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Management Focus

Being Real or Really Being Someone Else? Change, Managers and Emotion Work

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Managers perform unseen yet significant emotion work as part of their role, particularly in a change context. The suppression or expression of emotion by managers is no accident, but influenced by the over-rational portrayal of change processes. Our study uses longitudinal data to explore the types of emotion work performed by managers within different stages of organisational change. We argue that managerial emotion work is characterised by four facets: it involves high strength relationships, is unsupported, unscripted, and unacknowledged. We argue that emotion work is an important part of managerial activity, and should be acknowledged and supported by the organisation.

Keywords: Emotion Work, Managers, Change, Emotional Labour

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to illustrate how managers perform unseen yet significant emotion work as part of their role, particularly in a change management context. The over-rational portrayal of both change management and managerial activity has obscured the emotional experience of the manager, which is explored here through rich empirical accounts. From the findings of our study we argue that the artificially demarcated levels of 'individual' versus 'organisational' activity often used in change management literature are inadequate, particularly in relation to managers who essentially 'bridge' these two areas. Our findings have implications for change management as we believe that the success of any change activity depends as much on the management of the transition period as its strategic formulation. Consequently it is vital that the emotion work performed by managers is both acknowledged and supported by the organisation.

Our study forms part of the research carried out by the Change Management Consortium,[1] an academic-practitioner alliance which consists of a group of public and private sector organisations who commission academic research within their own organisations.

Change management is a topic that attracts a vast amount of literature and academic discussion, and its successful implementation is the source of a great deal of debate. However, it can be argued that change management is often represented as a series of processes and activities that need to be implemented in a linear and rational way:

''Business schools seldom teach the human side of change. The human side is not logical, rational or reasonable. It involves the feelings of employees...they are difficult to assess and manage...but it is crucial for them to understand'' (Stuart, 1995, 84)

Our study challenges the over simplistic view that change management is a purely rational activity, and explores the 'emotion work' associated with managerial roles within a change context. Emotion work is ''the act of attempting to change an emotion or feeling so it is appropriate for any given situation'' (Bolton, 2005, 50), meaning that emotions are either suppressed or expressed for the benefit of others. We argue that emotion work is fundamentally important for managers, particularly during times of change, as conditions of organisational uncertainty may promote political activity and shifts in power which ''can generate fear or anxiety. . .emotions that signal that their vested interests are being threatened in some way'' (Fineman, 2000).

In times of change particularly, the neglect and marginalisation of emotion can have negative consequences for organisations, as illustrated by James and Arroba (1999, 71):

> ''most organizational change is based on sound rationale, and most managers hope this will be firm enough for people to make the transition. It rarely is. Dealing with change is an emotional process, with its own tasks and stages''

We present data from a case study which focuses primarily on managers, who we define as those who sit above the level of supervisors but below the 'strategy making' board level. This paper illustrates how emotion work is intrinsic to carrying out a managerial role at this level, and shows how the demands of performing emotion work are exacerbated and heightened during a period of change, yet still remain relatively invisible. We also show how emotion work is dynamic and varies depending on the wider structural context, and in particular the stage of the organisational change process.

Our data draws on a series of interviews with managers, carried out as part of an in-depth, longitudinal case study of an organisation undergoing major change and the data reflects the three stages of organisational change: mobilise, move and sustain. Research involving longitudinal data in the area of emotion at work is not common, and we argue that this aspect of our study is of great value.

Change and Transition

Traditional models separate change management into three distinct states: future, present and transition stages (Beckhard and Harris, 1987). Much of the academic and practitioner literature on change focuses on defining the future state as different from the present and on *designing* the programmes which will deliver transition. These two activities are traditionally located at the strategic apex of the organisation. In contrast, this research is concerned with the day to day experiences of the managers who implement these programmes, whilst simultaneously living the painful process of personal change.

Transition management is arguably dominated by two enduring o*rganisational* models. One is Lewin's famous model of the three stages of *organisational* transition: Unfreeze, Move and Refreeze (Lewin, 1958). A more contemporary way of describing these stages is Mobilise, Move and Sustain, thereby discarding the anachronistic notion of organisations ever being refrozen into a steady state of existence (Balogun and Hope Hailey, 2003). Mobilising is about creating readiness for change within, Moving is concerned with the actual implementation of change initiatives, and Sustaining is concerned with embedding and integrating the change into everyday behaviour and routines.

The *individual* transition curve is a model which is based on the original research by Kubler-Ross (1997) but adapted and refined by many other management writers (Bridges, 2002; Stuart, 1995; Adams, Hayes and Hobson, 1976). Here the individual path of transition is summarised into three stages: Letting go of the Past; Adapting to Change; and Moving Forward. By definition this work focuses on the psychological process of transition.

However, in the thoughts, feelings, and activities of managers there is no neat separation of these two processes into organisational and personal experiences (see Figure 1). Instead they are intertwined. Managers at this level are held accountable for the delivery of organisational change programmes and performance outcomes whilst simultaneously being expected to take their teams through the psychological process of transitioning, and potentially experiencing the pain of personal change themselves. For example, during a period of redundancy managers are required to be task focussed in their implementation activities, whilst also being engaged in people orientated dilemmas, such as who to 'let go', as well as potentially being subjected to the same personal anxieties and insecurities as often their own role is also under review.

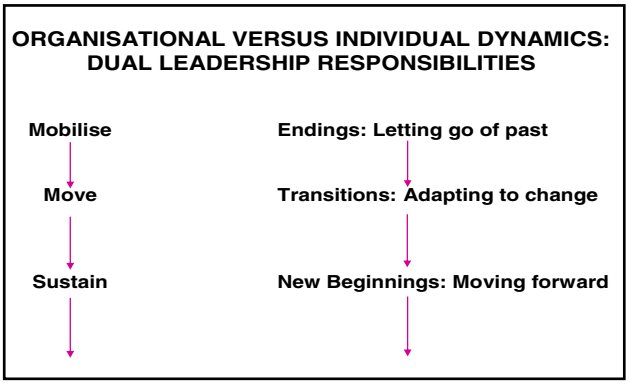

Figure 1 The Duality Experienced by Managers

We argue that it is this daily intertwining of rational programmatic change delivery with the management of subjective personal change that requires managers to engage in an activity called ''emotional labour'', or ''emotion work''. We now go on to examine this concept in some depth.

Emotion Work and Managers

In Hochschild's (1983) seminal work she described the way that flight attendants were expected to hide, and display, certain emotions during their interactions with customers, for example 'smiling to order'. Hochschild described this 'commodification' of emotions as 'emotional labour' and illustrated how the 'management' of emotion in certain roles can be onerous, and in some instances even alienating in relation to task performance (Bolton, 2005).

According to Hochschild, emotional labour is different from the mere control of emotions because it is extended to incorporate the *expression* as well as the *suppression* of emotion, as she explains:

> ''Emotion work' refers more broadly to the act of evoking or shaping, as well as suppressing, feeling in oneself'' (1979:266)

'Emotional labour' or 'emotion work' involves either the suppression or expression of feelings adopted in order to produce the 'proper countenance in others' (Hochschild, 1983), and to date most of the emotional labour studies have focussed on encounters between front line service staff and customers. Such studies have found support for the notion that 'emotional labour' is pervasive, and characterised by its regulated and scripted nature (Rafaelli and Sutton, 1987, 1990; Taylor, 1996, 1998).

However, within this area of research there are groups who have been neglected (Harris, 2002; Ogbonna and Harris, 2004), among them managers (Huy, 2002; Fineman, 2003). Harris proposes that:

> ''concentrating on emotional labour at the employee-customer interface..., may overlook broader more pervasive emotional labour'' (2002:577)

The findings from our study support the idea that the manipulation and control of emotions in order to engender particular responses in others is by no means exclusive to front line workers in organisations, and that managerial emotion work may be differentiated from service workers because of its unregulated nature.

Emotional labour is a concept that has been heavily applied to studies of front line workers, and current debates suggest the actual use of the term 'emotional labour' should be confined to this sector. To circumvent any contentiousness we will use the term *'emotion work'* when referring to professional groupings (for a full discussion of the use and misuse of the term 'emotional labour' see Bolton, 2005, 49–55).

We propose that whilst managers are carrying out seemingly rational change implementation, they are concurrently performing invisible yet demanding emotion work as part of their role, the consequence of which may be personal conflict or tension. Previous research has shown that in a change context, managers may be emotionally ambivalent about their role, as O'Neill and Lenn (1995, 24) illustrate:

> ''The results portray a jumble of emotions...they dislike the ambiguity in their roles – which force them to be agents of strategy for change and its potential victims as well''

Foy (1985) suggests that although managers may experience ambivalence during change, managers feared that any outwardly negative displays would be interpreted as ''confusing, wishy-washy and a sign of weakness''. This leaves managers with a restricted emotional repertoire, having to balance the needs of the organisations with the needs of their employees, while also being constrained in their expression of voice. Managers are subjected to similar rewards, incentives and penalties as any other group of employees, and are also likely to experience similar feelings of self doubt and anxiety (Watson, 1994).

Furthermore, such managers occupy a position in organisations where they are managing as well as being managed, a duality of role described by Sims (2003: 1195) as having 'a peculiar loneliness'. Despite the traditional view of managers as agents of capital, the professional middle class manager's position in large corporations may be very distant from this myth of managerial elitist wealth and power (Ehrenreich, 1989). Recent management literature and consultancy has focussed on initiatives that encourage closer relationships and aim to break down the boundaries between managers and non-managerial staff (Gratton, 2003). Workers have been exhorted to become ''self managing'' and managers have been encouraged to become coaches rather then overseers, which has increased managers' accountability to staff. As such, the very notion of what it means to be a manager has arguably become more problematic and trends may have led managers to identify more with their colleagues at work than the organisations that employ them (Willmott, 1997).

Although managers may perform emotion work in much the same way as non-managerial staff (albeit that their forms of compensation and benefit separate them symbolically from non-managerial employees), their managerial position requires them to implement strategies often not of their own making to secure profit and performance, which may test their loyalty to their work mates and provoke deeply con-

tradictory emotions. To gauge the nuances and dynamics within organisational relationships Groth *et al.* (2004) propose a measurement of 'relationship strength'. 'Low strength' relationships consist of 'one off' encounters at one end of the continuum, whilst relationships with a shared history, an intensive nature, and an expectation of future interactions are termed 'high strength' situated at the other end of the continuum. By the nature of day to day interaction with employees the relationship would normally be high strength.

The potential for contradictory managerial emotions are also rooted in the way that managerial identities are constructed through multifaceted influences extending beyond the workplace, for example the community or the family (Whittington, 2002). In this study all three influences (the workplace, the community and the family) are clearly present and inextricably intertwined. It is precisely the manager's reluctance to simply comply with a corporate formulation of morality and identity that creates the need for emotion work (Ten Bos and Willmott, 2001). Such emotion work needs to be understood as more than an individual act, as it is subject to wider structural influences and is more ''a question of power and/or control'' (Sturdy, 2001) than simply a benign accident. However, in the organisational literature emotion work is often positioned at the psychological individual level as Bolton observes:

> ''we are led to believe that important work issues such as stress, burnout and emotional exhaustion are individual crises that arise due to an individual's lack of capacity to cope. Despite huge developments on this band of thinking there continues a serious neglect of the political, social and economic factors that provide the social framework in which interpersonal relations are embedded'' (2005:21)

Front line service workers are typically given a script for guidance, or at the least have a highly structured foundation for their interactions (Korczynski, 2003), however managers would be expected to cope with this aspect of their role independently. Consequently, the organisation would not provide support for this kind of activity. Our study seeks to highlight the characteristics of managerial emotion work which differentiate them from service workers: (1) the unscripted and self-regulated manner in which it is carried out and (2) the complex and enduring nature of the high strength social relationships (often extending beyond the physical boundaries of the workplace) and (3) the unacknowledged and invisible activity involved in this work, which consequently means that it is unsupported. We argue that these three distinct characteristics of managerial emotion work render it more taxing and onerous than for some other types of employee, for example service staff involved in front line 'low strength' relationships. We also argue that for successful change management such emotion work needs to be recognised and acknowledged within organisational life, as the invisibility but necessity of constant emotion work, particularly during times of change, may result in either burn out or alienation for those managers who are left unsupported. Finally, the juxtaposition of the emotion work experienced by managers compared to the over-rational change rhetoric is stark, and needs to be highlighted and acknowledged.

Methodology

Our research was conducted through the sponsorship of the Change Management Consortium, and in this paper we present data from a longitudinal case study which examined the emotion work undertaken during a period of substantial organisational change. The study took place on a manufacturing site which formed part of a large global corporation. A case study approach was adopted in order to understand the findings in context, and to study the dynamics in a single setting over time (Yin, 1994). The case study included a variety of data collection methods: observations; diaries kept by a sample of managers; and a series of interviews conducted at three different points in time. The details of the methods used are summarised in Table 1.

The data presented here is drawn from longitudinal interviews with managers. These managers were above supervisory level, but below strategic board level. The participants involved in the longitudinal interviews were all managers, male, and between the ages of 28 and 55. All the managers had worked on site for at least 10 years, and some for all of their working life. The workforce was made up of a number of close relationships which reflected the tightly knit community. These relationships were evidenced in our managerial sample of ten, which included a father and son, and two brothers.

Managers were observed initially at workshops during a management development exercise; the same managers were then interviewed at Time 1 following a period of major downsizing (50% of workforce). The interviews were semi-structured and lasted between 45–90 minutes. All interviews were recorded and later transcribed. Management interviews were carried out again 9 months later at Time 2 when new processes had been embedded, and then

Table 1 Methods of Data Collection

	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
Interviews – Managers	10	8	8
Interviews – Supervisors	16		
Interviews – Site Manager	1	1	
Interviews Division/Corporate	2		
Observational Workshops	3		
Diaries (number of managers)	3		

finally after a further 9 months. Time 3 data collection occurred shortly after another period of significant change had taken place (the site manager had been sacked and replaced, the site was no longer European focused, and a recruitment process had begun as new orders now meant a shortage of staff).

The data was analysed using a grounded theory approach, with categories and codes emerging and being iteratively refined throughout the three periods of data collection. The data from all three sources (interviews, diaries and observations) were entered into NVIVO^{tm} software, which was extremely beneficial in providing links across both methods and time periods, whilst at the same time segregating the data into the three particular data sets.

Findings

In Context

Understanding the context of this case study is of fundamental importance when viewing the data. The study was carried out on an aerospace engineering company situated within a small and close-knit U.K. island community. Islanders made up 95% of the (predominantly male) workforce and the majority had worked at this site all of their working lives, where length of service exceeding 20 years was unexceptional. Both the workplace and the community were extremely close knit: consisting of brothers, fathers, sons and neighbours. As a result, managers executing corporate strategy arguably experienced more heightened emotions than in other circumstances, since the ramifications of decisions made by the organisation rippled out into the local community. The empirical results found in this study are unlikely to be peculiar to this island setting, but could arguably be more pronounced or exaggerated.

The organisation (BCP aeroservices) has been a major employer on the island for a number of years, employing 2,000 people at its peak. When the first series of data was collected the number of employees stood at around 650 people. Similar alternative employment was not readily available on the island, and working on mainland UK was perceived to be logistically and emotionally unattractive by most employees:

''they don't want to, you can't justify it because logically you can break it down, but actually it's a mental state, it's a nightmare to travel off the Isle of Wight elsewhere. . .I like being within 20 mins of work, without undue traffic problems, low travel costs all those kinds of things'' (Steve, HR Manager)

Although the site formed part of a global corporation, until recently the BCP aerospace head office had been physically situated on the island. It was reported that the relocation of head office to the mainland UK had contributed to the feelings surrounding a loss of status and autonomy. Consequently, participants often stated that their future was in the hands of a 'faceless' and remote head office, and that they had little ownership in the corporately led and designed changes, in particular the need to downsize dramatically. A corporate announcement however insisted that the future of the site depended solely on the site returning a profit within three years. However, the pervasive folklore was that BCP aeroservices would eventually close the site, and that it was just a matter of time before this happened. Such gloomy predictions were widespread at all levels, from managers through to operators, particularly in Time 1.

In 2001 the aerospace industry was heading towards hard times, and in the aftermath of September 11th this decline was accelerated and exacerbated. The demand for new civil aircraft fell, and both corporate and local communications stated that the site could not survive in its present state. During our study BCP aeroservices went through a series of changes, the most dramatic of which was an organisational downsizing of around 50% of the workforce. Over and above this there was a further round of 100 redundancies, three different site managers, a series of different management strategies, and a major site transition from a variety of older buildings that had been used for over 50 years, to a single building with no heritage or past.

Our data, drawn from three different time periods can roughly be assigned to the three phases of organisational change mentioned earlier, that of Mobilise, Move and Sustain (Balogun and Hope Hailey, 2003). At the organisational level BCP had to mobilise to make 50% of the workforce redundant, while in the next stage people were attempting to 'move' to the new 'leaner' state (still within a background of continuous change), while individually they were becoming more aware and adapting:

''the way it was portrayed to me was as a business that had gone through significant shock but was in the position now to move itself forward in a much stronger position'' (New Site Manager)

During the 'sustain' period the redundancies have all been made, there is a new site manager in situ, and there is talk of new beginnings and 'the snowdrops are starting to pop back up again' (manager). New orders are coming in and there is a need to re-hire.

Changing Emotions and the Emotions of Change

Excerpts from the data have been placed in Table 2 in order to systematise and contextualise their meaning. The commentary which follows the table relates to these quotes, but in some instances additional excerpts of data have been inserted into the text.

Most of our managers reported working on this site for a long period of time (some all of their lives),

Table 2 Types of Emotion Work Exhibited by Managers During the First Phase of Organisational Change

Mobilisation – Letting Go of the Past
The Emotional Consequences of Change ''at the moment they think the redundancies are all over now but actually it is really just starting cos we have all the other bits to deal with in terms of organisation. . .it hasn't finished by a long shot, it will be round our necks for another two years as people will harp back to it'' ''I think there were occasions when if you like, their objectives in terms of speed of what they wanted to achieve were far too optimistic, and that goes back to the fact they weren't, I think, ready and prepared to let people have the time to go through the bereavement you know, announce the redundancies and turn up and sack them''
Unscripted ''I didn't have anybody sitting on my shoulder. . .I thought somebody could have come along and said 'well right, you're going to go through this' you know the old bereavement curve, well that very much applies to this, we should have been prepared for that and we should have been told how to manage that''
Unsupported ''in terms of my colleagues they knew it was a tough job and they knew it was difficult but it in terms of the people you talk to on a daily basis they weren't interested in what I was feeling or what the team were feeling, grim reaper and all that sort of stuff''
Emotional Investment of Managers ''it was a complete emotional rollercoaster'' ''my management peers. . .I would say that a lot of people are exhausted at the moment, what we have been through in terms of making half our workforce redundant''
Dual Role of Managers ''I found it very difficult to think about doing it but to actually do it I managed to kick into a different mode, I tried to listen to them and understand them and at the end of the day it was not going to change my decision'' ''It's pretty crummy, actually, having to try and tell someone and still give them positive feedback- so they actually didn't feel bad, because the last thing you want to do is tell someone they're crap and that's why they've been chosen to go''
Uncertainty and Insecurity ''I probably feel that someone might put me on a list saying well if we need to take someone else out then maybe he's a good man''
Suppression of Feelings ''in terms of the change process in general regardless of redundancy, downsizing and all those kinds of things, there is still a big issue for me is that it has to be seen to be fair and there has to be a constructive reason for doing it, and I can't always see it and I don't always believe it''

and spoke of their relationships with the employees as being both long standing and close, outside of the workplace as well as within it. In the early phase of data collection (mobilise) our accounts indicated that the downsizing aspect of the managerial role was a task infused with emotion, and one made more difficult by the longevity and intense nature of these employee-manager relations:

> ''''it is going to be very demanding, probably emotionally on you, because most of the people we pulled in had experience, so they had been here 20 odd years as well, it was mates, it was relations'' (manager)

In addition to these close relationships, the managers were also well aware of the actions and consequences of the organisation on the local community and their families, as well as the additional island firms who received work from BCP services. As we argued earlier, when managers are doing emotion work it may prove to be especially difficult and onerous because it is often performed in the context of high strength relationships. In this study the relationships between the managers and their team members had a long history, were of an intense nature, and had an expectation around future encounters, which meant on Groth *et al.'s* (2004) continuum they were examples of 'high strength' relationships.

The implications of executing change in a 'high strength' relationship are that the stakes are likely to be greater and therefore more emotive, and emotion work would feel harder and more uncomfortable. In this particular set of circumstances, given the long service records of many employees and the relatively closed nature of the island community a more pronounced experience was reported, particularly as the relationships often extended outside of the physical work space. The nature of the relationship between manager and employee in this study shows that the experience of executing change was a long way from the 'rational' task so often outlined in the change literature, as described here:

> ''I felt bloody awful, I think they understood that I stood up there from the heart, and I did speak from the heart'' (manager)

Our accounts demonstrated that emotion work was a necessary and onerous part of the managerial role and the experience of implementing the changes associated with downsizing was very far from the

rational change activity so often represented in the literature. Our data contained rich and emotional language from managers who sometimes reported great personal distress, describing the redundancy task as 'an emotional rollercoaster', and criticising the organisation for attempting to hurry the process through in an overly rational and 'task focussed' manner. As is often the case these managers were required to implement policy irrespective of whether they agreed with it, and there was a reported need to 'tow the party line'. These managers, aware of their own vulnerability in any future downsizing exercises, reported suppressing their feelings in order not to jeopardise their own career. Some managers reflected that people did not feel valued by the organisation during this process because of the manner in which it had had been executed ''we are just a number'' (manager).

Furthermore, it was reported that there had been very little guidance or acknowledgement of the emotion work involved in the task of making staff redundant, and that managers had mostly been left to find their own way of managing this task with little support. One manager described the lack of emotional support as inadequate:

''I am not a great one on counselling, but advice might be a better expression and it was lacking and I think we should have had a little more of that'' (manager)

Whilst a scripted or regulated process might be inappropriate for some managerial tasks, generally the respondents felt that some guidance and support would have been beneficial. Unlike service workers who receive training and/or scripts to deal with difficult situations, the emotion work carried out by our managers did not relate to a formal set of behaviours which they could call upon, so their emotion work was self-regulated, and unscripted and also appeared to be unacknowledged. The accounts showed that these managers often felt lonely in their roles, as they were unable to discuss emotional matters, even with their peers, because of a fear of repercussions and showing weakness. Such a constrained emotional environment meant that during this period of change, managers carried out a great deal of emotion work, with little or no organisational support. One manager described the experience as isolating:

''there is nobody here you can really talk to, that is something else within this organisation I am finding very difficult – you have nobody to talk to, everyone is such political animals who are always for one another'' (manager)

Our data table illustrates how managers in the 'mobilisation' period found letting go of the past difficult and sometimes reported being fearful and uncertain about the future, for themselves personally as well as for the other members of the workforce.

Table 3 Types of Emotion Work Exhibited by Managers During the Second Phase of Organisational Change

Moving – Adapting to Change
The Emotional Consequences of Change
''my personal view is that I do not think the business can take another redundancy, I think morale, and I do not know how you recover from that and there are so many people stretched. I think we are halfway coming up there now. I think that if we took another blow I think we will go to the bottom and never come back''
''now we have done the hard bit everybody is expecting us to perform and do well and meet the results consistently, and that again is the next step and just as difficult I would say''
Unsupported
''don't get your tissue out but it's a real lonely environment. . .because you don't have that outlet to be able to talk about things at work and bitch about things and stuff like that you have really just got to keep it to yourself''
Uncertainty and Insecurity
''the needle is more optimistic consistently, but it doesn't take much movement to put it there and I just think that until that settles down properly its going to get difficult''
''The first thing when you wake up. . . you have all those things on your mind and I think that is sad''
Suppression of Feelings
''you start beating yourself up, because it's then a sign of weakness again isn't it, and I'm thinking well I'm just moaning, I can't really do anything, it's like stop moaning and get on with it''
Pressure/Workload
''the pressure to deliver the transition and the ongoing redundancies, which is a tremendous pressure because you are under pressure all the time to achieve and they have taken all your tools away. I always say I have one hand behind my back and I have got them both there now''
Voice
''you could see them realigning themselves and I think that we all did. I think we all did and I probably did it without realising it and I am not saying that I am any different. You get this sort of jockeying position and I guess that it is to strike up a relationship with someone to find out how they work and the right thing to say and the wrong thing to say''

Our accounts also suggested that uncertainty over the future led to increased insecurity, and self-protective political behaviour. These managers, aware of their own vulnerability in any future downsizing exercises performed increased emotion work required in order to suppress certain (negative) emotion. Consequently this also meant that support for these managers was further decreased, as admitting the need for help was perceived to be tantamount to weakness.

Managers in the 'move' phase (Table 3) showed some acceptance of the situation, but were also searching for some personal meaning to make sense of what had happened, and they particularly vocalised the role of the organisation, indicating that there was a personal degree of discomfort in the part they themselves had played. For example, one manager explained how he felt when several members of his team suffered heart attacks, which he partly attributed to the stress they were under following their increased workload:

''if they [the organisation] carry on they will put them all in hospital'' (manager)

During the sustain phase (Table 4) there was more organisational stability as the future of the site became less precarious. Participants were accepting of some of the past events while also reflecting on the previous organisational activity. However, the emotional and operational aftermath of the changes continued to have real consequences for employees and managers alike. This created its own uncertainty as employees chose to leave the organisation because of work pressures and a cynicism following the amount of change activity. This excerpt from the data shows how the stability of the organisation is only part of the managerial experience, as we have already proposed on a number of occasions in this paper:

''I think the business is more stable. The next hurdle really I think is just getting the morale back on track somehow'' (manager)

Table 4 Types of Emotion Work Exhibited by Managers During the Third Phase of Organisational Change

Sustain – New Beginnings and Moving Forward
The Emotional Consequences of Change
''Because the change this place has been through we didn't deserve to survive the change, it was brutal what we had to do with the reduction, but now we're starting to. . .the snowdrops are starting to pop back up again, it really is yeah, it does feel good''
Unsupported
''There's no-one really to take [worries] to''
''I would argue people are less supportive of each other because they're all looking after their own individual requirements''
Dual Role of Manager
''[the site manager] has his demands as well, so it's awkward for people in my position and it was then, and it always will be. . . I was getting a lot of pressure about things the Site Manager was expecting them to do, where previously I'd have buffered that''
Uncertainty and Insecurity
''you know we've been north, east, south, west, which way are we going to go now, there was that kind of cynicism about, you know''
''I have a future [here] but I don't want to go home every Friday night worried about what I've got to do over the weekend. . .or lying awake at night worried''
Suppression of Feelings
''I don't mean to sound hardened to it, as I said before that was a very difficult time and it has been a difficult time. . .but I felt about halfway through, my misses said if you don't get your head round it you won't be here, they'll be saying goodbye to you because you worry about everyone. . .I had to adopt the same attitude, [but] I didn't agree it was the right thing for the company''
High Strength Relationships
''Oh it was awful, all those people and I still see a lot of them about you know. On the island you do that, you see people that worked for you and got let go and things like that''
Voice
''I feel like saying you know guys you pay us good wages, you obviously have some respect for us but you never come and ask our opinions or if you do you don't listen to them''
Pressure/Workload
''in a lot of cases the guys are pulled in too many directions''
''some people are starting to want to leave rather than being pushed out of the door, they want to leave''
Unacknowledged
''I don't believe I get any recognition for the work that I am doing, I think that in general I still don't see much recognition taking place within the organisation''
''it would have made an enormous difference, it is not so much the money it is just someone telling you that 'you did a really good job there' ''

Consequently during the 'final' phase of change the emotion work continues, sharing many similarities with the previous phases, although it also manifested itself in different guises than before (for example the unacknowledged aspect), and therefore the emotion work performed by mangers may be described as both stable and dynamic.

There was considerable support found in our data for the notion that emotion work was not simply an individual act or choice, but was instead governed and influenced by the wider structures within which the managers were situated. One highly influential aspect in terms of the legitimacy of displayed emotion (and consequently emotion work) was the feeling rules that were particular to this organisation. For example, when one participant was asked what would happen if he expressed his fears publicly, he replied:

''it's a sign of weakness in the kind of culture that we work in you know, I mean if I were to, I mean that would be it, you'd be finished'' (manager)

Following this argument, it appears that the more stringent the feeling rules are, the more emotion work is required. Therefore in times of change, the more constraining the feeling rules are then the more likely managers are to suppress their feelings, or express feelings they don't have in order to protect their own careers. In this study managers reported that both inwardly and outwardly their own feelings and behaviour had to alter in line with the expectations placed upon them in their role, to be in keeping with what was perceived to be acceptable in the workplace:

''I think when there's looming redundancies, yeah, it's a big issue for somebody to say 'I cant' cos it's a weakness'' (manager)

Accounts such as those given in Table 2 and in this body of text provide support for the idea that carrying out change in a managerial role is by no means a simple rational process, but often involves the management of emotions, which may result in personal and emotional costs to the manager, as well as the employee. This indicates that the execution of organisational change is indeed inseparable from the personal experience of those involved. Consequently, the construction of change as a purely rational activity to be executed is not only misleading but unhelpful in supporting what is a significant aspect of managerial activity.

Conclusions

This study has looked in-depth and over time at managers and has identified the emotion work they perform in an organisational change context. Although most other studies concerning emotional labour have tended to focus on front line service workers, our findings provide evidence that managers are also required to display or hide emotions as part of their role. We argue that this emotion work is heightened and brought into sharper focus during periods of change. The emotion work and experience of the mangers in this study is at odds with the rational presentation of change management which is common within much of the literature. Consequently, the emotions of managers are often not seen as legitimate in the representation of the rational workplace, and as such their emotion work is unacknowledged and unsupported, even though it appears to form an important and sometimes onerous part of their role.

Our findings show that the personal change experiences of the participants were not acknowledged by the organisation. However, much of the data in our study relates to the experience of managers executing organisational change as well as being emotionally and personally involved. The idea that there are different and separate levels of change – personal and organisational, is challenged by the experiences reported here, and therefore we argue that this theoretical demarcation is inappropriate in practice.

Our research supported the notion that the emotion work carried out by our mangers was significantly different to those groups (e.g. front line service workers) who feature in much of the emotional labour literature, because of several differentiating characteristics. Firstly, these participants were engaged and embedded within a culture of *high streng*th relationships in accordance with Groth *et al.*'s (2004) definition. Our data indicated that undertaking significant change activity within these relationships was highly emotive and onerous for managers, and was often carried out at great personal cost as one manager remarked ''its pretty crummy actually''. In some respects it may be argued that the emotional issues displayed by this workforce were accentuated in relation to other organisations because of the particular island context, yet it is the specific organisational context that is essential in understanding the dynamic relationships and the managerial emotion work involved. The feelings that managers suppressed or feigned in this context needed to be sustained over a longer period of time, and also 'spilled over' beyond the physical boundaries of the workplace in a way that 'one off' service encounters rarely do, reflecting the complex and intense nature of these relationships.

Secondly, the emotion work was *unscripted*; some of the most demanding emotion work carried out in the 'mobilise' phase was uncharted territory for these managers, who were given no training and ''very little guidance'' around how to carry out redundancy activity, or how to cope with extreme reactions from employees. Thirdly, the emotion work was *unsup-*

ported; managers felt there was nobody they could really talk to because discussing such issues was seen as a weakness. The final differentiating characteristic around the emotion work in this study was that it was *unacknowledged*; those senior and junior to these managers did not acknowledge this demanding element included in their role ''they weren't interested in what I was feeling'' (manager). This study argues that this managerial group were different to other groups in the type of emotion work carried out, but it also proposes that these characteristics made the emotional aspect of their role more difficult and demanding than for many other groups. Consequently, we suggest that further exploration around managers, emotion work and change would be valuable.

The type of emotion work that is undertaken also appears to change, depending on the stage of organisational change as defined by Balogun and Hope Hailey (2003). In the 'mobilise' phase our data suggests more heightened emotions, especially in high strength relationships. In addition, this phase was also perceived to be the most uncertain and insecure, with managers experiencing fear and vulnerability around their own roles which often manifested itself in both political and self-protective behaviour. The rigid and constraining feeling rules on this site meant that during this phase managerial emotions were often hidden, and most emotion work was invisible. Whilst the organisation is in this stage of change the managers simultaneously had to let go of the (sometimes very painful) past, which often resulted in reported feelings of shock or denial. This data phase indicated the highest amount of emotion work especially in relation to the rational representation and ambivalence surrounding these tasks.

During the 'move' phase our data shows that the mangers are adapting to the changes, but are also becoming aware of the new behaviours and expectations required. There is an acceptance of the changes, but they are not always 'embraced' whole heartedly ''everybody has had big changes to accept, and reluctantly they have been accepted'' (manager). The dynamics included the assessment of what emotions are now acceptable and unacceptable, which in turn influences the nuances of how the expression and suppression of emotion are adjusted. For example, managers report on a realignment and 'jockeying for position' whilst they work out ''the right thing to say and the wrong thing to say'' (manager), and participants reported that the expression of voice was not always welcome.

Finally, in the 'sustain' phase, there is a certain amount of acceptance, yet managers have had space to reflect on what happened and construct their own interpretations. Certainly in the organisational context of our study it was a time of new beginnings with new orders and site profit, yet it also prompted some managers to question their own role in implementing the organisational change, and how they felt about it, with some 'blaming' the organisation, while others questioned their own involvement. Once the change has been 'executed' the ramifications at both an emotional and operational level continue for a long time: ''it hasn't finished by a long shot, it will be round our necks for another two years as people will harp back to it'' (manager). This is an issue of consequence when viewing change purely from a 'task' point of view because emotional issues and 'fall out' ripple through the organisation long after a particular change has been implemented. For example, 18 months after the downsizing there is still considerable emotion work surrounding the surviving (but diminished in terms of headcount) team members who are now under greater pressure as ''we put more and more on them'' (manager).

The benefits of longitudinal data collection in this study of emotion is that we did not simply collect a 'snapshot' in time, but are able to chart the way that emotion work can ebb, flow, and change in form, depending on the specific (changing) context. We argue that this study demonstrates the value of longitudinal emotion research and contextualised emotion studies, and we dispute that an entative approach is sufficient.

In attempting to understand our data it is also important to remember that managerial emotion work is not merely the province of the individual. Our study showed that the emotion work of these managers was not performed in a vacuum, but was reported to be in line with a myriad of expectations surrounding the legitimacy and illegitimacy of expressing their emotion at work. The influential factors in this study included: organisational expectations (outwardly a highly rational environment, the idea of the managerial role); societal expectations (the community, being male); and an understanding of the political and economic context (the state of the aerospace industry). Consequently, in order to assist the management of change it is important to recognise that individual coping mechanisms alone will not reduce the onerous nature of emotion work in organisations. Furthermore, such 'individual' strategies will not address the wider organisational issues surrounding the emotion work of managers.

The research raises a number of important considerations for those embarking upon significant corporate transformations. First, the study suggests that acknowledging and supporting the emotion work undertaken by local managers is important for the successful execution of centrally designed corporate change programmes. This case study suggests that it is this level of manager which needs to be given support, both in terms of formal management development in the area of personal and organisational change, and also encouragement and acknowledgement of the emotional component of the work. This support seems to be critical in retaining these managers' long term commitment and motivation

when repeatedly implementing successive rounds of change programmes.

We also suggest that the day to day management of transition should be given as much time, energy and attention at senior management levels as the more intellectually oriented activities such as visioning. Delivering the future vision relies as much on the emotion work of local managers (such as those at BCP) as it does on expert strategy formulation.

Whilst we are reporting here on a single case study, we have repeated the research in eight other public and private sector corporations and the findings are broadly similar (Farndale *et al*., 2006). However, future research in this area would be welcomed, particularly if it were undertaken in different change contexts. One proposition would be to explore how particular emotions that are more prevalent at the start of the change activity (e.g. anxiety, uncertainty, insecurity) are replaced by different emotions (e.g. ambivalence, self-protection, guilt) by the 'end' of the activity. Further research could also include the ways that individual emotion work can add to the organisational toolbox in terms of facilitating change, exploring how negative individuals emotions (e.g. guilt) are transformed into more positive organisational emotions (e.g. empathy). However, we must heed the warning issued by Bolton (2005) against taking a one sided prescriptive view of emotion, advising that it should not merely be ''captured and controlled for organisational ends'' (2005, 67).

Note

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