture” elicits many varied definitions. Culture is examined in almost every area of study from psychology and sociology to business, law, and conflict resolution. Although every area of study uses a different lens to examine the concept, Schein (2004) suggests a common thread in definitions of culture is the “shared patterns of thought, belief, feelings, and values that result from shared experience and common learning” (p. 88-89). This view ties the definition of societal culture together with the definition of organizational culture and shows that they have similar impacts. Del Prá Netto Machado and Carvalho (2008) support this by saying that “the rules that drive a nation will also serve to guide the organizations belonging to that nation” (p. 23). The strong comparison between societal culture and organizational culture allows us to examine the idea of culture somewhat generically and apply it to organizations.

The Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) Research Program examined culture, leadership, and organizations on an international scale, giving us insight into the American culture by explaining some traits found in all cultures (House, 2004). Generally, culture is defined in terms of shared processes such as ways of thinking, feeling, and reacting; shared meanings and identities; shared socially constructed environments; common uses of technology; and common events such as history, language, and religion. Project
GLOBE defines culture specifically as “shared motives, values, beliefs, identities, and interpretations or meaning of significant events that result from common experiences of members of collectives and are transmitted across age generations” (p. 57). GLOBE researchers continue to explain that this definition can apply to and be analyzed at both the societal and organizational levels (House, 2004).

Schneider (1994) explains that every organization has its own personality, history, and character that reinforce its way of doing things. Alvesson (2002) discusses how the concept leads to very different ideas such as symbols, values, rules, norms, emotions, behavior patterns, structures, and practices (p. 3). Ashby (1999, p. 1) defines organizational culture simply as “the organizational way of life,” or as Deal and Kennedy (1982, p. 4) state, it is “the way we do things around here.” Schein (2004) discusses levels and layers of culture: “In between these layers are various espoused beliefs, values, norms, and rules of behavior that members of the culture use as a way of depicting the culture to themselves and others” (p. 25). Del Prá Netto Machado and Carvalho (2008) say, “The collective action in organizations is what we call organizational culture. It is because the organization is comprised of people who have different ways of acting, thinking, and feeling” (p. 5) that we find such variance within organizations.

While there is no widely accepted definition of organizational culture, we can examine some of the concrete traits conceptualize the idea. Most perspectives share some similar assumptions about culture. For instance, culture is related to the organization’s history and traditions. These perspectives show that culture is
difficult to understand and must be interpreted; it is collective and shared by organizational members; it revolves around ideals, understandings, beliefs, and knowledge; and it is holistic, intersubjective and emotional (Alvesson, 2002).

When attempting to define culture, most authors look at value systems and other intangibles such as members’ assumptions or behaviors. As Schein (2004) discusses, organizations have layers that consist of espoused beliefs, values, norms, and rules of behavior. Members of the culture use these intangibles as a way of depicting the organization to themselves and to others. O’Reilly (1989) simply defines it as “the pattern of beliefs and expectations shared by the organization’s members” (p. 12). Deal and Kennedy (1982) continue this thought by stating that values are the core of an organization’s culture, because they provide a sense of direction that all employees understand and embrace in the course of their work. In this sense, the understanding of the organization’s direction empowers the employees to take actions based on these expectations.

Schein (2004) explains three levels of culture: artifact, espoused beliefs and values, and underlying assumptions. Artifacts are visible and tangible structures and processes. Artifacts are “easy to observe and very difficult to decipher” (p. 28). They consist of members’ dress such as whether they wear uniforms, business attire, or casual dress. Also, artifacts consist of the languages used, which can be seen in jargon or technical language; the physical structures, including architecture and furniture; and the published values, including the mission and vision statements, policies, and procedures.
The espoused beliefs and values refer to the members’ shared perceptions about “what ought to be” (p. 28). The members’ experiences of both successes and failures, such as gaining or losing clients, shape these perceptions. The social experience of the group helps to define the belief systems (Schein, 2004). Organizational members show this in the way they act toward each other around the office, as well as in whether they interact socially outside of the office.

Underlying assumptions are closely related to beliefs and values, because repeated successes in the implementations of beliefs and values shape assumptions. These successes can come in the form of marketing techniques or sales strategies that have brought in additional customers. They also can be in the way that organizational members deal with conflict. An example would be when leaders ignore difficult issues and allow employees to keep their jobs. In this case, avoiding the uncomfortable situation is seen as a success. Basic assumptions are usually unquestioned and not open to debate. These are extremely difficult to change because experience has “proven” these assumptions work and any questioning of these causes anxiety and defensiveness among members of the group (Schein, 2004).

With such differing perspectives and beliefs about what culture really is and how it works, one might be frustrated to find that some see it as “more powerful than anything else” and that “its impact supersedes all other factors when it comes to organizational, economic performance” (Schneider, 1994, p. 3). O’Reilly (1989) states that “failure to clearly specify what ‘culture’ is can result
in confusion, misunderstanding, and conflict about its basic function and importance” (p. 10).

O’Reilly (1989) states that culture can be viewed as a control system and a normative order. This means that the influence of those in power, or a control system, and the social norms within the organization can define and change culture. He continues to explain that norms are the expectations of appropriate and inappropriate attitudes and behaviors. These are determined by the actions of the leadership and/or the workers. Although both the leadership and the workers do not have to express the norms, organizational members’ strongest shared expectations define the norms. He states that individuals’ level of commitment to the organization’s values, as well as their sense of job involvement and loyalty to the company, determine a strong culture.

**Cultural Typologies**

Now that we have looked at culture we can examine some basic cultural typologies found in organizations. These typologies can provide some insight into the way that organizations function, including how they deal with change and conflict. Each cultural typology will require different leadership strategies as well as different methods for changing. This section will give Conflict practitioners some insight into the types of stumbling blocks they may face when attempting to implement an Integrated Conflict Management System for each type of organization.
While most authors make it clear that we cannot put the ideas of organizational culture into a box, some try to create some base logic and categories. Charles Handy (1995) states we cannot precisely define cultures, but we can use some patterns to guide our understanding. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) outline the aspects of organizational structures that are important in determining organizational culture. These structures are the relationship between employees and their organization, the system of authority between managers and employees, and the general views that employees have about the purpose and goals of their organization.

Del Prá Netto Machado and Carvalho (2008) summarize the works of five authors and their suggested typologies. They lay out the works of Schneider (1996), Handy (1978), Quinn and McGrath (1985), Trompenaars (1994), and Hofstede (as cited in Del Prá Netto Machado and Carvalho, 2008) and propose some commonalities among their theories.

Based on their review of the various typologies, Del Prá Netto Machado and Carvalho (2008) use a comparative analysis to combine the characteristics of each of these theories, demonstrate overlap, and propose a new unified typology. They recommend a two-dimensional view with one dimension relating to human relationships and the other relating to power. This creates four quadrants, each representing a theoretical organizational type. Figure 2 shows each quadrant and the key elements found in each theoretical typology.
The horizontal axis shows how relationships within the organization are viewed. On one side, we see personal relationships as very important. On this end of the spectrum people join the organization or remain with the organization based on their relationships with other members. On the other end of the horizontal axis, we see functional relationships. This means that individuals’ participation with the organization is based on how their skills benefit the organization as a whole. The vertical axis relates to the way power is distributed within the organization. On one end, we find high levels of shared power. This means that organizational members work together, and power, primarily in the form of decision-making, is distributed among the group. The other end of the vertical axis shows concentrated power. This means that one individual or a select few have decision-making powers and the others mostly follow suit.

Within these cultural typologies, we will find information about how leaders function within their organizations as well as how each organizational cultural type changes. It should be noted that each typology has different ways of functioning including their ability to change. The more difficult it is for an organization to deal with change, the more likely conflict is to occur when an organization attempts changes. This section will examine some primary cultural typologies, as well as the roles of leaders and the cultures’ ability to deal with changes.
Figure 2: Organizational Cultural Typologies

Cultural Typologies Quadrant 1

The first quadrant shows a high level of concentrated power as well as personal connections. This is shown in Schneider’s collaboration culture, Handy’s club culture, Trompenaars’ family culture, Quinn and McGrath’s clan or consensual culture, and Hofstede’s family culture. These organizations tend to be family businesses and small businesses where the power is primarily in the hands of the “patriarch” (Del Prá Netto Machado and Carvalho, 2008).
In this typology, Schneider (2000) suggests that organizations employ a team-type system that focuses on relationships. He calls this collaboration culture. These teams value customer satisfaction and work together toward complete solutions for the customer. Teams work toward consensus and value everyone’s input. The leader is a team- and trust-builder, coach, and integrator (Schneider, 2000). Handy calls this the club culture and defines it by the division of work. People are assigned duties based on trust and specific skills around functions or products. The leader makes all decisions. Leaders hire employees based mostly on close connections, such as family members or friends, because the leader has already found trust in the employee and personal contact is highly valued. These cultures are a club of like-minded people working together toward common goals. Most organizations start as club cultures. (Handy, 1995).

Leaders in club cultures tend to prefer verbal communication over written communication, leading them to be less concerned with written reports and other documents. They favor impressions and feelings over hard data. The leaders are well-informed but are bad at passing information along. Their work patterns are unplanned and hectic because they prefer interruptions. Decisions are made primarily by intuition and judgment (Handy, 1995). Change in club cultures generally focuses on the individual. It can happen through education and training but generally happens by replacing the person who is failing. The credible people in the organization – the leaders – must give good reasons for change to occur (Handy, 1995).
Quinn and McGrath (1985) call this the consensual or clan culture. It values group-maintenance and cohesion. Decision-making takes place through participation and consensus-building. Here, the leaders are informal and their positions come from status. They are supportive and participate in the processes. The results of this culture are cohesion defined through organizational climate, member morale, and teamwork. Clan culture suggests that norms and values are associated with affiliation, and motivation comes from the sense of participation among members (Quinn and McGrath, 1985).

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner call this the family culture. The family culture focuses on personal relationships that are close and hierarchical, much like a home. This culture relies on power and structure while maintaining a great deal of personal connectedness. It is hierarchical and person-oriented. Here the leader is seen as caring and as knowing what is best for the organization. Trompenaars relates this leader to a “father figure” and states that “this type of culture is usually carried forward in an atmosphere that in many respects mimics the home” (p.163). The motivation in this culture revolves around pleasure from relationships, and employees work hard to keep the leaders happy. Change is most likely to come from the top down, and methods that help to change this culture are new visions, charismatic appeals, inspiring goals and directions, and authentic relationships (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998).
Cultural Typologies Quadrant 2

The second quadrant shows a high level of concentrated power and functional relationships. This quadrant is illustrated by Schneider’s control, Handy’s roles, Trompenaars’ Eiffel Tower, Quinn and McGrath’s hierarchical, and Hofstede’s pyramid of people theories (Del Prá Netto Machado and Carlvahlo, 2008).

Schneider refers to this typology as control culture. It uses power as a primary motive, focusing its actions on certainty. The organization exists to grow and ensure its own future. The organization is the most important thing, and resources are dedicated to meeting goals, whatever they may be. Leaders are authoritative, directive, conservative, and commanding (Schneider, 2000). This type of organization bases its approaches on the specific roles or jobs to be done rather than on personalities. Job descriptions are highly important, as roles, responsibilities, rules, and procedures are well-defined. In this culture, stability and predictability are highly valued. These cultures are efficient when everything is predictable. Members generally ignore change, because they hate it (Handy, 1995). Leadership comes from one’s role, position, or title. The amount of power one has is written into their job description. To change a role culture, the organization must change the rules, roles, and responsibilities. This means changing the systems of procedures, responsibilities, and structure.

Here structure is far more important than function. Leaders are in their roles because of their experience and knowledge, and their jobs are to assign tasks
and make decisions. Leaders are obeyed because their role is to lead. The boss has power because the rules give them power. Change in the Eiffel Tower culture is extremely complex and happens through the changing of rules. Manuals, procedures, and job descriptions must be altered for changes to be effective (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998).

**Cultural Typologies Quadrant 3**

The third quadrant shows functional relationships and shared power. These organizations are rational and results-driven. They use workgroups, each having its own leader. They always seek professional development, and power is exercised by expertise on the current task. The similar culture types in this quadrant are Schneider’s competence, Handy’s task, Trompenaars’ guided missile, Quinn and McGrath’s rational, and Hofstede’s well-oiled machine (Del Prá Netto Machado and Carvalho, 2008).

Achievement motivates this culture. Members of this culture strive for superiority and excellence. Members want to be the best and want their products to stand out with the goal to create unmatched products and services. Leaders in competence cultures set standards, create conceptual visions, are assertive, and challenge others (Schneider, 2000). They strive toward the successful solution of problems. The process is to define the problem, assign resources to address the problem, give permission to find solutions, and wait for the best solutions to
come. Leaders gauge high performance by positive results, and they give power based on the expertise needed to resolve the problems. Teams are highly valued.

These groups are normally formed by mutual agreement. The leader accepts members based on their experience and the members accept the leader’s expertise. Individuals earn respect based on expertise and experience. Leaders are able to persuade followers based on experience. To change this culture, members must define and agree on the problem and then discuss solutions for the best methods and needs for change (Handy, 1995).

These organizations are egalitarian and task-oriented and act based on the circumstances as long as goals are met. These cultures work primarily in teams or project groups and all members act mostly as equals. Leaders are coordinators who are responsible for the assembly of the final product. The leaders must maintain a high level of respect for the members, because they may not necessarily be as knowledgeable in all required areas. Change comes easily in the guided-missile culture. For this organization to work, individuals must get along and function as a team, which means adapting appropriately to every situation (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998).

**Cultural Typologies Quadrant 4**

The fourth quadrant shows the overlap between personal relationships and shared power. These organizations are focused on the personal satisfaction and development of employees. Staff, as well as clients and other stakeholders, share
Power. The cultural types that fit into this quadrant are Schneider’s cultivation, Handy’s existential, Trompenaars’ incubator, Quinn and McGrath’s developmental, and Hofstede’s market cultures (Del Prá Netto Machado and Carvalho, 2008).

Growth of the customer base and self-actualization of the members motivates these cultures. Members place a great deal of value on whether the organization’s statements live up to its actions. They strive to realize new ideals, values, and purposes.

Leaders in cultivation cultures are catalysts and stewards. They work to build commitments and ensure that employees keep their promises and act in the customers’ best interests (Schneider, 2000). In this type of culture, the organization is there to help the individual achieve his or her purpose. Members are brought together based on professional competence. Management is only by consent, making coordinated efforts a matter of time-consuming negotiations. Change requires some form of exchange where “one person or persons do or get something in recognition of something else” (p. 57). Leadership in this culture is defined loosely at best and the leaders’ interactions are with each person individually. These interactions revolve mostly around ideas about a situation or topics of common interest. Members of these cultures highly value freedom and actually do not want to be part of an organization at all. Membership is based on personal convenience (Handy, 1995).
Trompenaars states that this culture is focused on the final objective and empowers staff to act in self-fulfilling ways. These organizations have very little structure, and people work together to develop ideas and locate resources for each other. Members share resources and experiences – doctors in a group practice or legal partners for example. Because association is voluntary, the role of leader is difficult to define. (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998). In this culture, members highly value gaining resources. Leaders are charismatic, visionary, inventive, and idealistic, and take risks. Here, organizational growth means success. This culture incorporates the values of change and flexibility (Quinn and McGrath, 1985).

Summary of Cultural Typologies

These various cultural typologies help to illustrate how different organizations function. However, there is no exact science to identify an organization’s typology. Each cultural type offers some basic understanding of the features of organizations and some potential issues when trying to implement change. While this review of some cultural typologies gives us information on how change happens within each typology, it is missing information on the specific types of conflict that can occur when these typologies implement change, as well as what specific techniques their leaders use to create change. We will address this more later.
While it is clear that the definitions of culture vary and there is no ideal type, some authors have suggested qualities that they believe make great cultures. Ashby (1999) shares some of his ideas about positive cultural attributes. Among these are excitement about the mission, a sense of pride, willingness to change, a focus on values, creativity, high expectations and professional standards, incentive programs, celebration of successes, and adherence to the Golden Rule (Ashby, 1999). Studer shares his own ideas about what a good culture looks like. He explains that organizations must give their employees purpose and that employees must be doing worthwhile work that makes a difference (Studer, 2003).

**Culture: Stability and Change**

George, Sleeth, and Siders (1999) view organizational culture as a valuable part of creating member behavior and describe both positive and negative outcomes of culture. On the positive side, they tell us that culture can influence members’ behavior in ways that are consistent with organizational goals, create cohesion, improve communication, increase profits, reduce employee turnover, and increase members’ self-esteem.

On the other hand, culture can have some negative impacts such as creating norms that are not in line with the organization’s goals or creating groupthink. The culture could become so embedded in individuals’ ways of functioning that it makes employees resistant to change initiatives. It could create
negative barriers to communication and escalate employees’ commitments to lost causes (George, Sleeth, and Siders, 1999). This resistance to change makes implementation of the organizational systems we will discuss below difficult.

Although it may not be fully understood, culture plays a valuable role in organizations. If culture is “the way things are done,” then the culture should find the best way to do things according to the goals of the organization. The organization’s culture is a powerful way to guide behavior, because it helps employees do their jobs in two ways. The first way that a clear culture helps employees is by creating rules that lay out how they are expected to do their jobs. The second way is that it enables individuals to work harder, because they feel better about their jobs (Deal and Kennedy, 1982). This is addressed in greater detail earlier in the section on Integrated Conflict Management Systems. These systems are intended to create rules and options for dealing with conflict. However, because organizational cultures rely so strongly on rules, the changes that result from these systems can be detrimental to the way that employees feel about their jobs.

Culture forms the foundation for how employees will interact with each other, as well as how they will interact with the organization’s customers. Organizations with weak cultures are lacking in clear values and beliefs about how to do business or are unable to agree upon which values and beliefs are the most important. Different parts of the company may have very different beliefs, and the day-to-day operations are disorganized or contradictory (Deal and
Kennedy, 1982). If cultural aspects are not properly addressed, organizations could display symptoms such as employees focusing on internal activities rather than on what is happening in the real world; employees focusing strictly on short-term accomplishments rather than on long-term, organization-sustaining goals; resulting morale problems leading to high turnover and actions; and standards becoming fragmented and/or inconsistent. The biggest symptom is emotionalism because employees feel vulnerable and frightened. This emotionalism can even come out in personal affairs, resulting in divorce or addiction problems (Deal and Kennedy, 1982). These negative symptoms are in line with the costs of conflict that were discussed earlier. Additionally these are the same types of negative results that Integrated Conflict Management Systems intend to address. Weak cultures ultimately lead to conflict and other issues that simply hurt the organization’s bottom line. When an organization like this seeks to create an Integrated Conflict Management System, they must address cultural issues to be successful.

Considering that all negative cultural symptoms discussed above are truly grounded in the organization’s culture, we must acknowledge the role culture plays in change. Deal and Kennedy (1982) emphasizes that “culture is the barrier to change” (p. 159). Greenberg and Baron (2003) lay out several key factors that make people resistant to change. These factors are economic insecurity, fear of the unknown, threats to social relationships, habit, and failure to recognize the need for change. Any of these factors can create barriers to change initiatives.
Greenberg and Baron (2003) also discuss a continuum of reactions to organizational change (shown in Figure 3). This continuum includes acceptance, indifference, passive resistance, and active resistance. Each individual will have a different reaction, from acceptance and active resistance to change initiatives based on their perceptions of the change. If they feel threatened or fear the impact of the change, they will likely show some form of resistance. On the other hand if they have a strong understanding of the benefits and reasons for the change, they may show acceptance. This is an important factor to consider when determining communication strategies about change initiatives. It is important to note that employee buy-in can help to decrease the amount of active and passive resistance.

If these issues are not properly addressed and managed, they will increase conflict within the organization. These outcomes show the value and impact of culture and illustrate the need for consideration of cultural factors in change initiatives.
Figure 3: A Continuum of Reactions to Organizational Change

![Figure 3: A Continuum of Reactions to Organizational Change](image)

Greenberg & Baron, (2003, p. 601)

**Cultural Change**

We have looked briefly at the cultural typologies and how change happens within these typologies. The next step is to examine what it really takes to create change. What exactly is cultural change and how do organizations do it?

According to Greenberg and Baron, “Organizational change refers to planned or unplanned transformations in an organization’s structure, technology, and/or people” (2003, p. 587). This can be as simple as the natural evolution of the organization or as complex as any number of planned initiatives. The purpose of
this paper is to look at the planned change initiatives that affect the way that employees do their day-to-day jobs and how these initiatives can lead to conflict, as well as how leaders address conflicts.

Considering the complex issues that are brought to the table by the idea of culture, it is important to know when organizations should even consider cultural change initiatives. Deal and Kennedy (1982) suggest that in most situations, organizations should not attempt large-scale cultural change. They do, however, offer five situations where change initiatives should be considered.

The first is when it is clear that traditional values will lead to disaster. An example of this would be old policies and behaviors around Equal Employment Opportunities in the United States. Old value systems and methods for addressing these types of concerns must remain up to date with current laws and cultural norms.

Second is when the industry is highly competitive and the environment changes quickly. The culture must change to adapt as quickly as the environment. This is seen in the technology industry where new competitors and products appear almost daily.

The third is when the organization is mediocre or bad. If the organization is barely surviving, it must examine all options including the aspects of the culture that may be bringing down the company. The current automobile industry crisis shows this. The bad economy has forced manufacturers to reexamine many aspects of their vehicles as well as the way they do business.
The fourth situation is when the company is on the verge of becoming large. Processes and values must shift when the organization’s size and demand increases. If the organization’s culture is not ready to handle the complexities of being a large organization, then it is likely to fail. A current example of this is seen in social media organizations where the popularity of specific media, such as Facebook and Twitter, force their developers to hire more employees and to obtain better hardware and connections to keep up with the worldwide demand of their services.

The final situation is when the company is growing very quickly. If change happens fast, then the culture needs to be adaptable or the organization will simply not survive. The technology industry also shows this. The introduction of one product could lead to great successes, but the culture and processes must be ready to handle increased demands.

Handy (1995) suggests a sequence of events that help to create and initiate change. The first event is fright. When the organization is faced with some form of trauma, it is frightened into change or recognizes a need to change. This could be a drop in sales, high employee turnover, or operational troubles. A form of this is referred to as “doomsday management,” where executives introduce a sense of urgency due to some form of impending crisis. The goal is to “unfreeze” people so they are open to the idea of changing something (Greenberg and Baron, 2003).
Next, due to the scare, new people are brought in at the top of the organization to begin some type of restructuring, such as the replacement of executives or some form of consultants.

The third phase is new directions, when the new team at the top changes priorities. Focus then shifts and resources are reallocated.

The final phase is new groupings. This happens when the previous changes lead to new roles and responsibilities as well as new systems and methods.

After determining when a cultural change is necessary, an organization should consider what components need to be addressed. The organization should determine whether pieces of the external culture need to be altered, such as artifacts, or whether internal polices and procedures must be addressed. Culture is not static (Senge, 1990). It is impacted by the organization’s successes and failures, as well as other experiences of the employees and leadership. This means that culture is always changing, which adds to the difficulty of studying and strategically changing it.

As discussed previously there are many aspects to an organization’s culture. Especially in modern organizations, due to ever-changing technologies, the realities of doing business are constantly changing. If an organization is growing rapidly and revenue is increasing, then the physical features of the organization are in constant motion. Things such as new furniture, additional office space, and more employees will keep the culture in constant motion.
Additionally, organizations need to adjust as their size and business demands it. All of these factors, as well as many others, play a role when attempting to research or change the culture.

**Leadership: How culture is formed, shaped, and changed**

We have discussed that culture is the foundation of all organizations. It defines how organizations function and how members of the organization are expected to act. We have seen examples of some basic cultural typologies and have gotten a taste of how leaders within those cultures act. Leaders are responsible for forming, shaping, and changing their organizations’ cultures. The leader’s vision and effort build the organization from the ground up. The leader gives the organization purpose and begins forming the policies and procedures that will guide the employees’ expectations. Once an organization is formed it is also the leader’s role to shape the culture and change it as appropriate. We will now examine what a leader is as well as his or her role in organizational culture and change.

For the purpose of this paper, it is important to note that leaders are not always managers and managers are not always leaders. Leaders can come from any level or position in the organization. However, this study looks to gain insight about leaders who have formal authority to act as leaders. These are managers, administrators, and other executives.
Goleman and Baron (2000) explain that there are thousands of leadership experts who have made careers from giving advice based on inference, experience, and instinct. They continue that there is virtually no quantitative research to support which leadership behaviors create results. Although some view the research as limited, it is important to consider the many styles and techniques that leaders can use.

Burns (1978) defines leadership as “leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations of both leaders and followers” (p. 19). He continues to explain that the most important aspect of how leaders work is the “manner in which leaders see and act on their own and their followers’ values and motivations” (p. 19).

While there are numerous books on leadership, a few styles and typologies have made their way into valid research studies. Goleman and Baron examine six distinct leadership styles – coercive, authoritative, affiliative, democratic, pacesetting, and coaching. Burns (1978) suggests two leadership types – transactional and transformational.

Goleman and Baron (2000) explain that “coercive leaders demand immediate compliance. Authoritative leaders mobilize people toward a vision. Affiliative leaders create emotional bonds and harmony. Democratic leaders build consensus through participation. Pacesetting leaders expect excellence and self-direction. And coaching leaders develop people for the future” (p. 2). He
continues to explain that the leaders with the best results do not rely on one style but use all styles seamlessly depending on the situation.

Possibly the most researched leadership types are transformational and transactional. James MacGregor Burns first introduced the concepts of transformational and transactional leadership in 1978. Transactional leadership refers to the relationships between leaders and followers. This is the idea that a transaction or exchange takes place. A leader pays an employee for his or her work, or a politician offers jobs in return for votes. The relationship between leaders and followers is viewed as tit for tat, and its purpose only lasts as long as the bargaining process is able to continue (Burns, 1978).

On the other hand, while transformational leaders also recognize the importance of transactional exchanges, they seek to satisfy the underlying needs and motives of their followers. This relationship strives to convert followers into leaders. In this case, the relationships between leaders and followers become fused, and the followers’ motives change throughout the process (Burns, 1978). Through transformational leadership, the value systems of both leaders and followers evolve. The empowerment process enacts this transformation. Followers are empowered through the participatory and democratic ideals of this leadership style (Burns, 2003). Bass (2008) explains that transformational leaders do three things. First, they raise the followers’ level of consciousness regarding the values of outcomes and their means. Second, they get the followers to think beyond their own self-interests for the purpose of the organization. Finally, they
raise the followers’ needs for achievement and self-actualization. We have
discussed Integrated Conflict Management Systems and can see how these
leadership traits overlap with the values of these systems. Additionally, giving
employees options for dealing with various conflicts is in line with the
expectations of transformational leaders.

While our focus is on how leaders shape culture, some authors argue that
an organization’s culture actually shapes its leaders. “I assume that most people
[who are] expected to exercise leadership in their jobs are much more strongly
influenced by organizational culture than they are involved in actively producing
it” (Alvesson, 2002, p. 107). This helps to illustrate the power that culture has on
the organization, as well as some of the frustrations that leaders may face when
trying to make any changes.

Many authors who study organizational culture emphasize the importance
of leaders’ roles in forming, shaping, and changing organizational culture.
Gagliardi (1986, p. 119) even goes so far as to say “when cultural identity is being
modified there is always a charismatic leader or elite who leads the group towards
a new, broader, or different view of things.” To continue the emphasis on the
importance of leaders, George (1999) insists that the leader’s role in shaping
culture never ends, and their job is always to shape the members’ behavior to the
desired cultural type. Without some type of leadership, an organization cannot
exist because any organization needs a leader to start it.
Avolio, Walumbwa, and Weber (2009) give a review of current theories and research. They discuss the concepts of authentic, complex, and shared leadership styles. They emphasize that the current field of leadership focuses on many things including followers, peers, supervisors, environment, and culture, as well as the leaders themselves. As we examine different leadership styles, it is important to consider how these leaders might address conflict and initiate change. When working with organizations, Conflict practitioners should note the leaders’ styles and adapt their processes accordingly. They should consider questions such as: What do leaders do to work through conflict in their organizations? Is there a specific style that encourages this organization to change?

Avolio, Walumbwa, and Weber’s first concept is authentic leadership. Authentic leadership evolved out of James MacGregor Burns’ concept of transformational leadership. They define authentic leadership as “a pattern of transparent and ethical leader behavior that encourages openness in sharing information needed to make decisions while accepting followers’ inputs” (Avolio, Walumbwa, and Weber, 2009, p. 423). This model examines several layers of leadership, addressing the actions of the leader and the follower in specific contexts (Avolio, Walumbwa, and Weber, 2009).

Authentic leadership focuses on four factors. The first is balanced processing, which suggests objectively analyzing data before making a decision. The second is an internalized moral perspective, which suggests moral standards
regulating one’s behavior. The third factor is relational transparency, where one shares situation-appropriate information and feelings, including avoiding the display of inappropriate feelings. The fourth factor is self-awareness of one’s strengths, weaknesses, and views of the world. (Avolio, Walumbwa, and Weber, 2009).

New genre leadership moves away from the traditional ideas of transactional leadership, in which the theories vary from exchanges between leaders and followers, to more dynamic ideas such as transformational and charismatic leadership, which was addressed previously. These new ideas suggest that leaders strive to raise followers’ ambitions and values. The new genre leadership ideas have been found to positively improve leaders’ effectiveness, as well as organizational outcomes across varied organizations, situations, and cultures (Avolio, Walumbwa, and Weber, 2009).

Complexity leadership aims to view leadership less in a hierarchical fashion and more as a complex system that can produce outputs such as knowledge dissemination, learning, and innovation. This theory states that one cannot view leadership as a simple one-size-fits-all idea. Leadership is as complex as the organization in which it functions. The fundamentals of complexity leadership revolve around the idea of complex adaptive systems. These roles are adaptive – engaging others to achieve goals; administrative – formal planning based on organizational structure and rules; and enabling – attempting to
minimize bureaucracy to allow the followers to take initiative (Avolio, Walumbwa, and Weber, 2009).

Shared leadership, according to Avolio, Walumbwa, and Weber (2009), is based on team dynamics. Here, the group works toward goals by leading each other. The role of leader is shared and distributed among the group rather than having one individual who serves as supervisor. It is defined as “team-level outcome” – the idea of successful leadership as the property of the group and the result of the relationships between members. Shared leadership grows as individual knowledge drives organizational cultures. The cultural typology in quadrant four discussed above, where the group is brought together as a convenience, is very similar to shared leadership.

An examination of the relationship between leaders and followers is the leader-member exchange theory. This suggests that leaders develop different relationships with their followers, and the quality of the exchanges between leaders and followers impacts the outcomes. A high-quality leader-member exchange results in higher levels of performance as well as “organizational citizenship behaviors,” according to Avolio, Walumbwa, and Weber, (2009). In other words, effective relationships and/or exchanges between leaders and their followers have a positive impact on productivity and organizational climate, and even result in followers going above and beyond their obligations to achieve greater results (Avolio, Walumbwa, and Weber, 2009).
The GLOBE Study examined leadership styles around the world and found six major leader behaviors/styles. The first is charismatic/value-based leadership. Charismatic leadership is defined as the ability to inspire, to motivate, and to expect high-performance outcomes from others based on firmly held core values. These types of leaders are visionary, inspirational, self-sacrificing, decisive, performance-oriented, and honest (House, 2004). Charisma is defined as the “ability to capture the subordinates’ attention and to communicate major assumptions and values in a vivid and clear manner” (Schein, 2004, p. 245).

The second style is team-oriented leadership, which emphasizes building teams and creating a common purpose among members. Team-oriented leaders are diplomatic, benevolent, and administratively competent. They work to integrate teams and focus on collaboration (House, 2004).

The third type is participative leadership. Participative leaders involve others in making and implementing decisions. Participative leaders are gauged on a scale from non-participative to autocratic (House, 2004).

The fourth is humane-oriented. This type of leadership emphasizes support and consideration, as well as compassion and generosity. These leaders are modest and focus on humane interactions (House, 2004).

The fifth type is autonomous leadership. Autonomous leaders allow for individualistic, independent followers (House, 2004).

The sixth style is self-protective leadership, which focuses on the safety and security of the individual and the group through status enhancement and face-

All of these leadership styles give a basic idea of the many options that organizational leaders face. The options boil down to the leaders’ opinions on the direction they expect their organizations and members to go, as well as their personal value systems. Conflict practitioners need to have a basic understanding of each of these styles, because they will have an impact on the processes used to design Conflict Management Systems. Additionally, the leader’s style will have a strong impact on the cultural type. Although there is no clear rule, we can infer that if a leader is self-protective, then the organization’s culture will likely be one where the employees keep their personal interests close and are careful to document their efforts for the purpose of self-preservation. If the leader is charismatic, then the organizational members will likely be open and motivated.

Quinn and McGrath (1985) describe eight leadership roles or traits and behaviors. They use horizontal and vertical axes to illustrate the continua that result in four quadrants and two styles in each quadrant. Illustrated in Figure 4 below, the vertical axis shows the continuum from a responsive, open style to a structural, formal style. The horizontal axis shows the continuum from a cooperative, team orientation to a dynamic, competitive style.
In the first quadrant, you find an innovator style. The innovator leader is high on the responsive, open end of the vertical axis, which means he or she is responsive and open to ideas and change. He or she is also highly competitive and dynamic, which leads to creativity and cleverness. This style is both inventive and risk-taking. Also, in this quadrant is the broker role. This leader is resource-oriented and pays a great deal of attention to politics (Quinn and McGrath, 1985).

The second quadrant is toward a dynamic, competitive style, as well as a structured, formal style. Here you find the producer leadership style. The producer
style is task-oriented and work-focused. The other role is the director. The
director is decisive and provides a great deal of structure. Both of these maintain
control, are assertive, and create and maintain the external focus (Quinn and
McGrath, 1985).

The third quadrant is toward the formal, structured style as well as the
cooporative, team-oriented side. The first role here is the coordinator role. The
coordinator is dependable and maintains structure. The other role is the internal-
monitor role, which focuses on procedures and facts. Both of these roles are
conservative and cautious. They maintain control and internal focus (Quinn and
McGrath, 1985).

The fourth quadrant is cooperative and team-oriented, as well as
responsive and open. The group facilitator and mentor roles are in this quadrant.
The group facilitator is process-oriented, diplomatic, and tactful. This role
facilitates all interactions. The mentor role is caring and empathic toward
followers. Both of these roles are flexible and internally focused. They are
concerned and supportive in their actions and interactions (Quinn and McGrath,
1985).

This brief overview of some leadership types and philosophies gives some
perspective on how leaders can act in their organizations. The various styles leave
room for each leader to interpret and act appropriately based on the value systems
in their organizations and the needs of each follower. As with organizational
culture, no one leadership style has been proven to be better than another. Some
styles are more appropriate for certain situations than others, and the leader must determine which style works best for them in their situations. Additionally, the style that the leader chooses will have a significant impact on the way the employees act and react within the organization. As we will discuss in the next section, the leaders are responsible for shaping and changing the organization’s culture. Their leadership styles play a valuable role in the everyday life within their organizations.

**How Leaders Create and Change Culture**

We have discussed the various types of cultures found in organizations, including some information about what the requirements are for change and how the leaders act within each culture. We have looked at some reasons for organizational change including when traditional values lead to disaster, how a highly competitive industry or quickly changing environment can impact an organization, and when an organization is mediocre or bad (Deal and Kennedy, 1982). Also, we have examined some of the different leadership styles and how these styles can be appropriate in different situations. Now that we have examined organizational culture and leadership, we will take a look at the role that leaders play in creating and changing culture.

Gagliardi (1986) discusses one way in which organizations form their value systems. He calls this the “genesis of organizational values” and states that values are formed in four phases. In the first phase, the leader uses visioning
processes to establish the value system in the creation of the organization. These ideas are based on the leader’s values, which the leader’s experiences, education, and knowledge create. In the second phase, the leader influences membership through the organization’s successes in the market place. If the members’ actions lead to sales, this reaffirms that the actions were correct and solidifies the value of the processes that leaders created and members used. In the third phase, the focus shifts from getting results to examining the organization’s purpose or “cause.” The ideology becomes embedded in the culture. In the final phase, the organization’s members assume and even take for granted the value of the work they are doing.

Before a leader attempts to change an organization’s culture, O’Reilly (1989, p. 24) suggests that they consider four steps. They are:

1. **Identify the objectives.**
2. **Analyze the existing values and norms that characterize the organization.**
3. **Look for norms that may hinder the accomplishment of critical tasks.**
4. **Design programs to shape or develop the norms.**

When considering these options, Schneider (1994) insists that interventions be system-focused and clearly tied to business strategy. O’Reilly (1989) lays out four common mechanisms for developing culture. They consist of leadership driving group members to become involved by participating in processes; taking clear, visible actions that encourage desired values; circulating consistent information among coworkers; and creating a comprehensive reward system for desired behaviors.
Deal and Kennedy (1982) also recommend several ways to make change efforts successful. First, they insist that leaders provide reasons for change that everyone understands. If the reasons are not good enough to drive consensus, change will be very difficult. A “hero” can make this easier by taking charge of the process. The hero must understand the vision and be able to explain the new processes, as well as have the respect of employees and the ability to inspire. Also, Deal and Kennedy say to include rituals that illustrate pivotal moments in the process. This gives employees opportunities to recognize where the change is and mourn the loss of the old ways if necessary. Next, Deal and Kennedy say to provide training in the new behaviors and values. These training sessions should enforce the understanding of new expectations, as well as give the resources necessary for moving forward. Another piece is to bring in outsiders who can add to the transition. The outsiders can bring additional tools and help to mediate new processes. The use of outsiders or third parties is a key feature of Integrated Conflict Management Systems that we will discuss later.

Organizations should also create symbols, such as posters, that will serve as concrete signs of the change and communicate job security. If people are uncertain about their jobs, they can easily fall back to the old ways of doing things, defeating any attempts at change.

Alvesson (2002) states that cultural change is a combination of many different concepts. These concepts consist of recruiting new people and changing selection processes; changing socialization and creating new training programs;
rewarding new, positive behaviors; promoting those who exhibit the desired culture; having leaders properly communicate new values; and using organizational symbols. He continues to explain that these processes assume that top management is where the change originates and that top management has the best perspective on the organization’s needs. This helps to emphasize the need for leaders to have buy-in and push change initiatives.

In summary, we find that culture varies from one organization to the next, even between groups within organizations. We see that culture is the accumulation of employees’ values and beliefs about how work is done, and the amount of priority employees give to each aspect of the organization. We see that leadership is responsible for building and developing the culture, and established culture makes change difficult.

As we can see, the idea, function, and effect of leadership make it a complex issue. Even while the definition of leadership is varied, its power in an organization is strong, influencing organizational functions, such as change. Organizations can understand change initiatives more comprehensively when they consider the many aspects and theories on leadership. Organizations also must examine the organizational culture, consider the aspects of the change initiative, and plan what leadership should do to help guide the change. If organizations understand the many facets of leadership, it will help them plan and implement change initiatives.
Hardwiring Excellence: Building a Strong Culture

Quint Studer (2003) presents one option for leading change – leaders need to give employees clear goals and expectations and motivate them through worthwhile work. Studer’s work in health care organizations provides some insight on leadership that changes culture. His work can easily be applied to organizations in other industries as well.

Studer (2003) discusses how leadership in health care organizations can improve the organization’s bottom line by dealing with low, middle, and high performers; rounding for outcomes; looking for the positive; remaining transparent; evaluating; and communicating at all levels. He describes processes that, if leaders follow, will hardwire positive behaviors in the organization even after the leader is gone. This hardwiring behavior is the same process as changing the culture. His methods focus on making sure that employees are doing worthwhile work that makes a difference and that employees realize the purpose of their work. He lays out nine principles for success.

The first principle is creating a commitment to excellence, which he defines simply as running a great hospital. This consists of creating a culture that can adjust and respond to change and focus on people, service, quality, finance, and growth.

The second principle is to “measure the important things.” The goal here is to use specific leadership techniques to create favorable employee behaviors, or “the important things.”
The third principle is to build a culture around service. Under this principle, organizations must provide opportunities for actions that lead to results, allow employees to correct negative behaviors, and then reward positive behaviors by using what he refers to as “key words at key times.” He says to trust employees on the front lines as a resource for ideas. This is also where team-leader training is necessary.

Principle four is to create and develop leaders. This requires educating leaders on change efforts, including what to expect from employees and how to address key issues.

The fifth principle is to focus on employee satisfaction. He states that employees want three things – to believe the organization has the right purpose, to know that their job is worthwhile, and to make a difference. Here, he emphasizes his concept of “rounding for outcomes,” which he compares to doctors doing their rounds in the hospital. The leader must do their rounds to touch base with employees and get feedback, as well as look for opportunities to improve their work environments.

Principle six is to build individual accountability. Here, he states that employees who have a sense of ownership do a better job. Leaders can create a culture in which people are more inspired to motivate themselves by taking advantage of the intellectual capital within the organization.

Principle seven is to align behaviors with goals and values by constantly evaluating leaders’ behaviors to make sure they are consistently pushing toward
the proper goals. Principle eight is to communicate at all levels. Finally, principle nine is to recognize and reward success.

Studer’s work could be a leader’s guide to changing an organization’s culture. He insists that these methods will give leaders the tools necessary for creating a positive and productive work environment, or culture. Using health care organizations as an example, Studer lays out how organizations can be cutthroat and dysfunctional, and how strong leaders can use some specific methods to transform the culture into a more productive and functional environment. This example begins to illustrate how culture and leadership are strongly tied.

Organizations can see the value of Integrated Conflict Management in the way they reduce the negative impacts of conflict and create positive culture change within organizations. As said previously, any system that an organization introduces with the intention of changing the way things are done has a strong impact on the culture. At the same time, the culture can affect the success of the system in both positive and negative ways, depending on how well the cultural aspects are addressed during system implementation. Finally, because of their role in shaping culture, leaders can play the most valuable part when it comes to creating systems in their organizations.

Now that we have an understanding of the concepts of organizational culture, leadership, and Integrated Conflict Management Systems and how they relate to each other, we can begin to look into more specific details. We have seen
that many different factors define every organization’s culture. Among these factors are the written documents, such as policies and procedures, which specify how the organization expects people to behave. We have discussed that leadership is a key factor in defining and shaping the culture and have looked at the relationship that Integrated Conflict Management Systems has with both culture and leadership.

The following section will examine, through interviews, what specific conflicts occur during change initiatives and what leaders do to work through these conflicts.
III. Methods

Rationale for This Study

When attempting to design an Integrated Conflict Management System for an organization, practitioners must keep in mind that systems change the culture of organizations, and cultural change, by its nature, causes conflict. Because of this, the ICMS implementation process is likely to lead to the same conflicts it is trying to prevent. Leaders are vital to ensuring a smooth change process. This study aims to help practitioners anticipate conflicts in the implementation process, as well as identify ways that an organization can use leaders to maximize the organization’s assets.

To minimize the conflict that an ICMS implementation can produce, practitioners must work to change the organization’s culture to accept the system’s new processes. Otherwise, workers are unlikely to use the new system. Additionally, Conflict practitioners could gain insight by examining organizational leaders’ methods for addressing conflicts.

In this study, we will build on the literature reviewed earlier in this paper by examining the interviews of organizational leaders who have seen their organizations through some form of change initiative. We will identify the types of conflicts that changes created, as well as both the successful and unsuccessful
methods leaders used to overcome the conflicts changes caused. The intention of this research was to uncover details that will be useful in the implementation of Integrated Conflict Management Systems. This could shed light on how organizations can use conflict resolution processes to lead change.

**Difficulties in Researching Organizational Culture**

In addition to the lack of a formal, widely accepted definition of what organizational culture really is, many obstacles make researching culture difficult. When attempting to research organizational culture, one will find cultural variance among groups within the organization, which makes valid conclusions difficult. Many of the standard flaws in research methodology are applicable here, such as participant selection and the impact of the observer.

In the area of data collection, most researchers strive to make as little impact on the participants as possible, which leads to an uncommon drawback. As discussed by Schein (2004), researchers are not accepted until they show the value they will provide to the organization. Value can be in the form of personal connections and rapport-building with participants or in having participants understand how the researcher is contributing to the overall success of the group, such as showing how the research will make their jobs easier or safer.

Ury, Brett, and Goldberg (1988) described a similar dilemma where researchers integrated themselves into workers’ lives in a coal mine in an attempt to gain greater understanding of organizational stresses. They found much
resistance to their presence until they were able to build trust. Workers even subjected the researchers to an initiation ritual at one point.

Ury, Brett, and Goldberg’s work ultimately resulted in the creation of what they call a “Dispute System,” or what this paper defines as an Integrated Conflict Management System. The connection that Ury, Brett, and Goldberg show between Conflict Systems and culture further illustrates the value of understanding the cultural implications of any organizational system. If they had not gained the trust of workers, their dispute systems would likely have failed.

Participants

The participants in this study were selected through a snow-ball sampling method. The researcher sent e-mail messages to his personal and professional contacts requesting leads on possible participants. Those contacts then sent out their own requests. When they received word from someone who was willing to participate, they passed the contact information on to the researcher who scheduled one-on-one meetings with the participants. This sampling and self-selection method may have limited the scope of participants. The original goal was to interview Chief Executive Officers or Executive Directors and many of the participants did not meet those criteria. However, these connections may have helped with the participants’ ability to remain open and honest during the interviews.
The initial request for participants, shown in Appendix A, stated that the researcher was searching for Chief Executive Officers or Executive Directors who had led change in their organizations. Many of the responses came from people at lower levels of the organizations, such as Presidents and Vice Presidents, who were still able to provide a great deal of insight for the research. The time available for completing the research and the scope of the project suggested this shift in participant qualifications. All participants had a great deal of experience and a strong understanding of the pressures that both supervisors and supervisees place on individuals.

Eight organizational leaders self-selected for this study and agreed to be interviewed. The researcher arranged one-on-one interviews at private locations. Only one meeting occurred in a location other than the leader’s office. This person selected a nearby coffee shop. The participants’ backgrounds and organizational affiliations varied greatly. Six participants came from nonprofit organizations of varying sizes and scopes, one participant was with a government entity, and the last came from a small, but rapidly growing, for-profit organization. These leaders were responsible for as few as four direct reports and as many as 680 employees who indirectly report to them through other managers. Four participants were male and four were female. The researcher estimates that the participants’ ages ranged from mid-30s to early 50s. None of these organizational leaders expressed any formal training in conflict resolution. All
participants mentioned previous organizational leadership experience prior to their current positions.

The duration of the meetings ranged from approximately 40 minutes to two hours, depending on the time available and the individual’s feelings about his or her ability to contribute to the research.

**Procedure**

Participants were given the “Informed Consent Form” (shown in Appendix B) and allowed time to read and ask questions. They then selected whether they agreed to be audio-taped and were given the option to waive confidentiality. The researcher explained that the intention behind waiving confidentiality was so that all participants could be given proper credit and recognition for helping with the research. All participants agreed to waive confidentiality and to have the interview recorded. After completing the “Informed Consent Form,” participants were told that the focus of the study was to examine cultural change in organizations, the stumbling blocks that leaders face, and the methods that they use to work through these stumbling blocks.

They were informed that cultural change was defined generically as any attempt to change the policies and procedures in a way that affects employees’ day-to-day activities. The researcher then asked some basic questions about the organization, about their attempt at change, and then allowed the participant to
speak freely. The interview questions are shown in Appendix C. This free-form discussion allowed most questions to be answered without being asked directly.

The interview questions were broken into four sections to help the flow of the conversation. The first section was information about the organization and the change initiative. Section two asked about specific conflicts that occurred during the change. Section three examined the outcome and success of the change, and section four looked for the specific actions leaders took.

The midpoint of the interview involved showing participants a modified version of Christopher Moore’s (2003) Circle of Conflict (see Figure 5 below). They were then given time to review the descriptions of each type of conflict and asked to give any examples they had experienced, as well as any methods that they used for resolving each conflict.
As discussed previously, Christopher Moore’s (2003) Circle of Conflict lays out the five major types of conflict: Relationship, Data, Interest, Structural, and Value. Moore gives some definitions of these conflicts as well as methods for working through them. By asking participants for examples of conflict they had experienced, the researcher gained insight into the specific issues that occur during change initiatives, as well as information about how organizational leaders worked through them.
At the end of the interview, the researcher explained that the goal of the research was to contribute to literature on Integrated Conflict Management Systems by looking at the potential conflicts that could occur when an ICMS is implemented at an organization. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and evaluated for common themes between participants. The objective was to determine specific types of conflicts that occur during change initiatives and what methods leaders used to work through those conflicts.
IV. Results and Discussion

The interviews were transcribed and analyzed looking for common themes using a cross-case analysis. According to Patton (2002), a cross-case analysis is “grouping answers from different people to common questions, or analyzing different perspectives on central issues” (p. 440). Interview responses were grouped around three major categories. The first is what change initiative the leaders worked through. The second group is the conflicts that occurred during the changes. The third group is what leaders did to work through the conflicts. The study did not specifically examine Integrated Conflict Management Systems, although some participants were able to speak about the use of some pieces of ICMS, such as facilitators and crucial conversations.

Although every participant agreed to waive confidentiality, participants shared enough personal information that the researcher has chosen to protect the identities of all participants in this study. To protect their identities, the participants will be referred to as ‘Participant’ and identified with a number 1 through 8 or abbreviated as P1, P2, etc. Also, without impacting the results of the study, their stories will be modified enough to disguise their organizations and locations.
Results Part I: Cultures, Leaders, and Change Initiatives

When asked to describe their change initiatives, the researcher received a wide range of stories. Based on the information gathered in the literature review, cultural change was described to the participants as “any attempt to change policies or procedures in a way that changes how the employees are expected to act on a day-to-day basis.” Participants self-selected by agreeing that they had seen their organization through this type of change. The results of this study include the examples of change that participants discussed, as well as some insight into the leadership traits and organizations’ cultures. These descriptions are discussed below.

It is important to note that, as mentioned in the review on leadership, no particular leadership style is better than another. The goal was not to judge or gauge the effectiveness of the leaders but rather to look for overarching recommendations from one leader to the next and gather their opinions of what methods they feel are successful. The researcher did not view the participants as experts in leadership as much as experts in the conflicts they have experienced in their organizations and the methods they used to work through them. Success for these leaders is based solely on their opinions.

For the purpose of confidentiality, the participants will not be connected in any way to their specific stories. The details of the change initiatives will be summarized in a random order below.
One participant described being given control of a highly dysfunctional team that was poorly managed in the past. This required the leader to remove and replace management, as well as rebuild workflow, responsibilities, and overall organizational attitude. The changes in policies and procedures included who individuals reported to as well as their day-to-day activities and expectations. Resulting conflicts were largely due to the fear employees felt during the change. Once management changed, employees felt unstable and were concerned about their jobs and responsibilities moving forward. This leader had to find methods of building trust within the group, training individuals to handle different work processes, and building a team that could continue forward with minimal support.

This leader began changing the norms and rules of behaviors for the staff. As discussed by Schein (2004) the members of the organization depict the culture through their beliefs, values, norms, and behaviors. When this leader, who was seen as somewhat of an outsider, began making changes, the team was forced to reevaluate the views they held of the organization. From the descriptions given by Del Pra Netto Machado and Carvalho (2008), this leader took a team that was set in its ways and acting as a rational cultural type (Quadrant 3) independent from the higher levels of the organization, and pulled them into a hierarchical culture (Quadrant 2) under his or her close supervision so that their processes could be changed to be more in line with the rest of the organization. The process that this leader discussed was very similar to the process that Handy (1995) outlines. First the organization is shocked by some form of trauma. The second phase is to bring
in a person to the top of the organization. The third phase is new directions, and the final phase is the settling of new roles and responsibilities. In this case the shock was operational troubles because this group was not living up to expectations. This leader was brought in to restructure, create new directions, and assign new roles and responsibilities. He or she then left the team with new leadership and performance expectations.

This leader exhibited director traits as discussed by Quinn and McGrath (1985). In the director role, he or she provided structure for the employees and made difficult decisions regarding staffing issues.

Another participant discussed specifically updating and rewriting the policies and procedures for the organization’s hiring procedures and requirements. This change required members to examine and negotiate their views of the hiring processes, their opinion of the organization’s values, and their interactions with each other. This change set the expectations for all future hires, impacting future decisions and actions within the organization. These changes brought out conflicts between individual’s beliefs about the core values of the organization.

This organization’s cultural type fits more into the Quadrant 3 or rational culture, where change happens through consensus and problem-solving methods. This leader actually described some of the consensus-building and problem-solving methods that the organization needed to work through the changes.

This leader displayed group-facilitator traits according to Quinn and McGrath's (1985) model. He or she used process and diplomacy to work through
the negotiations of changing the organization’s policies. As he or she mentioned when describing the organization’s culture, including the personalities of staff, this was the best and only method for leading change within this group.

The next participant reflected on changing the focus of his or her non-profit organization from building relationships with other entities and clients to protecting and improving finances. This required changing the roles and expectations of the organization’s board of directors, creating the need to replace some board members with individuals who were more able to support the new organizational focus. Conflicts resulted from disagreement about the organizational values and what the most productive direction was for ensuring long-term survival of the organization.

This leader described a Quadrant 3 or rational culture where change happens with the board of directors through problem-solving and consensus methods based on the theory of Del Pra Netto Machado and Carvalho (2008). Additionally, this leader displayed transformative leadership traits where he or she enacted the organization’s new direction and goals by empowering the others to provide feedback, make choices about their participation, and help the entire board evolve their values and the organization’s direction together.

Another participant stated, “We are always going through cultural change,” and described his or her responsibility for developing and monitoring all of the organization’s policies and procedures. This participant’s job was to monitor all current rules, regulations, and laws that governed the organization and
make sure that his or her piece of the organization remained in compliance. Additionally, this leader was responsible for managing the front-line staff to ensure high quality of service. Although the employees in this organization expect constant changes due to changes in the field and regulations, this leader still had many conflicts to work through. Conflicts consisted of personality differences, frustrations with other departments, and value conflicts related to the ever changing responsibilities.

Due to the large amount of external regulations, such as laws and other agency standards placed upon this organization, it could be seen as a Quadrant 2 culture as defined by Del Pra Netto Machado and Carlvahlo (2008). In this culture, job descriptions are highly important and roles, positions or titles define leaders. Changing this culture requires changes in systems, procedures, responsibilities, and structure.

This leader was very much a director and a mentor based on the descriptions provided by Quinn and McGrath (1985). This leader was very structured in the way that he or she managed decisions while maintaining a mentor relationship with employees. As a mentor, he or she used empathic techniques and active listening to address the needs and concerns of employees.

The next participant discussed his or her rapidly growing organization and how he or she is focusing on structural changes, such as the organizational chart. The participant also was reviewing hiring processes and client focuses. The primary change with which this leader was struggling was that as the organization
grew, the organization was forced to include fewer people in major decisions. People felt left out, creating concerns about morale.

This organization was going through a cultural change from a Quadrant 4 or existential culture, according to Del Pra Netto Machado and Carvalho, to a more rational (Quadrant 3) cultural type. In some instances, the organization was implementing aspects of hierarchy (Quadrant 2). This leader expressed concerns over the stresses of changing the organization from one where power is shared to one where leadership had to take more control over the rules and responsibilities governing members. This was necessary because the organization would soon grow rapidly, as previously discussed. Deal and Kennedy (1982) discuss how cultural change is necessary when an organization is growing rapidly and that processes and values must shift to handle size and demand issues.

This leader displayed innovator traits, according to Quinn and McGrath's (1985) definition. He or she was incredibly responsive and open to risk-taking. If anyone in the organization had a good idea, this leader would consider moving forward with it.

The next participant discussed how the organization changed its focus as a result of hiring him or her. This participant shifted the way the organization approached fundraising, as well as the attitudes about certain projects. This non-profit leader brought an aggressive sales approach to fundraising compared to the more passive approaches used in the past. These changes ask employees to step
out of their comfort zones and approach funders with requests for money. This created value conflicts related to the ways they address their clients and funders.

This leader expressed frustrations about the success of change initiatives because of the lack of support from the highest levels of the organization. The researcher speculates that this organization’s culture fits into Del Pra Netto Machado and Carvalho’s (2008) first quadrant. As discussed previously, this culture is much like a family system or a club of individuals. In this culture, change must occur from the top down with solid justifications and explanations of the reasons for the change. This leader made it very clear that his or her efforts were limited because the highest leadership did not fully support change efforts.

This leader was very goal-driven and task-oriented. He or she fits the producer role as discussed by Quinn and McGrath (1985). Although this leader expressed some transformative leadership traits, such as a desire to help his or her followers grow personally through their work, the researcher infers that the differing personality styles that he or she faced within the organization caused followers to view him or her as a more transactional leader, where the relationship between leaders and followers is seen as tit for tat, according to Burns (1978). Based on his or her descriptions of employee interactions, the employees had a difficult time adapting to the leader’s aggressive style, which seemed to hamper many of the attempts to create a transformative relationship.

The next participant discussed how his or her being hired resulted in a personality shift for the organization. His or her view for employees was that they
should “gravitate toward working smart not hard.” He or she explained this by saying, “I’m not going to come in on Saturday to read my inbox. I’m going to die with a full inbox.” This person demanded a lot of employees while at work but also expected them to take time for themselves and their families, which his or her predecessor did not openly encourage. Additionally, this leader changed the way that team-building work was approached.

The nature of this large organization forces it to be very hierarchical (Quadrant 2), but this leader chose to share power in many cases, which made the organization more of a rational (Quadrant 3) culture. This leader expressed how these changes created some cognitive dissonance among members who expected leadership to take more control over their day-to-day activities. This leader expressed a very transformative style where he or she empowered employees to make decisions and participate in molding the organization.

The final participant discussed merging organizations that had already worked closely together. This required negotiations at multiple levels including re-examining members’ roles, responsibilities, and client focuses. Both organizations had similar processes and procedures, but it was still necessary to re-examine work flow and other policies. Additionally, overlapping positions were eliminated and the leader made a strong effort to keep all employees even if their roles changed. The conflicts that resulted were due to fears of job loss or concerns about whether the organizations were making the best decisions by merging.
Both of these organizations were described as being more rational (Quadrant 3) and followed consensus-based, problem-solving methods. This leader expressed some of the group-facilitator traits while still maintaining a very goal-oriented and formal approach to managing the organization.

These brief examples give some insight into the types of cultural changes that organizations go through and illustrate basic conflicts that these changes created. Additionally, some insight was gained each organization’s cultural type, as well as leadership style. This study did not seek to gain a great deal of information about the cultural type of each organization but rather looked to find information about the conflicts that occur when cultural changes are attempted. True understanding of each organization’s culture would require in-depth research such as a cultural analysis. A cultural analysis would examine various aspects of the organization from different levels. This would require interviews of additional leaders, as well as other organizational members.

In the next section, we will break down the specific types of conflicts that leaders faced, and in part III, we examine what leaders do to work through these conflicts.

**Results Part II: Conflicts Created by Change**

As discussed above, some of the leaders’ descriptions of changes gave information regarding the conflicts they experienced during change initiatives.
These conflicts consisted of differences in opinions, disagreement over the direction of their organizations, personality problems, and value conflicts.

The next section of the interview looked to gain more specific insight into the conflicts that these leaders faced during their change initiatives. This section involved examining the specific conflicts that leaders witnessed during the change process. Participants were shown a modified version of Christopher Moore’s “Circle of Conflict” (Moore, 2003) as shown in Figure 5 above. They were then asked to give any examples they could think of from each conflict type – Data, Relationship, Interest, Structure, and Value. Most of the participants’ conflict examples overlapped with every conflict type.

When participants saw the Circle of Conflict, several actually chuckled. One participant (P2) summed up these reactions best when she said, “I think I can speak to all of them.” Each participant gave examples of conflicts that he or she felt applied to each type. Several participants seemed to try to force their examples into one specific conflict type, even though it was clear they saw the commonalities among multiple types. In some cases, participants asked if they had to fit their stories into one category and were informed that most conflicts have aspects of all five categories. They were instructed to categorize their conflicts as they felt was appropriate. Even then, the concepts seemed to confuse participants. More explicit questions and a better explanation of the conflict types would have improved results and reduced participant confusion.
Also, while the participants were encouraged to talk about the specific change initiative they had already described, they often brought up examples that were from other past experiences. Sometimes they explained that the conflict occurred during a different situation, and other times the researcher was left uncertain about when the conflicts actually occurred. These issues will be addressed in greater detail in the section on future research.

The results from each conflict type are described below.

**Data Conflicts**

Data conflicts, according to Moore (2003), consist of missing or lacking information, different views or interpretations, and varying procedures for assessing data. One respondent said,

“We had different views on what was relevant...We had members who were looking at the budget and seeing what the fundraising goals were but had no concept of how that money was going to come in and how they were going to be a part of having it happen or not” (P1).

This shows that employees had differing views and varying procedures for assessing data. Moore (2003) suggests that individuals can work through data conflicts by coming to agreement on the importance and interpretation of available data. In this case, the leader worked through the conflict by illustrating the organization’s current needs and explaining specifically how much of the budget each person was responsible for bringing into the organization.

Another respondent discussed issues with people being “messaged to in different ways” (P4). She discussed this as a problem both internally and
externally. The messaging issues caused differing views and interpretations of data and boiled down to multiple methods of communication. She believed that consistent messaging from leadership would alleviate many of the problems.

Participants gave some suggestions for dealing with data conflicts. One stated that she was “trying to develop one source of truth” for addressing data conflicts (P5). This meant creating a central place to contain all information and address rumors and gossip issues directly. She emphasized the value of communications, which we will discuss more later on.

Another participant discussed trying to create some standardized methods for collecting and reporting data, so all of their affiliates would know exactly what information was needed and how to report it back (P6). This is inline with Moore’s (2003) other suggestion to create common criteria for assessing data.

**Relationship Conflicts**

Moore (2003) defines states that strong emotions, stereotypes, miscommunication, or continued negative behavior cause relationship conflicts. After reviewing these bullets shown in Figure 5 above, participants described the relationship conflicts they have experienced.

Participants showed a great deal of respect for the common problems connected to relationship conflicts. One participant stated that relationship conflicts “are the largest challenges” (P3) and another stated that “whenever you’re dealing with people, you’re dealing with relationships and emotions,
especially when people are passionate about the work that you’re doing” (P1). Another stated that “relationship conflicts are one of the largest I encounter in the work place, including previous organizations.” She continued that these conflicts “boil down to communication problems” (P5).

Another participant explained that she faces poor communications and miscommunications when dealing with her marketing department. She said that the marketing department did not see her department’s efforts as a high priority, causing her department to have to work around or “go underground” to get work done in a timely manner (P4). This avoidance damages relationships and makes each interaction with the marketing department more difficult.

One participant described “difficulty working in close environments, where people feel that others talk too loud” (P7). He emphasized that these conflicts become worse when people do not want to discuss the conflict. The quote from P5 above touched on a possible solution, which coincides with Moore (2003). He suggests the use of rules or procedures, improving communication, or encouraging problem-solving attitudes as methods for working through these everyday types of conflict.

**Interest Conflicts**

Interest conflicts are caused by competition, procedures, or psychological needs (Moore, 2003). One participant stated that some changes caused members
to act as if they were in competition with each other and created a debate over the organization’s direction (P1).

Another participant discussed some interest conflicts among higher-level employees who spend less time in their offices but refuse to share space, while other employees, who spend significantly more time in their offices, are forced to share space (P2). She also connected this to structural conflicts. This relates back to cultural artifacts that Schein (2004) discusses as being the structures and processes found within the organization.

One participant stated that she sees “lots of interest conflicts at all times” (P4). She described having counterparts across the country who are responsible for specific areas and have conflict when the main office tries to nationalize any part of the organization. Each leader feels he or she knows what is most important for the procedures or needs in his or her area, leading to conflicts over control with the national office.

One participant defined interest conflicts by saying that “people are interested in doing things that benefit them personally” (P8). Along with the other examples, this statement helps to illustrate how interest conflicts can occur when people have even the simplest differences in how to reach their perceived needs.

As discussed above, P5 explained that the marketing department does not see her department’s work as a priority. This is both a relationship conflict and an interest conflict.
One participant offered a suggestion for working through interest conflict. “What has worked best for me with interest conflicts is to identify them and insist that we have to find some way to work through them. I think that identifying and being explicit that there is a conflict is a good first step” (P7). Moore (2003) also suggests putting the conflict situation on the table, because members can work through these conflicts by developing solutions that address everyone’s needs.

**Structural Conflicts**

Behavior patterns, unequal resources, power differences, environmental factors, or time constraints cause structural conflicts (Moore, 2003).

All of these leaders described cultural changes that were either intended to change structure or had a direct and obvious impact on the organization’s structure. As a result, members were expected to change their behavior by reporting to someone else or doing their job differently. Here we see some overlap with a description of interest conflicts. As discussed by participant 2, they had structural and interest conflicts around shared office spaces. These structural conflicts reflect some core issues around power and status differences. Conflicts such as this can have a strong impact on the morale and productivity of the lower-level employees.

Moore (2003) explains that organizations can work through structural conflicts by defining roles, replacing destructive behaviors, and managing control issues.
Value Conflicts

According to Moore (2003), value conflicts exist when members have no consensus about norms or ideals. These revolve mostly around different ways of life, ideology, or religion. Participants said they had not experienced much difficulty with value conflicts. One participant said that “values are set by the organization’s mission” (P4). These leaders, especially those with non-profit or mission-focused organizations, had less common frustrations with overarching value conflicts. Most of the conflicts that the researcher would consider to be value conflicts appeared to leaders to be relationship conflicts among employees. Additionally, several participants discussed changing specific policies and procedures that would change the course of the organization. Any conflict over changing the course of the organization could arguably be related to differences in individuals’ value systems.

Moore (2003) suggests some methods for working through value conflicts, such as allowing individuals to both agree and disagree, creating spheres of influence in which one set of values dominates, and searching for common interests that all individuals share. Many of these methods are seen within the structure of the organizations. These leaders’ organizations were all mission-focused, which gave members both spheres of influence and common interests. Individuals who do not share these interests are less likely to work for the organization.
Summary

Participant’s discussions about the conflicts caused by change initiatives varied greatly. Although this was a small sample, the participants gave some very good insight into the conflicts that could occur during change initiatives. These descriptions give some understanding of the issues that leaders can expect when initiating a change process. These leaders experienced all of the conflict types discussed including values, interest, structural, data, and relationship. These participants gave more descriptions about the occurrence of relationship and interest conflicts and fewer descriptions of value conflicts. Further analysis indicates that many of the perceived relationship conflicts that participants discussed could also be value conflicts. Due to the difficulty of working through value conflicts, this is vital information during any change initiative. Misdiagnosing a value conflict as a relationship conflict could lead to improper and inefficient attempts at resolution. Conflict practitioners should consider a leader’s opinion of the types of conflicts that the organization faces, while also examining what higher-level and more complex issues may be present. In fact, practitioners should be prepared to help leaders understand all conflict types and the different methods used to work through each type.

The most important message from this section is that these leaders experienced all types of conflict when attempting to change the organization’s culture. This information is vital knowledge for the implementation of an ICMS as practitioners should be prepared to experience some of the same conflicts that
these systems are intended to prevent. The next section will examine the methods that these leaders used for working through the various types of conflicts they experienced.

Results Part III: Leaders’ Methods for Overcoming Conflict

As mentioned previously, one of the researcher’s goals was to receive very specific information from each leader on the techniques used to work through each of Moore’s conflict types. Although the participants gave a taste of the methods used for each type of conflict and even confirmed some of Christopher Moore’s theory, this did not happen as intended. The researcher was able to gain insight on three topics that were found to be vital to these organizational leaders. Participants discussed overarching methods that they felt were appropriate and useful for dealing with all five types of conflict. Additionally, these methods are found to be congruent with many of the leadership types discussed previously.

Three primary themes were found regarding the methods that leaders use to work through conflicts during change initiatives. These were the importance of dialogue, the value of one-on-one conversations, and the need for leaders to be direct and consistent. The overarching theme for all three of these results is communication. Leaders discussed that conflicts were caused by lack of or poor communication and that different types of communication were effective in working through these conflicts.
Value of Dialogue

One hundred percent of participants discussed the value of dialogue during change initiatives. They discussed dialogue as having open and honest conversations, being transparent with employees, and listening. Figure 6 below shows a brief example of each participant’s comment related to dialogue. They stated that the importance and frequency of communication was valuable during change initiatives. Overall, participants emphasized that the dialogue should be appropriate for each person or group, and that they have seen the greatest amount of success when they use good communication skills.

For example, one respondent stated that when dealing with performance management issues, “I think that the communication piece is very essential, both formal and informal” (P5). This suggests both documenting conversations and having informal discussions to check in with employees. This is in line with Studer’s (2003) discussion on dealing with low performers. On the formal side, Studer states that leaders should be clear about the problems and how they can be fixed. Leaders should document these conversations and refer to them as necessary. On the informal side, Studer discusses rounding for outcomes. This informal communication helps leaders check in with employees to make sure leaders are providing the resources that employees need to do their jobs.

Additionally, participants emphasized the concepts of dialogue and open communication. They regularly discussed how important it is for employees to feel they have a voice. One participant stated, “Regardless of title, everybody has
a voice. Ideas come from everywhere and you have to look at it that way” (P3).

He gave an example of the organization’s weekly Monday meetings where they have open discussions and “look for good feedback from everybody.” These meetings are intended to increase the transparency and communication throughout this organization.

**Figure 6: Responses Related to the Value of Dialogue**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Brief Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>“…having a very honest dialogue …”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>“…I listen more and ask lost of questions …”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>“We’re very transparent …even with financials”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>problems associated with “poor communication”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>“… needs to be coupled with a higher level of communication”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>“Trying to increase communication”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>“this conflict resulted … poor communication”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P8</td>
<td>“having hypothetical conversations”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Value of One-On-One Conversations**

Another interesting finding is that six of the eight participants (75%) discussed the importance of one-on-one meetings with key players when trying to make changes. The value shown here is in building alliances and taking the time with each stakeholder to explain the benefits of the change as well as receive feedback from others regarding the pros and cons of the change. These one-on-one conversations were emphasized as being two-way conversations rather than the leader simply talking at the other person. People need to feel a part of the decision for change initiatives to be effective and the best way to gain that buy-in.
is for individuals to have their needs and interests heard and/or addressed. Figure 7 below shows examples of the participants’ statements about one-on-one conversations.

Figure 7: Discussions of One-on-One Conversations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Brief Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>“I had to do a lot of behind the scenes work…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>“I dealt with her complaint one-on-one.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>“We just spent a lot of time covertly having lunch with people to get feedback…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>“I had to meet with people individually…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>“Currently, I’m meeting individually with leadership…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P8</td>
<td>“We resolved things primarily through individual conversations.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One participant stated this as “doing some foundational work to get buy-in” (P6). Another participant stated, “I had to do a lot of behind-the-scenes work. It wasn’t secretive but I felt like all I was doing was having these private conversations and hoping [that I could] gather allied forces and try to make it move in one direction versus another” (P1). This is in line with Goleman and Baron’s (2000) definition of a democratic leader who builds consensus through participation. The participants used a democratic style of leadership to help individuals to voice their opinions and perspectives. Additionally, in an attempt to get buy-in from their followers, leaders were displaying traits of transformational leadership, according to Bass (2008). These conversations helped followers to think beyond their own self-interests for the purpose of the organization, as well
as give feedback that allowed opportunity for both the leaders’ and the followers’ value systems to evolve together, which is another trait of transformational leadership as described by Burns (1978).

At first glance, these one-on-one conversations seem to contradict another piece that most participants mentioned: the need to be open, honest, and transparent with followers. A deeper understanding showed that these one-on-one meetings are intended to address the needs of the individuals that may or may not be concerns of the rest of the followers. “I had to meet with people individually to reassure them that it (referring to firing an employee) wasn’t an expected pattern” (P5). Participants said these meetings are ways to meet and address the specific needs and/or concerns of different individuals during change initiatives. Also, these were opportunities for both the leaders and the employees to save face and prevent certain topics from being discussed in front of groups. This was discussed previously in the section on transformational leaders. Transformational leaders, according to Bass (2008), strive to satisfy the underlying issues of their followers. They strive to help their followers move beyond their own self interests toward the interests of the organization as a whole. Also, these one-on-one conversations would likely be seen in the cultural typology of Quadrant 1 (see Figure 2), which focuses on relationships and collaboration.

In summary, the majority of participants in this study felt that one-on-one conversations were vital in working through conflicts that organizational changes create. These one-on-one conversations are intended to gain trust, give
information, and negotiate necessary pieces of the puzzle as they move forward with the initiative.

**Direct and Consistent Messages from Leaders**

Another theme that several participants talked about was the need for leaders to be direct and consistent with their messaging to staff. When referring to dealing with staff issues, one participant said, “You have to be consistent, because if you don’t deal with your weak employees, you’ll lose your strong employees” (P7). This statement is in line with Studer’s work. Studer (2003) emphasizes dealing with high, middle, and low performers. He says to give low performers opportunities to improve by communicating their problems and removing them if they are unable to follow through.

Another participant suggests a layered approach. “I start with a direct approach. If the direct approach scares someone, I try a more subtle approach” (P4). Others talked about leaders making and owning their decisions. “Sometimes you just need somebody to step in and say ‘this is what we’re going to do’” (P5). Another participant emphasized frustrations with this by saying, “I think one of the hardest things for board members to do is realize when they really need to step in and do something most unpleasant in an organization, like make the executive director accountable” (P1).
Although every participant mentioned key concepts from Conflict Resolution literature, such as dialogue, consensus-building, and active listening, only two had brought in third parties to help with their processes. This is surprising because of the value that the conflict resolution process can bring to organizations. One organization has an organizational consultant on standby that occasionally facilitates staff meetings or helps make necessary staffing decisions. The other organization actually brought in a third party to help facilitate their change process. This person developed a series of group and individual meetings with the intention of working through the most difficult topics. This leader stated that it was important to “have a mandated process where everyone was given permission to bring up issues.” Overall, this helped to smooth out the organization’s transition. “The process stuff allows you to build a strong team.” This is inline with Moore’s (2003) recommendations for working through several types of conflict. He states that a mutually acceptable decision-making process should be established for dealing with structural conflicts (Moore, 2003).

Finally, some of the participants shared additional information that the author feels is important to discuss. As mentioned above, one participant stated that “what has worked best for me with interest conflicts is to identify them and insist that we have to find some way to work through them. I think that identifying and being explicit that there is a conflict is a good first step” (P7). Leaders who understand and believe in this concept could find great value in
knowing some of the Conflict Resolution processes that can help them find ways to work through the problem. Processes such as group facilitation or mediation would give leaders the tools they need to find resolutions. Even though the study was not looking specifically for the use of Conflict Resolution methods, two participants mentioned the use of facilitators and organizational consultants.

When asked if she has specific techniques to work through conflicts, one participant said, “When I do it really well, I listen more than I talk, and I ask lots of open-ended questions and put the ball back in the person’s court. When I’m not very good at it, I do all of the talking and I do the dictating and create all the plans ... I think really being present is important” (P2). This statement speaks to the power of active listening and interest-based negotiations that Fisher and Ury (1991) emphasize. Also, this is a skill that is associated with transformational leaders. Transformational leaders look for ways to find the underlying interests of their followers (Burns, 2003).

After examining the Circle of Conflict, one participant shared a specific conflict situation and was even able to assign a dollar value to the attempts at dealing with the problem. He shared the following story.

_We used to have one refrigerator for all 47 people. We had all different types of people. We had the people who would literally put a bag of groceries in the fridge. We had people who would go in together on cases of Coke or Pepsi. We had the people who would bring the piece of pizza in foil and forget about it for months and put them in the freezer. And people would complain. ‘So and so puts too much in there’ ... ‘So and so ate my mustard’ ... ‘Why do we need six different kinds of ketchup?’ And we would deal with this at staff meetings._
I’m telling people that our payroll is $1,000/hour in this organization, and look at what we’re spending our time on. My predecessor dealt with this for ages and ages. She said you guys get a schedule (for cleaning out the refrigerator) and everyone has to write their name on it.

My first reaction was to get involved. We came up with all these ideas – a calendar for the different divisions for cleaning, limit the amount of stuff one person can have – and everyone was miserable. (Only) the people who wanted it clean cleaned it. We have three divisions. One day it just came to me. It took me a year and I watched my predecessor struggle with this for two years.

What we’re going to do is have three refrigerators and I’m delegating to each of the managers to handle it. If I ever hear about this again, we’re unplugging all three and selling them on eBay, and we’re never having a refrigerator again. And they said, ‘Wow. Okay, we’ll do that.’ And what happened is we haven’t had any problems in four years. Each fridge has its own style. It was a great study for me in resolving conflict. The kernel of wisdom is to delegate to the lowest level of the organization.

This conflict had very strong emotions and poor communication. Some people took lunch at different times. There was negative repeated behavior. What we had was one person dealing with 41 others. That one person doesn’t have much power and can’t accomplish anything but one person dealing with 10 or 12 in their own division can have a little impact. They can understand each other’s stories. It wouldn’t have made sense to get everyone around the table and ask for ideas because we would have had 47 different ideas. But it did work to delegate to the lowest level and provide a few more resources ...

I would do that again – get a focus group of managers and non-managers and have them find the best option. Whatever works for that organization works for that organization. It was all about people communication and what was important to them, and we try to move past it and communicate better ... No one has the time or energy to say, ‘What are we going to do with the fridge and let’s work through that problem.’ It’s interesting because there wasn’t enough information to work through the problem (P7).
After discussing this conflict situation, he stated, “The kernel of wisdom here is to delegate to the lowest level of the organization and provide a few more resources” (P7). This shows the power of the people who are on the front lines, as discussed by Studer (2003), and how valuable it can be to give them the necessary resources. Additionally, it illustrates what the cost of conflict can be. He said that the combined salary of all of his employees was $1,000 per hour, and they spent a great deal of time focusing on this conflict rather than their jobs (P7). This story shows how these conflict situations can cause a great deal of wasted time as discussed previously in the section on the Cost of Conflict.

Another participant shared valuable information when she compared the change process to sales strategy. “I sell them on the change. It’s about persuasion, presentation, and recommendation about how this change is going to benefit them.” She continued, “It’s either going to save you money, make you money, or save you time. Those are the three factors when you think about change in an organization, and if you want buy-in you need to decide which of those to appeal to” (P4). This addresses how to lead change in the organization. Through this method, she displays transformational leadership by seeking to address the underlying interests of her followers (P4). While individuals can have a variety of underlying interests, she suggested three options – to save money, make money, or save time. By defining followers’ common underlying interests, leaders can find the foundations for any change initiative and thus create buy-in. Additionally, this speaks to other findings in the research -- one must communicate based on the
interests of the stakeholders. One-on-one conversations may be necessary if and when interests vary from one person to the next.

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into the types of changes that organizations go through, the conflicts that are caused by those changes, and what leaders do to work through those conflicts. First, we have seen some examples of the types of cultural changes that are seen in organizations. The story of organizational change varied from those necessitated by organizational growth, intentional policy changes, and team restructuring, and those caused by changes in leadership. Next, we obtained some examples that illustrated the various types of conflict. Participants confirmed that all of Christopher Moore’s (2003) conflict types – data, relationship, interest, value, and structural conflicts – can be found in cultural change initiatives. Although all of these conflicts are found in change initiatives, the conflicts happen more or less frequently depending on the leaders, the employees, and the organization’s culture. Most importantly we gained some insight into methods that organizational leaders use to address conflict within their organizations. The participants emphasized that communication is an overarching key to working through all types of conflict. More specifically they discussed open dialogue, the value of one-on-one conversations to address interests and the importance of direct and consistent messaging to employees.

Based on information from the literature review, this study defined cultural change as any changes in policies and procedures. For Conflict practitioners, this is important to note because the development of Integrated
Conflict Management Systems within organizations is a change in the policies and procedures that employees use for addressing conflict. Because ICMS is likely to change the culture, organizations are most likely to see the conflicts that these leaders describe when attempting to design ICMS for organizations. Conflict practitioners should be aware of the methods that leaders use for helping their organizations through cultural changes.

**Limitations and Future Research**

Future research in this area should consider the pros and cons of this study. To begin, this research was limited by the snow-ball method and self-selection of participants. Due to the complexities of organizational culture, the study should include participants from several layers of each organization. The study would have greater impact if Chief Executive Officers were interviewed, as well as other members of the organization. This would have allowed for a true examination of culture and cultural change. Additionally, a survey of each organization’s culture would allow researchers to consider the culture along with specific change initiatives to discover the effects of change on each cultural typology. While some cultural data can be collected by observation and single interviews, it is difficult to make large-scale assumptions.

The free flow of the interviews made it difficult to nail down answers to many of the questions. If the interviews had been more rigidly structured and participants were encouraged to stay on track, a larger amount of valid data would
have been collected. Additionally, if participants were given time prior to the interview to collect their thoughts on specific initiatives, the discussions would have been able to go to an even deeper level. This also would have allowed more time to focus on Moore’s specific types of conflict, reducing participants’ confusion about the questions on conflict types.

These drawbacks in research focus made analysis difficult. Participants were asked to think of examples from their change initiatives that displayed specific conflict types. However, due to the time constraints, the researcher accepted any situation the participant could remember. A better analysis could have been achieved if all examples remained focused on their specific change initiatives or if one story was given and examples from that story were used to describe the conflict situations.

A more in-depth view of the leader’s styles would allow for several comparisons. First, del Pra Netto Machado and Carvalho (2008) discuss the types of leaders that are generally associated with each of their four cultural typologies. If a true cultural survey were done the researcher could also examine the specific leadership traits to test the accuracy of the stated leader styles within each typology. This also would allow a comparison of the effectiveness of the different leadership styles in addressing each of the conflict types.

Finally, a more expanded analysis could examine the differences in conflicts that occur in organizations that use conflict resolution techniques, such as a Conflict Management System or a third-party facilitator, versus organizations
that do not. This research could even examine some of the corporate initiatives, such as right-sizing, total quality management, or other types of organizational systems.
V. Conclusion

The results of this study give some understanding of conflicts that occur during organizational change initiatives, as well as some methods for how leaders work through these conflicts. The study shows that communication is an overarching method for addressing and preventing many conflicts. Related to communication, we find that open dialogue with employees to increase communication, and one-on-one meetings help to address individuals’ interests, as does having direct and consistent messaging from leaders. These types of communication help gain buy-in from employees by addressing their needs and interests. By addressing these issues, leaders will find greater success when implementing any new type of change.

We have examined the roles of organizational culture and leadership, looked at conflict and Integrated Conflict Management Systems, and researched what conflicts occur when culture is changed and how leaders address these conflicts. Finally, we will discuss what this information means for Conflict practitioners and others who are interested in designing ICMS for their organizations.

In conclusion, the researcher would like to offer some recommendations for those who are interested in creating Integrated Conflict Management Systems for organizations. It was hoped that the insight gained from this study would
provide information to supplement or aid in the creation of ICMS and help organizations understand the major concepts, such as culture, conflict, and leadership, that can be valuable resources during implementation.

While ICMS is offered as a cure to organizational conflict, this study has examined the organizational cultural factor that could strongly impact the effectiveness of ICMS. Because changing the policies and procedures of an organization impacts the culture, Conflict practitioners must be aware that implementing new procedures for addressing conflict actually impacts the organization’s culture. These systems change the way that employees are expected to deal with conflict and alters “the way we do things around here” (Deal and Kennedy, 1982), which was discussed as a definition of culture. Because ICMS impacts the organization’s culture, it is likely to cause some of the same conflicts that cause cultural changes.

With this in mind, Conflict practitioners should be aware of the role that organizational leaders must play to ensure the successful implementation of a conflict management system. Conflict practitioners may find it necessary to evaluate leaders’ behaviors and even perform a cultural assessment before designing a conflict management system. We will now review some recommendations for the creation of ICMS.
Recommendations for Integrated Conflict Management Systems

As discussed throughout this paper, organizational culture plays a valuable role in the implementation of Integrated Conflict Management Systems. The culture can determine the success or failure of any organizational system. If the culture does not change to accept the ICMS’ new procedures, then the conflict management system will not be used, and thus, will not be effective. Leaders sit at the top of the pyramid in any attempt to change culture. As illustrated in Figure 8, leaders are the primary source for creating and changing the culture of their organizations. This is true for all previously discussed cultural types. When planning an ICMS, organizations should be aware of the relationships between leaders, cultural change, and Integrated Conflict Management Systems. Without the highest levels of support, their systems will not reach their true potential, because the highest levels of leadership in the organization are responsible for initiating cultural change.
If a conflict management system is seen as an important resource to the organization, the organization must consider leadership and culture to ensure the most successful outcomes. The literature review for this study discusses how ICMS actually is a culture-change initiative because it requires organizational members to change the way they react to specific situations. It effects the definition of the organization’s culture and impacts “the way things are done around here.” This relationship suggests that Conflict practitioners must balance and consider the impact that cultural change has on the organization. They must also consider the organization’s cultural type. Change occurs differently in every organization and even every department. For example, an organization that is in
Quadrant 1 (see Figure 2, p. 30) will require the leader to directly initiate the change because leaders make all of the key decision in that type of organization. However, in Quadrant 4 (Figure 2, p. 30), power is shared among the group, and therefore, change requires negotiation with all members and some form of exchange to get buy-in.

The review of leadership shows how leaders are responsible for establishing the organization’s culture as well as initiating and ensuring change. This supports the idea that the leaders must gain employees’ buy-in and support for the implementation of an ICMS. The methods for doing this are dependent on both the organization’s culture and the leader’s style.

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher suggests some key concepts to consider for ensuring the quality and effectiveness of the systems that are implemented. First, buy-in must come from the highest levels and leaders must continue to sell members on the benefits of the system. This was discussed in the section on cultural change. Although there are many additional aspects required for successful organizational change, leaders are the most important resources for initiating change. Ensuring that the highest levels of the organization have buy-in is the first and most important step during any change initiative. The effects of not having buy-in from higher levels were described by P4. He or she explained that there was difficulty implementing some of the department’s ideas because higher levels provided limited support. While individuals on any level of an organization can disrupt the process, leaders are the primary factor in any
change initiative. If they refuse to “talk the talk and walk the walk,” then the lower levels of the organization will see this and interpret the change initiative as being a low priority. As discussed previously, the tips from P4 are helpful here. She said, “It’s either going to save you money, make you money, or save you time. Those are the three factors when you think about change in an organization and if you want buy-in, you need to decide which of those to appeal to.” The “sales” approach here is applicable not only to the leadership but also to gaining buy-in from the lower level employees.

Additionally, the leaders should be coached on how to sell the ideas to both their superiors and their staff. The “sales” strategy will likely need to change from one person to the next. Make sure that leaders at all levels understand the benefits of a conflict management system and know how to “sell it” to those below them.

Next, consider the organization’s culture and how changes will affect all levels. In the section on cultural typologies, we discussed some necessary components for change in each type of culture. We also discussed how cultures can even have variance among departments. The organization’s culture plays a vital role in whether change is successful. A person cannot properly sell the ideas of a conflict management system if he or she does not know their audience. With an understanding that organizational change leads to conflict, one should examine the behaviors of each department to determine the culture type and be aware of the necessary methods for creating change within that department. As discussed
previously, this is illustrated by O'Reilly in his four steps to consider before attempting cultural change. These are to identify the objectives, analyze the existing values that shape the organization, look for norms that may create barriers to change, and then develop systems to shape or alter those norms.

In the research section, it was discovered that some of the relationship conflicts that leaders described could really be value conflicts. Conflict practitioners should have a solid understanding of all types of conflicts and the best practices for working through each type. If the leader misdiagnoses a value conflict as a relationship conflict, then the methods used to overcome this issue will most likely not be effective. In fact, leaders who see relationship conflicts as the problem would likely believe that they have the proper skills for addressing these issues. Value conflicts can be much more intense and frightening to employees. If leaders improperly address these conflicts, it could result in greater complications or even the unnecessary loss of vital employees. Conflict practitioners should be prepared to explain the differences to both leaders and employees and have the ability to describe how additional skills are necessary for overcoming value conflicts.

Finally, the participants in this study all expressed the value of good communication skills for working through conflicts. As the system is developed, knowing the needs of every part of the organization and how to address, or communicate through, the conflicts that arise are vital to success.
References


Appendix A

E-mail to personal contacts

Dear colleagues,

I am nearing the completion of my graduate work in conflict resolution. I am at the stage in my thesis work that requires interviews and I am seeking your assistance in finding participants. I am looking for CEOs who have helped their organization through some form of change initiative. Change initiative is defined as any attempt to change the organization’s policies and procedures.

If you know someone that might be willing to participate in my study please send me their contact information by calling my cell phone 720-220-8683 or e-mailing me at bbeck@du.edu.

If you have questions or comments please feel free to contact me.

Thanks for your time and assistance!
Brian
Appendix B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Integrated Conflict Management Systems as Cure and Cause: How Leaders Address Cultural Change and Conflict in Their Organizations

You are invited to participate in a study that will examine the types of conflicts that occur during organizational change initiatives and the methods that leaders use to overcome them. Cultural change initiatives are defined as any effort that alters the policies and procedures of the organization in a way that changes the day-to-day actions of employees.

The research is being conducted to fulfill the requirements of a Master’s in Conflict Resolution at the University of Denver. The research is being conducted by Brian S. Beck. Results will be used to document methods used by organizational leaders to progress change initiatives and to complete graduation requirements at the University of Denver. Brian can be reached at 720-220-8683 or bbeck@du.edu. The project is being supervised by Dr. Tamra Pearson d’Estrée, Professor of Conflict Resolution and Director of the Center for Research and Practice, Conflict Resolution Institute, University of Denver, Denver, CO 80208, (303) 871-7685.

Participation in this study should take about 1 hour of your time. Participation will involve responding to questions about your recent change initiative. Participation in this project is strictly voluntary. The risks associated with this project are minimal. If, however, you experience discomfort you may discontinue the interview at any time. You may choose not to answer any question during the interview and are free to withdraw from the study at any time. You will incur no penalty for refusing to answer a question or withdrawing from participation.

You will have the choice to make all information gathered from your interview confidential. In this case your name, address, or any other personal information will not be connected to the interview notes. When the information is reported, individuals desiring confidentiality will not be mentioned in anyway that could identify them. In either case, this means that only the researcher will have access to the information you provide. The data will consist of notes and audio recordings taken during the interview. These notes and recordings will be kept on a secure computer, to which only I have access.
Although this research does not address the following, I am required to inform you that there are two exceptions to the promise of confidentiality. Any information you reveal during your interview with me concerning suicide, homicide, or child abuse and neglect is required by law to be reported to the proper authorities. In addition, should any information contained in this study be the subject of a court order, the University of Denver might not be able to avoid compliance with the order or subpoena.

If you have any concerns or complaints about how you were treated during the interview, please contact Susan Sadler, Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at 303-871-3454, or Sylk Sotto-Santiago, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 303-871-4052 or write to either at the University of Denver, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 2199 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO 80208-2121.

You may keep this page for your records. Please sign the next page if you understand and agree to the above. If you do not understand any part of the above statement, please ask the researcher any questions you have.

I have read and understand the foregoing descriptions of the study called Integrated Conflict Management Systems as Cure and Cause: How Leaders Address Conflict in Their Organizations. I have asked for and received a satisfactory explanation of any language that I did not fully understand. I agree to participate in this study, and I understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time. I have received a copy of this consent form.

Please initial the desired options:

**Audio Taping**

____ I agree to be audio-taped.

____ I do not agree to be audio-taped.

**Confidentiality**

____ I desire confidentiality

____ I waive confidentiality and allow my name and affiliation to be associated with my interview responses.
Appendix C

Interview Questions

I. Describe the organization and the change:
   1. How long have you been with the organization?
   2. How would you describe your organization’s mission? How many employees?
   3. As the consent form states, I'm looking for information on how leaders address cultural change and the conflicts that are caused by change. Cultural Change is defined as anything that changes the policies and procedures in a way that impacts employees’ day to day activities. Tell me about a change initiative that you have had a role in implementing.
   4. What were you trying to change?
   5. What was the goal of this initiative?

II. Describe conflicts that occurred
   6. What stumbling blocks were you prepared/did you expect to encounter? (Concerns, resistance, tensions, etc).
      a. Did they occur?
   7. Tell me about some of the unexpected stumbling blocks caused by the initiative.
   8. What other conflicts or issues were brought up by the change initiative?
   9. *Show Moore’s circle of conflict.* Which of these conflict types did you witness and what methods did you use to work through them?

III. Did change happen?
   10. How complete is the change?
   11. Do you consider it to be a success?
      a. If yes, in what ways was it a success?
      b. If not, why not? What happened?
   12. How do you know that the culture changed?
   13. Did the mission or vision change? How?
   14. Describe how policies and procedures changed.
   15. Describe examples of how people’s actions changed.

IV. Leadership actions
   16. In regards to the stumbling blocks and conflicts we discussed, what did you as a leader do to manage these issues? (Leave space for a long answer here)
   17. Were specific techniques used?