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**Organisational Culture, Organisational Change and Emotions:  
A Qualitative Study**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Some organisations have strong cultures of innovation and adaptability that influence individual responses to change. Another dimension is affective culture, which shapes the way emotions are experienced and expressed, and which plays a particularly important part during changes to the culture or to any other aspect of organisational life. Organisational change triggers emotions as people anticipate or encounter gains or losses. This paper illustrates the two and three way relationships between culture, change and emotions and presents the results of a qualitative study.*

Key words: organisational culture, organisational change, emotions

Organisational culture is regarded as a set of assumptions, beliefs, values, customs, structures, norms, rules, traditions and artefacts (Schein 2004), and a system of shared meanings (Pizer & Härtel 2005), although how much is really shared is debatable (Martin 2002). More colloquially culture is “how things are done around here” (Martin 2002: 3) and it moulds the behaviour of its members in overt and covert ways. The term organisational climate, which is often used instead of culture, or in addition to it, is the employee perception of the culture and a manifestation of it (Allen 2003). The debate as to the similarities and differences between them, and discussion of the multiple theoretical perspectives on each (Allen 2003; Denison 1996), lie outside the scope of this paper, and to simplify matters the term organisational culture will be used, even though it is employee perceptions that will be engaged.

It should also be noted that organisations have sub-cultures (Allen 2003; Ryan 2005; Harris & Ogbonna 1998) that are based on categories such as hierarchy, department, profession, ethnicity and gender, but also on more abstract values. As an example of the last, Palthe and Kossek (2003) have developed a typology of sub-cultures that are employee-centred, profession-centred, task-centred and, of special relevance to this paper, innovation-centred. Sub-cultures may become counter-cultures (Elsmore 2001), which, according to Armenakis, Harris and Mossholder (1993: 687), may “polarize the beliefs, attitudes and intentions of members” and undermine readiness for change.

The constructs of organisational culture and change intersect when the culture contains a

strong focus on innovation and adaptability, when the culture itself is the target of change and when the culture changes as a result of strategic, tactical or operational changes. The emotional aspects may arise from changes to the culture as well as from the other types of change. The aims of this paper are firstly to identify the emotions that arise from changes to organisational culture, and secondly to explore how the culture influences the experience and expression of emotion during any type of organisational change. I begin the paper by outlining how the three constructs intersect, then present the results of a qualitative study and finally identify limitations and directions for further research.

### **ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND CHANGE**

It is believed that an organisation's culture should be aligned with its strategy (Pearce & Robinson 2005) and that when the strategy changes managers should ensure that the culture changes if it needs to. The construct of change readiness as a cognitive phenomenon is an important facet of organisational culture (Armenakis & Bedian 1999; Eby, Adams, Russell & Gaby, 2000; Jones, Jimmieson & Griffiths, 2005) but researchers have been virtually silent on its affective ramifications.

A number of articles from the business press feature organisations with cultures of change. Google's "anything-goes spirit" and "off the wall culture" at its California headquarters was considered by a *Fortune* journalist to be a company that has successfully embraced a change-oriented philosophy (Lashinsky 2006: 45, 46). In a recent interview (*Time* 2008), the CEO of Procter and Gamble indicated that the company needed to transform itself into an innovative organisation where the values of openness, connectedness, curiosity, courage and collaboration became embedded in the culture. Conversely, an ex-Wal-Mart executive "paints a picture of warring fiefdoms and a passive-defensive culture that was hostile to outsiders" and claims that the company "would rather have had a painkiller [than] taken the vitamin of change" (Berner 2007: 71). In referring to a meeting at General Motors in 2005 to discuss the development of an electric car Welch (2008: 38) used three words to characterise a risk-averse culture, "Myopia. Fear. Inertia". By 2008, a crisis obliged GM to change.

Organisations can consciously change their cultures but may also find that other types of change inevitably lead to a cultural change. Hewlett-Packard deliberately set out to change its culture from a family-like organisation to one focussed on accountability for results and innovation (Forster 2006).

Ryan (2005) studied a company that for decades had two key values - innovation and care for its employees. When the culture changed to a short-term results-oriented one, with what was described as a penal attitude for not meeting targets, both innovation and morale declined. Cisco, had a culture of innovation but also one that was “brutally competitive”, and when results declined it maintained the focus on goals, but, in addition to other changes, also demanded collaboration - with mixed outcomes:

*Everyone hated the new way at first...Executives didn't like sharing resources; joint strategy-setting and decision-making was cumbersome....'The first two years were very painful' admits [CEO] Chambers. Some of the most successful people left...Others were asked to leave (Kirkland 2007: 38).*

Schein (1990: 111) indicates that “Culture is what a group learns over a period of time as that group solves its problems of survival in an external environment and its problems of internal integration. Such learning is simultaneously a behavioral, cognitive, and an emotional process”. According to Van Maanen and Kunda (1989: 46) “Any attempt to manage culture is therefore also an attempt to manage emotions.”

## **CULTURE AND EMOTIONS**

Three key points arise from the nexus between organisational culture and emotions - culture has emotional overtones, cultural change triggers emotions; culture influences how employees experience emotions and deal with them. Emotions are cognitive responses to events, issues, relationships and objects that are important to people (Lazarus 1991; Frijda 1988). “The emotional intensity of the actual historical experiences” contributes to the development of culture members have shared (Schein 2004: 11). “The most critical function of corporate culture”, according to Bratton, Grint and Nelson (2005: 51), “is to generate commitment and enthusiasm among followers by making them feel they are part of a ‘family’ and participants in a worthwhile venture.”

Organisational culture is substantially about values (Kabanoff, Waldersee & Cohen 1995) whether deliberately articulated or simply evolved, and can be imbued with emotion. For example, Vodafone New Zealand’s website proclaims that it has “passion” for customers, their people, results and the world around them ([www.vodafone.co.nz](http://www.vodafone.co.nz)). The theme of happiness is emphasised on the Virgin website: “The Virgin brand is built upon Richard Branson’s core philosophy - if you keep your staff happy then your customers will be happy, and if you keep your customers happy then your shareholders will be happy” ([www.virgin.com](http://www.virgin.com)). The Disney website currently reveals “optimism” as a

key value and that “At The Walt Disney Company, entertainment is about hope, aspiration and positive resolutions” (www.corporatedisney.com). Staff are required to at least demonstrate appropriate attitudes and behaviours but some organisations go even further by expecting staff to subscribe to the values and by aiming to instil in them the *desire* to do what is asked of them. In their in-depth study of Disneyland Van Maanen and Kunda (1989) documented the concerted approach that was used to get employees to buy into the feel-good culture of the company. When Vodadone New Zealand made an acquisition its work culture was reported in the press as being “energised”. According to a senior manager the company’s culture was “youthful, casual and fun” and that “it was important for workers to have energy and passion” to be competitive (Keown 2006: C4).

The extensive literature on emotional labour has indicated how the experience, display and suppression of emotions at work has been determined by a host of societal, organisational, professional and individual factors (e.g. Hochschild 1983; Rafaeli & Sutton 1991; Mann 1999; Bolton 2005). The emotional culture (Zembylas 2006) or affective culture (Barsade & Gibson 2007) of an organisation influences how emotion is experienced and expressed. The role of emotion in organisational life has either been ignored by most managers and researchers or treated in pejorative fashion as irrational and disruptive (Domagalski 1999). Yet the affective culture of an organisation can result in emotions being ‘captured’, ‘harnessed’, ‘managed’, ‘controlled’, ‘sanitised’ and ‘commodified’ by organisations for their own ends, and often at the expense of the employee (Sturdy & Fineman 2001; Fineman 1993, 2000, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2008; Zembylas 2006). Emotions become cultural prerogatives (Fineman 2008) when some are deemed appropriate for display while others must be contained. Callahan (2002) found that employees were expected to hide their emotions and that the emergence of new and healthier norms was being stymied by an unresponsive culture. Rules of appropriate display of positive emotions and suppression of negative emotions are not only imposed and monitored by managers but can also be policed, or at least influenced, by peers (Haman & Putnam 2008; Zembylas 2006). Alternatively, organisational culture can embrace emotional experience as natural and its expression as mostly acceptable. The determination of companies like Disneyland (Van Maanen & Kunda 1989) to control employee emotions can be contrasted with The Body Shop where emotional expression is considered legitimate (Martin, Knopoff & Beckman 1998),

or at least it was under its original owners. Clarke (2006) has also researched the impact of organisational culture and professional identity in healthcare organisations and found reflection on, discussion of, and support for the emotional aspects of work to be helpful to staff. Perceived organisational support, both practical and psychological, refer to employees perceptions of the support from their direct managers but more from organisational systems and culture (Masterton, Lewis, Goldman & Taylor 2000). Support also includes the notion that emotions need to be acknowledged and treated with sensitivity (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison & Sowa 1986). Perceptions of in/justice, particularly when it is systemic (Sheppard, Lewicki & Minton 1992; Beugré & Baron 2001), can create organisational cultures of contrasting emotional natures. At one extreme, for example, are companies that are rife with humiliation, degradation and intimidation, resulting in employees feeling “anger, sadness, outrage, grief, shame and hate” (Harlos & Pinder 2000: 261).

A healthy organisational culture shows evidence of ‘emotional capability’ (Huy 1999), where emotional expressiveness is encouraged, anxiety is managed and value is placed on emotion work (Pizer & Härtel 2005; Beyer & Nino 2001). Ashkanasy and Daus (2002) provide a set of guidelines for emotionally healthy organisations that includes selecting employees for emotional sensitivity, training them in emotional intelligence and the healthy expression of emotion, creating a positive and friendly emotional climate, and if need be, changing the culture. The organisations depicted by Martin et al. (1998) and Clarke (2006) reflect healthy emotional cultures.

## **ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE AND EMOTIONS**

Organisational change has the capacity to elicit emotions as people anticipate or deal with positive and negative outcomes (Huy 1999; Kiefer 2005; Smollan 2006) Sometimes it is the transition from the old state to the new that is the problem (Bridges 2003) and poorly contrived processes of change can exacerbate the way people react on an emotional level. Personality and emotional intelligence influence the emotions people experience and their ability to adapt to change (Chawla & Kelloway 2004; Wanberg & Banas 2000; Oreg 2003, Jordan 2005).

Factors evoking employee emotions are employee perceptions of the scale of the change, its speed, frequency and timing (George & Jones 2001; Huy 2001), its fairness (Paterson & Härtel 2002;

Barclay et al. 2005), and the trustworthiness and emotional intelligence of change leaders and managers (Morgan & Zeffane 2003; Jordan 2005). When change takes place, either in the culture of the organisation or some other facet of it, emotions may arise and the affective culture of the organisation can help or hinder the process of adjustment (Schein 2004; Zembylas 2006).

### **CULTURE, CHANGE AND EMOTIONS**

In laying out the two-way interaction between the three concepts the three-way relationships have already begun to emerge. This is emphasised by Duck (1993: 113) who believes that:

*Change is fundamentally about feelings; companies that want their workers to contribute with their heads and their hearts have to accept that emotions are central to the new management style...the most successful change programs reveal that large organisations connect with their people most directly through values - and that values, ultimately are about beliefs and feelings.*

According to Ryan (2005: 432) organisational culture “represents the often unwritten sense of identity, feeling part of the organization. It provides a ‘glue’ and understanding by helping individual members make sense of events and change activities.” Changes that are seen to be compatible with an organisation’s culture will be more readily accepted (Lines 2004). Huy (2005) suggests that strategic change, which is usually radical in nature, challenges a sense of core identity, which is focused on organisational values, and that anxiety and defensiveness are used to meet this challenge. Loss of identity during change is a source of resistance (Dirks, Cummings & Pierce 1996) and can occur when the culture changes even when there are many positive elements. A perceived improvement in a negative culture will trigger positive cognitive, affective and behavioural responses to change, as long as cynicism abates (Oreg 2003) and trust in management’s ability and integrity increases (Ferres & Connell 2004; Fairholm & Fairholm 2000). Schein (2004: 309) points out that new leaders, who are often brought in specifically to change the culture, need to deal with emotional reactions:

*The infusion of outsiders inevitably brings various cultural assumptions into conflict with each other, raising discomfort and anxiety levels. Leaders who use this change strategy therefore have to figure out to manage the high levels of anxiety and conflict they have wittingly or unwittingly unleashed.*

When culture changes it may be seen as a breach or violation of the psychological contract, the employee’s perception of mutual obligations, and trigger negative emotions (Robinson & Rousseau 1994). For example, Brooks and Harfield (2000) report on a culture change programme in a local government authority in New Zealand from a civil service mentality to one of ‘public

management' where the user pays for a service. The cultural change programme, known as 'Giving Value - Being Valued', was considered inequitable (Adams 1965) since the 'Being Valued' component fell short of the effort expended by staff in 'Giving Value', and evoked negative emotions.

The language of culture in the context of change is laden with emotion. Martin (2002) explains how jargon both defines a culture and shapes it. For example, in mergers and acquisitions terms such as 'sharks', 'ambush', 'stud', 'cupid', 'rape' and 'afterglow' reflect themes of sex and violence and these "metaphors tap the emotional aspects of life in particular kinds of organisations and industries, alluding to emotions that may not be socially acceptable to express more directly" (p. 80). Emotional labour can be required to lead and implement change since those entrusted with these tasks need to inject the appropriate type of emotion into selling the change (Fox & Amichai-Hamburger 2001). Change initiatives can also lead to emotional labour in recipients. Bryant and Wolfram Cox (2006) found a number of their respondents felt the need to hide their emotions about organisational change since their expression was construed as an unwelcome form of resistance. Turnbull (2002) studied the ways individuals responded to an organisation's attempts to deliberately change its culture to one of trust, openness, innovation and loyalty, in workshops laden with emotional appeals. Managers, who were the subject of her study, often responded in unintended ways, with mistrust, anger and embarrassment often eventuating from awkward situations. They reported the need to hide their feelings and often pretended to comply with the changes.

Naumann, Bennett, Bies and Martin (1998) researched workers who were informed that they were to be laid off and found that a combination of perceived organisational support and interactional justice increased organisational commitment while they remained on the job. Masterton et al. (2000) surveyed employees about the introduction of a new performance management system and reported that employee responses were related to fairness, perceived organisational support and the nature of leader-member relationships. Supportive organisations provide employee assistance programmes (Aker & McHugh, 2000) and outplacement programmes (Rudisill & Edwards, 2002), both including psychological counselling. However, there is little research about the emotional effects of perceived organisational support in the context of organisational change.

In summary, organisational culture provides an important contextual framework for

organisational change and can also be one of its targets. Change triggers emotions and the culture of the organisation influences the extent to which emotional expression is encouraged or discouraged.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In this study I have adopted a qualitative/social constructionist approach because it provides a useful way of understanding the three main constructs of organisational culture, emotions and change, and all have been subjected to social constructionist treatments in the literature. “A general assumption of social constructionism is that knowledge is not disinterested, apolitical, and exclusive of affective and embodied aspects of human experience, but is in some sense ideological, political and permeated with values” (Schwandt 2003: 307). One of the major dimensions of organisational culture is a set of values (Schein 1990; Martin 2002) which are shaped by both internal and external forces (Strandgard Pedersen & Dobbin 2006). Organisational cultures can be created by explicit management intervention but also by multiple employee (and managerial) discourses so that there is often a divide between espoused and perceived values (Kabanoff et al. 1995). As Allen (2003) puts it, organisational actors create, but are also constrained by, organisational meaning. Social constructionist perspectives of emotions underlies much of the literature on emotional labour (e.g. Mann 1999; Bolton 2005). They takes the view that emotions are culturally mediated phenomena (Antonacopoulou & Gabriel 2001) that are developed through interaction in social relationships. Cultural factors influence how appropriate their display is (Callahan & McCollum 2002; Fineman 2008; Zembylas 2006). Change has also been the subject of social constructionist studies. The way in which various organisational actors frame change (such as an exciting opportunity or a response to problems) can stimulate discourses about change (Bean & Hamilton 2006; Ford, Ford & McNamara 2002) that may or may not result in shared understandings. The emotions that people experience, express or repress during organisational change, are shaped by social relationships inside and outside the organisation (Fineman 2003).

To explore how people responded on an emotional level to organisational change I interviewed 24 people in Auckland in 2006 and 2007 - 13 men and 11 women, 16 European, 2 Maori, 3 Asian and 3 of Pacific Island background. They were from a variety of industries, organisations, functional departments and hierarchical levels. The interview was part of a larger project on emotions

and organisational change and one question participants were specifically asked was: How did the culture of the organisation impact on your responses to the change? They also referred to the influence of organisational culture elsewhere in the interview. Part of the social construction of knowledge rests on how the researcher selects and interprets interviewee comments. The analysis of the findings is therefore my reconstruction (Schwandt 1998) of the dynamics of culture, emotions and change.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Organisational culture shapes the way people believe they are supposed to think, feel and behave (Schein 2004) and for participants it provided both a context for their responses to organisational change and for some it was one of the contents or targets of change. Comments were made about the types of culture, how they changed and what the consequences were for the organisation and the interviewee. A number of participants in the current study who were change managers and leaders spoke positively about the way their organisations allowed free debate about important issues - such as upcoming changes - particularly in the management team. Some also noted the place of emotion in organisational culture and how the changes had influenced their own affective commitment.

Orientation to change or innovation as a cultural value was discussed by a few participants. P was particularly scathing about the government department that took over her organisation. She referred to a “cultural takeover” where her organisation’s culture “died”:

*We were able to take calculated risks on how we grow providers, how we might pilot particular services...that kind of culture...didn't survive in the Ministry because it's a bureaucratic organisation, it's the centre of government. Bureaucracies can't help themselves, they impose processes that completely kill any degree of risk taking...*

R was brought in as a senior human resources manager to effect a number of structural, operational and cultural changes in a professional services firm that she described as archaic, conservative and traditional. “We were trying to build a culture of integrating and sharing and working as a team”. She found that many staff, including those who had been partners, struggled to adapt to the new practices, and the new culture that underpinned it, particularly for those who believed that they had lost status, identity, authority, benefits and pay. Anxiety, anger and resentment arise from loss (Wolfram Cox 1997; Dirks et al. 1996) and were evident in resistance to change at R’s firm.

When values change, as R found, people often resist, at least initially. A, a senior manager,

experienced regret that a consultative culture in his regional division had given way to a more directive one, due to the influence of head office management installed by new owners. Consequently, he felt “disenfranchised” and “disengaged”. H was concerned that her organisation was being changed by the new owners from a people oriented culture to one where making money became paramount. Another senior manager, G, acknowledged that whereas previously the company had provided a culture of support it became necessary to supplement it with a performance culture. He believed that this had been well managed because of the strong human relations element in the existing culture.

Perceived organisational support has been documented in the research literature as giving organisational members a sense of comfort in difficult times and is overlaid with notions of justice (e.g. Naumann et al. 1998; Masterton et al. 2000). Some interviewees in the current study who were leaders and managers of change were proud that their organisations had provided support to staff during difficult periods of change. Those who managed redundancies said they had put in considerable effort to give tangible help, such as help with writing curricula vitae, and approaching neighbouring firms to hire their staff, and psychological support, both personally and through employee assistance programmes. These types of actions were noted by Rudisill and Edwards (2002) as elements of best practice in helping staff cope with difficult changes. G spoke of the company’s development and articulation of values where people are important: “Our frame of reference was if that’s happening to me what would I want to happen?” The way they managed the redundancies was consistent with these values. In his words organisational culture was “the glue that made it doable”, echoing the belief of Ryan (2005) that culture is the glue which allows people to make sense of organisational change. Yet D was surprised to find that her organisation, which she had previously found to have a very supportive culture, suddenly found it acceptable to try to make her redundant with immediate effect and with seemingly little understanding of the pain and embarrassment that this would cause her. A few participants commented that their direct supervisors, and sometimes those more senior, were aware of their emotional reactions, and responded appropriately. However, the interviews were not geared towards investigating emotional intelligence or support as organisation-wide phenomena.

Participants reported that negative cultures were characterised by the absence of support, which led to a host of deleterious consequences. Three participants were especially critical of cultural

aspects of their organisations and this contributed to their decisions to resign. J said his organisation had a culture of “bowing down” to customers to reduce prices, regardless of the financial cost to the company and the emotional cost to the employees. B found no understanding of the way in which she was “drowning”, little concern for people shown by those at senior management level (but more at lower managerial levels), lack of trust and instances of injustice. She said: ‘I hadn’t been comfortable with the culture really since I’d been working there. That was why I was leaving really.’ P narrates how a previously supportive culture was obliterated in a takeover:

*It was always Ministry are taking over. We certainly felt under-valued and demoralised. There was a real culture of stamping on any of the sort of features of [our] culture in the past. It was big brother stomping on little brother.... [Ours] was an organisation where a lot of the culture was fostered and supported by a very devolved management style. People were allowed to try different things and make a few mistakes, come back, be held accountable but then be supported to learn and do it better...They took that away and so that has a huge affect on people’s ability to be quite passionate about their jobs.*

A number of participants saw other negative elements in their organisation’s culture. L found it hard to deal with sexist attitudes, including her boss’s remark “may the best man win” (when referring to two women forced to compete for one position in a structural change). She believed that this comment was typical of a firm dominated by men and observed that the culture of the organisation was:

*very male, engineering male, technical, not emotional on the outside...very stiff upper lip environment.... As a woman operating in a senior role...I don’t actually draw gender lines but there were lines drawn and I had to work with those lines drawn so I was expected to toe that line always, and it was confusing too because...sometimes they expected you to be girly and other times they didn’t, but you actually couldn’t really tell when was the right time .*

When she cried she vowed not to let it happen again because of the macho culture that prevailed. She did however note that she had worked for the company for over 13 years and that over time sexist attitudes and an emotionally neutral type of culture had changed markedly.

H was replaced as general manager by a man who was appointed by the new owners and the predominantly male management team quickly introduced a very different type of culture which, together with the diminution of her role, led her to negotiate an exit. One change in culture was the practice of new managers emailing her from the next door offices. Another was a stronger focus on sales and profits and less on people. Gender issues also surfaced:

*...it was all about Friday night drinks, and you know, if you could share a drink with the boys on a Friday...the office girls would join in, and I would occasionally come in. I stopped having drinks with them at that point, but the girls were then excluded from the rest of the evening’s proceedings, so the boys would be invited, but I would never be invited...they would usually go to the rugby, or go to the races or something like that, and the males sort of went, but all the girls were excluded from*

*that and I became, I was sort of like the office girls, not that I would have ever had gone, but...*

Professional image, according to Roberts (2005) is often beholden to power elites who influence people of different groups, for example those based on ethnicity and gender, to act in expected ways, including managing emotions. The nationality of new leaders also appeared to play some part in the new organisational culture. O and V felt that foreign chief executives who took jobs in social service agencies in New Zealand were unfamiliar with local ethnic issues. Compounding the problem for both was a different form of leadership style which was more autocratic and more aloof.

The extent to which sub-cultures (Harris & Ogbonna 1998; Palthe & Kossek 2003; Elsmore 2001), affected participants' responses to change in this study was not often evident. However, B, a human resources officer, commented that one department of large organisation had a "horribly dysfunctional" culture, but this seemed to mirror her views of the organisation as a whole. L (also in human resources) spoke of the divide between what appeared to be a human resource management culture from the dominant engineering culture: "The culture was such that if you weren't an engineer then you were an overhead, therefore you cost them money, therefore you take up as little time as possible, but you'd better achieve because they are paying you." This also became a factor when change was being designed. The partners in R's professional services firm had developed a culture of status and this was being undercut by a more egalitarian style of management.

The degree to which the emotional climate of an organisation contributes to its culture has penetrated the literature on emotional labour (e.g. Mann 1999; Bolton 2005). For some participants emotion management was considered part of the role of the 'professional' image of the manager (Fournier 1999; Roberts 2005; Turnbull 2002), and few indicated that their organisational culture played a part. W felt that emotional expression was a facet of senior management interaction but he admitted that he was careful not reveal his emotions to lower level staff. A, a male manager in an engineering company, claimed that "people in this profession are notorious for not getting in touch with their emotions" and that his organisation was no different. He also advanced the view that his organisation has "a very strong professional managerial culture" and this influenced the way he controlled his emotions when the culture became less participative. Two female managers, H and L, observed that in male-dominated environments they had to be particularly careful in controlling their

emotions. Professional image, according to Roberts (2005), is a cultural construction whereby behaviour is influenced by the expectations of a group with which a person seek to identify.

These experiences are in line with those reported in some of the empirical literature. The literature on emotional labour is rife with reported expectations that women, in particular, hide 'inappropriate emotions' (e.g. Hochschild 1983; Martin et al. 1998; Lewis 2000; Lively 2000; Guy & Newman 2004). These constraints become particularly salient during times of change. Turnbull (2002) and Bryant and Wolfram Cox (2006) have shown how staff have been cowed by negative affective cultures into hiding emotions that arose during organisational change. The findings in the current study thus confirm the results of previous literature - cultural influences often require employees to display or control emotions during change, often in ways that they feel are inauthentic.

#### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

People construct culture as a way of understanding organisational life (Allen 2003) and although this process is moulded by many experiences and discourses a single idiographic narrative of one organisational culture cannot be taken to be an accurate description of it. Participants in this study were all from New Zealand organisations. The influence of wider national influences on the culture of the organisations they commented on may have played a part in their reactions. Studies within organisations and across national boundaries may give a much more detailed picture of organisational culture and the influences of nationality, ethnicity and gender. The potentially intersecting relationships between the constructs of emotional labour, perceived organisational support, systemic justice and leadership can be studied in more depth, by qualitative and quantitative means, in the context of organisational change where culture is either backdrop or target.

In conclusion, organisational change has the capacity to alter the culture, whether deliberately or not, and conversely, the culture influences the way in which staff respond to the change. This study has made a contribution to the literature by presenting idiographic accounts that reveal how changes to the culture, or other facets of organisational life, can stimulate powerful emotional reactions and what organisations can do to create emotionally-supportive and change-oriented cultures.

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