Planned organisational change management
Forward to the past? An exploratory literature review

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Abstract
Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to identify the development of planned organisational change models (POCMs) since Lewin’s three-step model and to highlight key linkages between them.

Design/methodology/approach – A total of 13 commonly used POCMs were identified and connections with Lewin’s three-step framework and associated process attributes were made, reflecting the connections between these models and Lewin.

Findings – The findings show that first Lewin’s three-step model represents a framework for planned change; however, these steps could not be viewed in isolation of other interrelated processes, including action research, group dynamics, and force field analysis. These process steps underpin the iterative aspects of his model. Second, all 13 POCMs have clearly identified linkages to Lewin, suggesting that the ongoing development of POCMs is more of an exercise in developing ongoing procedural steps to support change within the existing framework of the three-step model.

Research limitations/implications – The authors recognise that the inclusion of additional POCMs would help strengthen linkages to Lewin. The findings from this paper refocus attention on the three-step model, suggesting its ongoing centrality in planned organisational change rather than it being dismissed as an historical approach from which more recently developed models have become more relevant.

Practical implications – This paper presents opportunities for organisational change management researchers to challenge their thinking with regard to the ongoing search for model refinement, and for practitioners in the design and structure of POCM.

Originality/value – An analysis of the ongoing relevance of Lewin and his linkage with modern POCMs assist in rationalising the broadening, and often confusing literature on change. This paper therefore not only contributes to filtering such literature, but also helps clarify the myriad of POCMs and their use.

Keywords Change models, Evolution of change, Lewin change model, Planned organisational change

Paper type Literature review

Introduction
The evolution of planned organisational change models (POCMs), since their origin by Lewin in 1946, has derived from a wide range of characteristics, each adding to apparent gaps, whilst focusing on different component parts. One series of approaches has focused on differentiating change by type, where change is seen in the context of its phases, as continuous change or stepped change (Cook et al., 2004; Dunphy et al., 2007; Maimone and Sinclair, 2014; Pettigrew et al., 2001; Romanelli and Tushman, 1994; Tsoukas and Chia, 2002). Another approach, whilst in part related to the first, sees change in the context of its impetus, being planned or emergent (Beer and Nohria, 2000; Bullock and Batten, 1985; Burke, 2013; Burnes, 2004; Chia, 2014; Dunphy and Stace, 1993; Ford and Ford, 1995; Kanter et al., 1992; Kotter, 1996; Luecke, 2003; Porras and Silvers, 1991).

A further approach views change in terms of its organisational origins, namely top-down or bottom-up (Beer and Nohria, 2000; Smith and Graetz, 2011). A final differentiating aspect
in organisational change management (OCM) has been viewing change in terms of its size and impact, identifying the transformational and incremental elements and the necessary steps in achieving such change (Dunphy et al., 2007; Malhotra and Hinings, 2012; Robinson and Griffiths, 2005; Sutherland and Smith, 2011; Taffinder, 1998). A defining element in each of these POCM characteristics is the absence of mutual exclusivity between them, such that overlap occurs at intersections between type, impetus, origin, and size/impact at different points along the change continuum.

A common element intrinsic in the development of POCM over the decades since Lewin has been the focus on resistance to change as a condition inherent in failure, viewing resistance as a negative element that requires intervention in order to overcome its effects (Carnall, 2007; Piderit, 2000). During this period, there has been an increasing awareness of the role of those that resist change, not necessarily from a position of pure negativism, but rather from a position of improved understanding and involvement (Lewis, 2011), with the aim of improving change outcomes (Bartunek et al., 2011; Burke, 2013). In this manner, resistance to change has been summarily linked to a wide range of issues that organisations need to face in order to limit the debilitating effects of resistance on organisational change programs.

A further development in the understanding of resistance to change has been the role that individual emotions play in mediating the impact of negative resistance. This further consolidates a growing focus throughout the literature on the individual in change management as distinct to purely the broader organisation perspective (Cook et al., 2004; Holt et al., 2007; Keller and Aiken, 2009; Kotter, 2012; Nasim and Sushil, 2011; Oreg et al., 2013). Additionally, the focus on persuasion as a process in readiness for change, which addresses resistance by ensuring that change recipients will actually engage with the change, has been identified as a parallel process that supports change communication strategies (Garvin and Roberto, 2005).

Whilst OCM has been researched extensively over the course of the last 50+ years, resulting in currently over 2,700,000 references in Google Scholar to the terms “managing change”, discussions in much of the prevailing research continues around the notion of change failure (Armenakis and Harris, 2002; Burnes and Jackson, 2011; Gondo et al., 2013; Nasim and Sushil, 2011; Pfeifer et al., 2005; Smith and Graetz, 2011; Whittle and Stevens, 2013). Associated with this is the identification of factors that possibly support such failure considerations such as focusing on the duration of change programs, the integrity of the internal change agents, the organisational commitment to change, and the effort required by those experiencing change over-and-above normal work commitments (Sirkin et al., 2005).

Whilst the accuracy of failure statistics themselves have been questioned by some (Burnes, 2011; Hughes, 2011), there exist a range of themes emanating from the research that characterises change failure through a kaleidoscope of causes, including structure and content of change communication (Armenakis and Harris, 2002; McClellan, 2011); the role of senior managers and the direction of change from within the organisation (Bartunek et al., 2011); tensions between the organisational focus vs the people focus (Bunker and Wakefield, 2006); ignoring the role of culture (Damschroder et al., 2009; Schein, 2009); poor understanding of the impact of change readiness levels by change agents (Drzensky et al., 2012; Gondo et al., 2013); limited focus on the centrality of employee engagement in the planning and execution of change (Levasseur, 2001; Lewis, 2011; Lewis et al., 2008); and inadequate planning processes identified through a lack of appropriate organisational diagnosis (McFillen et al., 2013).

In the context of expanding research into POCM and a continuing recognition of OCM failures, we ask the question as to whether the depth of research regarding OCM and the resulting development of a multitude of POCMs has in fact defined completely new approaches to change, or, as we suspect, has the extensive research provided refinement to

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**Planned OCM**
the Lewin approach to change, by developing more detailed processes around the unfreezing-change-refreezing model first developed in 1946. In doing so, we highlight the often misbranded and misapplied description of Lewin’s change model as one of linearity in addressing OCM, when in fact, his inclusion of action research, group dynamics, and force field analysis suggests an approach to change that has features consistent with a more flexible approach, consistent with change management research undertaken since his original works.

This paper argues that the research over the last 50+ years has not fundamentally developed anything completely new; rather, the research has provided us with clarity to better understand what was developed many years ago and to consider how its ongoing application into the future can be optimised. As a developmental process, POCM challenges the interplay between organisational inputs, processes, and outputs, with the vagaries of human behaviour, a core variable in the success of organisational change. Through this recognition, especially with the inclusion of Lewin’s work in action research, group dynamics, and force field analysis, it places the outcomes of Lewin’s research into a more centralist perspective by ensuring that POCM, as both management and academic activities, recognises him not just as an historical reference from which OCM has evolved, but rather, as a potentially critical and current response to POCM both in practice and in academic research. Therefore, are we in fact moving forward by better understanding and applying the past?

**Lewin’s contextualisation of change**

This paper considers the POCM-related work undertaken by Lewin which was covered in three critical publications in 1946 and 1947, the former identifying the context of action research (Lewin, 1946) whilst the latter introducing and expanding on field theory, group dynamics, and the now famous three-step change model (Lewin, 1947a). In doing so, we consider the foundational elements of Lewin’s contribution to the ongoing research in OCM and identify the linkages between his contribution and the development of a number of organisational change models that have been introduced since that period to the present time. This lays the groundwork for responding to the question of “How has our understanding of OCM changed with the ongoing development of new POCMs since Lewin?”

Many of the references to Lewin’s three-step model tend to be one-dimensional in that they seek to isolate the management of change to a simple linear process of what Lewin (1947a) describes as “unfreezing the present, moving to the new level and freezing group life on the new level” (p. 330). This one-dimensional approach fails to recognise the remaining integrated components necessary in understanding all the elements of change. Within the three-step model is a clear reliance on a range of enablers which he considered as integral to the process. These are presented as criteria related to the creation of permanent changes, of which the three-step model is but one. Others included the need to identify countervailing forces as part of force field analysis and understanding the characteristics necessary to influence movement within a change process, understanding resistance as an element of habits within groups subjected to change, and the role of group decision making as underpinned by personal and group motivations. His linkages with action research in the course of his work with certain social groups provided the basis for a more complete picture of change, and underpinned a more iterative approach to change than many writers have since commented on. Seen in this light, the depiction of Lewin’s change model, not merely as a linear three-step process, is presented in Figure 1.

By considering a number of the key POCMs that have evolved during the late 1980s to the present, evidence exists that places Lewin’s model at the centre of these and further highlights that a more focused interpretation of Lewin suggests that in the area of POCM,
perhaps little that is fundamental to the process, has in fact changed, other than a degree of fine tuning, the impact of which may be questionable, given the prospect that historic change failure rates apparently continue.

**Method**

The world of POCM is diverse and complex with a number having resulted from academic-based research, and a number resulting from practice-based application in the hands of management consultants. Given the plethora of options, some of these differing sources have been addressed in the course of this analysis of the prevailing literature.

In the category of academic-based research, the various models can be further categorised into those that are predicated more on the governing approaches to change in that they provide specific approaches or steps that change agents and those who initiate change must address in order to maximise the success of the change programme. A further sub-categorisation points to those models that are more structural in their approach, meaning that they offer more of an overall framework within which change takes place. Whilst flexibility in both categorisations is necessary, the former approaches tend to be seen by change agents as definitive guides whilst the latter seem more conceptual in nature. In this manner, practice-based models tend to be governance focussed, as they are designed to drive specific client-driven outcomes. Tables I-III identify the most discussed models within these categories.

In the case of each of the research-based POCMs, we have adopted a three-stage evaluative process that first sought to identify the salient features of the model as identified when it was first developed. Second, refinements to the model stemming from any published revisions were highlighted where such refinements changed any components of what was originally published. Finally, we identified, within each of these models, characteristics that provide fundamental links to the Lewin three-step model, either by direct reference, or by virtue of inherent structure. This analysis is provided in Tables IV-VI inclusive.

**Discussion**

Lewin's writings on change were multi-faceted. His work in the area of change on minority problems in 1946 was predicated on the iterative processes of action research where the role
of fact-finding in the planning process was clearly defined. “Planning starts usually with something like a general idea. For one reason or another it seems desirable to reach a certain objective [...] The first step then is to examine the idea carefully in the light of the means available. Frequently more fact-finding about the situation is required” (Lewin, 1946, p. 37).
Lewin highlights the relevance and importance of clarity regarding the stated objective, but also the situational context within which the objective is being framed. Emanating from this point is the derivation of the execution phase which, as he identifies for management purposes, requires additional fact-finding processes to be initiated. The iterative process entailed evaluation of the action, assessing initial learning outcomes, laying the foundations for further planning, and finally the remodelling of the plans themselves, in what can clearly be identified as a fluid, non-static process.

Lewin’s (1947a) work focused on the post-war imperative associated with “[…]accelerating […] the change of social sciences to a new developmental level” (p. 301), focusing on integration issues, changing group life, and new techniques for social research. One of these techniques, force field analysis, became evident in understanding the inhibitors and enhancers of change. Whilst his mathematical modelling of the impacts makes for interesting reading, it is the practical application in a change strategy that gives credence to its ongoing use. Identifying and prioritising those positive forces that drive change, and those negative forces that restrain change, have been identified by many in the change “industry” as being situationally relevant.

Further application of group dynamics and resulting group decision-making processes supported the Lewin integrated approach to the management of change, which was also identified in his 1947 papers. Whilst Lewin (1947a) clearly identified the follies of managing through group decision making, he did indicate that the “[…] experiments with group decision are nevertheless sufficiently advanced to clarify some of the general problems of social change” (p. 331), further suggesting that group decision in a planned social change utilising the three-stage process of unfreezing, changing, and refreezing had a general overall advantage over a more individualised process.

The derivation of POCM from Lewin’s original approach has evolved both in time as well as in focus, as depicted in Figure 2. The project approach recognises the need to drive solutions to the ongoing challenges of change, providing insights into the procedural and process aspects whilst maintaining operational capacity in the short term and expanding it in the long term. This approach reinforces the procedural aspects embedded within change programs, supported by structured, stepped activities. The resistance approach recognises the difficulties associated with change and focuses on the groundwork necessary to reduce its negative attributes. This approach recognises the need to minimise one of the key inhibitors of change, being the role that individuals play in the change process and the deleterious impact of resistance to change. The interpretive approach sees change impacted
Bullock and Batten

Aligned to a project-management-type approach. Applies a four-stage process of (1) exploring the need for change and securing necessary resources, (2) creation of detailed plans for change, (3) actioning the plan including the development of feedback loops, and (4) aligning the changes back into the organisation through developed policies and procedures.

Kotter

A sequential eight-step process involving the formation of a guiding coalition, vision and strategy, communicating the vision, empowerment, generating short-term wins, consolidation, and finally institutionalisation.

2012 – The Accelerate Programme – based on two structures in one organisation designed to accelerate change and built on the original eight-step model (Kotter, 2012).

Beckhard and Harris

Formulaic representation of change highlighting interdependencies where each component must be evident otherwise resistance will not be overcome. Represented by \( (A \times B \times D) > X \) where \( A \) is the dissatisfaction with status quo; \( B \) the desirability of proposed change; \( D \) the practicality of change; and \( X \) the cost of change.

None

2012 – The Accelerate Programme – based on two structures in one organisation designed to accelerate change and built on the original eight-step model (Kotter, 2012).

Exploration and planning (1) and (2) are sub-sets of “unfreezing” as the latter must involve an in-depth understanding of current systems and processes which lead to an assessment of why change needs to take place and the resource issues that must be addressed, as well as the events and milestones that must be achieved from a project plan perspective. Actioning (3) equates to the “change” process itself whilst alignment (4) incorporates some of the activities associated with the institutionalisation processes of “refreezing.”

Establishing a sense of urgency (1) creating a guiding coalition (2) develop and communicate a clear shared vision (3) and (4) can be seen as components of the unfreezing process considering Lewin’s (1947a, b) focus on “open the shell of complacency” (1947a, p. 463). Communicate (4) empower (5) and short-term wins (6) are positioned within the “change” process and evident in Lewin’s (1947a, b) focus on achieving “group performance as the reaching of a different level” (1947a, p. 463). whilst consolidating (7) and institutionalising (8) support the “refreezing” imperative as suggested in Lewin’s (1947a, b) commentary “[…] that it does not suffice to define the objective of a planned change in group performance as the reaching of a different level. Permanency of the new level […] should be included in the objective” (1947a, pp. 339-463).

None

Mirrors Lewin’s three-step model, but places the emphasis on describing key states in the change process rather than detailed action points. These “states” infer specific actions in order to move from one state to another. Introduces specifics with regard to the role of leadership.

(continued)
The model is structured around an understanding of the present state and why change should occur, a transition state which represents the "[…] set of conditions and activities that the organization must go through to move from the present to the future" (Beckhard and Harris, 1978, p. 29), followed by the future state which reflects the destiny point that organizational leaders wish to attain. Taffinder's sequential eight-step "action list" process derived from the key "elements of human and organizational effort" of (1) awakening (2) conceiving the future (3) building the change agenda (4) delivering the big change (5) mastering the change. None of the above actions are mentioned in the context of Lewin's work. The "S-curve" has a corollary with Lewin's (1947a, b) with "awakening" and "conceiving the future" key components of unfreezing and "[…] breaking open the shell of complacency […]" (p. 330). "Building change" and "delivering big change" forms the underlying elements of "[…] moving to the new level […]" (Lewin's, 1947a, b, p. 330), whilst "mastering the change" is closely linked to refreezing. Taffinder then moves into an enhanced action list which identifies a range of details actions that are seen as necessary in order to implement the process.

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<th>Refinements by author</th>
<th>Connection to Lewin’s model</th>
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<td>Taffinder</td>
<td>A sequential eight-step “action list” process derived from the key “elements of human and organisational effort” of (1) awakening (2) conceiving the future (3) building the change agenda (4) delivering the big change (5) mastering the change</td>
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<td>The “S-curve” has a corollary with Lewin’s (1947a, b) with “awakening” and “conceiving the future” key components of unfreezing and “[…] breaking open the shell of complacency […]” (p. 330). “Building change” and “delivering big change” forms the underlying elements of “[…] moving to the new level […]” (Lewin’s, 1947a, b, p. 330), whilst “mastering the change” is closely linked to refreezing. Taffinder then moves into an enhanced action list which identifies a range of details actions that are seen as necessary in order to implement the process</td>
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## Table V.
Analysis of structural, research-based organisational change models

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<th>POCM</th>
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<td>Kubler-Ross</td>
<td>Linked to earlier research regarding grieving and suggests that those experiencing change will react through shock, denial, frustration, depression, experiment, decision, and finally integration. Understanding this from a change management perspective may predict response and therefore enable appropriate interventions to be planned either before or during the change process.</td>
<td>Can be related to the ancillary aspects of Lewin’s model, especially with regard to the implications associated with force field analysis and group dynamics, especially when one considers the behavioural consideration of each of these. In this manner, morale and competence are impacted over the duration of the change process, in line with Lewin’s discussions of personal impacts from changes to social habits. A common feature in both models is the focus on resistance. No further refinements have been undertaken as of the date of this paper.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burke and Litwin</td>
<td>Highlights nine drivers of change in order of importance as (1) external environment, (2) mission and strategy, (3) leadership, (4) culture, (5) structure, (6) work unit climate, (7) task requirements and individual skills, (8) individual needs and values, and (9) employee motivation</td>
<td>Understanding the drivers of change leads to an understanding of reactions to those drivers from a change agent’s perspective. Whilst this model has no direct linkage to Lewin, the “driver” approach can be viewed as informing specific actions that may be necessary in executing within each step, gaining clarity from an analysis of the forces that drive and inhibit change. No further refinements have been undertaken as of the date of this paper.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nadler and Tushman</td>
<td>As an open systems model that focuses on the congruence of outputs associated with work, people, informal, and formal organisational elements resulting directly from the interaction between the external and the internal environment</td>
<td>Within their open systems model, they identified key success points for change as (1) developing an understanding of the current state (2) articulating a clear vision of the future state, (3) guiding the organisation through a delicate transition period. These align closely with Lewin’s model. No further refinements have been undertaken as of the date of this paper.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bridges</td>
<td>Differentiates planned change from transition with the complexities of the latter being reflected in a three-phase process of ending, neutral zone and new beginning. In a similar approach to Taffinder, identifies specific action points that need to be considered for each of the phases</td>
<td>Mirrors Lewin’s step model but focuses more on how people feel during the change process. In this manner, it provides a broad framework for the various communication elements during each of the phases. In 2004, whilst the model did not change, a heavier focus on transitional elements was identified (Bridges, 2004).</td>
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<td>Carnall</td>
<td>Views change from a skills-based perspective suggesting that management must be able to (1) manage transitions, (2) deal with culture, and (3) manage politics. In doing so, the approach considers a multiple preconditions for change success focusing, building awareness, building the case for change, broadening and mobilising support for change, and crystallising the vision</td>
<td>Whilst the focus on skills within the organisation is predominant, the preconditions identified have a correlation with aspects of Lewin in that building awareness and building the case for change closely align with activities that form part of unfreezing, whilst mobilising support for change has application in both unfreezing and moving. Crystallising the vision reflects attributes of both moving and refreezing. No further refinements have been undertaken as of the date of this paper.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senge et al.</td>
<td>Consider change by viewing organisations more as biological organisms and accordingly considers reactions to changes within that biological context. In this context, the systemic model focuses on the issues which need to be aligned with Lewin stems more from the consideration of forces and challenges that may impede progress which underpins the concept of the “[...] dance of change [...]” [which highlights] the inevitable interplay.</td>
<td>(continued)</td>
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by situational factors that may affect the organisation and necessitate responses that address a wide array of organisational attributes. This approach recognises the variability of change and the important interplay between the organisation and the individual throughout the change process. Whilst many of these models breach each of the three approaches described in Figure 2, their groupings focus on their origins, and in this manner are not mutually exclusive descriptions.

Commonalities across the spectrum of POCMs exist and the categorisation identified in Figure 2 is not aimed at creating clear delineation between approaches and in the process suggestion priority between them, when no such priority actually exists. Rather, categorisation aids in focusing attributes of different approaches and assisting internal and external change agents in adaptation and modification in order to deal with what may be situational factors evident within individual organisations. Such an approach recognises the interrelationship between situational content, organisational context, and change process (Armenakis and Bedeian, 1999; Pettigrew et al., 2000), the varying responses needed for different stages of an ongoing change programme (Barnard and Stoll, 2010), and leading to a consideration by some that questions even the ability to effectively manage change (Balogun and Jenkins, 2003; Brewer, 1995).

The analysis presented in Tables IV-VI and summarised in Figure 2 may suggest a view of POCM that is more suggestive of the development of conceptual frameworks as distinct to definitive models that can drive successful change (Beer and Nohria, 2000). This becomes more evident when viewed in the context of the necessity for empirical evidence that can attest to the effectiveness of change through the use and application of differing theories and approaches (By, 2005).

The complexities associated with POCM regarding internal and external environmental triggers and considerations, the strategic and operational imperatives and forces, and the politics and uncertainties associated with organisational structures and communications (Heilmann and Heilmann, 2011) point towards POCMs being viewed more as considerations from which individual organisational approaches to change are derived. In this manner, a number of aspects to change become cornerstones of the process. These include the consideration of change as an architectural design and building approach (Kanter, 1983), limiting the one-size-fits-all methodology (Kotter and Schlesinger, 2008), recognising the multiple-model approach of matching specific organisational circumstances with change management approaches that best fit the place and the time (Schaffer and McCreight, 2004; Smith and Graetz, 2011), highlighting the determining role of organisational contingency in

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<td>Dunphy et al.</td>
<td>Identifies a six-phase process within “waves” of sustainability. The first wave is identified through (1) opposition, and (2) ignorance. The second wave is identified through (3) risk, (4) cost, and (5) competitive advantage. Finally, the third wave is identified through (6) transformation. Within this construct, they further suggest an eight-step process for incremental change and a ten-step process for transformational change.</td>
<td>between growth processes and limiting processes” (Senge et al., 1999, p. 10), implying correlation with Lewin’s force field analysis process. The “waves” relate closely to the three-step model where in Step 1 opposition and ignorance is addressed during the course of unfreezing. Compliance, efficiency and strategic pro-activity are dealt with during the movement step, and finally, sustainability issues are addressed during the refreezing. No further refinements have been undertaken as of the date of this paper.</td>
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POCM identification (Paton and McCalman, 2000), and considering the differing focuses of change efforts including activity-centred and results-driven programs (Schaffer and Thomson, 1992).

When assessing Lewin’s three-step model, a singular focus on the unfreezing, changing, refreezing process also becomes one-dimensional and limiting in its application and, for the
reasons identified earlier, should be viewed in the more integrated context of his related work in action research, group dynamics, and force field analysis, which were not ancillary to his change process, but well integrated and yet ignored in a narrower application by future contributors seeking a more readily defined approach in the pursuit of dealing with OCM. In the context of ongoing developments in the field of OCM research, a case can be made that Lewin provided a strong framework from which operationalising the mechanics of fostering change relies on the broad contextual and situational attributes contained within each organisation. This approach is depicted in Figure 3 which suggests that each of the governance, structural, and practice-based approaches to OCM can in fact be interpreted as the operationalisation of Lewin and sees POCM in the context of the centrality of Lewin’s model.

As suggested earlier and highlighted in Figure 3, the application of Lewin’s work in action research, group dynamics, and force field analysis needs to be viewed as a fundamental component of his three-step model, providing the basis for a more integrated and relational view of change.

The action research approach applied by Lewin supports both the unfreezing and the moving components of his three-step model. The iterative approach of applying feedback loops at these points in the change process identifies a need to continuously assess the organisational circumstances, internally and externally, as well as the dynamic nature of these changes, whilst assessing impact and results. In this manner, the linear approach, being a commonly quoted characteristic of Lewin’s model, is actually more dynamic than the criticism suggests, as constant feedback into the system causes ongoing refinements to both the unfreezing and the movement. Kubler-Ross’s studies into emotional responses to grief have been directly linked to similar emotional responses to change. The action research approach works with these human responses to change and develops strategies and responses to deal with them during the unfreezing and moving aspects in Lewin’s model.
The group dynamics approach applied by Lewin recognises the positioning of people within change processes, suggesting the interplay of individuals as decision makers. Kubler-Ross’s grief model provides insights into those elements of emotions that affect individuals during such times, focusing on individual’s responses that impact their behaviours. An important link that presents itself here is the impact on group behaviours and group dynamics as a direct result of these individual responses.

The inclusion of force field analysis by Lewin in identifying inhibitors and enhancers of change and dealing with these provide linkages with Kubler-Ross, Burke-Litwin,
Senge, McKinsey, and ADKAR model. In the case of Kubler-Ross, it is seen in the application of organisational considerations to the individual emotional responses of those impacted by the change. In the case of Burke-Litwin, it is seen in the complex interactions that underpin the relationship between the external environment, organisational strategy, leadership, and culture, to the resulting individual performances that change is so reliant upon. In the case of Senge, it is reflected in his non-formulaic approach which seeks to rebalance the forces of equilibrium within organisational systems, largely focusing on resistance. In the case of McKinsey, Prosci, and the ACMP approaches, a reliance on identifying organisational gaps that may impede achieving the change outcomes (McKinsey), responsiveness to responding to change enablers (Prosci), and a focus on stakeholder analysis (ACMP) further accentuates the force field analysis identified by Lewin.

Conclusion
This paper sought to position the contribution made by Lewin with regard to planned OCM beyond current perceptions of linearity and connect the thread of many organisational change models-in-use from his 1947 beginnings to the current period. Despite the voluminous research and material written regarding planned organisational change, Lewin’s approach, when considered in its entirety, is as relevant now as it was during the time of his original writings and may not just be the platform upon which models have evolved, rather, his narrowly interpreted three-step change model, reconceptualised in this paper, may in fact be as relevant now as it was then. This paper therefore considered the question of the extent to which we in fact are moving forward with an understanding of planned organisational change by better understanding and applying the past?

This exploration of the evolution of POCMs since Lewin’s three-step model first introduced in 1947 identifies the true integrated design and application of Lewin’s change model and its direct linkages with widely applied models that have evolved since that time. In doing so, it identifies that Lewin’s approach operated at two levels. The first level represented a framework for change, recognising that in order to change from a current position to a future position, there was a need to first “unfreeze” what currently exists, undertake the identified change, and reconstitute the changes by institutionalising them or “refreezing”. The second level provided processes that informed this framework, namely action research, force field analysis, and group dynamics, each of which were in-part characterised by elements of iteration which, to some extent, rebuke the key criticism of linearity to the management of change.

In the process of identifying and analysing 13 widely recognised POCMs characterised as being governance, structural, and practice based, the paper identifies those that are considered to be project orientated, resistance orientated, and interpretive in nature. In each case, evidence has been provided linking the framework elements of Lewin, as well as, where appropriate, the process elements of Lewin, furthering the concluding proposition that many of these models developed since Lewin are in fact process refinements which provide guidance on implementation of the substantive framework. Viewed in this manner, these models are not unique characterisations of change on their own account; rather they can be viewed as the “how to” of an enduring framework – Lewin’s three-step model. This presents opportunities for organisation change researchers to challenge their thinking with regard to the ongoing search for model refinement, and for practitioners in the design and structure of POCMs, by considering the context of future research into these and how such research, which must continue to lay the foundations for practice-based frameworks, can enable effective organisational change.

This paper analysed a number of POCMs that were generally regarded by practitioners and academics as models-in-use. In doing so, this represented a recognised limitation of this research which could be addressed by undertaking a systematic literature review which could then further inform the conclusions drawn in this paper.
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