The objective of the project

The project's main goal is to investigate **how teams manage change and ensure business continuity at the same time**. Such combination of clearly conflicting goals is an example of what academics call organizational ambidexterity. Companies which can be described as ambidextrous are able to be both innovative and operate efficiently, reliably, and without interruption. In fact, today's global competition and high speed of technological progress very often leave the companies with little choice, but to pursue the strategy of organizational ambidexterity. The research conducted so far shows that this strategy can indeed be beneficial to large, multinational corporation. However, it also causes many challenges, mainly because achievement of contradictory goals leads to tensions and conflicts. Although the practical implications of pursing conflicting goals were studied in groups of high-level and middle managers, we still don't know enough about how functional, cross-functional and project teams cope with and achieve conflicting goals in their everyday work.

The research to be carried out,

The investigation will be performed at a Polish office of a multinational company operating in information and information technology industries. Between 20 to 30 teams will be observed, their meetings will be recorded and the members of the teams will be interviewed. Such extensive data collection is in line with methodology called ethnography of communication. This method is one of many which look at communication to better understand wider group dynamics and behaviors. However, it is unique in that it combines analysis of communicative context with the study of specific language elements and structures. The collected data will be investigated using multiple techniques. One group of such techniques includes detailed reading and manual coding while the other reaches out for more automated solutions. These solutions rely on unsupervised machine learning which helps identify clusters and patterns within the data. The application of such methods is not an attempt to replace a researcher's role in the data analysis process, but to propose tools that can provide new insights and ways of looking at the data.

Reasons for choosing the research topic

There are two main reasons for choosing the research topic. First of all, the specific behaviors of functional, cross-functional and project teams which are expected to achieve conflicting goals are still rather poorly described and understood. At the same time such understanding can be helpful for teams, their managers and company executives in a number of situations like for example team set-up, team performance measurement and assessment, definition of team and department goals. Secondly, the project also aims to fine-tune, test and evaluate a novel combination of research methodology. The blending of traditional ethnography of communication with modern computational data analysis is a promising direction for social research in our ever-stronger digitalized world.