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LA REACCIÓN AL CAMBIO DE LOS LÍDERES SÉNIOR DE CAMBIO:
UN ENFOQUE TEÓRICO FUNDAMENTADO

SENIOR CHANGE LEADERS' REACTION TO CHANGE:
A GROUNDED THEORY APPROACH

ARTIOM UPRETY

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La Reacción Al Cambio De Los Líderes Sénior De Cambio:
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Senior Change Leaders' Reaction To Change:
A Grounded Theory Approach

Artiom Uprety

Doctoral Thesis Advisor: Jill Waymire Paine, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

Little is known about how senior change leaders (SCLs) experience the changes they are leading. The organizational change literature has largely focused on the reaction to change by change recipients, while empirical research on change agents' reactions targets mid-managers responsible for implementing change initiated by others. This qualitative study uses an interpretative grounded theory approach to develop a model of SCLs' reactions while leading planned organizational transformations by analyzing retrospective interviews with 32 SCLs in a wide range of geographies, industries and change contexts. The findings reveal that SCLs perceive their roles to be emotionally, mentally and physically demanding and therefore stressful; however, the type of stress they experience depends on their appraisal of their situation regarding their perception of the valence of the change, the specific demands of the role and the resources available to address these demands. If SCLs appraise their situation positively, they experience challenge stress and the associated positive emotions, causing them to be more effective. If this positive appraisal is sustained, SCLs may enter self-reinforcing 'gain loops' of further effective behavior, achievements and resource gains. However, if SCLs appraise their situation negatively, they experience hindrance stress, causing them to be ineffective; and if this negative appraisal is sustained, SCLs can enter self-reinforcing 'doom loops'. SCLs are constantly reappraising their situation as their role, resources and the valence of the change evolves, and as a result they can temporarily shift from challenge to hindrance stress (or vice-versa). If the factors causing the shift are sustained, however, leaders may break the doom loop to enter the gain loop (or vice-versa). The emergent process model

offers a theoretically integrated approach to the study of change leadership and practical insights that may help to increase the success rate of organizational transformation programs.

ABSTRACT (SPANISH)

No se sabe gran cosa acerca de cómo experimentan los propios líderes sénior de cambio (SCL, siglas en inglés) los cambios que están liderando. La literatura sobre el cambio organizativo se ha centrado en gran medida en la reacción al cambio por parte de los receptores de éste, mientras que la investigación empírica sobre las reacciones de los agentes de cambio se centra en los mandos intermedios responsables de implementar el cambio iniciado por otros. El presente estudio cualitativo utiliza un enfoque interpretativo de teoría fundamentada para desarrollar un modelo de las reacciones de los SCL mientras lideran transformaciones organizativas planificadas, analizando entrevistas retrospectivas con 32 SCL en un amplio abanico de territorios, industrias y contextos de cambio. Los hallazgos revelan que los SCL perciben que sus funciones son emocional, mental y físicamente exigentes y, por tanto, estresantes. Sin embargo, el tipo de estrés que experimentan depende de su evaluación de la situación en lo tocante a su percepción de la valencia del cambio, las exigencias concretas de la función y los recursos disponibles para hacer frente a tales exigencias. Si los SCL evalúan positivamente su situación, experimentan el estrés por desafío y las emociones positivas asociadas, lo que les hace ser más eficaces. Si esta evaluación positiva se mantiene, los SCL pueden entrar en "bucles de ganancia" que se refuerzan a sí mismos con más comportamientos eficaces, logros y ganancias de recursos. No obstante, si los SCL evalúan su situación de forma negativa, experimentan un estrés por obstáculo, lo que les hace ser ineficaces; y si esta evaluación negativa se mantiene, los SCL pueden entrar en "bucles de fatalidad" que se refuerzan a sí mismos. Los SCL reevalúan constantemente su situación a medida que su papel, sus recursos y la valencia del cambio evolucionan con el tiempo, por lo

que pueden pasar temporalmente del estrés por desafío al de obstáculo (o viceversa). Sin embargo, si los factores que provocan el cambio se mantienen, los líderes pueden romper el bucle de fatalidad para entrar en el de ganancia (o viceversa). El modelo de proceso emergente ofrece un enfoque teóricamente integrado para el estudio del liderazgo del cambio y unas ideas prácticas que pueden ayudar a aumentar la tasa de éxito de los programas de transformación organizativa.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to the loving memory of my late parents – my father Vijaya Nath Uprety and my mother Yelena Uprety. I am forever indebted to them for their love, support, guidance, encouragement, and for all the sacrifices that they had made to create the opportunities and the environment for me to learn and grow. I miss them every single day.

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In Nepal, we believe that we owe all our achievements to the grace of our Gurus, the Teachers who move us from the darkness of ignorance towards the light of knowledge. I would therefore like to start with an invocation of an ancient Sanskrit verse to express gratitude to my Teachers:

ॐ अज्ञानतिमिरान्धस्य ज्ञानाञ्जनशलाकया ।चक्षुरुन्मीलितं येन तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥

Salutations to the Teacher (Guru) who removes the darkness of ignorance and opens my eyes with the torch of knowledge. (Shree Guru Gita, verse 24)

I consider myself incredibly blessed to have had so many Teachers, both formal and informal, who have taught and guided me throughout my life, and who have imparted me the knowledge that has made this dissertation possible. First, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my dissertation advisor Prof. Jill Waymire Paine for the tremendous effort she put into me over the last five years sharing her deep knowledge of the leadership of organizational change, patiently coaching me to think like a researcher, widening my thinking and constantly guiding me to make my work more precise, rigorous, and relevant. It has been a wonderful learning journey. Thank you, Jill!!!

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teachers in Nepal – Mr. S.M Tuladhar, Mr. M. Scholey, Mr. G.M. Udas, Mr. K. Jones and the late Mr. L.A. Wedgewood from Budhanilkantha School, and Mr. I.Kumar and the late Principal N.K. Singh from English Preparatory School – for inspiring me to learn more and not to accept the conventional wisdom at face value. I am particularly indebted to my first teacher, Mrs. Shanti Maya Shrestha, who has been a source of inspiration and a guiding light throughout my life.

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LIST OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

INTRODUCTION

The ability of organizations to successfully transform themselves in response to frequent discontinuities in the environment caused by rapid changes in technology, consumer behavior, regulation and geopolitical environment is critical for their long-term survival (Burke, 2017; Burnes, 2015; Higgs & Rowland, 2000; Pasmore, 2011). Increasingly, organizations are facing the need to implement planned organizational transformations – changes characterized by significant alterations to basic elements of the organization such as values, norms, organizational assumptions, structures, and the ways of working and how people think and behave. Such changes are executed as long-term initiatives requiring significant effort at all levels of the organization to maintain their competitive advantage (Burke, 2017; Stilwell, Pasmore & Shon, 2016). Yet, it is well known that a large proportion of these transformation efforts fail to deliver the expected outcomes (Anand & Barsoux, 2017; Beer & Nohria, 2000; Burnes & Jackson, 2011; Kotter, 1995).

The literature of organizational change and leadership underscore the important role that leaders play in initiating, implementing and sustaining organizational change via the decisions they make about the content and process of change, the actions they take, and the leadership styles they adopt (Higgs & Rowland, 2011; Oreg & Berson, 2019; Stilwell et al., 2016). The dominant perspective within the literature views leaders as the agents of change whose role is to direct energy and action toward the organizations and their organizational members (By, Hughes, & Ford, 2016; Ford, Ford, & Polin, 2014; Weick & Quinn, 1999). Implicit in this perspective are three critical assumptions: (a) change leaders are fully motivated to carry out the change (Ford et al., 2014); (b) change leaders possess the right competencies, skills and mindsets to

implement the change (Battilana, Gilmartin, Sengul, Pache, & Alexander, 2010); and (c) as ‘catalysts’ of change (Caldwell, 2003; Ottaway, 1983), change leaders remain largely unimpacted by it (By et al., 2016). In other words, from a change agent-centric perspective, leaders are always “doing the right and proper thing, and even if they do not engage in effective behaviors, they at least do not engage in harmful or destructive behaviors” (Ford & Ford, 2012: 29). While the prevalent literature on change leadership extensively describes and prescribes how change leaders need to behave to be effective in their roles – namely the activities they need to undertake and the leadership styles they need to adopt – a closer examination reveals a paucity of systematic research with regard to understanding how leaders actually behave during organizational change, how effective they are in their role and how they influence the change outcomes (Ford & Ford, 2012; Huy, Corley & Kraatz, 2014; Oreg & Berson, 2019). Thus, absent from the prevalent thinking is the possibility that the leaders themselves may be impacted by the change they are leading and that their reactions to the change could be influencing their effectiveness as change leaders.

A small but growing volume of literature has begun to challenge this agent-centric view of change leadership and the implicit dichotomy between change agents and change recipients (By et al., 2016; Ford et al., 2014; Oreg & Berson, 2019; Stouten, Rousseau, & De Cremer, 2018). In this incipient literature, change leaders are identified as among those influenced by the change they are leading and are characterized as recipients of change (Eriksen, 2008; Stouten et al., 2018). Change leaders are often not the initiators of a transformation but are acting instead at the behest of their bosses, boards, or shareholders, or in response to competitive or institutional pressures (Oreg &

Berson, 2019; Westphal & Zajac, 1994; Westphal & Zajac, 1998; Zajac & Westphal, 1995). In situations like these, leaders may disagree with the rationale for the change that they are leading or they may believe that it is not aligned with their own interests or those of the organization (Balogun, Bartunek, & Do, 2010). In other instances, they may not have the required capabilities, skills or support to effectively lead the transformation and may have to go through a steep learning curve to acquire them (Battilana et al., 2010; Gilley, Gilley, & McMillan, 2009; Joffe & Glynn, 2002). Furthermore, the change may have a substantial impact on the leaders in terms of their roles, responsibilities, power base, and relationships in the organization (Ford & Ford 2012; Stouten et al., 2018). Therefore, in addition to their roles as change agents, leaders are also seen as the recipients of the transformations they are leading.

The organizational change literature provides abundant empirical evidence that change recipients react to change, i.e., they experience feelings (affective reaction) and thoughts (cognitive reaction) in response to change, and that these reactions may in turn influence their behaviors towards the change (Oreg, Vakola, & Armenakis, 2011; Piderit, 2000). Change is often demanding, and if recipients perceive that the change is not in their best interest and/or they have insufficient resources to deal with the challenges posed by the transformation, they may experience negative cognitive, emotional and behavioral reactions, including stress (Rafferty & Griffin, 2006; Smollan, 2015; van Emmerik, Bakker, & Euwema, 2009). These negative reactions may negatively influence their well-being, performance and effectiveness, which may ultimately impact change outcomes (Oreg & Berson., 2011; Vos & Rupert, 2018).

Since change leaders are not only agents but also recipients of change, it is logical to assume that they too experience affective and cognitive reactions to change (including stress). In turn, these reactions are likely to influence their behaviors and change outcomes (Higgs & Rowland, 2011). While the impact that change recipient reactions play in the successful implementation of change is well-recognized (Bouckenooghe, 2010; Vos & Rupert, 2018), we know far less about the reactions of change leaders themselves and how these reactions may influence their behavior or effectiveness (Fugate, 2012; Higgs & Rowland, 2011). The few existing studies on change leaders' reactions are primarily focused on mid-managers who are implementing change initiated by others and who themselves do not have substantial influence over the content, process and resources for change at the organizational level (e.g., Balogun et al., 2015; Huy et al., 2014; Luscher & Lewis, 2008). The review of the literature reveals that there is a lack of systematic research pertaining to understanding the reactions to change of senior change leaders (SCLs) who are responsible for initiating or sponsoring planned transformational change and who have substantial decision-making authority regarding the transformation of the entire organization. The focus of this research, therefore, is on the reactions of SCLs to the transformations that they are leading and the effect of these reactions on individual and organizational level outcomes. In practical terms, these are individuals with senior change leadership roles such as those of Sponsors, Senior Responsible Owners and Program Managers as described in the "Managing Successful Programmes" methodology[1] promoted by the

[1] Details on the responsibilities of these SCL roles and the definition of program management are provided in Appendix A.

UK Government (Great Britain Office of Government Commerce, 2011). In the context of planned organizational transformations, SCLs are usually CEOs or Top Management Team members (for Sponsor role) and the people reporting them (for Senior Responsible Owner and Program Manager roles).

While the insights generated from the extant research on reactions to change of mid-manager level change agents can provide some indications on the reactions of SCLs to the change they are leading, it is important to study the SCLs' reaction to change separately for two reasons. First, the roles of SCLs in the context of organizational transformations are very different from those of mid-managers. SCLs are responsible for assessing the organization's strategic environment, making macro-level decisions regarding the content of change (the organization's strategy, structure, culture, climate and protocols) and the change implementation process and resource deployment. They must also navigate the interests of a wide range of external and internal stakeholders in order to successfully initiate, implement and sustain the change (Hambrick, 2007; Hambrick, Finkelstein, & Mooney, 2005; Kotter, 1990; Rielin & Cataldo, 2011; Samimi, Cortes, Anderson & Herrmann, 2020; Stouten et al., 2018). As such, the complexities of their transformation-related decisions and the demands of their change agent roles are significantly different from those of middle managers who implement change initiated by others. Second, the resources and range of options available to SCLs are more substantial. They have more decision-making authority over the content and process of change and more control over the human, financial and other resources that organizations can allocate for change implementation (Hambrick et al., 2005; Huy et al., 2014; Neely, Lovelace, Cowen, & Hiller, 2020). Therefore, both the

reactions SCLs experience to their roles as well the impact of resulting behavior on organizational outcomes could be substantially different from those of mid-manager level change agents.

A deeper understanding of SCLs' reactions to change will build on and expand our understanding of senior leaders' role as both leaders and recipients of change. In addition, it has the potential of making a substantial contribution to practice by broadening our knowledge of the factors that drive the behavioral responses of SCLs during the initiation and implementation phases of change, and by identifying ways to make SCLs more effective in their roles. Thus, a deeper understanding of SCLs' reactions to change and the way they impact change leader effectiveness may contribute to our knowledge about why organizational transformations succeed or fail.

A number of scholars have called for more qualitative research integrating the knowledge from the fields of organizational change and leadership to advance our understanding of change leadership and change leaders' reaction to change (By et al., 2016; Ford et al., 2014; Fugate, 2012; Higgs & Rowland, 2011; Hughes, 2018; Oreg & Berson, 2019; Stouten et al., 2018). This dissertation research answers these calls by conducting a qualitative research study using an interpretative grounded theory approach to explore the research question, "*What reactions do senior leaders experience while leading change and how do these reactions impact their behaviors and effectiveness as change leaders?*" The objective of the study is not only to understand the phenomenon of SCLs' reaction to change itself, but also to illuminate the antecedents and outcomes of leaders' reactions to change, i.e., develop a grounded theory that aims to explain how the phenomenon occurs and what its consequences

may be. Qualitative research using an interpretivist grounded theory approach lends itself well to developing theories around underexplored phenomena involving sensitive topics of individuals' lived experiences in their social settings such as SCLs' reactions to change they are leading (Langley & Abdallah, 2011; Bryant & Charmaz, 2019; Conger, 1998; Corley & Gioia, 2011; O'Kane & Cunningham, 2014; Suddaby, 2006; Trochim & Donnelly, 2008).

This study uses retrospective interviews with 32 SCLs across varying geographies, industries and change contexts to understand the reactions these SCLs experienced while leading planned organizational transformations as the primary source of data. Where possible, the data obtained from the interviews with SCLs were further validated via the interviews with the colleagues who had the opportunity to observe the SCLs in question at close quarters during the course of the transformation programs discussed, as well as archival data related to these change initiatives. In addition, I have conducted perspective triangulation interviews (Flick, 2019) with 9 change practitioners (management consultants and leadership coaches with experience of working with SCLs implementing transformational change) to acquire a broader outlook on the phenomenon. In total, I have conducted 70 interviews for this study.

The grounded theory model that emerged from the analysis of the data suggests that change leaders find that their role makes substantial demands on their physical, emotional and mental resources, resulting in experienced stress (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Crawford, Lepine, & Rich, 2010). However, the nature of the reactions that change leaders' experience and the subsequent impact on their effectiveness and the ultimate outcomes depend on the leaders' appraisal of their situation. In line with the

transactional theory of stress and coping (Lepine, Lepine, & Jackson, 2004), this appraisal happens at two levels. The primary level involves leaders assessing the valence of the change – whether the change itself and/or the act of leading the change is aligned with the organization and leaders' interests (i.e., whether the change is a threat to the organization or the leader). If leaders assess that the change is not a threat to the organization or themselves, they will engage in a secondary level appraisal to determine whether they have sufficient resources (organizational and personal) to deal with the demands of the role (i.e., whether there is a threat of failure).

Leaders will experience 'challenge stress' (Lepine et al., 2004; Crawford et al., 2010) if they are sufficiently motivated to lead the change because they perceive it to be in the organization's or their own best interest and they have sufficient resources to deal with the demands of the role. If they view matters this way, the kind of stress experienced by change leaders results in a positive emotional state, with them feeling energized, engaged and willing to invest resources to deal with the challenges change poses. As a consequence, they tend to be effective in their roles as change leaders, making decisions and taking actions that support the change while engaging with employees, peers and stakeholders constructively. Effective leadership behavior also leads to successfully achieving goals, resulting in resource gains for leaders. If the positive appraisal and the resulting challenge stress are sufficiently sustained, it results in the leaders entering a self-reinforcing 'gain loop' of positive change outcomes – more effective behavior, greater success, leading to further gains and ultimately positive outcomes for the change initiative.

However, contrary to the prevalent views in the change agent-centric literature (e.g., Kotter, 1995), change leaders may not always experience such positive motivation and reactions to their roles. If the leaders believe that the change is not in either their organization's or their interest, or if they assess their situation as one where they lack the resources to cope with the demands of the change, they will experience 'hindrance stress' (Lepine et al., 2004; Crawford et al., 2010). This kind of stress is associated with a cascade of negative emotions, including fear, disengagement and ego-depletion. Such reactions result in leaders being less effective in their roles, unable to make decisions and take action that leads to beneficial change; they also tend to engage with employees, peers and stakeholders in a negative or even destructive manner. As a consequence, the change initiative experiences setbacks, resulting in resource losses for both organizations and leaders. This exacerbates the 'hindrance stress' these leaders experience and can result in them entering a self-reinforcing 'doom loop' of further ineffective behavior, setbacks and resource losses, which ultimately can lead to negative outcomes for the change initiative.

It is important to note from a theoretical perspective that although the feedback loops created by 'challenge stress' and 'hindrance stress' are significant and self-reinforcing, leaders are not fated to remain in one loop or another. Change leaders are constantly reappraising their situations as the demands of their role, resources available to them and even the valence of the change evolve over the course of the change journey, and as a result they can move from a state of challenge stress to that of hindrance (or vice-versa). For instance, a leader going through hindrance stress may experience a positive shift towards challenge stress if there is a decrease in demands or

an increase in resources or valence. If this positive shift is substantial and sustained, the doom loop pattern can be broken for the leader to enter the gain loop. However, if the factors causing the positive change wane or are neutralized by an increase in demands or a reduction in resources, the leader is likely to experience only a temporary 'spike' of challenge stress and then revert back to experiencing hindrance stress and even enter the doom loop. Similarly, an increase in demands and reduction in resources and valence may result in a leader in a challenge stress state experiencing a shift towards hindrance stress. If the factors causing the negative shift are temporary or are neutralized by an increase in counteracting factors, the leader may only experience a 'dip' into hindrance stress and revert back to a challenge stress state. However, if the shift is substantial enough and sustained, it may result in the gain loop pattern breaking and enabling the leader to enter the pattern of the doom loop.

This research makes a number of contributions to theory. First, it advances our understanding of reactions to change by examining the reactions of those who lead and plan organizational transformations – a significantly understudied focus in change and leadership research to date. Second, it contributes to both leadership and change scholarship by examining senior leaders in the context of the change leadership role and, hence, responds to repeated calls to expand our knowledge of change leadership by integrating these fields of study (Ford et al., 2014; Higgs & Rowland, 2011; Hughes, 2018; Oreg & Berson, 2019; Stouten et al., 2018). Finally, this research also advances knowledge in the area of resource-based theories of stress (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001; Hobfoll, 1989) by studying how interactions of demands and resources lead to strain reactions in the context of SCLs.

Further, the systematic study of the factors that influence SCLs' reactions to change and their role effectiveness also generates insights that are relevant to practice. Incorporating these insights into change management methodologies – particularly the findings that SCLs, as recipients of change, may experience negative reactions to change, and that these reactions could lead them to be less effective in their roles and therefore increase the likelihood of negative change outcomes – could help devise ways of making SCLs more effective and improve the likelihood of positive change outcomes.

This dissertation is structured as follows. Chapter 1 provides a review of the current knowledge regarding the role of change leaders, the reactions they experience to their roles, and the demands and resources of the roles that could influence these reactions. I then clarify the motivation for the present research to enhance our understanding of SCLs' reactions to change and how these reactions influence their behaviors and overall effectiveness as change leaders. In Chapter 2, I present my research methodology – a qualitative research study using an interpretivist grounded theory approach and explain how I have collected and analyzed the data to develop the grounded theory for SCLs' reaction to change. I also explain the measures I have taken to ensure the robustness and analytical rigor of this research. I then present the findings of the research and describe the grounded theory of SCLs' reaction to change that has emerged from the analysis of the data in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4, I discuss how the findings of this research are situated within the existing body of knowledge and how they contribute to theory and practice, and conclude the dissertation by identifying the new avenues for research to advance the knowledge of the topic.

INTRODUCCIÓN (SPANISH)

La capacidad de las organizaciones para transformarse con éxito en respuesta a las frecuentes discontinuidades del entorno ocasionadas por los rápidos cambios en la tecnología, el comportamiento de los consumidores, la regulación y el entorno geopolítico es fundamental para su supervivencia a largo plazo (Burke, 2017; Burnes, 2015; Higgs y Rowland, 2000; Pasmore, 2011). De manera creciente, las organizaciones se enfrentan a la necesidad de implementar transformaciones organizativas planificadas; cambios caracterizados por alteraciones significativas en los elementos básicos de la organización, como los valores, las normas, las premisas organizativas, las estructuras y las formas de trabajar y cómo piensan y se comportan las personas. Estos cambios se ejecutan como iniciativas a largo plazo que requieren un esfuerzo significativo en todos los niveles de la organización para mantener su ventaja competitiva (Burke, 2017; Stilwell, Pasmore y Shon, 2016). Sin embargo, es bien sabido que una gran proporción de estos esfuerzos de transformación no alcanzan los resultados esperados (Anand y Barsoux, 2017; Beer y Nohria, 2000; Burnes y Jackson, 2011; Kotter, 1995).

La literatura sobre el cambio organizativo y el liderazgo subraya el importante papel que desempeñan los líderes en el inicio, la implementación y el mantenimiento del cambio organizativo a través de las decisiones que adoptan con respecto al contenido y el proceso de cambio, las acciones que llevan a cabo y los estilos de liderazgo que adoptan (Higgs y Rowland, 2011; Oreg y Berson, 2019; Stilwell et al., 2016). La perspectiva dominante dentro de esta literatura considera a los líderes como los agentes del cambio cuyo papel es dirigir la energía y la acción hacia las

organizaciones y sus miembros organizacionales (By, Hughes, y Ford, 2016; Ford, Ford, y Polin, 2014; Weick y Quinn, 1999). En esta perspectiva están implícitos tres supuestos críticos: (a) los líderes de cambio están plenamente motivados para llevar a cabo el cambio (Ford et al., 2014); (b) los líderes de cambio poseen las competencias, habilidades y mentalidades adecuadas para implementar el cambio (Battilana, Gilmartin, Sengul, Pache, y Alexander, 2010); y (c) como "catalizadores" del cambio (Caldwell, 2003; Ottaway, 1983), los líderes de cambio prácticamente no experimentan el impacto de éste en ellos mismos (By et al., 2016). En otras palabras, desde una perspectiva centrada en el agente de cambio, los líderes siempre están "haciendo lo correcto y adecuado, y aunque no tengan comportamientos eficaces, al menos no tienen comportamientos perjudiciales o destructivos" (Ford y Ford, 2012: 29). Si bien la literatura imperante acerca del liderazgo de cambio describe y prescribe exhaustivamente cómo deben comportarse los líderes de cambio para ser eficaces en sus funciones —es decir, las actividades que deben realizar y los estilos de liderazgo que deben adoptar—, un examen más detallado revela una escasez de investigación sistemática con respecto a la comprensión de cómo se comportan realmente los líderes durante el cambio organizativo, cuán eficaces son en su papel y cómo influyen en los resultados del cambio (Ford y Ford, 2012; Huy, Corley y Kraatz, 2014; Oreg y Berson, 2019). En el pensamiento imperante, pues, no se tiene en cuenta la posibilidad de que los propios líderes puedan ser impactados por el cambio que están liderando y que sus reacciones al cambio podrían estar influyendo en su eficacia como líderes de cambio.

Un pequeño pero creciente volumen de literatura ha comenzado a desafiar esta visión centrada en el agente del liderazgo del cambio y la dicotomía implícita entre

agentes y receptores del cambio (By et al., 2016; Ford et al., 2014; Oreg y Berson, 2019; Stouten, Rousseau, y De Cremer, 2018). En esta literatura incipiente, los líderes de cambio se identifican entre los influidos por el cambio que lideran y se caracterizan como receptores del cambio (Eriksen, 2008; Stouten et al., 2018). A menudo, los líderes de cambio no son los iniciadores de una transformación, sino que actúan a instancias de sus jefes, consejos de administración o accionistas, o en respuesta a presiones competitivas o institucionales (Oreg y Berson, 2019; Westphal y Zajac, 1994; Westphal y Zajac, 1998; Zajac y Westphal, 1995). En situaciones como estas, los líderes pueden estar en desacuerdo con la justificación del cambio que están liderando o pueden creer que no está alineado con sus propios intereses o los de la organización (Balogun, Bartunek, y Do, 2010). En otros casos, puede que no dispongan de las capacidades, habilidades o apoyos necesarios para liderar eficazmente la transformación y que tengan que afrontar una pronunciada curva de aprendizaje para adquirirlos (Battilana et al., 2010; Gilley, Gilley, y McMillan, 2009; Joffe y Glynn, 2002). Además, el cambio puede tener un impacto sustancial en los líderes en términos de sus funciones, responsabilidades, base de poder y relaciones en la organización (Ford y Ford 2012; Stouten et al., 2018). Por tanto, además de sus funciones como agentes de cambio, los líderes también se conciben como los receptores de las transformaciones que están liderando.

La literatura sobre el cambio organizativo proporciona abundante evidencia empírica de que los receptores del cambio reaccionan al cambio, es decir, experimentan sentimientos (reacción afectiva) y pensamientos (reacción cognitiva) en respuesta al cambio, y que estas reacciones pueden a su vez influir en sus

comportamientos hacia el cambio (Oreg, Vakola, y Armenakis, 2011; Piderit, 2000). El cambio suele ser exigente y, si los receptores perciben que el cambio no favorece sus intereses o carecen de recursos suficientes para hacer frente a los desafíos planteados por la transformación, pueden experimentar reacciones cognitivas, emocionales y conductuales negativas, incluyendo el estrés (Rafferty y Griffin, 2006; Smollan, 2015; van Emmerik, Bakker, y Euwema, 2009). Estas reacciones negativas pueden influir negativamente en su bienestar, rendimiento y eficacia, lo que en última instancia puede repercutir en los resultados del cambio (Oreg y Berson, 2011; Vos y Rupert, 2018).

Dado que los líderes de cambio no solo son agentes sino también receptores del cambio, es lógico suponer que también experimentan reacciones afectivas y cognitivas al cambio (incluido el estrés). A su vez, es probable que estas reacciones influyan en sus comportamientos y en los resultados del cambio (Higgs y Rowland, 2011). Si bien el impacto que desempeñan las reacciones de los receptores del cambio en la implementación exitosa del cambio está ampliamente reconocido (Bouckenooghe, 2010; Vos y Rupert, 2018), sabemos mucho menos acerca de las reacciones de los propios líderes de cambio y cómo estas reacciones pueden influir en su comportamiento o efectividad (Fugate, 2012; Higgs y Rowland, 2011). Los escasos estudios existentes acerca de las reacciones de los líderes de cambio se centran en los mandos intermedios que están implementando el cambio iniciado por otros, sin que ellos mismos ejerzan una influencia sustancial sobre el contenido, el proceso y los recursos para el cambio a escala organizativa (por ejemplo, Balogun et al., 2015; Huy et al., 2014; Luscher y Lewis, 2008). Un examen de la literatura revela la ausencia de una investigación sistemática relativa a la comprensión de las reacciones al cambio de

los líderes sénior de cambio (SCL) que son responsables de iniciar o patrocinar el cambio transformativo planificado y que poseen una autoridad sustancial para la toma de decisiones con respecto a la transformación de toda la organización. Esta investigación se centra, pues, en las reacciones de los SCL a las transformaciones que lideran y el efecto de estas reacciones en los resultados individuales y organizativos. En términos prácticos, se trata de las personas que desempeñan funciones de liderazgo sénior de cambio, como es el caso de los patrocinadores, los propietarios sénior principales y los directores de programas, tal como se describe en la metodología "Managing Successful Programmes"[2] (Gestión Exitosa de programas) promovida por el Gobierno del Reino Unido (Great Britain Office of Government Commerce, 2011). En el contexto de las transformaciones organizativas planificadas, los SCL suelen ser los CEO o los miembros del equipo de alta dirección (para el papel de patrocinador) y las personas que dependen de ellos (para los papeles de responsable principal y director de programa).

Aunque las ideas generadas por la investigación existente sobre las reacciones al cambio de los agentes de cambio de nivel medio pueden proporcionar algunas indicaciones sobre las reacciones de los SCL al cambio que están liderando, es importante estudiar la reacción de los SCL al cambio por separado por dos razones. En primer lugar, las funciones de los SCL en el contexto de las transformaciones organizativas son muy diferentes de las de los mandos intermedios. Los SCL son responsables de evaluar el entorno estratégico de la organización, tomar decisiones a

[2] Los detalles acerca de las responsabilidades de estos puestos de SCL y la definición de la gestión del programa se incluyen en el Apéndice A.

nivel macro sobre el contenido del cambio (la estrategia, la estructura, la cultura, el clima y lo protocolos de la organización) y el proceso de implementación del cambio y la asignación de recursos. También deben afrontar los intereses de una amplia gama de *stakeholders*, externos e internos, para iniciar, implementar y sostener el cambio con éxito (Hambrick, 2007; Hambrick, Finkelstein y Mooney, 2005; Kotter, 1990; Rielin y Cataldo, 2011; Samimi, Cortes, Anderson y Herrmann, 2020; Stouten et al., 2018). En ese sentido, las complejidades de sus decisiones relacionadas con la transformación y las exigencias de sus funciones de agente de cambio son significativamente diferentes de las de los mandos intermedios que implementan el cambio iniciado por otros. En segundo lugar, los recursos y la gama de opciones disponibles para los SCL son más sustanciales. Cuentan con mayor autoridad para adoptar decisiones sobre el contenido y el proceso de cambio, así como más control sobre los recursos humanos, financieros y de otro tipo que las organizaciones pueden asignar para la implementación del cambio (Hambrick et al., 2005; Huy et al., 2014; Neely, Lovelace, Cowen, y Hiller, 2020). Así pues, tanto las reacciones que experimentan los SCL a sus funciones como el impacto del comportamiento resultante en los resultados de la organización podrían ser sustancialmente diferentes de las de los agentes de cambio de nivel directivo medio.

Una comprensión más profunda de las reacciones de los SCL al cambio desarrollará y ampliará nuestra comprensión del papel de los líderes sénior como líderes y receptores del cambio. Además, tiene el potencial de hacer una contribución sustancial a la praxis al ampliar nuestro conocimiento de los factores que impulsan las respuestas conductuales de los SCL durante las fases de iniciación e implementación

del cambio, y al identificar maneras de mejorar la eficacia de los SCL en el desempeño de sus funciones. Por tanto, una comprensión más profunda de las reacciones de los SCL al cambio y de la forma en que estas afectan a la eficacia del líder de cambio puede contribuir a nuestro conocimiento de los motivos del éxito o el fracaso de las transformaciones organizativas.

Son varios los académicos que han reclamado una mayor investigación cualitativa que integre el conocimiento de los campos del cambio organizativo y el liderazgo para avanzar en nuestra comprensión del liderazgo de cambio y la reacción de los líderes de cambio al cambio (By, Hughes y Ford, 2016; Ford et al., 2014; Fugate, 2012; Higgs y Rowland, 2011; Hughes, 2018; Oreg y Berson, 2019; Stouten et al., 2018). La investigación de la presente tesis responde a estas peticiones mediante la realización de un estudio de investigación cualitativa que utiliza un enfoque de teoría interpretativa fundamentada para explorar la pregunta de investigación: *"¿Qué reacciones experimentan los líderes sénior mientras lideran el cambio y cómo impactan estas reacciones en sus comportamientos y efectividad como líderes de cambio?"*. El objetivo del estudio no es sólo comprender el fenómeno de la reacción de los SCL al cambio en sí, sino también iluminar los antecedentes y los resultados de las reacciones de los líderes al cambio, esto es, desarrollar una teoría fundamentada que pretende explicar cómo se produce el fenómeno y cuáles pueden ser sus consecuencias. La investigación cualitativa que utiliza un enfoque de teoría interpretativa fundamentada se presta a desarrollar teorías en torno a fenómenos poco explorados que implican aspectos sensibles de las experiencias vividas por los individuos en sus entornos sociales, tales como las reacciones de los SCL al cambio que están liderando (Langley

& Abdallah, 2011; Bryant y Charmaz, 2019; Conger, 1998; Corley y Gioia, 2011; O'Kane y Cunningham, 2014; Suddaby, 2006; Trochim y Donnelly, 2008).

El presente estudio utiliza como fuente principal de datos las entrevistas retrospectivas con 32 SCL en diversos territorios, industrias y contextos de cambio para entender las reacciones que los SCL experimentaron mientras lideraban transformaciones organizativas planificadas. Allá donde ha sido posible, los datos obtenidos de las entrevistas con los SCL se validaron además mediante las entrevistas con los compañeros que tuvieron la oportunidad de observar a los SCL de cerca durante el curso de los programas de transformación analizados, así como los datos de archivo relacionados con estas iniciativas de cambio. Además, hemos realizado entrevistas de triangulación de perspectivas (Flick, 2019) con 9 profesionales del cambio (consultores de gestión y entrenadores de liderazgo con experiencia en el trabajo con SCL implementando el cambio transformacional) para obtener una perspectiva más amplia del fenómeno. En total, hemos llevado a cabo 70 entrevistas para este estudio.

El modelo de teoría fundamentada que surgió del análisis de los datos indica que los líderes de cambio consideran que su función conlleva grandes exigencias sobre sus recursos físicos, emocionales y mentales, lo que hace que los líderes experimenten estrés (Bakker y Demerouti, 2017; Crawford, Lepine, y Rich, 2010). Sin embargo, la naturaleza de las reacciones que experimentan los líderes de cambio y el consiguiente impacto sobre su eficacia y los resultados finales dependen de la evaluación que los líderes hagan de su situación. De acuerdo con la teoría transaccional del estrés y el afrontamiento (Lepine, Lepine y Jackson, 2004), esta evaluación se produce en dos

niveles. En el nivel primario, los líderes evalúan la valencia del cambio, esto es, si el cambio en sí mismo o el acto de liderar el cambio están alineados con la organización y los intereses de los líderes (es decir, si el cambio es una amenaza para la organización o el líder). Si los líderes consideran que el cambio no es una amenaza para la organización o para ellos mismos, realizarán una evaluación de nivel secundario para determinar si tienen suficientes recursos (organizativos y personales) para afrontar las exigencias de su papel (es decir, si existe una amenaza de fracaso).

Los líderes experimentarán "estrés por desafío" (Lepine, Lepine y Jackson, 2004; Crawford et al., 2010) si están suficientemente motivados para liderar el cambio porque perciben que redunda en los intereses de la organización o en el suyo propio y cuentan con recursos suficientes para afrontar las exigencias de su papel. Si ven las cosas de esta manera, el tipo de estrés que experimentan los líderes de cambio se traduce en un estado emocional positivo, en el que se sienten llenos de energía, comprometidos y dispuestos a invertir recursos para hacer frente a los desafíos que plantea el cambio. Por consiguiente, tienden a ser eficaces en sus funciones como líderes de cambio, adoptando decisiones y emprendiendo acciones que apoyan el cambio al tiempo que se relacionan con los empleados, los compañeros y los *stakeholders* de forma constructiva. Un comportamiento de liderazgo eficaz también conduce a la consecución de los objetivos, lo que se traduce en ganancias de recursos para los líderes. Si la evaluación positiva y el estrés resultante del desafío se mantienen lo suficiente, los líderes entran en un "bucle de ganancia" que se refuerza a sí mismo con los resultados positivos del cambio: un comportamiento más eficaz, un

mayor éxito, que conduce a más ganancias y, en última instancia, a resultados positivos para la iniciativa de cambio.

Sin embargo, en contra de las opiniones imperantes en la literatura centrada en el agente de cambio (por ejemplo, Kotter, 1995), los líderes de cambio no siempre experimentan esa motivación y reacciones positivas a sus funciones. Si los líderes creen que el cambio no es de interés para su organización ni para ellos, o si evalúan su situación como una en la que carecen de recursos para hacer frente a las exigencias del cambio, experimentarán "estrés por obstáculo" (Lepine et al., 2004; Crawford et al., 2010). Este tipo de estrés se asocia a una cascada de emociones negativas, como el miedo, la falta de compromiso y el agotamiento del ego. Estas reacciones hacen que los líderes sean menos eficaces en sus funciones, incapaces de tomar decisiones y emprender acciones que conduzcan a un cambio beneficioso; también tienden a relacionarse con los empleados, los compañeros y los *stakeholders* de forma negativa o incluso destructiva. A consecuencia de ello, la iniciativa de cambio experimenta contratiempos, lo que se traduce en pérdidas de recursos tanto para las organizaciones como para los líderes. Esto agrava el "estrés por obstáculo" que experimentan estos líderes y puede hacer que entren en un "bucle de fatalidad" que se refuerza a sí mismo con más comportamientos ineficaces, contratiempos y pérdidas de recursos, lo que en última instancia puede conducir a resultados negativos para la iniciativa de cambio.

Desde una perspectiva teórica, es importante señalar que, a pesar de que los bucles de retroalimentación creados por el "estrés por desafío" y el "estrés por obstáculo" son significativos y se refuerzan a sí mismos, los líderes no están destinados a permanecer en uno u otro bucle. Los líderes de cambio reevalúan

constantemente su situación a medida que las exigencias de su función, los recursos de que disponen e incluso el valor del cambio evolucionan en el transcurso del viaje del cambio y, en consecuencia, pueden pasar de un estado de estrés por desafío a otro por obstáculo (o viceversa). Por ejemplo, un líder que atraviesa un estado de estrés por obstáculo puede experimentar un cambio positivo hacia el estrés por desafío si hay una disminución de las exigencias o un aumento de los recursos o de la valencia. Si este cambio positivo es sustancial y sostenido, el patrón del bucle de fatalidad puede romperse para que el líder entre en el bucle de ganancia. Sin embargo, si los factores que causan el cambio positivo disminuyen o son neutralizados por un aumento de las exigencias o una reducción de los recursos, es probable que el líder sólo experimente un "pico" temporal de estrés por desafío y luego vuelva a experimentar estrés por obstáculo e incluso entre en el bucle de fatalidad. Del mismo modo, un aumento de las exigencias y una reducción de los recursos y la valencia pueden hacer que un líder en estado de estrés por desafío experimente un cambio hacia el estrés por obstáculo. Si los factores que causan el cambio negativo son temporales o se neutralizan por un aumento de los factores que los contrarrestan, el líder puede experimentar sólo una "inmersión" transitoria en el estrés por obstáculo y volver a un estado de estrés por desafío. Sin embargo, si el cambio es lo suficientemente sustancial y sostenido, puede provocar la ruptura del patrón del bucle de ganancia y permitir al líder entrar en el patrón del bucle de fatalidad.

Esta investigación hace una serie de contribuciones a la teoría. En primer lugar, avanza en nuestra comprensión de las reacciones al cambio examinando las reacciones de quienes dirigen y planifican las transformaciones organizativas, un

enfoque marcadamente poco estudiado hasta la fecha en la investigación sobre el cambio y el liderazgo. En segundo lugar, contribuye tanto al liderazgo como a los estudios del cambio al examinar a los líderes sénior en el contexto del papel de liderazgo del cambio y, por tanto, responde a las repetidas peticiones de ampliar nuestro conocimiento del liderazgo del cambio mediante la integración de estos campos de estudio (Ford et al., 2014; Higgs y Rowland, 2011; Hughes, 2018; Oreg y Berson, 2019; Stouten et al., 2018). Por último, esta investigación también incrementa el conocimiento en el campo de las teorías del estrés basadas en los recursos (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, y Schaufeli, 2001; Hobfoll, 1989) al estudiar cómo las interacciones de las exigencias y los recursos conducen a las reacciones de tensión en el contexto de los SCL.

Además, el estudio sistemático de los factores que influyen en las reacciones de los SCL al cambio y en la eficacia de su función también genera ideas que son relevantes en la práctica. La incorporación de estos conocimientos a las metodologías de gestión del cambio —en particular, los hallazgos de que los SCL, como receptores del cambio, pueden experimentar reacciones negativas al cambio, y que estas reacciones podrían llevarlos a ser menos eficaces en sus funciones y, por tanto, aumentar la probabilidad de resultados negativos del cambio— podría ayudar a idear formas de hacer que los SCL sean más eficaces y mejorar la probabilidad de resultados positivos del cambio.

La presente tesis está estructurada de la siguiente manera. En el capítulo 1 se ofrece una revisión de los conocimientos actuales sobre el papel de los líderes de cambio, las reacciones que experimentan ante sus funciones y las exigencias y

recursos de estas que podrían influir en dichas reacciones. A continuación, aclaramos la motivación de la presente investigación para mejorar nuestra comprensión de las reacciones de los SCL al cambio y cómo estas reacciones influyen en sus comportamientos y en su eficacia general como líderes de cambio. En el capítulo 2, presentamos nuestra metodología de investigación —un estudio de investigación cualitativa que utiliza un enfoque interpretativo de teoría fundamentada— y explicamos cómo hemos recopilado y analizado los datos para desarrollar la teoría fundamentada de la reacción de los SCL al cambio. También explicamos las medidas que hemos adoptado para garantizar la solidez y el rigor analítico de esta investigación. Posteriormente, presentamos los resultados de la investigación y describimos la teoría fundamentada de la reacción al cambio de los SCL que ha surgido del análisis de los datos en el capítulo 3. En el capítulo 4, estudiamos la forma en que los resultados de esta investigación se enmarcan en el corpus de conocimiento existente y cómo contribuyen a la teoría y la práctica, y concluimos la tesis identificando las nuevas vías de investigación para avanzar en el conocimiento del tema.

CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH MOTIVATION

The purpose of this chapter is to conduct a literature review in order to understand the current state of knowledge on the change leaders' reactions to the planned transformations they are leading. I review the state of extant literature in three different areas—the role of leaders in organizational change, their reaction to change (including the reactions of change agents to the change they are involved in), and the factors influencing change leaders' reaction to change (change leader job demands and resources available to deal with them). I conclude this chapter by summarizing the gaps in the current state of knowledge to explain how this study's research question is novel from the perspective of theory and relevant from the perspective of practice.

ROLE OF CHANGE LEADERS

Change leaders as change agents

The traditional approach to change management assumes change leaders are change agents, responsible for initiating, sponsoring, directing, managing or implementing change (Caldwell, 2003). It is worth noting that the definition of the term 'change agent' itself has evolved over the past five decades. Initially, it was used to describe external experts (usually Organization Development consultants) who act as catalysts for change by supporting organizations in problem-solving and the change implementation process. The role of change catalysts was intended to bring about change and accelerate its pace without themselves being impacted by the process (in no small part because they were outside the organization) (Ottaway, 1983). Since then, the term has evolved to include not only external consultants but also the leaders, middle managers, and change teams in the organizations undergoing change (Caldwell,

2003). Nevertheless, the idea that change agents are themselves untouched by change is still prevalent in extant thinking in the realm of change management (By et al., 2016).

In this agent-centric view of change leadership, planned change is something that a person in a position of authority promotes to a person or persons without authority (Weick & Quinn, 1999). Thus, planned change happens in one direction—from change agents to recipients—with change agents playing an active role in leading the transformation without themselves being influenced by the change. Implied in this dichotomy between change agents and recipients is an additional assumption that change leaders fully understand and buy into the change they are leading (Ford et al., 2014), and that it is the recipients who react to and often resist change (Dent & Goldberg, 1999; Piderit, 2000; Vos & Rupert, 2018). This view of change leaders tends to assign to leaders the role of an unbiased and unimpacted agent of change and see any resistance to change taking place 'over there' with the recipients (Ford, Ford, & D'Amelio, 2008: 362).

Taxonomy of change agents

It is also important to note that in organizational change literature, the expressions "change agent", "change leader" and "change manager" have overlapping meanings and are often interchangeably used to indicate individuals with a wide range of roles and responsibilities such as initiating, sponsoring, directing, managing, implementing and sustaining change of various levels of scale and complexity (Caldwell,2003; Ottaway, 1983). These terms can be used to describe senior leaders at the executive level, various levels of middle management and even front-line supervisors (Hughes, 2018; Huy, 2002). However, in practitioner literature, particularly

in well-recognized standards for managing complex change initiatives such as Managing Successful Programmes (MSP) published by the UK Government (Great Britain Office of Government Commerce, 2011) or the Project Management Body of Knowledge published by the Project Management Institute (PMI) (Project Management Institute, 2017), there is a clearer distinction between various leadership roles depending on the level of authority individuals have on the content and process of change, and the resources allocated to it that they control and the level of their involvement in the management of the change initiative. For example, MSP identifies three senior change leadership roles—Program Sponsor, Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) and Program Manager (PM) (Zein, 2010)—in the context of program management.[3] Program Sponsor is the individual (or group of individuals) who initiates and/or champions the change program and provides the resources and top-level endorsement for it. Usually this is one of the topmost leaders of the organization, either the CEO or a member of the Executive Team. SRO is the individual with executive ownership of the program and overall responsibility for ensuring the program meets its objectives and delivers the projected benefits. PM is usually a single individual responsible for the set up, management and delivery of the program (Thiry, 2009; Zein, 2010).[4]

While the positions in the organizational hierarchy for these leaders can vary, in the context of planned organizational transformation programs, Sponsors are usually

[3] Program management itself is defined as "the action of carrying out the coordinated organisation, direction and implementation of a dossier of projects and transformation activities to achieve outcomes and realise benefits of strategic importance to the business" (Great Britain Office of Government Commerce, 2011: 6).
[4] More details on the responsibilities of these roles are provided in Appendix A.

CEOs or members of the Executive Teams (i.e. CEO or CEO-1 level), while SROs and PMs are usually at CEO-2 or CEO-3 levels (Great Britain Office of Government Commerce, 2011; Zein, 2010). As shown by their role descriptions in Appendix A, these individuals have a significant level of influence on the content, process and resources allocated for transformational programs at the level of the whole organization. MSP also identifies other change management roles such as Project Manager or Business Change Manager at the local level which have the responsibility of managing individual change initiatives within the program or implementing change within a department or a business unit. These individuals are usually middle to senior-level managers who have influence over the parts of the transformational change that they personally are responsible for, but who have limited authority when it comes to influencing the content, process or resources at the organizational level (Great Britain Office of Government Commerce, 2011). For the purposes of this research, I use the expression “senior change leaders” (SCL) to describe individuals with substantial decision-making authority around the content, process and resources in the context of the change program and who have the responsibilities that are aligned with roles of Program Sponsors, SROs or PMs as described in MSP methodology.

Change leaders as recipients of change

Recent research acknowledges that change leaders often are not only the agents of change but also its recipients. A predominant proportion of change leaders, including senior managers who are initiating and implementing changes in their departments and business units, are doing so under the influence of leaders above them in the organizational hierarchy (Bartunek, Balogun, & Do, 2015). Even CEOs and top

managers may have to initiate and implement changes at the behest of various internal and external stakeholder groups such as the board or regulators, regardless of whether or not they fully subscribe to the need for change (Fiss & Zajac, 2006; Oreg & Berson, 2019; Westphal & Zajac, 1994). In addition, the change leaders themselves are impacted by the content of change. Once implemented, change of a strategic transformational nature may result in changes to the leaders' role and their level of power and influence in the organization, their relationship with other leaders, and their remuneration and future career trajectory (Ford et al., 2014).

There is also a nascent shift in the literature acknowledging that the process of leading change has a substantial impact on leaders. Leading change requires leaders to perform roles and engage in activities and behaviors that may be considerably different from the ones in which they had engaged in previously (Stouten et al., 2018). They may not have the knowledge and competencies required to lead the change, and therefore may experience a steep learning curve (Battilana et al., 2010; Gilley, McMillan, & Gilley, 2009; Higgs & Rowland, 2001, 2005; Joffe & Glynn, 2002) and sometimes even change their own attitudes, mindsets and behaviors (Eriksen, 2008; Fugate, 2012). In addition, their relationship with other leaders as well as the composition of the leadership team may also be changing (Ford & Ford, 2012). Further, they likely have to deal with the reactions to the transformation of various stakeholder groups within and outside the organization. These reactions may influence their organizational status, legitimacy, professional self-esteem, and eventually their ability to lead the change (Denis, Cazale, & Langley, 1996; Huy, et al., 2014).

REACTION TO CHANGE

Recipients of change are known to engage in sensemaking—a process of 'meaning construction and reconstruction' to develop a 'meaningful framework for understanding the nature of intended strategic change' (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991: 442). The resulting reactions are likely to influence their activities, behaviors and organizational outcomes (Bartunek, Rousseau, Rudolph & Depalma, 2006). In this section, I review the state of current research on the reaction to change in general and also of change agents as recipients of change, and identify the potential gaps that would be useful to address to advance the knowledge in this area.

Change recipients' reactions to change

As evidenced by a number of widely cited literature reviews (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999; Bouckenooghe, 2010; Oreg et al., 2011; Rafferty et al., 2013), there is a large volume of empirical studies on change recipients' reaction to change. The concept of reaction to change itself is defined as "how change recipients feel (affect), what they think (cognition) and what they intend to do (behavior) in response to change" (Oreg et al., 2011:467). It has its origins in the concept of 'resistance to change' introduced by Kurt Lewin (1947) and elaborated by Coch & French (1948) as a metaphor to describe a restraining force within a system moving in the direction of maintaining the status-quo (Burnes, 2015). However, by the end of the 20th century, the concept of resistance to change had evolved to signify dysfunctional behavior displayed by change recipients to protect themselves from the effects of the change and is considered one of the main factors contributing factors towards the failure of change efforts (Bouckenooghe, 2010; Dent & Goldberg, 1999; Kotter, 1990). There is a growing volume of literature

challenging the usefulness of this change agent-centric view of the resistance to change as an inevitably negative reaction always aligned with the recipients of change (Dent & Goldberg, 1999; Ford et al., 2008). In its place is a new approach that calls for a re-conceptualization of reaction to change among recipients as a dynamic and complex phenomenon consisting of affective, cognitive and behavioral dimensions which can be positive, negative, or even sometimes ambivalent along different dimensions (or even within the same dimension) (Bouckenooghe, 2010; Oreg et al., 2018; Piderit, 2000).

There is an extensive body of empirical research that defines various constructs for affective (e.g., stress, pleasantness) (e.g., Bartunek et al., 2006), cognitive (e.g., change evaluation, change beliefs) (e.g., Armenakis, Bernerth, Pitts & Walker, 2007), and behavioral (involvement, intentions, coping behaviors) (e.g., Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002) reactions and establishes their relationship with antecedents such as change process and content (e.g., Caldwell, Herold, & Fedor, 2004), perceived benefit/harm from change (e.g., Holt, Armenakis, Feild, & Harris, 2007), change recipient characteristics (e.g., Judge, Thoresen, Pucik, & Welbourne, 1999; Shin, Taylor & Seo, 2012) and organizational context (e.g., van Dam, 2005). Further, these reactions have been found to influence various outcomes including job satisfaction (e.g., Rafferty & Griffin, 2006), organizational commitment (e.g., Oreg, 2006; Seo et al., 2012), performance (e.g., Lok, Hung, Walsh, Wang & Crawford, 2005), effectiveness (e.g., Logan & Ganster, 2007) and the individual's well-being and health (e.g., Martin, Jones & Callan, 2005). While this literature is informative and expansive, there is very little scholarship pertaining to the understanding of change agent reactions to change. In fact, the subjects of the majority of empirical studies to date are categorized as

"followers" of change without influence on the content and process of change. The current study builds and expands this research by focusing on the reactions of senior change leaders. In addition, by answering calls for qualitative examinations of change recipient reactions (Ford et al., 2008; Oreg et al., 2011; Piderit, 2000), this study fosters a better understanding of the complexities surrounding the phenomenon of change recipients' reactions to change and change leader reactions to change in particular.

Change leaders' reactions to change

The conventional approach to change management assumes that change leaders are sufficiently motivated and energized about the change to engage in constructive leadership behavior while leading change (Kotter, 1995). However, recent literature suggests that this may not always be the case and that change agents may experience negative reactions in response to demands and threats of their role (Ford & Ford, 2012). A more expansive view of the wide range of responses will broaden our understanding of change leader experiences and their effect on organizational transformation outcomes.

Affective and cognitive reactions of change leaders

Change agents themselves engage in sensemaking about change and often evaluate the perceived gains and losses of the change (Balogun & Johnson, 2004; Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Lüscher & Lewis, 2008). As the result of this sensemaking, they may perceive the change itself or their role in implementing it as a threat in multiple ways. Change leaders may not have the necessary skills and resources to deal with the demands of their role, resulting in stress and burn-out (Joffe & Glynn, 2002). They may be concerned that the implementation of change may negatively impact their personal

resources, such as professional identity, power base and financial security (De Vries, 2008). Executives may also have worries about changes in their roles and activities as well as relationships with other leaders (Ford & Ford, 2012). These change leaders may feel uncertain about the necessity of the change and experience doubts about their ability to 'sell' the change within their organizations (Kets de Vries, Guillén, & Korotov, 2009). Implementing change may involve going against the vested interests (Ford & Ford, 2012; Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991) of powerful stakeholders within the organization, and change agents may be concerned about their reactions as well (Huy et al., 2014). Finally, change recipients may express their genuine concerns and reactions to change, which change leaders may interpret as 'resistance to change' (Piderit, 2000) and even overestimate the level of perceived resistance (Vos & Rupert, 2018). This perception of resistance to change may result in change leaders assuming that more effort will be required to accomplish the change than originally planned or that there will be other undesirable impacts, which may be perceived by leaders as a threat to their positive self-image, professional competence, and career prospects (Ford et al., 2008).

Dealing with the challenges of the change leadership role is known to place considerable emotional, mental and physical demands on change leaders.[5] Performing demanding roles while exercising self-control to overcome the motivational conflict of implementing change that is perceived to be a threat can result in stress and ego-depletion in change leaders, which in turn can have an adverse psychophysiological impact and result in negative affect, loss of energy and motivation and even burn-out

[5] The literature on the demands the change leadership role places on change leaders in the section on "change leadership role demands" later in this chapter.

(Krasikova, Green, LeBreton, 2013; Kets de Vries et al., 2009; Ford & Ford, 2012). These reactions can result in reduced effectiveness and an increased likelihood of negative behavior.

Behavioral reactions of change leaders

There is a growing volume of work indicating that the change leader's reactions to the demands of their role may result in them becoming less effective and sometimes even engaging in behavior that may be detrimental to change implementation. This is contrary to the conventional approach in change management studies which assumes that the leaders are doing the right things for their organizations, and even if they do not engage in constructive leadership behavior they will at least not engage in negative behaviors (Ford & Ford, 2012). For example, change leaders in Higgs & Rowland's (2001) study assessing the impact of a structured change management intervention on change leadership capabilities indicated that the stress of the role made it difficult for them to sustain their energy, enthusiasm, and motivation to effectively implement change. Similarly, Joffe & Glynn (2002) reported that change agents in their study found performing their roles time-consuming and demanding because of their lack of change management capabilities, leading to change agents shifting out of their roles to avoid burn-out. Likewise, in a study of nurse leaders, Kan & Parry (2004) found that excessive demands on change agents caused by implementing change while also managing day-to-day operations can result in a reduced ability to engage in constructive leadership behavior. And change agents in a study by Lüscher & Lewis (2008) experienced anxiety and decision-making paralysis during change implementation when they found it difficult

to make sense of their changing roles or found it hard to process the change due to the complexities associated with it.

There is also literature to suggest that change leaders may engage in behaviors that may be counterproductive to the successful implementation of change when they feel the change is a threat. Negative perceptions of the outcomes that will result from change cause negative emotions and produce escapist and avoidance behaviors in change recipients (Fugate, Kinicki, and Prussia., 2008). A similar idea has found support in studies of change leaders, who (as noted above) are also change recipients. For example, Kets de Vries & Balazs (1997) posit that leaders who implement unpopular change initiatives such as downsizing are known to experience stress because of having work against the values and belief systems that formed their own organizational identity. They try to cope with this stress by becoming detached and avoid engaging with employees. This distancing of leaders only exacerbates the negative emotional reactions among the 'survivors' of the downsizing and can lead to negative organizational outcomes. Similarly, in a study by Balogun et al. (2010, 2015), senior managers in a national subsidiary who were responsible for implementing change and who had been initially supportive of that change started resisting the change after they realized it would result in a loss of their autonomy and power. In the same way, middle managers who were initially supportive of strategic change openly mutinied against top management, who were perceived to be acting against the interests of the organization and the employees (Huy et al., 2014).

When leaders perceive a change recipient reaction as a threat, they may react defensively and aggressively instead of utilizing the reaction as a resource for change

(Ford et al., 2008). This type of behavior is likely to give rise to a vicious cycle of escalating resistance both from change recipients and leaders, which can pose unnecessary stress on the organization and may ultimately result in leaders losing their legitimacy to lead in the eyes of the followers—not to mention the overall failure of the change initiative (Huy et al., 2014).

The practitioner-oriented literature also provides examples of ineffective and sometimes counterproductive behavior in change leaders. For instance, Pasmore (2011) refers to instances of leaders facing resource starvation and exhaustion in their efforts to sustain change efforts, and even catalogues some extreme cases where the lack of leadership resulted in the leaders becoming an obstacle to successful change rather than a resource. Examples of a lack of leadership include passive leadership and leadership avoidance (e.g., not providing directions or actions plans, withdrawing resources and support, unwillingness to make tough decisions or confronting problematic behavior, abdicating control of change to internal or external consultants) (Bass, 1990), derailed leadership (e.g., punishing those who suggest that leaders themselves may need to change before others can do, openly siding with those who oppose change from above) (Shackleton, 1995), and even tyrannical leadership (e.g., not willing to listen to input from subordinates, blindly pressing forward with change without stopping to listen and figure out what should be happening) (Ashforth, 1994).

Key findings from a review of literature on reaction to change

Overall, the substantial volume of empirical studies on change recipients' reaction to change provides an important foundation but is insufficient in offering a complete understanding of the reactions of change agents – as both leaders and

recipients of transformations. Further, the existing research in this area has focused on lower-level change agents with implementation, as opposed to design and leadership responsibilities (Balogun et al., 2010, 2015; Huy, 2002; Huy et al., 2014; Luscher & Lewis, 2008). Therefore, while the findings from these existing studies add to our understanding of change leader reactions, questions remain regarding reactions that are particular to SCLs leaders in top management positions.

SCL reactions to change may differ from middle managers for two reasons. First, the roles SCLs play in the context of organizational transformation are very different from those of mid-managers. SCLs have the responsibility of scanning the organization's strategic environment, making macro-level decisions on the content of change (the organization's strategy, structure, culture, climate and protocols), the process through which the organization is going to implement the change and resources the organization is going to allocate for the implementation, as well navigating the interests of a wide range of external and internal stakeholders in order to successfully initiate, implement and sustain the change (Hambrick, 2007; Hambrick et al., 2005; Kotter, 1990; Rielin & Cataldo, 2011; Samimi et al., 2020; Stouten et al., 2018). As such, the complexities of their transformation-related decisions and the demands of their change agent roles will be significantly different from those of middle managers who implement change initiated by others. Second, the resources and range of options available to SCLs are more substantial (Hambrick et al., 2005; Huy et al., 2014; Neely et. al., 2020). They have more decision-making authority and more control over the human, financial and other resources that organizations can allocate for change implementation. Therefore, SCLs' reactions and resulting behaviors may have a more

significant impact on change and organizational outcomes. Developing a deeper understanding of SCLs' reactions to change has the potential to contribute to the current literature by developing insights into the reactions of a very different category of change recipients. In addition, it has the potential of making a substantial contribution to practice by broadening our knowledge of the factors that drive SCL behavioral responses during the initiation and implementation phases of change, and potentially identify ways of how to make SCLs more effective in their roles.

FACTORS INFLUENCING CHANGE LEADERS' REACTION TO CHANGE

In this section, I discuss the state of current knowledge on the factors influencing change leaders' reaction to change. I first introduce the conceptual framework of Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) (Demerouti et al., 2001) theory that I use for reviewing the literature on the factors influencing change leaders' reaction to change. I then proceed to describe the extant research on the change leaders' job demands and resources and the implications for understanding the change leaders' reaction to change.

Conceptual framework

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory applies the resource-based theory of stress to the organizational context to explain how job characteristics influence employee reactions to their occupational settings (Demerouti et al., 2001; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). The first premise of the JD-R theory is that job stress is associated with the two factors: job demands (aspects of the job that result in certain physiological or psychological costs to an individual) and job resources (aspects of the job that help individuals achieve their work goals, reduce the impact of job demands, and stimulate personal growth, learning and development). The second premise of the theory is that

job demands place a strain on an employee's mental and physical resources, and therefore may lead to events such as energy depletion and lack of motivation. In contrast, job resources lead to high work engagement, low cynicism, and improved performance. The third premise, which logically follows from the first two, states that job resources act as a buffer against the impact of job demands on job strain; in fact, job resources influence motivation or work engagement when job demands are high (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Personal resources (the psychological characteristics or aspects of the self that are associated with resiliency and the ability to control and impact one's environment successfully) play a similar role as job resources and act as a buffer against the impact of job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2007). The conceptual foundation of job demands and the resources available to deal with them has been used for studying individuals' reactions to a wide range of occupational settings, including in the context of organizational change (Oreg, Bartunek, Lee, & Do, 2018; Rafferty & Griffin, 2006; Shin et al., 2012; van Emmerik et al., 2009). I use this framework to study the literature on factors influencing change leaders' reactions to the change they are leading.

Change leadership role demands

The review of literature on change leadership reveals that there are two main aspects of the role that may lead to an increase in the emotional, mental, and physical demands on change leaders—the activities the leaders are expected to perform to be effective in their roles and the contextual factors surrounding the change leadership role (Hambrick et al., 2005; Oreg & Berson, 2019; Stouten et al., 2018).

Change leadership activities

The literature on organizational change has a wide range of normative models for successfully initiating, implementing and sustaining change, which describes and prescribes different activities change leaders need to perform to be effective in their roles (Oreg & Berson, 2019). In their recent review, Stouten et al. (2018:756) summarized the recommendations of prevailing change models into nine important activities: (i) assessing the opportunity or problem motivating the change, (ii) selecting and supporting a guiding coalition, (iii) formulating a clear and compelling vision, (iv) mobilizing energy for change, (v) empowering others to act, (vi) developing and promoting change-related knowledge and ability, (vii) identifying short term wins and using them as reinforcement of change progress, (viii) monitoring and strengthening the change process, and (ix) institutionalizing change in company culture, practices and management succession. Performing these activities requires a wide range of competencies and skills in change leaders. As previously noted, an implicit assumption in the conventional approaches to change management is that the change agents have the requisite competencies, skills, capabilities and motivation to perform these activities (Battilana et al., 2010). However, practice and empirical studies show that change agents often lack the capabilities to perform aspects of their roles (Buchanan, Claydon, & Doyle, 1999; Gilley et al., 2009; Joffe & Glynn, 2002). Due to differences across organizational transformations, change agents frequently are faced with new learning curves when approaching novel changes (Stouten et al., 2018). In addition, change leaders have varying abilities and tend to emphasize activities at which they are more skilled during the course of change implementation (Battilana et al., 2010) and often find

required activities in which they lack competencies to be particularly demanding or challenging (Hambrick et al., 2005).

Contextual factors of change leadership role

Although the most prevalent approaches to organizational change are based on the assumptions that change is a linear process that can be carried out in discrete stages in a sequential manner, the reality is that change is a dynamic, non-linear process (Burke, Lake, & Paine, 2008; Higgs & Rowland, 2005) that occurs in an equally dynamic and often volatile environment (March, 1981). Transformational change involves simultaneous changes in multiple core organizational elements (Huy et al., 2014) and requires the change agents to coordinate with various factions within the organization who may not always be supportive of the change (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). As such, change is often influenced by organizational politics, and often follows a cyclical pattern where periods of substantive change alternate with periods of political realignment to reestablish stability within the organization (Denis et al., 1996). Furthermore, actions taken to implement change may not always produce intended outcomes (Hannan & Freeman, 1984). Therefore, change agents have to face the complexities, ambiguities, and uncertainties associated with the change, which can result in increased demands (Luscher & Lewis, 2008).

In addition, implementing planned change efforts increases change agents' workload and emotional commitments. Organizational change tends to be failure-induced (Ocasio, 1995), i.e., initiated in response to poor performance (Boeker, 1997). In these circumstances, change agents are usually expected to work under high pressure with the limited resources the organization may be able to allocate to

implement the change (Huy & Mintzberg, 2003) while delivering rapid performance improvements (Huy et al., 2014). Moreover, the responsibility of simultaneously having to implement change, ensure business continuity, and manage daily operations can drastically increase the workload for those actively involved in the change process (Huy, 2002; Bartunek et al., 2006). Change agents also have to spend time and effort to manage the reaction to change from various stakeholder groups within the organization (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991) and change recipients (Ford et al., 2008). Those leading change also need to expend effort to attend to the unexpected side effects and emergent issues related with implementing change (Pasmore, 2011). Finally, change leaders are also impacted by the change they are implementing (Balogun, Bartunek, & Do, 2015; Denis et al., 1996; Ford & Ford, 2012). They may find that they have to go through a steep learning curve and even change their own attitudes, mindsets and behaviors in order to be effective in their roles (Eriksen, 2008; Fugate, 2012; Higgs & Rowland, 2005), which may further increase their workload. Performing roles associated with complexity, uncertainty, high workload under tight time pressures are known to increase demands on individuals (Hambrick et al., 2005; Ito & Brotheridge, 2003), and therefore we can infer that the contextual factors surrounding their roles may increase demands on change leaders.

Change leadership role resources

In the JD-R literature, job resources are classified into four broad categories: social resources (including resources such as supervisor and co-worker support), work resources (comprised of resources such as availability of tools and job control), organizational resources (e.g., communication, trust in leadership), and developmental

resources (e.g., performance feedback) (Schaufeli, 2017). The limited empirical evidence that exists underscores the important role resources play in influencing change leaders' behaviors. For example, a study by Paglis & Green (2002) showed that organizational support for change, coaching from supervisors, job autonomy and resource supply were positively related to leaders' change promoting behavior. Further, role resources (e.g., suitable competencies, finances, time available to implement the change and the authority to alter structure, reallocate capital, and hire and fire people) are considered to be important for change leaders to be effective in their roles (Anderson & Anderson, 2010; Higgs & Rowland, 2001; Huy et al., 2014; Pasmore, 2011). In addition, change leaders require social resources (e.g., support from senior leaders and co-workers and a collaborative work environment), organizational resources (e.g., effective communication), and developmental resources (e.g., coaching, skills development and feedback) to be effective (Anderson & Anderson, 2010; Ford & Ford, 2012; Higgs & Rowland, 2001). While there is an abundance of literature describing the resources change leaders require in order to be effective in their roles, most of it is either practitioner-oriented or theoretical in nature. Empirical research on the relationship between change leaders' job resources and their reactions and subsequent behaviors and effectiveness is scarce. Although some inferences can be made from the research on the relationship between job resources and change recipients' reaction to change, the nuances of change leadership roles (and particularly the SCL role) are likely to yield significant differences.

Change leaders' personal resources

The literature on organizational change and leadership identifies two broad categories of personal resources—change leadership competencies and personality traits—that are associated with the effective performance of the change leadership role.

Change leader competencies

In order to implement change effectively, leaders need to engage with employees using a constructive leadership style that allows them to gain support and acceptance for the change from change recipients. A large volume of research links leadership styles and follower responses and behaviors (Furst & Cable, 2008; Oreg & Berson, 2019; Oreg et al., 2011; Stouten et al., 2018; Van Dam, Oreg, and Schyns, 2008). Transformational leadership (Bass, 1990) is characterized by behaviors such as (i) articulating a vision of the future, (ii) fostering the acceptance of group goals, (iii) communicating high-performance expectations, (iv) providing intellectual stimulation, (v) modeling appropriate behavior, and (vi) displaying supportive leader behavior. These behaviors have been shown to engage followers and motivate them to support the leader's chosen direction. Empirical studies confirm that transformational leadership is positively related to followers' commitment to change (Herold, Fedor, Caldwell, & Liu, 2008) and their positive affect and behavioral responses to change (Seo, Taylor, Hill, Zhang, Tesluk, & Lorinkova, 2012) but negatively related to their behavioral intentions to resist the change (Oreg & Berson, 2011) and employee cynicism about the change (Bommer, Rich, & Rubin, 2005; DeCelles, Tesluk, & Taxman, 2012). Leaders who engage in sensemaking behavior by communicating the vision and sense of change (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991) help to shape employees' understanding of change and

enhance change acceptance among subordinates (Kan & Parry, 2004; Sonenshein, 2010). Further, effective change leaders frequently oscillate between using ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ leadership styles (Beer & Nohria, 2000), prioritizing operating or change activities, and prolonging or replacing team members (O’Kane & Cunningham, 2014).

Change leader personality traits

Empirical studies indicate that leaders’ personality traits influence the way organizations initiate and implement strategic change as well as how the leaders themselves cope with change. For example, a study of 120 CEOs in Ecuador showed that CEO personality traits of extraversion and openness were positively related to commencing strategic change (Herrmann & Nadkarni, 2014). Further, emotional stability was positively linked to both initiation and implementation of change, conscientiousness to hindering the initiation of change but improving the implementation of strategic change, while agreeableness hindered both aspects of change. Self-awareness has been found to be related to a leader’s ability to understand the systematic challenges associated with change (Higgs & Rowland, 2010). Another study conducted by Judge, Thoresen, Pucik, & Welbourne (1999) showed that change managers’ dispositional traits, including locus of control, generalized self-efficacy, self-esteem, positive affectivity, openness to experience, and tolerance for ambiguity and risk, were positively associated with the ability to cope with organizational change. Subsequently, the ability to cope with organizational change was found to be positively associated with extrinsic career outcomes including salary and job performance as well as intrinsic career outcomes including organizational commitment and job satisfaction.

By contrast, some traits are also known to hinder the effectiveness of change leaders. Leadership cynicism about organizational change was found to be negatively related to both the leader performance and employee organizational commitment while also being linked to employee cynicism (Bommer et al., 2005; Rubin, Dierdorff, Bommer, & Baldwin, 2009). And dispositional resistance to change was found to be positively related to change recipients' intention to resist change (Oreg & Berson, 2011).

While the literature on organizational change is predominantly focused on studying the relationship between leadership traits and specific organizational outcomes, it does not establish the empirical relationships between change leaders' personal resources and the reactions leaders themselves experience to change. At the same time, the literature on leadership explores the relationships of leadership traits with a wider array of leaders' reactions to their roles such as threat perception, stress, leadership styles, behavior, and effectiveness (e.g., Liu, Fisher & Chen, 2018; Spain, Harms & Wood, 2016), but this linkage has not studied in the context of organizational change. For instance, leaders' personality traits such as extraversion and openness to change were found to be positively associated with transformational leadership, which in turn was found to be associated with leadership effectiveness (Judge & Bono, 2000). Similarly, leaders' narcissism, values, dispositional traits, and stress are known to influence their strategic choices as well as leadership styles and behaviors (Oreg & Berson, 2015). Although the existing literature on leadership does provide theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence regarding the relationship between personal attributes, stress, and leaders' behaviors, these relationships have not been empirically established in the context of change leadership.

Given the paucity of empirical research on the impact of change leaders' resources on their reactions, conducting further empirical research that integrates the knowledge from the fields of organizational change and leadership and conceptualizes organizational and personal resources as a buffer to the demands and threats of the change leadership role could open doors for new ways for understanding SCLs' reaction to change and the resulting behaviors.

CONCLUSION AND RESEARCH QUESTION

One of the key insights from this review is that while there is a substantial volume of literature describing and prescribing effective change leadership behaviors, there is limited systematic research regarding how leaders *actually* behave when initiating, implementing, and sustaining change as well as what factors drive these behaviors. The limited number of studies that examine change leader behavior are constrained to understanding the role of middle managers and do not explore the role of top-level managers (Balogun et al., 2015; Huy et al., 2014). As discussed previously, it is important to study the reactions of SCLs because the demands of their roles as well as their influence on the strategic change initiative's content, process and resources are different from those of mid-managers. Therefore, the reactions the SCLs experience and the impact of these reactions to the change outcomes are likely to be different. Furthermore, existing studies are limited to examinations of the change agents' reactions to their appraisal of how they or the organization may be impacted by the change (Balogun et al., 2015; Huy, et al., 2014) and the ambiguity and uncertainty surrounding the change (Luscher & Lewis, 2008), rather than the influence of the broader demands posed by the change leadership role. Finally, while the existing

studies provided examples of change-resistant behaviors in change agents, they do not show a broader evidence of negative leadership behavior presented in change practitioner literature (Anderson & Ackerman-Anderson, 2010; Pasmore, 2011).

The aim of this dissertation research is to apply rigorous methodology to offer a more comprehensive understanding of why and how SCLs react to the change. Specifically, I apply a qualitative methodology to investigate the research question "*What reactions do senior leaders experience while leading change and how do these reactions impact their behaviors and effectiveness as change leaders?*" Via a grounded theory approach, this research intends to expand our knowledge of (a) the cognitive and affective reactions SCLs experience in response to the change they are leading, (b) the factors that influence these reactions, (c) the way these reactions impact their behaviors (i.e., decisions, actions, leadership styles) and overall effectiveness, and (d) how this process of SLC reactions, behaviors and outcomes evolves throughout change implementation.

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

I apply qualitative methods using an interpretivist grounded theory approach to explore the reactions of senior leaders to their change leader role and the antecedents and outcomes of these reactions. The primary source of data for this research is retrospective interviews aimed at understanding the lived experiences of change leaders from a wide range of organizations and change contexts. I now explain the rationale for the choice of research methodology and the data collection method.

INTERPRETIVIST GROUNDED THEORY APPROACH

Why grounded theory? The primary aim of the current research is to create a deeper understanding the phenomenon of senior leaders' reaction to the change they are leading and explore the factors that influence this reaction as well as the impact it has on the leaders' subsequent behavior and effectiveness. In essence, this research explores 'what is going on' (Glaser, 1978) in the context of the leaders' reaction to the change they are leading to develop a conceptual framework that explains the processes at work around the phenomenon. As such, this research strives to develop a theory that reflects the rich array of 'concepts and relationships' at play in such change to better explain 'how and/or why a phenomenon occurs' (Corley & Gioia, 2011: 12).

Grounded theory research methodology is considered an ideal approach for research with such objectives (Suddaby, 2006). Originating in the work of Glaser & Strauss (1967) and further developed by Strauss & Corbin (1990) and Charmaz (2014), grounded theory is a systematic methodology in which theory emerges from and is grounded in the data. The key elements of the grounded theory method consist of conducting data collection and analysis in an iterative process, analyzing actions and processes rather than themes and structures, and using constant comparative methods

at all analytical levels – data, codes, memos, categories and extant studies. Grounded theory draws on data in the service of developing new conceptual categories and develops inductive abstract analytic categories through systematic data analysis. It emphasizes theory construction and theoretical sampling in the search for new properties in emergent categories rather than the description or application of current theories or engaging in a representative sampling of a given population (Charmaz and Belgrave, 2007).

Grounded theory is an effective research methodology for deepening the understanding of social processes around a phenomenon and developing substantive theories both in organizational studies (Corley & Gioia, 2011; Gehman, Glaser, Eisenhardt, Gioia, Langley, & Corley, 2018) and social sciences (Bryant & Charmaz, 2019). It is particularly useful in situations when researching underexplored phenomena involving sensitive topics such as the lived experiences of participants in their social settings (Langley & Abdallah, 2011; Suddaby, 2006). The grounded theory approach therefore lends itself well to exploring social processes around leaders in the midst of organizational change (Hunt & Ropo, 1995; Kempster & Parry, 2011; Parry, 1998).

Why an interpretivist approach? Since its origins (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), the methods of grounded theory have evolved. Today there are a wide range of potential approaches to take when conducting research via a grounded theory approach (Gehman et al., 2018). I have used an interpretivist approach to constructing grounded theory as elaborated by Corley & Gioia (2011) to address the research question driving this study. The interpretivist method is particularly suited for studying participants' lived experiences (Langley & Abdallah, 2011). It is based on the assumption that the

organizational world is socially constructed and that both the informants of the research process and the researcher(s) themselves are ‘knowledgeable agents’ (Corley & Gioia, 2011). As knowledgeable agents, the informants know what they are trying to do and can explain their thoughts, intentions, and actions. In turn, researchers as knowledgeable agents develop a grounded theory by figuring out patterns in the data, bringing to surface concepts and relationships that might escape the awareness of the informants, and formulating these concepts in theoretically relevant terms. This approach acknowledges and foregrounds the subjectivity of data analysis and theory construction, and accepts from the outset that two different researchers with the same research question will not always find the same explanation for the same phenomenon (Gehman et al., 2018). The theory that emerges from this approach does not emerge from the data using pure induction. Rather, it is developed through a process of induction and abduction (Augustine, Soderstrom, Milner, & Weber, 2019; Soderstrom & Weber, 2020) in interactions between the researcher and the participants and is informed by extant theories and the researcher’s prior knowledge. Theories using this approach are therefore not formal or final theories, but substantive “mid-range” theories that aim to offer reasonable explanatory power regarding the lived experiences of the participants within the context of the area under investigation (Urquhart, 2019; Suddaby, 2006; Charmaz, 2014).

Why retrospective interviews? When developing grounded theory around people’s lived experiences, the first-hand narratives of the people who have experienced the phenomenon themselves—where they tell their stories of the events as they unfolded—are considered a valuable source of data in the identification of the

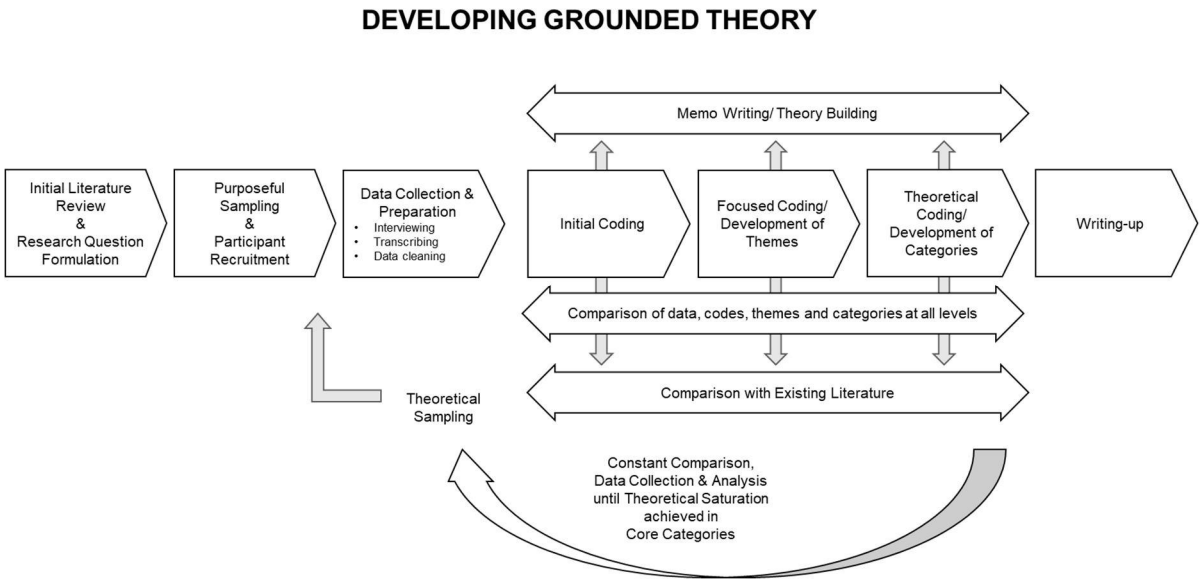
process and structure of the phenomenon (Charmaz, 2014; Morse, 1994). Intensive retrospective interviews in which participants tell their stories about their experiences from beginning to end provide a useful setting in which to draw out these narratives, especially when it involves individuals' experiences of stressful situations in emotionally intense settings such as transformational organizational change (Margolis & Molinsky, 2008). In this sense, they provide a holistic overview of the process being studied (Morse, 1994).

Why interviews with senior leaders from various organizations as the primary source of data? According to Corley & Gioia (2011), in order to understand the phenomenon under investigation—here the lived experiences of participants—it is useful to gather as many varied perspectives on the phenomenon as possible. Instead of controlling for variances, phenomena like that under investigation—the leaders' experience of the change they are leading—are better understood if researchers *aim* to capture variability in data and then try to understand why that variability exists. At this exploratory phase of research into the phenomenon of the lived experience of change leaders, the aim is to develop a better understanding of leaders' reaction to change. Collecting data by conducting intensive interviews (Charmaz, 2014) with a wide range of leaders from various organizations and in different change contexts captures the variances in the leaders' lived experiences. Doing so also provides the necessary variety of information needed to construct a substantive theory that explains not just what the phenomenon is but how it arises and what its consequences are.

RESEARCH PROCESS

For this study, I have used the process for developing grounded theory recommended by Charmaz (2014). The process involved an iterative approach to data collection, analysis, memo-writing with the constant comparison of data, codes and categories among themselves and with the extant literature. The overall process that was followed is shown in Figure 2.1 (based on Charmaz, 2014).

Figure 2.1: Approach to Grounded Theory Development



In the following sections, I describe my approach to sampling, interviewing, data collection, data analysis and memo-writing in the context of the research methodology. I will also explain the role the extant literature and my own background and prior knowledge have played in the process.

Sampling. The purpose of this dissertation research is to gain insight into the reaction leaders experience when they have the primary responsibility for initiating or implementing change in organizations they lead. The research is particularly focused on

senior leaders who have a substantial influence over and accountability for the content or process of change and/or the resources allocated for its implementation in the context of planned organizational transformations. In order to be able to collect the data that is most relevant for the topic of the research, I conducted purposeful sampling (i.e. sought out settings and individuals where and for whom the processes being studied are most likely to occur) (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018) of change leaders for interviews based on the following criteria:

Experience of leading planned transformational change. Transformational organizational change involves fundamental changes across the organization, resulting in enhanced complexity and scale (Burke, 2017). The challenges leaders face and the reactions they experience to the challenges are pronounced and noticeable, providing an ideal context for studying leaders' reaction to change. Although transformational changes are often critical for organizations' survival, they are also associated with a low success rate (Kotter,1995). The heightened stakes for successful transformation result in more pronounced challenges to the change leader and subsequent reactions on his or her part. Focusing on understanding the reaction of change leaders to transformational change is therefore useful in generating insights that have relevance for not only theory development but also practice.

Experience of leading change in large organizations. The sample for this study consisted of leaders with experience of leading transformational change in organizations of above 100m USD in revenue and/or over 200 employees. In smaller organizations, change is usually implemented in a less structured manner. Change may not be managed as a distinct initiative and the roles for leading change may not be

clearly defined. Larger organizations tend to employ a more formalized and structured approach to planned transformational change, typically treating them as a distinct initiative. As a result, there usually is greater clarity around roles and responsibilities for leading change as well as the resources allocated for its implementation. Larger organizations therefore offer a better environment for distinguishing between leading change and the 'business as usual' leadership role in order to understand the reaction of leaders to the change itself.

Experience of having led change from a senior position with influence on content or process of change or resources allocated to it. The purpose of this research is to understand the reactions of senior change leaders who have substantial influence over the process and content of the planned organizational transformations and the resources allocated to its implementation, and whose decisions, actions and style of engagement therefore have a substantial impact on the change outcomes. In the context of planned organizational transformations, these are usually top managers of the organization (Huy et al., 2014) with the responsibility of initiating, sponsoring and implementing the transformation. There is no consistent taxonomy of change agents in academic literature, and the terms change agents, change leaders and change managers can have wide and sometimes overlapping definitions and can be used interchangeably to describe senior leaders at the executive level, various levels of middle management and even front-line supervisors (Caldwell, 2003; Huy, 2002). I have therefore resorted to practitioner literature (namely the MSP methodology promoted by the UK Government (Great Britain Office of Government Commerce, 2011) to identify senior leadership roles which have substantial influence over the content and process of

change, and therefore through their actions and behaviors can substantially influence the change outcomes across the organization. In the context of complex change programs such as transformational organizational change, these are individuals performing the roles of Program Initiators/Sponsors, SROs and PMs (Zein, 2010). The Program Initiators/Sponsors are usually CEOs or the members of the Executive Team (i.e., CEO or CEO-1) while SROs and Program Managers usually report to Sponsors and are therefore at CEO-2 or CEO-3 level. The details of roles and responsibilities of various levels of senior change leadership in the context of program management are provided in Appendix A. Accordingly, all the senior change leaders interviewed for the purposes of this research were those individuals whose responsibilities matched the responsibilities of Initiators/Sponsors, SROs or Program Managers in the context of the planned organizational transformations. In order to ensure sufficient levels of seniority and experience of candidates, I interviewed leaders with at least 15 years of business experience who have achieved a sufficient level of seniority in the organizations (Harrell & Alpert, 1989).

Triangulation. While the intensive retrospective interviews of the people who have lived through the phenomenon themselves provide valuable data for grounded theory research on people's lived experiences in their social settings (Margolis & Molinsky, 2008), this method of data collection also has its limitations. There is a risk of interviewees 'performing' for the interviewers, adjusting their responses in order to maintain a positive self-image and create favorable impressions, smoothing over their experiences, and not always giving the full picture of what their actual behavior was

(Charmaz, 2014; Higgs & Rowland, 2011). This can lead to questions around the validity of the findings.

Given the advantages of retrospective interviews over other methods of data collection, I have used them as the primary source of data for developing a better understanding of the senior leaders' reactions to during organizational transformations they were leading. At the same time, I have employed the following strategies to offset these limitations, improve the validity of the findings and enhance the richness of data.

Data triangulation. The data from interviews with change leaders (where possible) was validated with the data collected through alternative sources (Flick, 2018, 2019). While the emotional and cognitive reactions of the change leaders could only be found out from the interviews of the change leaders themselves, the information from the leaders' interviews on the factors and incidents leading up to these reactions, leaders' behaviors as a consequence of these reactions, and their eventual impact on the change initiative and the organization itself could be validated using a number of alternative sources. First, I had asked the change leaders who had participated in the study to provide me access to people who had worked with them during the change initiatives discussed in the interviews and who had the opportunity to observe them from close quarters. As a result, I managed to conduct 17 triangulation interviews with colleagues and peers of the change leaders. Second, where available, the participants of the study provided me with the archival data (project charters, plans, emails and minutes of meetings showing critical events, such as the loss of key team member to burn-out, severe delays to the projects, performance reports, financial data, etc.) from within the organization. Third, where the information on the events associated with the

change being discussed was already in the public domain, the participants of the study pointed me to these sources (e.g., annual reports, investor reports, press releases, news reports on plant closures, LinkedIn profiles with changes in employment statuses of the key people discussed in the interviews, etc.). More details on the various alternative sources used to validate the different slices of data derived from the interviews with change leaders are provided in Appendix B.

Given the diversity in the change contexts, types of organizations, and confidentiality of the information shared by the leaders, not all alternative sources of data triangulation were relevant or available for confirming the findings from all the interviews with change leaders. The practice of using one primary source of data and different alternative sources to validate and confirm the data from the primary source depending on the context of the topic being studied is generally accepted in qualitative research (Margolis & Molinsky,2008).

It is important to note that only the data from the primary source (i.e., the interviews with change leaders) was used for the purposes of theory development. The data from alternative sources were mainly used for validating and confirming the findings from the retrospective interviews that were most relevant and interesting from the point of view of theory building. When additional data emerged from the data triangulation process, that information was validated with the change leader before being used for theory building. For example, L18 described going through a particularly tough period when encountering the political games of his subordinates and board members. During the triangulation interview with T18, it was reported that L18 developed serious health issues as a result of stress from the situation. This information

was further validated with L18 over a brief telephone call before being included as data for theory building.

Perspective triangulation. In qualitative research, the purpose of triangulation is not limited to validating and confirming the findings from one source of data using data collected from sources. In a more comprehensive understanding of the term, the purpose of triangulation is to create additional knowledge by using multiple perspectives to gain a broader and deeper understanding of the phenomenon (Flick, 2018, 2019). One of the methods recommended for triangulation of perspectives while researching social processes is the interview of experts who work closely with the actors experiencing the phenomenon being studied. For example, in a study of residents' sleeping disorders in nursing homes, Flick, Garms-Homolová, Herrmann, Kuck and Röhnsch (2012) not only interviewed the residents experiencing sleeping disorders, but also studied the phenomenon from the perspectives of experts, doctors and nurses involved in treading sleeping disorders. Similarly, in the study life and treatment situation of homeless adolescents, Flick (2016) interviewed not only the homeless adolescents but also social workers and physicians to understand their perceptions of how the adolescents deal with their situation. It is important to note that in both these studies, the purpose of the interviews with experts was not to validate the findings from the interviews of the people experiencing the phenomena but to create additional knowledge by understanding the perspectives of those who deal with closely with the phenomenon.

In this dissertation research, in addition to interviewing 32 senior change leaders, I also interviewed 9 change practitioners – management consultants and executive

coaches – who had the experience of working closely with several of the change leaders to get wider perspectives on the phenomenon being studied. These practitioners have the advantage of observing change leaders' actions from 'ring side' seats and therefore provide additional perspectives on the contexts, reactions and behaviors of change leaders. While change leaders in course of their career have opportunities to work in a limited number of transformational change initiatives, consultants and executive coaches have the opportunity to work in a larger number of transformation initiatives and therefore can provide a broader perspective on the phenomenon.

These interviews for perspective triangulation were primarily conducted in the initial phases of the research and provided valuable insights on which topics to explore and what to look out for when studying change leaders' reactions to change. As before, while the data from these interviews were analyzed, the insights generated from these perspective triangulation interviews were used for the purposes of theory building only if they were confirmed in the interviews with change leaders. For example, P8 had provided examples of change leaders overestimating their own capabilities or taking too much control when things were not going well. The examples of these behaviors were also observed in the interviews with change leaders. Therefore, these insights were included in theory building. On the other hand, P4 had provided an example of a toxic leader who was primarily motivated by the financial rewards linked to the successful implementation of change and tried to push through the change at any cost, even if that meant engaging in destructive behavior. Since examples of such motivation and

behavior did not emerge in the interviews with the change leaders, these particular observations were not used for theory building.

Critical incident interviewing. The risk of participants 'smoothing over' their experiences during the interviews can also be mitigated to an extent by asking interviewees to recall the critical incidents while leading change and provide specific examples of experiences (Charmaz, 2014). For example, if an interviewee described the experience as stressful or frustrating, I asked them questions such "Could you please provide give me some examples of specific situations when you were feeling frustrated or stressed? What was going on there? What made it frustrating/stressful?"

Sample size. I conducted an initial round of 5 interviews with two change leaders (L16 and L17) and three practitioners (P5, P6 and P8) selected through purposeful sampling criteria defined above. The purpose of the initial round of interviews was to acquire a general understanding of the phenomenon of leaders' reactions to the change they are leading, including the antecedents and consequences of those reactions. As categories started to emerge from the initial analysis of the data, I moved to a more theoretical approach to sampling, where the focus was to gather more insights into emerging categories of analysis. In line with the principles of the grounded theory approach, the data collection through theoretical sampling and concurrent analysis continued until the research reached the point of theoretical saturation for key categories (Charmaz, 2014).

Following this approach, I conducted 70 interviews in total. I collected the data on the reaction to change of 32 senior change leaders using 44 interviews (12 change leaders were interviewed more than once for collecting additional information on

emerging categories). In addition, I conducted 17 data triangulation interviews (Flick, 2019) with the people who had worked closely with the change leaders to validate the key aspects of the information the latter had provided in their interviews. Furthermore, for the purposes of perspective triangulation (Flick et al., 2012; Flick, 2016), I interviewed 9 change practitioners (consultants and executive coaches) who worked closely with several of the senior change leaders. The breakdown of the number of interviews by different types of interviewees is given in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Interviews by Type and Interviewees

Interviewee type	**Number of first-round interviews**	**Number of follow-up interviews**	**Number of data triangulation interviews**	**Subtotal**
Change leaders (N=32)	32	12	17	61
Change practitioners (N=9)	9	-	-	9
Subtotal	41	12	17	Total = 70

While theoretical saturation and not the sample size is the key criteria for quality in grounded theory research, and there are no specific rules for the number of interviews to reach saturation, I believe that studying the lived experience size of 32 key respondents (senior change leaders) fits with the recommendation of 20–30 interviews from Creswell (1998) and 30–50 interviews from Morse (1994) for grounded theory research.

Sample selection. The change leaders and change practitioners interviewed for this research stemmed from my own network, either from the MBA alumni network of a

leading European business school where I had studied or individuals I know through my professional connections in my capacity as a strategy and leadership coach. I created an initial list of potential candidates for interviews based on my own knowledge and from input from colleagues and fellow alumni. The potential candidates were approached on the phone or through email, WhatsApp or text messages. The research topic was explained to them and I asked if they would be interested in participating. From the sample of those individuals who had shown interest in participating, I verified that they fulfilled the criteria for purposeful sampling. Of the 32 change leaders interviewed, 19 were responsible for either initiating or sponsoring the transformational change, while 13 were either SROs or PMs for change being implemented across their organizations, including areas outside their own direct responsibility. 15 were CEOs or head of their organization (level ‘N’), 7 were at N-1 level, 7 at N-2 level and 3 at N-3 level.

In terms of organizational size, 15 of the change leaders were from organizations with more than 10,000 people, 3 from organizations of 5000–10000 people, 11 from organizations of 1000–5000 people, and 3 from organizations from 100 up to 1000 people. Profiles of change leaders, the context of the change they were leading as well as their roles in leading the change (initiator, sponsor, SRO or PM) are provided in Appendix C. The breakdown of the change leaders by the organization size and their level within the organizational hierarchy is provided in Appendix D.

Of 17 data triangulation interviewees, 16 were the direct reports of the respective change leaders at the time of the change program discussed for this research, and 1 (T30) was a board member who coached and supervised the change leader L30 (CEO

of a private equity owned company). Of the 9 change practitioners interviewed, 3 are management consultants, 3 are executive coaches, 2 combine the roles of management consultants and executive coaches, and 1 was a senior academic and executive coach. Profiles of change practitioners are provided in Appendix E.

All of the individuals interviewed have work experience of 20 years or more. Of the 32 change leaders, 31 were male and 1 (L4) was female. Of the 9 practitioners interviewed, 7 were male and 2 were female. Of the 32 change leaders, 7 (L3, L4, L12, L18, L22, L27 and L31) were between 40 and 50 years old during the period when they were leading the change they discussed in the interviews and the remaining 25 were more than 50 years old. Of the change practitioners, two (P5 and P6) were in the 40–50 age group and the other seven were older than 50. Of the change programs discussed by the 32 change leaders, 11 provided information on changes across the globe, 8 in Western Europe, 4 in Eastern Europe, 4 in the Middle East, 2 in the Americas, 2 in Asia-Pacific, and 1 in Africa. All change practitioners were based in Western Europe.

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Following the recommendations from Charmaz (2014), I have used the technique of intensive interviewing involving a gently guided conversation with the interviewer asking open-ended questions to explore the interviewee's substantive experience of the topic of research. The data gathered then informs the grounded theory research approach and is used to help answer the question 'what is happening here?' (in terms of both basic social and psychological processes) in the context of the research question. With this objective in mind, I developed initial interview protocols with a list of open-ended questions to ask the participants to reflect on their experiences of leading change

(or in case of change practitioners, their observations of change leaders in action). The initial protocol was based on sensitizing concepts (Charmaz, 2014) such as role demands of change leadership, personal and organizational resources, reaction to change, leaders' behaviors and change outcomes that had emerged from the initial literature review. The purpose of using the sensitizing concepts in grounded theory research is to begin the inquiry by providing initial but tentative ideas and questions that raise and explore the research topic. The sensitizing concepts are not intended to impose a particular theoretical framework on the research but instead (as the notion of an open-ended question suggests) to offer a prompt for the interviewee to use as a starting point for reflection.

The initial interview protocols are provided in Appendices F (for change leaders) and G (for change practitioners). The first 5 interviews with interviewees L16, L17, P5, P6 and P8 revealed that the interviewees saw the questions in the protocol as an invitation to discuss what the role and experiences of change leaders should be as opposed to what they themselves had experienced and observed while leading change or supporting change leaders. I then adapted my questions to gently guide the interviewees to talk about their own experiences. I later modified the interview protocol to ask two critical questions and a few follow-up questions/prompts to delve deeper into the interviewees' experiences. The modified interview protocol questions and follow-up prompts are as follows:

Q1. I would like to invite you to reflect on your experience of leading transformational change (supporting change leaders) and tell me about what part of the role you (change

leaders you worked with) found exciting/motivating and what part of it you found demanding/challenging?

Follow-up questions/prompts:

- *What made the role exciting/challenging?*
- *What factors were at play? Why were they important?*
- *What support were you getting from the organization?*
- *Which of your own personal qualities/skills did you find most useful in your role?*
- *What was going on for you personally (for change leaders or clients you worked with) at that time? How were your (your client's) levels of motivation and energy? What emotions were you (your client) experiencing?*
- *How did that impact your (your client's) behavior/decision-making/leadership style?*
- *What was the impact on the people/change/organization?*
- *Can you please provide me with specific examples/details?*

Q2. Based on your personal experience, what advice would you give to leaders taking on a change leadership role? (Variation – Based on what you know now, what advice would you give to yourself of xxx years ago when you started the change leadership role?)

Follow-up questions/prompts:

- *What makes the advice you identified important?*
- *What else do change leaders need to know to be more effective?*

Consistent with the grounded theory approach of simultaneous data collection and analysis combined with constant comparison and theoretical sampling, the specific

questions asked in the interviews (and particularly in the follow-up questions) evolved with the research and were adapted to allow me to generate deeper insights into the themes that were emerging from the data. For example, in the later stages of research, after the categories of gain and loops had been developed, the topic of theoretical interest moved towards understanding how change leaders shifted between experiencing hindrance and challenge stress, what factors caused this shift, for how long these shifts lasted, and what the consequences of these shifts were. These questions were particularly relevant for the follow-up interviews with change leaders. Nevertheless, the two main questions outlined above remained largely unchanged for the first-round interviews with the change leaders.

Simplifying the protocol to two main questions made the interviews more 'intensive' in that they became more conversational, allowing space for the interviewees to remember, reflect and talk about their experiences. In addition, asking interviewees to remember the critical incidents by bringing specific examples of their experiences mitigated (to some degree) the limitations of retrospective interviews such as interviewees performing for the interviewers, smoothing over their experiences, and not always telling what they have actually done (Higgs & Rowland, 2011; Charmaz, 2014).

Triangulation interviews with the colleagues of the change leaders were geared towards identifying what the interviewees felt were the most exciting and challenging parts of the change for the change leader concerned, and then getting the interviewee's perspective on some of the critical incidents (e.g., tough board meetings, facing opposition to change from the employees, unexpected crises, etc.) that the change leaders had mentioned with focus on what caused these incidents, what behaviors were

observed in change leaders during the incident, and what the consequences of these incidents were on the change leaders themselves, the people around them, and the change initiative. The protocol for triangulation interviews is provided in Appendix H.

DATA COLLECTION

The shortlisted candidates for interviews who had shown interest and availability to participate in the research and who fulfilled the criteria of purposeful sampling were contacted for a suitable time and date for an interview. An email with the calendar invitation was sent out to the interviewees. All the interviews were scheduled to be held either in face-to-face meetings or through video conferencing applications such as Facetime, Zoom, Skype, MS Teams or WeChat. Of the 70 interviews conducted, 8 were conducted in face-to-face meetings, 56 through video conferences, and only 6 were through an audio-only connection due to insufficient internet bandwidth to support a video conference.

I began the interviews with a short description of the topic of the research, confirmed the time available for the interview, and explained the process by which the data would be and analyzed. I emphasized the confidentiality of the information they provided for this research and explained how they would be protected by anonymizing the names of the interviewees and their organizations they worked with in the interview transcript as well as any other information that would allow identification. I also reminded the interviewees that they had the option to ask me for the interview transcript and to remove from it any information that they thought would be revealing confidential information. After agreeing on the process, I asked the interviewees for their permission to record the interview electronically. All the interviewees except two change leaders

(L17 and L31) and five interviewees for data triangulation (T16, T17, T20, T25 and T31) agreed to be recorded. The interviewees who did not want to be recorded were mainly based in the Middle East (except T25) and because of the cultural specifics of the region were not comfortable to discuss sensitive topics around their organizations, colleagues and bosses on the record. In fact, L31 initially agreed to be recorded, but as soon as the interview moved on to an emotionally charged topic of the pressure he was experiencing from the stakeholders and his reactions to this pressure, he asked the recording to be stopped if I wanted to hear the 'full story'. T25 motivated his request not to be recorded because what he said were 'data protection issues'. I respected all the requests not to record the interviews without further discussion. In cases where the participants did not want to be recorded, I took much more detailed notes than I did during the other interviews, sometimes even requesting the interviewees to pause while I made sure that I had captured all the important points. I then typed out a transcript of the interview from the notes on the day of the interview itself while it was still fresh in my memory.

Most first-round interviews with SCLs lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. The second-round interviews with SCLs and the data triangulation interviews lasted 30-45 minutes. All interviews except those with L9, L12, L18, L27, L28, T18, T22 and T27 were conducted in English. The interview with L9 was conducted in English with the interviewee using Hindi about 5% of the time to describe situations that were highly emotionally charged for him, while the interviews with L12, L18, L27, L28, T18 and T27 were primarily conducted in Russian with some concepts discussed in English. T22 started the interview in French, but as he became more comfortable with the context of

the interview, he moved to English himself. Although all interviewees were fluent in English, I found that giving the interviewees the opportunity to reflect on their lived experiences of leading change in the language of their choice to talk about topics that were linked with strong emotions resulted in the interviewees being more open about sharing their feelings and thoughts, resulting in more vivid descriptions and richer data (I have near-native fluency in Russian and Hindi and have working knowledge of French). At the end of the interview, I asked the interviewee's permission to contact him or her again for any clarifications and about the possibility of having a follow-up discussion on emerging topics that needed further exploration.

DATA PREPARATION

The recordings of the interviews were initially transcribed verbatim. For the interviewees who did not agree for the interviews to be recorded, the transcript was produced from extensive handwritten notes. The interviews with L12, L18, L27, L28, T18 and T27 which were conducted in Russian were transcribed directly into English by a translator. Interviews with L9, which was conducted in a mix of English and Hindi, and T22, which started in French and switched to English, were directly transcribed by me into English. I reviewed the quality of the transcripts (and the translation in cases of L12, L18, L27, L28, T18 and T27) by going through them line by line while listening to the recordings and comparing them with the handwritten notes I had made during the interview. If there were parts of the transcript that were not clear because of the quality of the recording or because of the acronyms and industry jargon used by the interviewees, I contacted the interviewees for clarification. The adjustments I had to make to the transcripts as the result of the quality check were minimal. I then

anonymized the transcripts by assigning codes to the interviewees. All change leaders were coded starting with “L” followed by a number, practitioners were assigned a code starting with “P” followed by a number, and the interviewees for triangulation were assigned a code starting with a letter “T” followed by the number assigned to the change leader they were providing the data for (e.g., L1 for change leader 1, P1 for change practitioner 1, T18 for the triangulation interviewee for L18). I further anonymized the data by replacing any names, words and phrases that could reveal the identities of the interviewees or the organizations they referred to in the interviews by codes for interviewees and a combination of random letters for names of other individuals and organizations (e.g., xxx, yyy, zzz). I also removed some filler words (e.g., um, ah, hmm, etc.) in contexts where they did not add any useful information or reflect the interviewees’ emotions. The transcripts from the 70 interviews conducted comprise over 730 pages of single-spaced text with over 350,000 words.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis involved examining underlying meaning in data, reducing it to abstract concepts and summarizing it. Following the practices of data analysis in the grounded theory method (Charmaz, 2014), the data were analyzed through a number of concurrent processes – coding, memo-writing, constant comparison and theoretical sampling.

Coding. Coding, or the process of defining what data is about, is at the foundation of data analysis in qualitative research. It involves taking the data apart and assigning ‘codes’ or labels that assign symbolic meaning to ‘chunks’ of information collected during the study (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Unlike in other research

methodologies, in grounded theory codes are not developed from pre-conceived categories. They are created by researchers from what they see and the patterns they discern in the data. The codes emerge as the result of researchers studying and interacting with their data. Coding therefore becomes a pivotal link between the collection of data and the development of emergent theory to explain the data. As recommended by Charmaz (2014), I coded the data in three phases – initial, focused and theoretical coding.

Initial coding involved the early process of engaging with and defining the data. Following recommendations from Charmaz (2014), I stayed close to the data and analyzed it from the perspective of the interviewees by coding for actions using gerunds (e.g., leading, being excited, getting frustrated, etc.). Charmaz (2014) also recommends doing line-by-line coding at the beginning of the research. Line by line coding encourages the researchers to actively engage with the data, bracket their preconceptions, and see it from new perspectives and generate fresh ideas. Aligned with Charmaz's (2014) recommendations, I have conducted line-by-line coding for an initial set of interviews until I had generated a sufficient number of codes to pursue, after which I assigned codes to larger chunks of data such as sentences or paragraphs.

Focused coding is a process of analyzing the initial codes (sometimes referred to as 'coding the codes') to come up with codes that have analytical strength and that can be raised into tentative categories for further development. The process involves concentrating on the most frequent or significant codes among the initial codes and testing them against large batches of data to select the codes with the most analytical strength. It also involves devising new codes that subsume numerous initial codes

under a single category. I followed Charmaz's (2014: 140) recommendations and considered the following questions when comparing codes to codes and developing focused codes that best serve to direct the analysis, clarify the theoretical centrality of emerging ideas, and create a skeleton for the further analysis:

- What do you find when you compare your initial codes with data?
- In which ways might your initial codes reveal patterns?
- Which of these codes best account for the data?
- Have you raised these codes to focused codes?
- What do your comparisons between codes indicate?
- Do your focused codes reveal gaps in data?

For example, using this approach, I created a focused code called 'experiencing negative emotions' which subsumed a wide range of initial codes such as 'feeling bad', 'feeling betrayed', 'feeling angry', 'being frustrated', etc.

Theoretical coding involves creating codes that integrate the categories and conceptualize the relationship between them to help create a coherent analytic story. Theoretical codes do not replace the substantive codes generated during analysis. Instead, they help in identifying the underlying structure and relationships among the substantive codes (Charmaz, 2014). If focused coding creates a skeleton for analysis, then theoretical coding forms the spine of that skeleton, supporting the overarching analytical framework and connecting all parts of the coding process (Saldaña, 2009). For example, after analyzing the focused codes such as 'experiencing negative emotions', 'feeling depleted' and 'feeling demotivated/disengaged' and comparing the findings with the extant literature, a second-order theme of 'hindrance stress' was

developed. After comparing this second-order theme with other emerging themes such as ‘ineffective behavior’, ‘setbacks’ and ‘loss of resources’ and analyzing the relationships between them, and how they impacted appraisal (and reappraisal) of change leaders of their situations, the category ‘doom loop’ emerged.

Instruments for coding. I performed the initial coding in two steps. First, I manually took notes on a piece of paper while reviewing the quality of the transcripts. I then uploaded the edited transcripts into NVivo software (v12) and used the application for detailed initial coding making sure that the codes from handwritten notes were reflected in the codes created in the software. I then used the software to analyze, sort and group the codes to create both focused and theoretical codes.[6]

Memo-writing. Writing analytical memos is an important part of data analysis in the development of grounded theory. Analytical memos are notes in which researchers capture their reflections and ideas throughout the research process. They are not just the summaries of data or a description of the process. Memos rather are about trying to synthesize the ideas emerging in the researcher’s mind into a higher level of analytical meaning. They are a powerful and useful tool for sensemaking about emerging codes and categories and help drive the research process from data analysis to theorizing. They also often serve as an intermediate step between data collection and writing paper drafts (Charmaz, 2014; Miles et al., 2014; Saldaña, 2009).

I wrote numerous analytical memos throughout the process of data collection and analysis, usually after conducting an interview or the initial coding of the interview

[6] The ‘node tree’ from Nvivo with full list of initial codes arranged by the first order concepts, second order themes and theoretical categories is available on request.

transcript. The analytical memos were either in the form of text written in MS Word or diagrams drawn on paper or in MS PowerPoint. I used the memos to reflect on the following aspects of the research:

- What were the insights coming from the interviews?
- What codes, themes and categories emerged?
- How do the emerging themes and categories compare with the data reflected in previous interviews?
- Which of the previous interviews need to be revisited/recoded in light of emerging insights?
- What follow-up questions do I need to ask the participants I have already interviewed?
- What topics should I explore and what type of data should I collect in future interviews?
- How are the emerging categories related? What are the implications for the emerging theoretical model?
- How do the findings relate to the extant literature? In what new areas do I need to review literature to position the findings?
- How best to represent the findings/visualize the emerging theoretical model?
- How did the interview go? What do I need to do differently in order to extract the most useful data from the interviewees?

I found the analytical memos to be very useful tools in synthesizing my thinking throughout the research process. They ensured the process involved constant comparison and documented the results of those reflections and assisted me in moving

from initial codes to focused, data-based codes as well as from focused codes to categories and theoretical codes. They were also instrumental in aiding in the development of ideas for theoretical sampling and especially in constructing the theoretical model. During the course of the research, I have created over 40 memos which are documented in 24 MS Word files which add up to 120+ pages of single-spaced text (over 48,000 words) and more than 60 diagrams (handwritten and in MS PowerPoint).

THEORETICAL SAMPLING AND SATURATION

As recommended by Charmaz (2014), after preliminary categories started emerging from data analysis, I moved from purposeful sampling to theoretical sampling to advance my research. Theoretical sampling involves seeking people, events or information that define properties, boundaries and relevance of the emerging categories. Theoretical sampling is used to elaborate and refine the categories constituting the emergent theory. The purpose of theoretical sampling is for the conceptual and theoretical development of the analysis. It is explicitly not about representing a population or increasing the statistical generalizability of results.

Theoretical sampling in the case of my research evolved in two dimensions. A first dimension involved looking for participants who could provide more data so that I could generate deeper insights into the properties of the emerging categories. For example, as preliminary categories such as ‘complexity’, ‘pressure’, ‘fear of failure’ and ‘threat’ emerged from the interviews, I started to look to interview leaders who were involved in particularly complex and challenging change initiatives where these categories were likely to be more pronounced. Similarly, as the research moved on to

exploring how leaders shifted from experiencing challenge stress to hindrance stress and vice-versa, I started to look for change leaders who were engaged in change initiatives of longer durations where such shifts were likely to be more frequent and more pronounced. A second dimension for theoretical sampling involved the questions I asked interviewees regarding their reflections about particularly informative incidents. The questions I asked them became more focused on exploring the properties of the categories which needed more data to reach the point of theoretical saturation.

In grounded theory, data collection and analysis continue until the point of theoretical saturation, at which gathering more data about a theoretical category reveals no new properties nor yields any further theoretical insights about the emerging grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014: 345). The decision regarding whether the categories have reached the point of theoretical saturation is ultimately subjective. Charmaz (2014) suggests making comparisons of data within and between categories to see if these comparisons reveal any new properties, directions or conceptual relationships in order to assess whether saturation was achieved. I believe this research reached the point of theoretical saturation; while the interviews conducted at the final stages (e.g., with L31 and L32) provided new examples of the reactions of change leaders' to the demands of their role, and provided additional confirmation for the emerging theoretical model, the data from these interviews did not generate any additional theoretical insights.

ROLE OF EXTANT LITERATURE AND RESEARCHER'S PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

The approach to extant literature and the researcher's prior knowledge in the 'informed' grounded theory approach recommended by Thornberg (2012) and Charmaz (2014) is very different from the one in classic grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss,

1967). In classic grounded theory, the data is considered to be objective, and the researcher ‘discovers’ the theory by approaching the data with a blank slate and without an agenda. In order to avoid the contamination of the discovery of the theory from the data by forcing prior theories and knowledge, in the methodology of classic grounded theory engagement with literature is left to the end of the research process.

On the other hand, in the methodology of ‘informed’ grounded theory both the data and theory are considered to be co-constructed by researchers and participants in the field as a result of their interactions. As such, the data, its analysis and the emergent theory are influenced by the researcher’s and participants’ historical, cultural and social setting, their academic backgrounds and world views (Charmaz, 2014; Thornberg, 2012; Thornberg & Dunne, 2019). Instead of pretending to ignore that their prior knowledge may influence the research process, researchers are encouraged to reflexively engage the data and explicate their preconceptions and positions during all phases of the research process. In the methodology of ‘informed’ grounded theory, the researcher therefore approaches both the data and the extant knowledge with an open mind rather than a *tabula rasa*. This means that pre-existing theories and research findings (as well as the concepts and theories that are being developed by the researcher) are treated as provisional, fallible, open to challenge and in need of (re)adjustment, correction and (re)construction. The researcher is encouraged to use extant knowledge as a possible source of inspiration, explanation and abduction, while recognizing the limitations with respect to the explanatory power existing knowledge and the researcher’s own world view have. Informed grounded theory therefore is not just the product of the research process but the research process itself, in which both

the process and the product have been thoroughly grounded in data by grounded theory methods while being informed by existing research literature and theoretical frameworks. The methodology of informed grounded theory therefore is infused by the existing research literature and theoretical frameworks while not necessarily being influenced by them (Thornberg, 2012; Thornberg & Dunne, 2019).

In my research, I have followed Thornberg's (2012) recommendations on informed grounded theory approach and have engaged with the extant literature in three phases. The first phase—the initial literature review outlined in the previous chapter—was conducted before data collection. The objective of this review was to understand the landscape of current knowledge on the topic of the reaction of change leaders to change—to help establish if, how, when, where, why and by whom the topic has been studied to date. The framework of Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model used to organize the literature review was intended as a useful framework for creating a structure to organize, analyze and synthesize extant knowledge on the topic (as opposed to being used as a theoretical framework to be imposed on future data). The extent to which the JD-R model influenced the initial phases of research was limited to generating sensitizing concepts that were included in the preliminary versions of the interview protocols to provide the basis for a list of questions to approach the field.

The second phase of engagement involved an ongoing literature review that took place during data collection and analysis. It was heavily influenced by the emerging themes and categories and involved seeking literature that relates to the findings from the data. As such, there was an iterative process of constant comparison among the extant literature and the data, emerging codes and analytical memos. The literature

reviewed in this stage followed the same logic of theoretical sampling that was used for data collection, i.e. the search for literature was guided by the codes, concepts and questions generated during data analysis. The literature review in turn led to a fresh analysis of the emerging codes and concepts with new lenses and approaching the data with new ideas. Literature review at this stage was an integral part of data analysis and not a stand-alone activity.

The final phase of the literature review occurred towards the end of the study after the analysis had been completed and an emergent grounded theory model had been developed. The objective of this phase of the literature review was to locate the study within or across the disciplines by contextualizing the constructed grounded theory in relation to established theoretical ideas.

Throughout this research, the extant literature and my own prior knowledge and preconceptions were not imposed on the data. Rather, they were used to inform the data collection process, and for constant comparison with the emergent themes, categories and theory, while keeping in mind the possible limitations of extant knowledge and remaining reflexively aware and vigilant of how my own preconceptions may be influencing the research process.

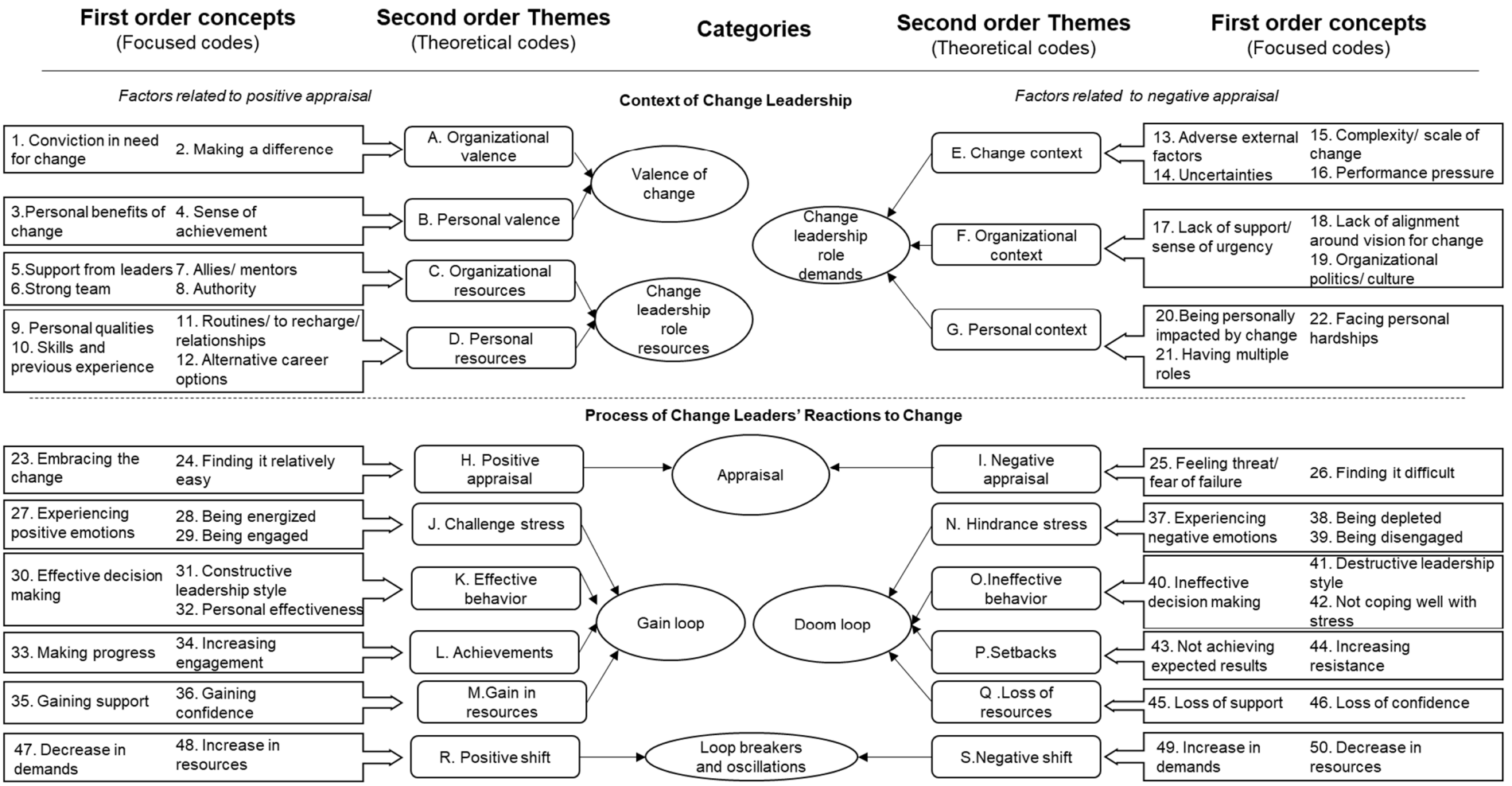
CHAPTER 3: FINDINGS

The study of SCLs' reactions to the transformational changes they were leading revealed a complex process of appraisal and reappraisal regarding the valence of change, the demands of the role and resources available throughout the change implementation. These (re)appraisals framed the reactions SCLs experienced that in turn influenced the effectiveness of their behaviors and the progress of the change initiatives they were leading—which then further impacted their resources, leading to further reappraisals and the continued evolution of SCLs' reactions and organizational outcomes. Figure 3.1 represents the emergent data structure regarding SCLs' responses to change, illustrating the interaction among first-order concepts (terms adequate at the level of meaning of the participants of the study), second-order themes (built from theoretically clustered first-order concepts), and, finally, the overarching dimensions (categories that served as the foundation for the emergent grounded theory model of SCLs' appraisal and response to change process). Table I.1 (in Appendix I) contains additional supporting evidence referenced in Figure 3.1, representing quotes from the participants of the study grouped by first-order concepts and second-order themes. The synthesis of the themes and categories from the emergent data structure revealed two larger domains – the 'change leadership context' to describe the contextual factors that influence the SCLs' appraisal of their situation and the 'process of change leaders' response' to describe the SCLs' appraisal of their situation and the resulting responses they experience. These domains are located at the top and bottom of Figure 3.1 respectively. In each domain, the categories and themes related to positive appraisal are on the left side of Figure 3.1, while those related to negative appraisal are shown on the right side.

I begin this chapter by discussing these themes and categories, illustrating them with representative data obtained in this study. I first review the findings regarding how the SCLs' appraisal of their situation is influenced by the perceived valence of change and the demands and resources of the change leadership role. This is followed by a discussion of the resulting responses of SCLs and the impact on their effectiveness, progress of change initiatives and resources. Finally, I describe how SCLs' (re)appraisals and their responses evolve over the course of the change initiatives, along with the evolution in demands, resources and valence.

After the discussion of emergent categories, I use case vignettes of four SCLs to illustrate the complex interplay of these categories that led the reactions of SCLs to evolve as the valence, demands, resources and the resulting (re)appraisals changed. I conclude this chapter by presenting the emergent grounded theory model that offers an integrated picture of the relationship among these categories with regard to SCLs' reaction to change and constitutes the cornerstone of the theoretical contribution of this research.

Figure 3.1 Data Structure for the Theoretical Model of SCLs' Reaction to Change



EMERGENT CATEGORIES

Employing the coded data found in the first-order concepts, second-order theoretical coding led to the emergence of themes that were then reflectively combined into overarching categories. The categories of the emergent grounded theory model are discussed below and illustrated using the data obtained in this study.

Appraisal

The data from this study shows that at the core of how SCLs responded to the change they were leading was their appraisal of their context: the demands of the role, the resources available to cope with these demands and their perception of the change valence. In line with the transactional theory of stress described by Lepine et al. (2004), change leaders in this study were found to be constantly appraising (and reappraising) their situation at two levels. The primary appraisal occurred around the valence of the change—whether the change itself or change leadership role were aligned with the interests of the organization or their own (Holt et al., 2007). The secondary appraisal involved assessing whether the leaders had sufficient resources (organizational or personal) to cope with the demands of their roles.

Change leaders participating in this study found their role to be mentally, emotionally and physically demanding due to three key contributing factors. First, transformational change was complex and often involved implementing simultaneous change across multiple dimensions and entities in an organization under performance pressure from stakeholders and in an environment of uncertainty and ambiguity. These complexities were further exacerbated by adverse external conditions such as increased levels of competition, disruptive changes in the environment or market crisis,

which typically prompted the change in the first place. The interviewees noted that the demands of leading such change were in addition to their ‘day jobs’ of running an organization, resulting in a significant increase in workload. A second contributing factor that emerged from the data was the need for leaders to navigate and align the often-opposing interests of various stakeholder groups of the organizations who are not always supportive of the transformation (and sometimes even resistant to it). Finally, SCLs in this study were also personally impacted by the change, and not always in a positive way. Like any other change recipient, they had to invest effort and energy to cope with the difficulties that change posed to them and to adapt themselves to the new environment. For some SCLs, taking on change leadership responsibilities could mean a change in their position and identity in the organization. For others, having the responsibility of leading change meant a steep learning curve and spending significant amounts of time and energy gaining new knowledge and skills. For others still, the deepest personal impact stemmed from decisions involving letting people go, particularly when they had a sense of personal loyalty and responsibility to the individuals involved. As a result of these demands, SCLs found that they had to invest substantially more mental and emotional effort into their change leader role and experienced considerably higher workloads than when they were in roles that did not involve leading change.

The way SCLs responded to these demands was influenced by how they appraised their situation. When SCLs positively appraised their situations (i.e., perceived the change to be beneficial and believed that they had sufficient resources to deal with the demands), it resulted in them being motivated by and embracing their

roles, linking change outcomes with their success and experiencing positive emotions upon finding their role challenging but relatively easy to perform. This positive appraisal was similar in kind to the perception of challenge stress (Lepine et al., 2004), which is associated with perceiving a situation as conducive to personal growth, leading to individuals feeling engaged and energized. Positive appraisal of situations results in individuals being willing to invest additional effort when confronted with demands (Crawford et al., 2010). On the other hand, when SCLs negatively appraised their situations (i.e., did not perceive the change to be beneficial to the organization or themselves, or believed that they did not have sufficient resources to deal with the demands), they described feeling threatened by the change or the responsibility of implementing it, experiencing pressure and fearing failure or retaliation and finding it difficult to perform their roles. This negative appraisal was similar in kind to the perception of hindrance stress (Lepine et al., 2004), which is associated with perceiving a situation as potentially harmful or threatening, resulting in disengagement and emotional depletion. Negative appraisal of situations results in individuals being unwilling to invest additional effort when confronted with demands (Crawford et al., 2010).

In the sections that follow, I elaborate on the interaction among the valence of the change, the demands of the change leadership role and the resources available that were associated with SCLs positively and negatively appraising their situations and the responses that resulted.

Positive appraisal. The perception of positive valence, i.e., the extent to which SCLs' believed the successful implementation of the change would be beneficial for

their organizations and/or themselves, was seen as the most important factor in the leaders appraising their situations positively. Almost all the SCLs interviewed for this research reported perceiving the change to be beneficial (at least at its initial stages). SCLs perceiving positive organizational valence held deep convictions regarding the need for change in order to ensure the organization's competitiveness, long-term viability, and reputation (even their survival for companies in crisis). For example, L6, the CEO of a global engineering services company, described his discomfort at the status-quo and the need for urgent change as follows:

> From the outside it seems like it's a little money machine, but from the inside in fact there are multiple serious challenges even for the seemingly successful business and market challenges, competitive challenges, organization challenges, lots and lots of them... There's a shared view, certainly in the executive, that it's not sustainable. We need one of the major issues that we have to blow up for the whole facade to crack. (L6)

For other participants of the study, transformational change was seen as something that went beyond ensuring the competitive advantage and the survival of their organizations. They saw leading change as an opportunity for 'making a difference'. This involved opening new opportunities for growth for their organizations and people, taking them to the next level of performance, and even making positive contributions to the greater good for their customers and society writ large. For some leaders, this type of change was intertwined with their own deep sense of personal purpose and meaning. This was the case for L11, who described his motivations in

instituting the change program he was sponsoring to transform the health and safety performance in a global transportation company:

> Here is a chance to make an impact that's more meaningful or more relevant than just more money, right? … What is it you want your legacy to be? Do you want your tombstone to read... [that] you added a lot of shareholder value, that's all fine, right? But it doesn't really matter. … But here, if you just kind of think about the math, you know, we had 12 or 14 people that died every year [of accidents], we got it down to about 2 or 3 … that's ten people a year that are alive that otherwise wouldn't have been. (L11)

Change was also seen to be personally beneficial for leaders, not only in terms of opportunities for career growth or rewards linked to successful execution, but also as a way of improving future career prospects in the market. L31 saw the successful implementation of the transformation he was leading in a large government agency as a way of improving his future career prospects in the market:

> If I'm successful in this role, my value in the market will go up. This is a very highly visible role. So if I'm successful, people will notice me. Hopefully, this will result in new opportunities for growth for me in the future. (L31)

Finally, for most of the SCLs interviewed in this study, successful change implementation was seen as intrinsically motivating and providing a sense of achievement—an opportunity for interesting and intellectually stimulating work that required learning new skills and offered personal development. As the CEO of a mining company, L28 saw the chance to turn around the operational performance of a failing

mine as an opportunity to prove to himself and others what he was capable of achieving:

> Even though no one believed us, it took us about 1-1,5 years to increase the production rate two-fold without significant investments. What's inspiring is that first, it's visible and second, you think that it's never been done before. (L28)

Leaders who experienced a positive valence were energized to pursue the change goal and this energy served as a resource that fueled their engagement throughout the change process—even when they experienced mental, emotional, and/or physical fatigue in response to the demands of the role. This finding supports Baumeister & Vohs' (2007) proposition that positive motivation enables individuals who are experiencing depletion of their cognitive, emotional or physical resources to unlock residual self-regulatory resources needed to deal with demanding tasks.

While the motivation and energy from the perception of positive valence served as a crucial resource for the leaders to appraise their situation positively, organizational and personal resources available to change leaders also played an important role in the appraisal process. One of the most critical organizational resources that SCLs needed to deal with the complexities, uncertainties and organizational politics around the change (as well opposition and resistance) was the support from their leaders (and for CEOs support from their boards). This support allowed them to acquire other important resources like the authority to implement the change and access to human and financial resources to aid them in performing their roles. Having support from leadership also provided change leaders with the 'air cover' they needed to deal with the organizational politics, opposition to change and adverse reaction from stakeholders. They also found

it easier to make strategic decisions that removed obstacles to change and facilitated a mindset shift in the people of their organization. This certainly was the case for L25, who was leading the complex transformation of a business model of a global IT services company. The fact that he had full support from his CEO, the authority to implement the change and access to financial resources for change implementation resulted in a positive appraisal of his situation despite the enormity of the challenge facing him:

> I report to the CEO… Our CEO said [that] this is maybe one of the most important programs our company has ever embarked …I'm fortunate because I have a sizable budget… So if somebody is in trouble or something is behind, I actually have some money to throw at it, which helps a lot. Because if I was under the stress also of being tight on money, and tight on time, that's when you know, lots and lots and lots of issues can [happen] …. we're driving this, to try to get this done faster than what the original plan was, because it's important for our company, and particularly because it's in a COVID environment, I think it's kind of kept everybody's energy levels at a pretty high level. (L25)

Another critical organizational resource for SCLs in dealing with the challenges of their role was having a strong team—one which was appropriately staffed, possessed the right motivation and had the right skills and experience (including those that an SCL lacked). Change leaders who could trust their teams found that they could delegate work to team members, thereby reducing their own workload. They also found having a diversity of opinions and expertise on the team allowed them to come up with better ideas on how to shape and implement the change. The team members' knowledge of the organization and their relationships were also a useful resource for change leaders

in convincing people of the need for change and navigating the organizational politics with less effort. For instance, a CEO implementing a complex transformational program for a utility company (L17), found that his extensive previous experience leading large organizations meant that he “had the (relational) leadership skills to influence and motivate people, understand their fears and concerns, calm them down,” however, he lacked “the technical skills [to navigate] all aspects of the transformation.” He relied on his team that included technical experts to complement his skills and provide him with the confidence that the collective expertise of the team could shepherd the organization through the transformation.

In addition to skills and experience, personal qualities such as resilience, maturity and the ability to deal with ambiguity and uncertainty were mentioned by SCLs as important resources for dealing with the challenges of the role. For L32, a CEO of a global engineering goods company implementing a transformation of its business model, his resilience and maturity as well as his 25 years of experience of successfully implementing transformational change proved to be a useful resource in dealing with the demands associated with the complexities of change:

> There will be a lot of forces who will try to prove that this is stupid, just expensive and it was better and faster and cheaper in the former organizational model…. It's a tedious road, where your part is basically you orchestrate a huge load of motivation…. [deal with] people with tempers, with the egos of people... And then get the backlash of the system... If you find this stressful in a way that you can't sleep, your digestive system goes hiccups or whatever can happen to you, then [it’s] a different thing. I am too old for this kind of stuff. (L32)

The demands of the change leadership role can deplete SCLs mentally, physically and emotionally. SCLs reported that having personal resources such as a support network of family and friends and routines for recharging helped them recuperate and played an integral role in maintaining their energy levels and continuing their positive appraisal. Despite the hostility of some board members and tremendous pressure to deliver results, for L22 (the CEO of an oil products company), the support of his family and his routines for reflecting and recharging helped him maintain a positive outlook while orchestrating change:

> It does take a lot of your own personal energy too. And if you don't have enough other grounding in life, whether it's your family life, your own health and other things which ground you … if you are shaken from that side, then this can be very hard to push through… if I didn't have... support from my family and my own personal resilience… then you're more to give [up] the change effort...
>
> I've got a very firm routine. So I wake up very early in the morning, like 4:30, quarter to five, I do an hour. So I do some meditation, do some reading, I don't do any work... I go for a run every morning… do some sort of mental gratitude. (L22)

What was also interesting that for some CEOs of fairly large organizations (e.g.L18, L20, L24, L32) the fact that they had alternative career options and were not afraid to lose their jobs allowed them to perceive their challenges as less threatening to them personally. This gave them more confidence in dealing with the demands of the role, including negotiating for more authority and resources, and overall appraise their situations more positively. This was the experience of L24, the CEO of an airline undergoing complex transformation and restructuring in response to the Covid-19 crisis.

He described how the fact that he had other options in life helped him in appraising his situation positively:

> I don't want to be CEO of this company for much more time than the minimum needed, because I don't get excited by making 100 million dollar decisions. You know, I've made so many [already in my career]. So it hasn't been difficult [and] the situation hasn't been stressful because I don't think that I need to show myself anything with respect to what I'm able to do. (L24)

Overall, the perception of positive valence regarding change and the belief that they have sufficient organizational and personal resources to cope with the demands of their role resulted in SCLs offering a positive appraisal of their situation. Their confidence in their ability to deal with the challenges of the role, their motivation to implement the change and their positive emotions and energy were all contributing factors for SCLs championing change. As the CEO in charge of turning around a failing telecommunications company, L30 spoke for many SCLs in seeing change as an opportunity to challenge himself and ultimately make a difference:

> When there is a challenge I love [it] … the team that I was able to assemble around me … It gives me [a feeling of] what I can give to the people around me to get things done. And I do have [things to give] in this respect. I am very competitive … I saw the opportunity with the company when I walked in … of what this company could become. But I saw the pitfalls and I knew that I have the ability to change that by primarily changing the culture of the company, because it had good assets, they were just not put to work. [It was] like a raw diamond that needs us to polish it for everyone to see how it can shine … That is how change

works, because no matter how stressful it is, it energizes you because you know you’re doing a good thing. (L30)

Negative appraisal. Most SCLs interviewed perceived the change they were leading to be aligned with their own interests and with those of the organization (at least initially). However, as the change evolved, some SCLs found that they no longer perceived the change to be beneficial. For example, L9, who was the initiator and sponsor of the transformation of a software company, found it ‘difficult to swallow’ that the success of change he had initiated had resulted in the company turning into an organization with processes and structures that went against the values he stood for. As a result, his appraisal turned negative:

> If you want to be successful you have no option but to grow. If you grow there is no option but to put processes and structures in place. All you can hope to do is look at them and make sure there are, they're still tied to your values and you are not shafting somebody and it's not taking away from the flexibility and agility of the organization. But recognize there will always be somebody who will be disgruntled, or where it won't work in a particular scenario and accepted as collateral damage… Those are the things that I found very difficult to swallow or to explain to a wide audience. Maybe that is the only way that you can scale up; I’ll buy into that, but it still sticks in my throat. (L9)

Change leaders who perceived the change to be beneficial still appraised their situations negatively if they believed that they did not have sufficient resources to deal with the demands of their role. The complexity and uncertainty surrounding the change combined with a lack of resources to influence the outcome was a major factor leading

to negative appraisal. For example, L7, a majority shareholder and CEO of a family-owned European construction goods company, knew that rapidly restructuring the company's manufacturing footprint and cost base was the only way of keeping the company afloat. However, the combination of a perceived lack of control over the market conditions, lack of cooperation from the banks as well as pressure from his family to rapidly deliver results resulted in L7 appraising the situation as a threat to his credibility as the leader.

> It is frightening especially when the banks get nervous and our banks, they were getting nervous… They were even asking me if you had any other resources which I could throw into the company, if your family has money to put it into the business…. My [family members] were worried also about their money, as the value of their shares depends on the profitability of this company. If the profitability goes down then they are also affected… [I felt] helpless… everybody around you is nervous… You feel that [people] start to question, 'Do we have the right leader?' (L7)

L18, a relatively new CEO of a European metals and mining company, faced a similar situation. He believed that the organizational restructuring and efficiency program he was implementing was crucial for the long-term survival of the company, but the combination of an influential board member and a subordinate undermining his efforts resulted in him appraising his situation negatively:

> There was a colleague who was going against me and he was listened to by the board more than me… The stress is because you know what you have to do and you know that [things you are doing] are correct… I'm sure I have the best

> interest [of the company] in mind…That guy (the subordinate) was a real villain... he was not very clever but as he was an insider and he had more trust than me. It was very frustrating. (L18)

Sometimes it was the lack of personal resources that resulted in SCLs' negative appraisal of their situation. For example, L3 was promoted to CEO of a petrochemicals company from his role in finance. He strongly believed in the transformation of the health and safety practices of his company, but because of his lack of experience in leading an industrial organization, he perceived the technical questions from his team as a threat to his legitimacy as a CEO:

> We had several discussions around what we could or should do and I got some push back because my background was finance. That was an initial challenge for me. OK, I was a CEO, I had a formal power, as you like, the formal title, but when it comes to very industry [specific] technical discussion, they felt they could lecture me on what was possible or not: 'look, that is not how things are handled, this is not how the things should happen'... I struggled at the beginning. (L3)

Overall, change leaders who perceived the change itself or the context in which the change was being implemented to be harmful to their organizations or themselves—or if they perceived that they did not have sufficient resources to deal with the demands of the role—assessed the situation as negative. They described the situation as a threat to their organization and/or to their own future career prospects, financial reward, well-being and self-esteem, and associated the change with feelings of pressure and the fear of failure. For example, L6 vividly described the negative appraisal of a particularly challenging transformation program he was leading:

> I didn’t enjoy working 360 days of the year. I didn’t enjoy meeting angry customers. I didn’t enjoy being confronted by dead children [in hospitals]. I didn’t even enjoy having to hold these mega town hall meetings and laying bare the facts. (L6)

Finally, the data also suggests that hindrance (or challenge) stress was the result of change leaders’ assessment of their overall context and situation—whether they perceived the change to be beneficial or harmful and whether they had sufficient resources to deal with the demands. For example, dealing with resistance to change in an organization was considered to be one of the most mentally and emotionally demanding aspects of the change leadership role. However, depending on their personal circumstances, when confronted with this demand, different change leaders appraised their situations differently and therefore experienced different types of reactions. The opposition L3 faced from his team to the change he was proposing was perceived by him as a threat to his authority and legitimacy as a CEO, and he therefore experienced a hindrance reaction. However, when L5 was confronted with similar resistance to change, he saw the situation as an opportunity to learn how to engage emotionally with people to address their concerns and convince them of the need to change. Unlike L3, he experienced challenge stress; although exhausted by the end of each day, his interactions gave him a deep sense of satisfaction and joy. These findings tend to support the assertions by Bakker & Demerouti (2017) that the same type of demand can be the cause of either challenge or hindrance stress depending on the context. Therefore, within a framework of relating people’s reactions to their occupational settings, it may be more meaningful to apply the terms hindrance or

challenge for describing individuals' appraisal of their situations and the resulting responses instead of using these terms to categorize different types of demands.

Gain loop

Even though they were facing substantial emotional, mental and physical demands in their change leader roles, SLCs who positively appraised their situation described associated their roles with a feeling of positive emotions and of being engaged and willing to invest the effort necessary to deal with the challenges facing them. In other words, they were experiencing challenge stress. As a result of this positive reaction, SCLs were able to be effective and engage in positive coping strategies to release tension and recharge their energy. The consequence was that the change initiatives they were leading achieved successful results while the leaders themselves gained additional personal and organizational resources to proceed with the change. The success and additional resources made SCLs even more motivated and energized to lead the change, and they entered the self-reinforcing gain loop leading to more effective behavior, achievements and resource gains. The process model for the gain loop is shown in Figure 3.2. In the section below I elaborate on the themes that constitute the gain loop.

Figure 3.2 Process Model for the Gain Loop

Challenge stress. The SCLs who positively appraised their situation were motivated about the change and engaged in their roles. For many, the motivation came not only from the personal or organizational benefits stemming from the successful implementation of change, but also from the excitement of making a difference, solving problems and facing adversities, proving themselves, and learning and growing. These leaders also experienced a wide range of positive emotions such as happiness, excitement, pride, satisfaction and feeling good about themselves. In line with resource-based theories of stress (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Crawford et al., 2010), the additional demands of their roles caused a stress reaction in them, but they described it as ‘positive stress’, ‘being in a state of flow’, and ‘being exhausted and excited’. They were energized and willing to invest time and effort to deal with the challenges of their roles.

For example, L12 described being “excited” about launching the transformation of the transportation company that he was chairman of despite the challenges he was facing: “You are learning about everything, even complicated things... [it was] a positive

experience” (L12). The thrill of making a difference by doing something new resulted in ‘positive stress’ for L10, the SRO of a complex transformation program in a global medical equipment company:

> It was stress but …. I experienced it still as some[thing] stimulating at the same time. Because it was okay we were trying something new. We're not sure if it's going to work but at least we're trying something new… So I don't think back on it as being extremely stressful… (L10)

Effective behavior. Engaging in effective behavior requires SCLs to engage in a sufficient degree of self-regulation, and that in turn requires leaders to have psychological resources, particularly in situations when the mental, emotional and physical demands are high (Collins & Jackson, 2015). In line with the assertions of Mawritz, Folger, & Latham (2014) and Krasikova et al. (2013), change leaders who believed that the change was beneficial overall and that they had sufficient resources to deal with the demands of their role were found to be engaging in effective behavior because they had the psychological resources to be constructive in their roles.

SCLs experiencing challenge stress demonstrated a wide range of effective behaviors, such as leading by example, being systematic and decisive decision-makers and engaging with their peers and teams in a constructive manner (even when facing setbacks or resistance). They were aware of their own limitations, seeking support from key stakeholders when needed, and were flexible enough to change their approach when encountering problems. L6, the CEO of an engineering services company undergoing a transformation, pointed to his decisiveness as indicative of his effectiveness:

> If there is one mistake that I have made consistently [in the past] in making change, it is that I've waited too long to change... The reason people waste [time], obviously, is they're afraid they might get it wrong... And I've tried to avoid that by moving quicker here… I think it's very important not to lose time in making decisions. (L6)

L25, the change sponsor of a complex business model transformation program in an IT and telecommunications services company, was similarly described as engaging in a constructive and supportive manner with his team members even when they were experiencing setbacks:

> L25 is very good at doing the balancing act between supporting the people and applying the pressure to get things done… For example, when we had issues with one of the teams not being able to complete some of the important tasks because of external dependencies such as securing regulatory approval for some of the changes we wanted to implement, he was very understanding of the difficulties the team was facing. He asked if there was any help we could provide them, for example allocate more people or budget, to get the matters resolved. (T25, colleague of L25)

SCLs experiencing challenge stress were also effective in managing themselves by engaging in various routines (e.g., mindfulness, exercise, taking time to rest, etc.) to recharge their energy and let go of stress, as well as learning new skills and changing their own behaviors to adjust to the needs of the changing organization and the environment around them.

Achievements. As a result of the effective behaviors of SCLs, there were achievements in the change they were leading. First, there was progress in the change initiatives themselves—they were delivering early wins in the form of demonstrable changes to the organization (e.g., putting in new structures, processes and systems in place) and its performance (e.g., profitability, sales, market share, safety performance), along with clearing major hurdles, meeting milestones, and even being ahead of plan. Second, in line with research findings on the positive relationships between leaders' transformational behavior and employees' positive response to change (Hill, Seo, Kang, & Taylor, 2012; Oreg & Berson, 2011; Shin, Seo, Shapiro, & Taylor, 2015), SCLs who engaged in constructive leadership behavior found that the level of engagement and buy-in for change among employees increased. Finally, their effective behavior resulted in the growth of team members' capabilities, skills and engagement. This was an achievement that some change leaders were particularly proud of and resulted in SCLs being able to gain more resources. For instance, L26, a program manager of a quality improvement and culture change program in a global engineering services company, described the early achievements that arose from his careful decision making around which countries to pilot the program in and the resulting gain in resources as follows:

> One country head, he embraced [the change] very early in the process, went on to do a lot of stuff, saw huge improvements …even turned around the performance of the country …[more than] what was expected. …. He came out, made a video and told everyone that it was only because of [the change program] that he was able to get his people motivated. …. And in a year's time, he turned around the whole country from a loss-making to a very profitable one.

> And this was recognized – the guy was promoted [to a] very senior position, two jumps in one go… from a small country position…to becoming an area head responsible for 500-600 million business from running a 30 million business. So this was recognized by the organization. (L26)

Gain in resources. The achievements in the change initiatives allowed SCLs to gain resources in a number of ways. The fact that change initiatives achieved their milestones and began delivering outcomes decreased the level of uncertainty about the change and increased the level of support for the program among key stakeholders. This meant that stakeholders were ready to invest more organizational resources into the initiative, which increased the likelihood of success. SCLs were also able to use early wins to build momentum for change by proving their doubters wrong and attracting more interest by different parts of the organization in adopting the changes proposed. The achievements of the initiative also brought recognition to the change leaders from the stakeholders from within and outside the organization.

The achievements of the change initiatives and the increased level of support and recognition was useful in reducing any doubts leaders were having about their own capabilities and decisions. This was seen in the case of L9, the initiator of a business transformation program to drive growth in a software company, who described the recognition the company received and the confidence he and his team gained as the consequence of their early achievements:

> Not only we were seeing sales increasing, not only we were seeing more and more clients picking us up, talking about us, not only we were seeing analysis start to talk about us, but we also saw the absolute indication that people were

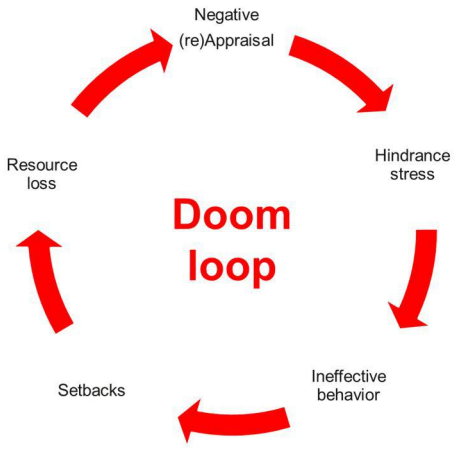
willing to put money into the company and saying we want to be part of it now. (L9)

These gains resulted in SCLs reappraising their situations even more positively. As a consequence, they were even more motivated to lead the change and their subsequent actions further reinforced the gain loop they found themselves in.

Doom loop

In line with the claims of resource-based theories of stress (Demerouti et al., 2001; Hobfoll, 1989), change leaders who appraised their situation as threatening because they perceived they did not have sufficient resources to deal with the challenges they faced experienced hindrance stress. This stress was manifested in the form of SCLs experiencing negative emotions such as anger and frustration and feeling exhausted and depleted. As a result, they were not effective in their roles (Collins & Jackson, 2015; Harms, Credé, Tynan, Leon, & Jeung, 2017), and this in turn led to change initiatives facing setbacks and the leaders losing critical resources such as self-confidence and organizational support. These losses resulted in further exacerbating the hindrance stress leaders were experiencing, and as a consequence SCLs continued in a self-reinforcing doom loop of further ineffective behavior, setbacks and resource losses. The process model for the doom loop is shown in Figure 3.3. In the section below I elaborate on the themes that constitute the doom loop.

Figure 3.3 Process Model for the Doom Loop



Hindrance stress. SCLs with a negative appraisal of their situation experienced a wide range of negative emotions. The most common emotions were frustration and anger that they had to spend significant time and energy convincing the organization to make changes because people did not share a need for the change or its urgency. They also noted experiencing anxiety and discouragement, as well as betrayal and that others had let them down. L1 described his frustration at the situation when people in his organization (he was the CEO of a medical services company) resisting change:

> This is going to sound quite bad, but you just feel a lot of frustration … Some of the frustration is just sprung from dealing with people who have quite a different view than you. (L1)

SCLs who struggled in dealing with the demands of their role also described of being depleted, drained and exhausted—a state where they felt they did not have enough energy or motivation to continue pushing through the change. For L7, the CEO of a company in crisis referred to earlier, the situation was associated with such extreme

fear and almost unbearable pressure that it led to him to physically shake before an important meeting with a bank:

> One morning I had to go to a bank meeting and I was sitting in a car and my leg was shaking. It puts pressure on you. I mean, everybody has some limit but how much pressure you can bear and I would say I'm a pretty much stable person and I am not too sensitive but this had an impact on me… It puts you down, it takes energy away. (L7)

SLCs described losing sleep, gaining weight, aging faster and encountering health issues as the result of stress of dealing with challenges of leading change. For example, in case of L31, the pressure to deliver a complex change with limited resources for demanding stakeholders resulted in an urgent visit to the emergency room:

> All of this pressure was piling on me … I was working round the clock, no rest, no exercise. I ended up in ER(emergency room) in hospital— my blood pressure had gone through the roof. After seven years of managing my blood pressure without medication, I ended up being back on pills. (L31)

Ineffective behavior. The depletion of cognitive resources as the result of hindrance stress can result in ego-depletion and SCLs becoming less effective in leading change or even engaging in destructive behavior (Collins & Jackson, 2015; Harms et al., 2017; Mawritz et al., 2014; Einarsen, Aasland, & Skogstad, 2007; Krasikova et al., 2013). Such ineffective behaviors included impaired decision-making capabilities, avoidance behavior, dysfunctional engagement with teams and colleagues, micromanagement, and not asking for support when needed. The CEO of a

transportation company going through a turnaround situation confessed to avoidance behavior linked to his inability to deal with the demands of letting go of the people:

> When it relates to difficult decisions that impact people and where I [need to] fire the person…[I] haven't been brave enough and clear enough to say "Listen, my friend, let's face the situation"… I've been dancing around the thing and passing on wishy-washy messages. (L24)

But ineffective behavior can transcend avoidance to become outright undermining of the change effort. In the case of L17, a CEO leading a transformation under tight deadlines, the stress caused by an unexpected issue that threatened further delays to the program resulted in him bursting out at one of his project managers, further deteriorating an already tense atmosphere in the organization:

> I went to the project manager and confronted him directly. I later got feedback from my team that I as a CEO should not have shown to everyone that I was angry and nervous. This would make the whole organization become concerned and nervous. I accept it. I should not have done it. I later called the project manager's superior and resolved the matter. This is what I should have done in the first place... But I was frustrated and stressed, and it changed my behavior. (L17)

SCLs experiencing hindrance stress also reported becoming personally less productive and becoming so depleted that they were not even able to engage in activities that would have recharged them. For L4, the depletion caused by increased workload and the pressure of having to deliver a very challenging transformation of a

failing business meant that she did not have sufficient energy to get herself to exercise and meet with friends – things that could have helped her in replenishing her energy:

> I did some exercise, but [it was] definitely not sufficient… I didn't see anybody (friends) in when I was in S. [It was] work, work, work… and that's actually very unhealthy… I'm actually very tired. But I still continue working. Because I, at some stage, I become almost obsessed with it… maybe I should have met some more people… it could have helped me not just personally… [but also] make better [business] decisions. (L4)

Setbacks. As a consequence of SCLs' ineffective behavior, the initiatives they were leading suffered setbacks in a number of ways. Destructive leadership styles adopted by the change leaders led to negative reactions to change among stakeholders. L9 described a situation where his own inability to adapt to the new ways of working required by the change he had initiated and the unproductive confrontations he had with his colleagues regarding the change vision negatively impacted the environment in the organization and the progress of the change, as well as resulted in him losing the support of the CEO:

> It was becoming stressful and it was impacting my relationships internally with other people. People who were more comfortable working in a structured environment obviously felt that I was a dinosaur who could not adapt…. All [the CEO] hears is either me moaning about things or somebody else moaning about me. And it started impacting the relationship [with the CEO]…. He obviously knew that I and some other [members of the] management [team] were not aligned. And when that happens, some people start either playing politics or they

> start getting worried….[They think] “Ok, which way are we expected to go?” That obviously had an impact [on the progress]. (L9)

As a result of poor decision-making or avoidance behavior by SCLs, their change initiatives were not achieving results or not achieving them fast enough—in some cases requiring change leaders to recalibrate the goals to make them less challenging and therefore dilute the intended impact.

Loss of resources. Setbacks in change initiatives can result in SCLs losing the resources they need to lead change. Leaders who were experiencing hindrance stress described losing the support of their own leadership, their peers and even their teams when the change initiatives they were leading started facing setbacks. This loss of support also meant that the organization was less willing to invest human and financial resources in the change effort as well as management energy. Faced with sustained setbacks, some SCLs reported losing their self-confidence and started to question not only their own ability to lead change but also their identity as a leader. L22, a CEO leading a transformation of a poorly performing company, started to question his own capabilities when in the initial phase of change he was not able to deliver quick results and as a consequence faced a backlash from some of the board members:

> You start questioning, are you doing the right things? Are you focused on the right things? Are you letting yourself and your people down? And, you know, can I handle it sort of thing? ….You start doubting yourself to say, well, am I the right person for this job? Maybe I am not the right person; [maybe the right person] requires a different personality. (L22)

Overall, these negative consequences resulted in change leaders having an even greater fear of failure and reappraising their situation in an even more negative light, leading them further into the doom loop of stronger hindrance stress, ineffective behavior, setbacks and resource loss.

Oscillations and loop breakers

While the gain and doom loops described above are self-reinforcing in nature, the data suggests that SCLs are constantly reappraising their situations as the demands of their role, resources available to them and even the valence of the change evolve over the course of the change journey. As a result, they may shift from the state of challenge to hindrance stress or vice-versa. If the factors leading to these shifts are sustained, then leaders end up breaking one loop and entering the other (i.e. they experience a 'loop breaker'). However, if the factors leading to the shift dissipate or are neutralized by countervailing factors, then these shifts are only temporary, resulting in merely an oscillation (a 'spike' or a 'dip').

Positive shift. A change leader going through hindrance stress may reappraise their situation to be beneficial and experience a positive shift towards challenge stress if there is a decrease in demands, an increase in resources, or a change in valence for the leader. SCLs may experience a reduction in demands when adverse external factors such as a crisis or unfavorable market conditions weaken or disappear outright. Sometimes making a progress and achieving a key milestone can reduce the uncertainties and complexities surrounding the change and reassure SCLs and their key stakeholders about their ability to implement the change.

The experience of L12 is typical in this regard. He was experiencing hindrance stress in the initial phases of the transformation program he was leading because of a combination of poor market conditions, uncertainty about the change outcomes, adverse reaction to change from powerful external stakeholders and not having the full support of his shareholders. After recruiting supportive and high-qualified team members and a group of external advisers (he called them psychological allies), however, a positive shift occurred toward progress and initial results. These achievements led to increased support from his shareholders and provided renewed confidence:

> For about 2 years I was in stress because I didn't understand then if it was going to finish successfully or not… I started feeling a bit relaxed when we started the construction, when it became clear that we found a contractor that was ready to build within our budget, when we found and attracted investments, when we more or less completed the board of directors. Then I started feeling relaxed a bit because I understood that we had all the ingredients to get to the finishing point of the project. Most of the people around me were charged with the intention to make things happened. This was very supportive for me. (L12)

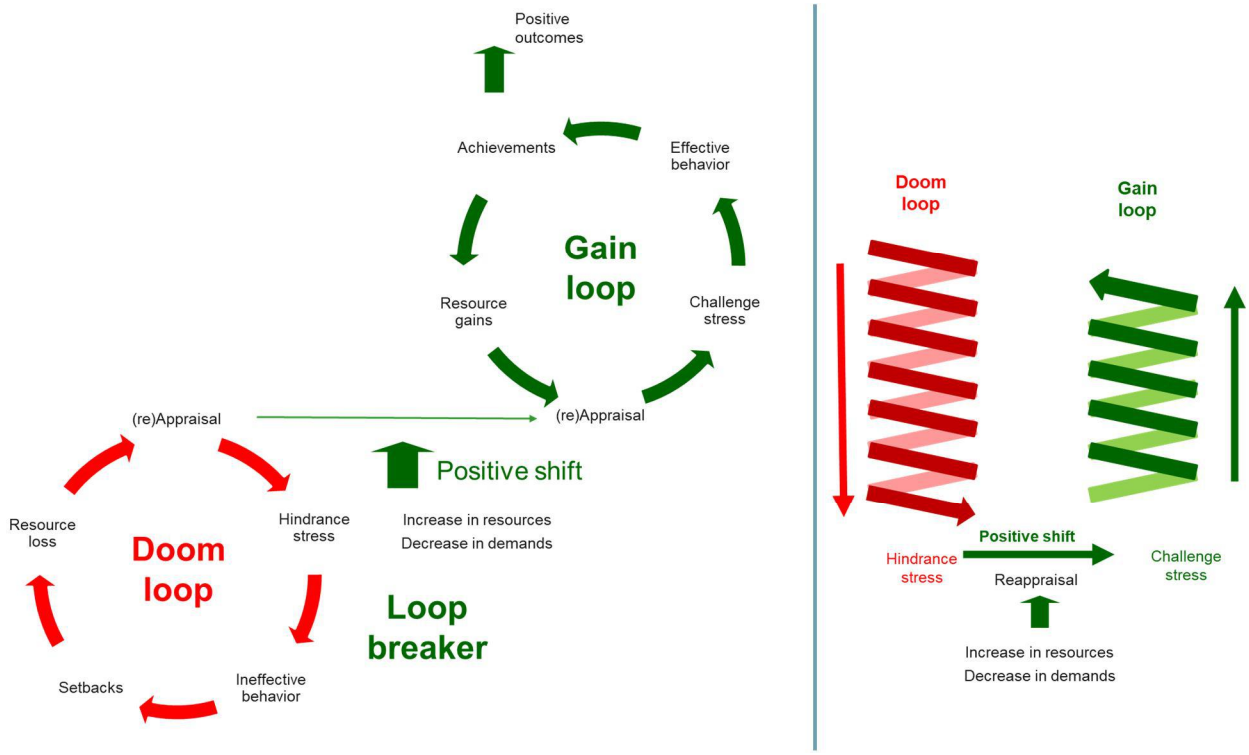
Change leaders also described experiencing an increase in resources in a number of ways. SCLs could see the support for them increase when key stakeholders who opposed change moved on to other roles. They found new allies, both inside and outside the organization who not only supported them in their effort but also gave them a boost of self-confidence. Getting positive feedback, having a coaching session, meeting a mentor, or even spending a weekend away with friends and family allowed

the depleted leaders to regain their energy, reassess their situation and be able to tackle the challenges with more confidence and a positive attitude. Some SCLs (e.g., L13, L31) experienced positive shifts when they saw a clearer path for their own career progression and personal benefits associated with the successful implementation of change. L31 described the positive shift he experienced when he was going through a particularly difficult phase of a complex transformation when he simultaneously found out that the person he thought was trying to take his role decided to leave the organization and he started getting more support from his boss because of early achievements. He vividly recalled the relief he felt: “I was still in the game. The threat of losing my job was gone” (L31).

Experiencing sustained periods of hindrance stress and setbacks triggered in some leaders (e.g., L3, L22, L28) a journey of self-exploration and analysis to try to understand why things were not going the right way. They read books, took courses on personal development, acquired new skills, and as result emerged as stronger, more self-aware SCLs who were not only better equipped to deal with the challenges of the transformation they were leading but also had a new and more meaningful perspective on their lives.

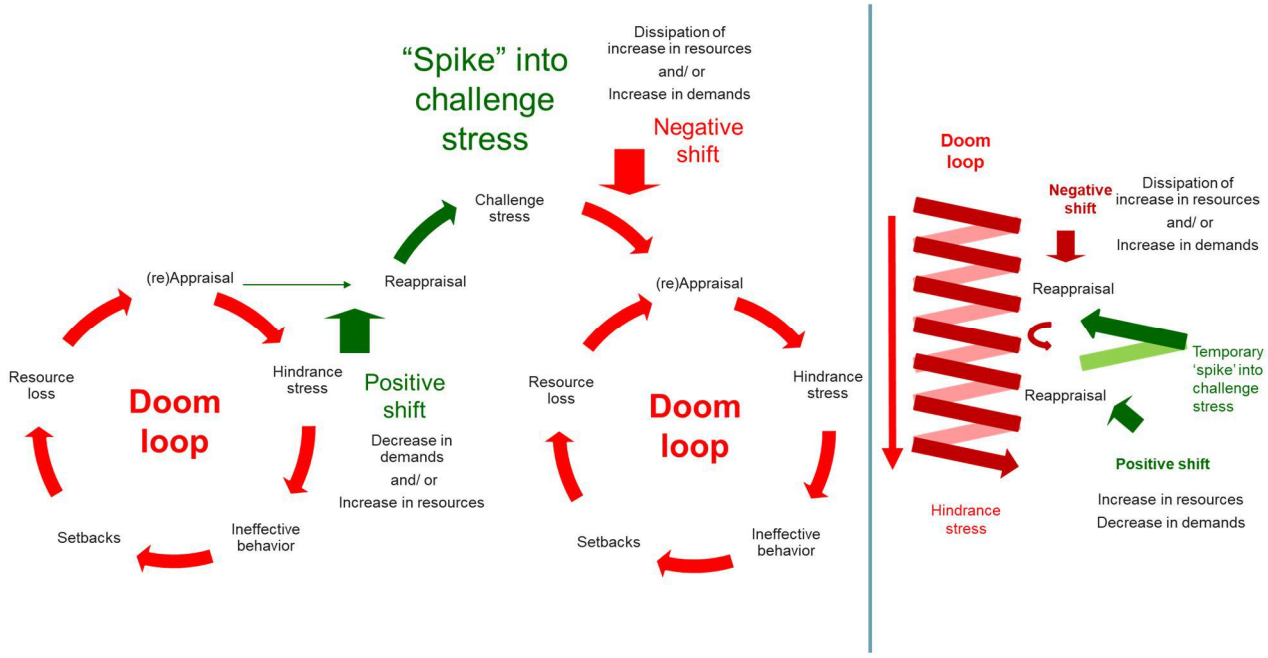
If the factors causing the positive shift are substantial and sustained, SCLs who are experiencing sustained periods of hindrance stress may break the pattern of the doom loop and enter the gain loop. The process model for the doom loop breaker is shown in Figure 3.4. and the experience of a leader breaking the doom loop to enter the gain loop described in case vignette 1 about L3 below.

Figure 3.4 Process Model for Doom Loop Breaker



However, if the factors causing the positive change dissipate or are neutralized by an increase in demands or reduction in resources, the change leader is likely to experience only a temporary ‘spike’ of challenge stress and then revert back to hindrance stress (as shown in Figure 3.5 and illustrated in the case vignette 4 for L21 below).

Figure 3.5 Process Model for 'Spike' into Challenge Stress



Negative Shift. A change leader going through challenge stress may reappraise their situation to be negative and experience a shift towards hindrance stress if there is an increase in demands, a decrease in resources, or a change in valence for the leader. SCLs reported a number of ways in which the demands increased over the course of change implementation: adverse conditions, unexpected delays or setbacks or the discovery of new problems and issues that added to the complexity of change and uncertainty of outcomes. Other demand increases included political games around the change and increased pressure before important milestones and meetings with key stakeholders. SCLs described facing increased mental, emotional and physical loads due to these factors and experiencing hindrance stress as a result.

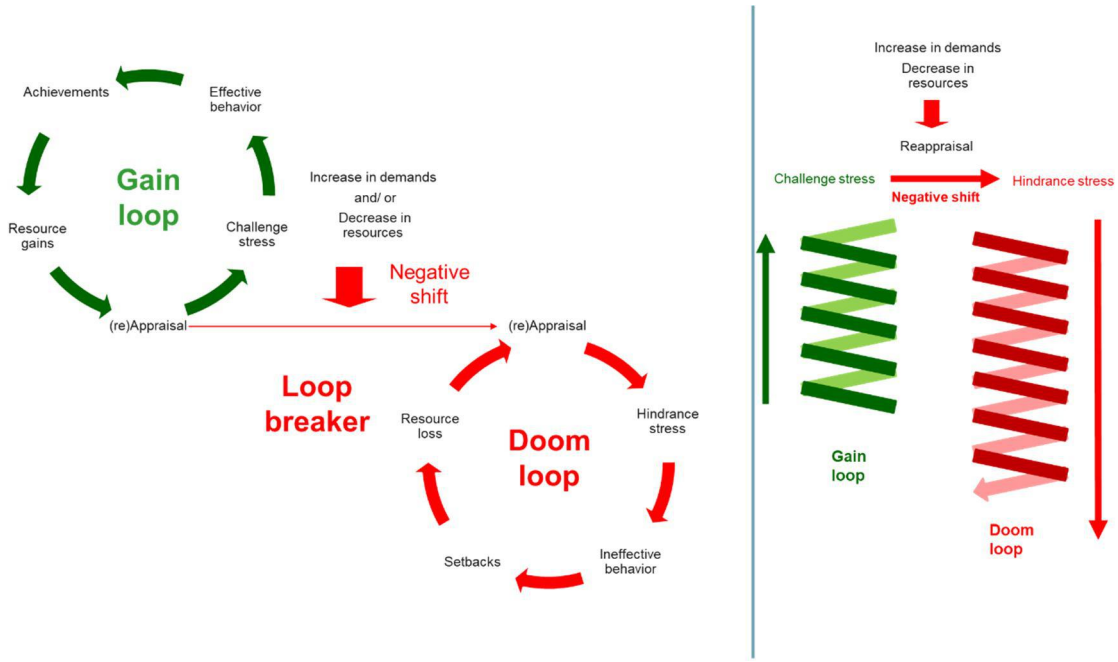
Leaders also described situations of moving to a hindrance reaction when they lost leadership support (e.g., when the sponsors who championed the change either retired or moved to a different role). For example, as the CEO of a government agency

who was committed to implementing a complex change despite all the challenges he was facing, L17 experienced a negative shift and hindrance stress (“I felt left alone…no support from sponsors... I felt betrayed…let down”) after the chairman of the board who supported him was replaced with someone who did not back the change he was leading.

Similarly, a loss of energy because of long periods of intensive work or losing an important team member were also seen as factors contributing to the negative shift. As the case vignettes below reveal, for some change leaders the cause of the negative shift was the realization that the change or the way it was being implemented was not as beneficial to the organization (e.g., case vignette 2 for L14) or them personally (e.g., case vignette 4 for L21).

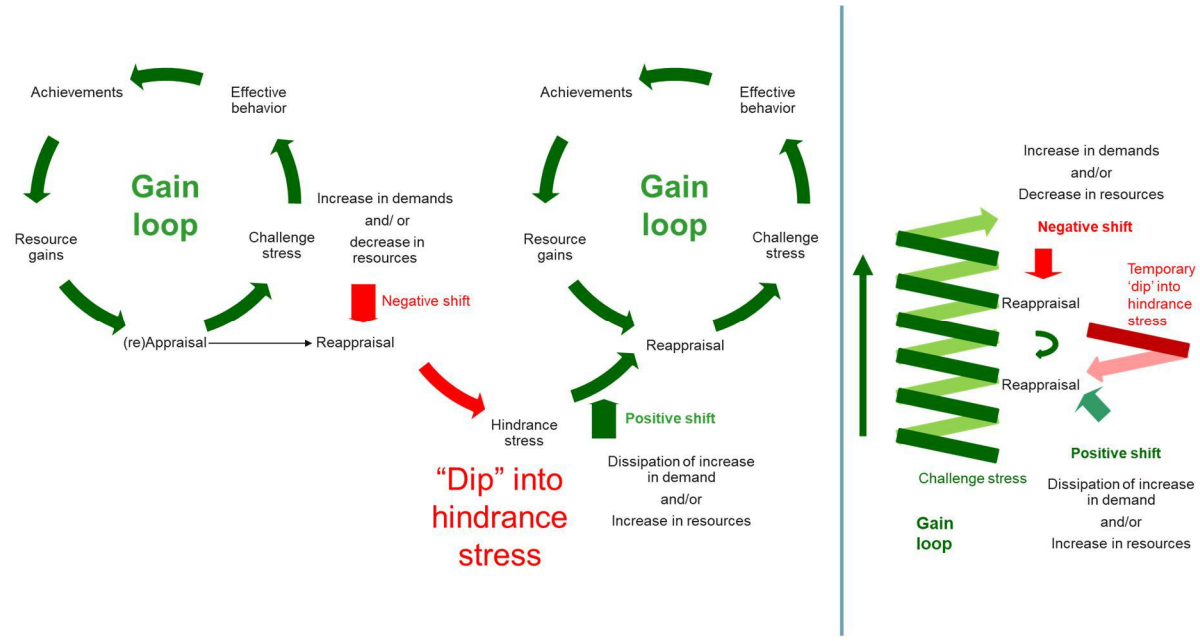
When the factors causing negative shift were substantial and sustained, they resulted in SCLs breaking the gain loop to enter the pattern of the doom loop. The process model for the gain loop breaker is shown in Figure 3.6 and the experience of a leader breaking the gain loop to enter the gain loop is described in the case vignette 2 for L14 below.

Figure 3.6 Process Model for Gain Loop Breaker



However, if the factors causing the negative shift were temporary or were neutralized by an increase in counteracting factors (as shown in Figure 3.7), the leader only experienced a temporary ‘dip’ into hindrance stress and revert back to challenge stress (as shown in case vignette 3 for L30).

Figure 3.7 Process Model for 'Dip' into Hindrance Stress



Change outcomes

The consequences of SCLs experiencing challenge stress and making achievements or experiencing hindrance stress and facing setbacks accumulate over time and therefore result in positive or negative outcomes both for the organizations and the leaders themselves.

Positive outcomes. The achievements of the gain loop usually end with the change initiative ending with a positive outcome for the organization in terms of changes being successfully implemented and achieving the intended business results. There is usually also a positive outcome for the change leader involving their development as a leader, a sense of achievement and the opening up possibilities for career growth.

Negative outcomes. Similarly, the setbacks of the doom loop can negatively impact the outcomes of the change initiative. For example, when change leaders find that they do not have sufficient resources to implement the change fully, they may

recalibrate their expectations and not implement all the changes they set out to deliver. Some change initiatives were described as ‘dying quietly’ or ‘fading away’ because leadership abandoned them after multiple setbacks within a doom loop, whereas other initiatives were stopped outright or ‘shot’ when the organization failed to invest further resources. Being in a doom loop for too long can also have negative consequences for SCLs. They may exit the change leadership role and move on taking on new responsibilities within the same organization or leave the organization (voluntarily or involuntarily).

CASE VIGNETTES

The following case vignettes illustrate the complex relationships between the emergent categories and the processes behind the evolution of SCLs’ reaction to change that result in loop breakers (e.g., L3, L14), dips (e.g., L30) and spikes (e.g., L21).

Case vignette 1 (L3): Breaking the doom loop and entering the gain loop

L3 had suddenly been promoted to the CEO position of a large industrial company after a long time as a CFO and a brief stint as head of a business unit. At the beginning of his tenure, the company had two major health and safety incidents. L3 therefore decided to launch a program to significantly improve the company’s performance in health and safety—not only to reduce the likelihood of negative safety incidents in the future but also to move the company towards a culture of excellence. While L3 was convinced of the need for change and had the full support of his board, by his own admission he did not have much experience of managing industrial operations and “did not know the language” of his industrial team. When his team questioned the

economic value and practicality of the ambitious targets he had asked them to deliver, he saw these questions as opposition to change and a threat to his legitimacy as CEO. Instead of trying to understand the reasons behind the objections his team was raising, he became confrontational, and as a result the objections to the proposed changes within his team only increased. This resulted in an experience of deep frustration and hindrance stress from the opposition he presumed he was facing, and he became less productive and effective in other aspects of his CEO role. He lost confidence in himself and questioned whether his background in finance had adequately prepared him to lead the company through the transformation:

> I never let anyone know that I had these doubts….this comes with insecurity. To make matters worse I knew that if I could not convey the idea, if I myself was not fully convinced, I was not able to convince them. Self-fulfilling prophecy, right? If I have my inner doubts, sometimes it comes across, and then it [is] going to be tough to push that agenda. (L3)

This reaction only increased his hindrance stress, and he found himself in a doom loop.

Several things happened that caused L3 to experience a positive shift. First, he found allies within his organization (the engineers at the plants) who gave him confidence that the changes he was proposing were feasible and also provided him with facts to counter the arguments against his initiative. Second, he became acquainted with the CEO of a competitor who shared his background in finance as a former CFO. This new psychological ally bolstered his confidence that he too could be a successful CEO of an industrial company.

> And I met a CEO of the number one chemical company in the world. A German guy, probably with PhD in something specific. He was the ultimate chemical company CEO. I was very happy to hear from him… [when I asked] 'Which area are you coming from?' and he said, ' I was a company CFO' and I said, come on, if B's CEO could come from a financial side of things, who is a saying that [my company's] CEO could not come from financial side as well. If the Germans can do it, we can do it as well. (L3)

Third, the initial setbacks led him to reflect on his own behavior and to realize that his role as a CEO was not to control others' behavior, but rather to inspire, coach and support them to achieve ambitious goals regardless of the route they took to get there. With his newfound confidence and a different perspective about his role, he experienced a positive shift and became more energized. As the result, he managed to turn around his team's position, and they implemented the change successfully. More data with a description of L3's experience through the process steps is provided in Appendix J.

Case vignette 2 (L14): Breaking the gain loop and entering the doom loop

L14, a senior leader in a global mining company reporting to the Chief Commercial Officer (CCO), was tasked with implementing an organizational restructuring project. The change itself was initiated by the Executive Committee (which included the CCO) and was sponsored by the CFO (who was at the same level as the CCO). The transformation involved radically changing the operating model of the company by redesigning and delayering it. L14's role was to work with the consultants appointed by the sponsor to influence his peers and colleagues to make changes in

their respective parts of the organization. L14 initially appraised his role positively and was excited about the opportunity to lead this change because he strongly believed that the change itself was the right move for the company. In addition, he felt that his strong network within the organization, the support he had from his boss and the goodwill of his peers he had accumulated over the years made him uniquely positioned to successfully implement this complex change.

However, within two months into the transformation program, L14 faced numerous challenges. First, while the Executive Team was aligned on the need for change, they were not aligned on how to implement it. Second, he perceived that several Executive Team members were using the change initiative to position themselves as contenders to succeed the CEO. Third, the consultants appointed by the CFO proposed an approach to restructuring which he felt was harmful to the organization, and they were unwilling to change their approach when challenged because they had ‘air cover’ from the sponsor. L14 felt that he could not convince his colleagues to change using an approach that he did not believe in, and unsurprisingly he experienced pushback from his colleagues when he tried to get them to cooperate. Further, without sufficient resources (e.g., support from his peers, the consultants and the change sponsor) to amend the situation, his initial positive appraisal of the situation shifted to negative:

> It made life extremely difficult. And try as I might, in this particular instance, I couldn't get my head around. I couldn't get one piece to sit still long enough, so I could deal with to the other piece, there were too many variables… So, I had my peers, who were to responding to some fake news and some real news. And the

> management consultant company who was pushing to get things done quite quickly…And then, you had a third dimension of where you had some senior leaders giving messages about needing to move quickly, that you felt you couldn't represent your peers very easily back to the management consultant which put me into real conflict because I felt I was not in control of the process, but the process was controlling me. (L14)

Unable to manage the pressure from the program sponsor to implement the change, L14 began to experience hindrance stress, leading him toward disengagement and frustration. In an effort to avoid further confrontation, he did ask for support from his own boss to resolve the issue. He suffered a loss of self-confidence as his support from organizational peers waned. An increase in hindrance stress led to a doom loop and an ultimate departure from the organization. The change did not deliver the intended results. More data with a description of L14's experience through the process steps is provided in Appendix K.

Case vignette 3 (L30): 'Dipping' into a hindrance stress zone only to return to gain loop

L30 was hired by a private equity (PE) firm as a CEO to turn around a failing European telecommunications company that they had recently acquired. L30 was very motivated about the change and was initially in the challenge stress zone because he felt that there was room for considerable improvements and the potential to deliver results quickly. He had previous experience of turning around poorly performing telecommunications companies, the full support of the PE's leadership, and the authority to hire a new team that he could rely on. Furthermore, he was himself invested

in the company as a part of the deal with the PE and stood to benefit financially if the turnaround were successful.

However, three months into his tenure, L30 discovered “a number of gaps from where I thought we were” revealing that the firm was “actually far more behind.” To compound matters further, L30 also learned that the contracts the company had with the telecommunication equipment suppliers had clauses that were ‘life threatening’, i.e. the company could wind up paying huge penalties which “in terms of their size could financially ruin the company” (L30). As a result, L30 began to experience hindrance stress, which led to sleepless nights and acute back pain. He felt that he had to devote all his time to dealing with this threat, and therefore did not have time left over for other tasks related to the transformation or even time to spend with his family:

> For a period of time I lost a bit the balance meaning that I didn't get enough sleep. Basically just go to bed with a thought and you wake up and you see class because in the middle of the night you think of something and then you cannot go back to sleep. (L30)

Nevertheless, in the end L30 saw his efforts pay off. With the support of his colleagues from PE, he managed to renegotiate the contract with the equipment supplier by proposing a new equally beneficial solution that would preclude the need for the company to pay fines. The absence of this significant threat enabled a shift back to a perception of the change demands as challenges and the entry into a gain loop process. The turnaround was ultimately successful as well. More data with a description of L30’s experience through the process steps is provided in Appendix L.

Case vignette 4 (L21): Breaking the gain loop by oscillating between challenge and hindrance stress.

L21 was the SRO leading the strategic transformation of the business model for a global fast-moving consumer goods company by introducing a new product line that would eventually phase out the existing one. The change had been demanding for him in a number of ways. There were substantial uncertainties around the new line, and it took a lot of effort and years of iteration to finally settle on the best product and business model to promote it. There were additional operational issues that led to the change occurring slower than anticipated, resulting in enhanced competition and stakeholder dissatisfaction with the pace of the change. In addition, L21 lacked the authority to directly implement the change himself and required the involvement of operational level colleagues to implement it. However, building a case for the change was challenged by politically influential members of the organizations who feared the change program would entail a shift in the balance of power in the company away from the existing product portfolio. Despite these challenges, the CEO and the Board shared high expectations for the change program to succeed. These pressures centered on L21 as the champion for the new product group.

Despite these challenges, L21 had been extremely motivated about the change he was leading because he saw perceived high value for the organization. Demand for the previous product line was waning, creating a clear need for new products to maintain the viability of the organization's future. He also perceived personal valence in the change program, believing that the success of the new product line would enhance his candidacy to become a member of the Executive Team and potentially become

CEO. With the support of the Executive Committee members and his immediate boss who was sponsoring the transformation initiative, L21's overall appraisal of his situation was positive, and he invested considerable effort to implement the change despite the challenges he faced:

> It is such an energizing and motivating agenda that we're working on… Obviously, you also get these, you know, punches on the nose. Yeah. And it goes back, it goes very, very quickly. And you just feel good, and you're basically running with it… (L21)

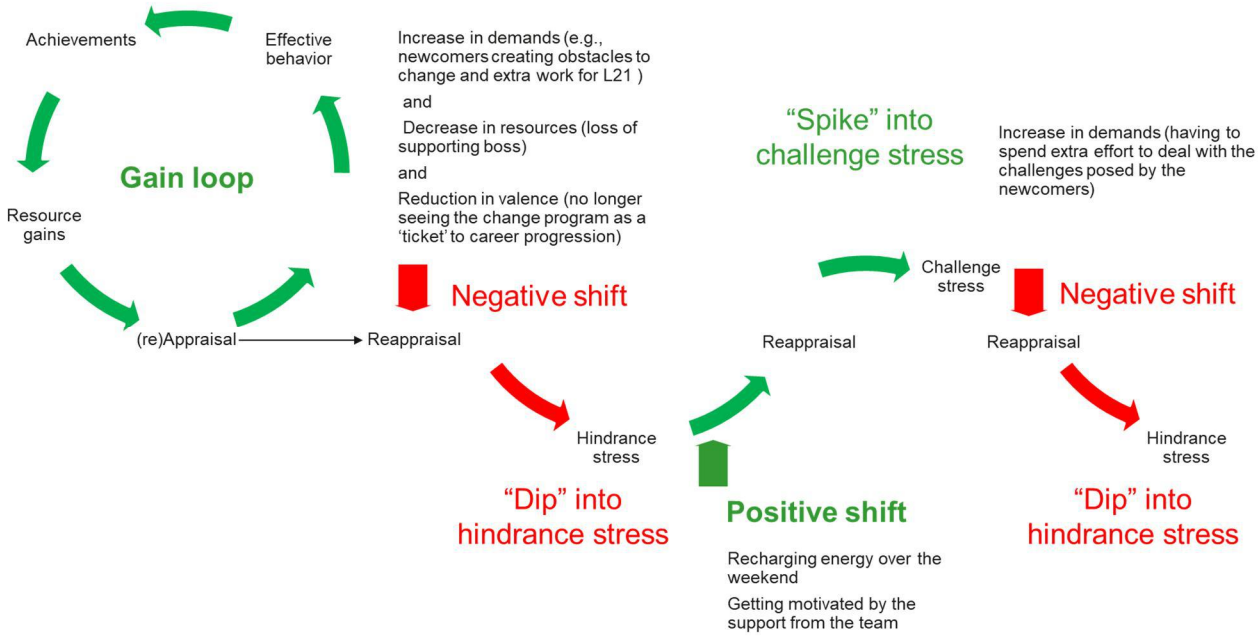
His initial gain loop experience began to shift, however, as role demands increased and the perceived personal valence of the change decreased. First, internal resistance to the new product line increased as its viability as a revenue-driver became evident. His supportive boss retired and was replaced, along with several other previously supportive members of the board had retired. The company also had hired a set of outsiders to fill positions within the Executive Committee, lessening the likelihood of him being promoted to the next level. Despite spending a lot of time explaining to the newcomers what the change was about and why his approach was the right one, they still overrode his decisions. He saw a substantial part of his work wasted and then had to put in a lot of effort to correct what he perceived to be mistakes by the new Executive Committee. As a result, the successful implementation of the product line no longer was as personally motivating to him as it used to be:

> So that has put me into this thing…really [it] is a time for me now to go and figure out maybe… I don't know if it's a midlife crisis, but I think it's triggered by this, this feeling of being partly passed over, and partly pushed into this position, where

> I'm the historian or the veteran or... I'm the legacy. And I've never tried that before. So it's new to me. And I'm not sure I particularly appreciate that role at this time…. If I should take it to the higher level, I think it's [as] if the ownership is being eroded a little bit, you see what I mean? If suddenly, I don't feel that I fully own the solution. (L21)

As a result, his appraisal would often shift to be more negative as he experienced hindrance stress. He would become frustrated, disengaged and fatigued when he perceived that he no longer had lost ownership over the project. However, this negative appraisal was not strong enough to create a sustained doom loop. Following a restful weekend and an opportunity to recharge his energy, he often rebounded to experience temporary ‘spikes’ of challenge stress, but would then descend back into negativity by the end of a draining week. Figure 3.8 illustrates the process of L21 breaking the gain loop yet oscillating between hindrance and challenge stress as demands, resources and valence fluctuate.

Figure 3.8 Process Model for Oscillations Between Challenge & Hindrance Stress

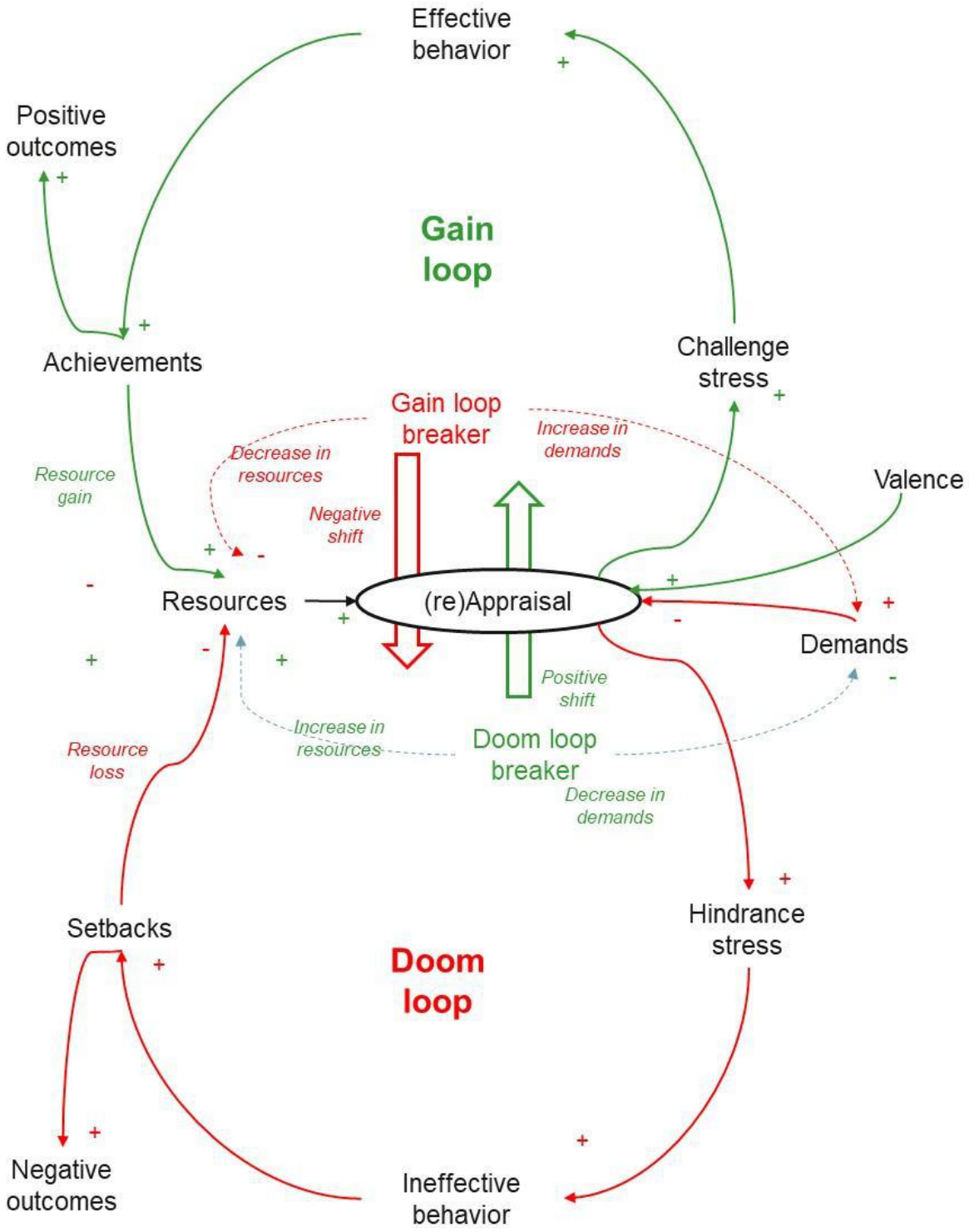


More data with a description of L21's experience through the process steps is provided in Appendix M.

EMERGENT GROUNDED THEORY MODEL

Figure 3.9 illustrates the grounded theory model emerging from this dissertation research that integrates the most relevant relationships among the categories and themes to explain the reactions of SCLs to the change they are leading. It illustrates the processes of how the key theoretical categories—including (re)appraisal, valence, role demands, resources, challenge/hindrance stress, effective/ineffective behavior, success/setbacks, resource gain/loss, and the self-reinforcing gain and doom loops—relate to each other to define the reactions and effectiveness of change leaders over time.

Figure 3.9 Emergent Grounded Theory Model of Change Leaders' Reaction to Change They Are Leading



Analysis of the data collected for this research suggests that SCLs perceive their role to make substantial demands on their physical, emotional and mental resources, resulting in the experience of stress (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Crawford et. al., 2010). However, the nature of the SLCs' reactions and the subsequent impact of these reactions on their effectiveness and the organizational transformation outcomes depends on the leaders' appraisal of their situation. In line with the transactional theory of stress and coping (Lepine et al., 2004), this appraisal happens at two levels. The primary level involves SCLs assessing the valence of the change—whether the change itself and/or the act of leading the change is aligned with the organization and leaders' interests (i.e. is the change a threat to the organization or leader). If SCLs assess that the change is not a threat to the organization or themselves, they will engage in a secondary level appraisal to determine whether they have sufficient resources (organizational and personal) to deal with the demands of the role (i.e. is there a threat of failure).

SCLs will experience 'challenge stress' (Lepine et al., 2004; Crawford et al., 2010) if they are sufficiently motivated to lead the change because they perceive it to be aligned with their own interests or the organization's interests and they have sufficient resources to address the demands of the role. If they view matters this way, the challenge stress experienced can result in a positive emotional state and enhanced energy, engagement and a willingness to invest resources in the challenges posed by the change. As a consequence, they tend to be effective in their roles as change leaders, making decisions and taking actions that support the change while engaging with employees, peers and stakeholders constructively. Effective leadership behavior

also leads to an increased likelihood of goal achievement and an eventual resource gain for SCLs. If the positive appraisal and the resulting challenge stress are sufficiently sustained, leaders enter a self-reinforcing ‘gain loop’ of positive change outcomes—and increases in effective behavior and successful implementation progress, thereby leading to further gains and ultimate positive outcomes for the change initiative.

However, contrary to the prevalent views in the change agent-centric literature (e.g., Kotter, 1995), SCLs may not always experience such positive motivation and reactions to their roles. If the leaders believe that the change is not aligned with their own interests or the organization’s interests, or if they assess their situation as one where they lack the resources to cope with the demands of the change, they will experience ‘hindrance stress’ (Lepine et al., 2004; Crawford et al., 2010). This kind of stress is associated with a cascade of negative emotions, including fear, disengagement and ego-depletion. Such reactions result in SCLs being less effective in their roles due to an inability to make decisions and take action that would lead to beneficial change and engage constructively with employees and peers. As a consequence, the change initiative often falters, resulting in resource losses for the SLCs that can exacerbate their experience of ‘hindrance stress’ and, if sustained, can lead to a self-reinforcing ‘doom loop’ of further ineffective behavior, setbacks and resource losses. Doom loops, in turn, ultimately influence the likelihood of change initiative failure.

It is important to note from a theoretical perspective that although the feedback loops created by ‘challenge stress’ and ‘hindrance stress’ are significant and self-reinforcing, SCLs are not fated to remain in one or the other. Change leaders are

constantly reappraising their situations as the demands of their role, resources available to them and the valence of the change evolve over the course of the change journey. Consequently, they can move from a state of challenge stress to that of hindrance (or vice-versa). A leader experiencing hindrance stress may shift towards challenge stress if there is an increase in resources or a positive change in valence. If this positive shift is substantial and sustained, the doom loop pattern can be interrupted for the leader to enter a gain loop. However, if the factors causing the positive change dissipate or are neutralized by an increase in demands or a reduction in resources, the leader is likely to experience only a ‘spike’ of challenge stress and then revert back to experiencing hindrance stress and a possible entry to a doom loop. Similarly, an increase in demands, reduction in resources, and/or a change in valence may result in a leader in a challenge stress state to experience a shift towards hindrance stress. If the factors causing the negative shift are temporary or are neutralized by an increase in counteracting factors, the leader may only experience a ‘dip’ into hindrance stress and revert back to a challenge stress state. However, if the shift is substantial enough and sustained, it may result in the gain loop pattern breaking and the leader entering the doom loop pattern.

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION

The findings from this grounded theory research reveals a process model that explains the reactions senior change leaders experience, the factors that cause these reactions, the consequences of these reactions, and the way these reactions evolve over time. Central to this process model is SLCs' repetitive appraisal of their context. Sustained positive appraisal leads to a gain loop of challenge stress, effective behavior, and achievements in the change initiatives, which can result in additional resource gains. Sustained negative appraisal leads to a doom loop of hindrance stress, ineffective behavior, setbacks and further loss of resources. While these loops are self-reinforcing, a substantial change in the demands of the role, available resources (organizational and/or personal) or the valence of the change, can lead to a reappraisal of their situation and either a temporary or sustained shift from one loop to the other. By developing the theoretical process model, this research has generated insights that both advance the fields of organizational change and leadership and offer relevance for practice.

Contributions to Theory

The emergent grounded theory model of senior leaders' reactions to the change they are leading answers the call by scholars to have a more integrated approach to the study of the leadership of organizational change (Burnes, Hughes, & By, 2018; By et al., 2016; Ford & Ford, 2012; Oreg & Berson, 2019). I outline the particular contributions to these fields and to resource-based theories of stress below.

Contribution to the Knowledge on Organizational Change. This research contributes to the body of knowledge on organizational change by creating new insights

on the role of senior change leaders in the context of organizational change, reaction to change and the impact of leaders on change outcomes.

First and foremost, this research provides systematic evidence to support the growing body of literature (Battilana et al., 2010; By et al., 2016; Ford et al., 2014; Weick & Quinn, 1999) challenging the assumptions in the agent-centric view of change leadership—that senior change leaders are unbiased and unimpacted agents of change who have all the motivation, skills and mindsets to implement the change in the benefit of the organization. The findings from this research instead suggest that senior change leaders are impacted by the change they are leading in several ways. Senior leaders implementing transformation change not only experience a considerable increase in emotional, mental and physical demands, but also find that the change could be impacting their role, identity, power base and relationships in the organization. Sometimes, change leaders discover that they are required to implement change that may not be fully aligned with what they believe is in the best interests of either themselves or their organizations. There may also be a considerable degree of ambivalence in the way they appraise the personal and organizational impact of the change on themselves or their organizations. Therefore, change leaders, even those at the highest echelons of the organizational hierarchy who are responsible for initiating and sponsoring large-scale transformational change, are not only the agents but also the recipients of the change they are leading. This view of senior change leaders being agents and recipients of the change at the same time provides a new and different perspective in understanding the role of leaders in organizational change than the prevalent view that is based on a dichotomy between change agents and recipients.

This study also contributes to advancing the knowledge of reaction to change by conducting systematic research on the reactions that senior change leaders experience to the change they are leading—an area that has been unexplored in the extant literature on reaction to change. The grounded theory model that emerges from the research also explores the antecedents and consequences of these reactions. It explains how the appraisal by the change leaders of the organizational and personal valence of the change, the demands of their roles, and the resources they have available to cope with these demands result in leaders experiencing hindrance or challenge stress reactions and how these reactions in turn impact leaders' effectiveness in their roles in terms of the decisions they make, the actions they take, and the leadership styles they adopt. These findings support the propositions Ford et al. (2008), Oreg et al. (2019) and Piderit (2000) that an individual's reactions to change is a complex phenomenon comprising of reactions with cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions, often with ambivalence among these dimensions and sometimes even within each.

Furthermore, contrary to the prevalent assumptions that senior leaders are motivated to implement the change and act in the interests of the organizations and followers, the findings of this research suggest that change leaders can appraise their situations negatively, and the resulting reactions may cause them to be disengaged and less effective in performing their roles. This is because engagement in effective change leadership behavior requires leaders to expend a considerable amount of emotional, cognitive and even physical resources. However, when change leaders have a negative appraisal of their situation, they experience hindrance stress which leads to negative

emotions, disengagement, exhaustion and depletion of emotional and cognitive resources. These depleted leaders may therefore not have sufficient resources to make effective decisions and engage with the organization in a constructive manner (Collins & Jackson, 2015) and sometimes even engage in destructive leadership behavior (Mawritz et al., 2014).

The emergent grounded theory model also contributes to the understanding of how the reactions to change evolve over the course of an organizational change and the factors that influence this evolution. It shows that sustained experience of challenge stress, effective behavior, achievements and resource gains can lead to change leaders entering self-reinforcing ‘gain loop’ of further challenge stress and resource gains. Similarly, sustained experience of hindrance stress can result in change leaders entering a self-reinforcing “doom loop”.

For most change leaders, the demands of the role, the resources available, and even the valence of change evolve over time. Change leaders are constantly reappraising their situations. As a consequence of this reappraisal, change leaders may experience ‘shifts’ from challenge to hindrance stress or vice-versa. If the factors causing these shifts dissipate or are compensated by an increase in counteracting factors, these shifts can be temporary, (i.e. merely ‘dips’ into hindrance stress with a reversal to challenge stress, or ‘spikes’ into challenge stress with a reversal to hindrance stress). However, if the factors causing these shifts are sustained, the leaders may end up breaking the gain loop and enter the doom loop or vice-versa.

The emergent grounded theory model also offers insights in terms of understanding the factors leading to senior change leaders’ behaviors and reactions. It

was found that while most of the factors causing the shifts are exogenous (e.g., increase or decrease in demands, resources and valence), in some cases a positive shift (and a resulting breaking of a doom loop) could be the result of the endogenous factors engineered by the leaders themselves. Being in a hindrance stress zone for prolonged periods of time can act as a trigger for change leaders to go on a journey of self-reflection and self-exploration to understand why they find themselves experiencing the negative impact of the doom loop. This may result in change leaders becoming more mindful of the situation around them and their own emotions, thoughts and behaviors, seeking the support of coaches and mentors, learning new skills of leading themselves and others, and as a result growing as leaders and gaining self-confidence. These resources may in turn help the leaders to shift from hindrance to challenge stress.

This study also contributes to the knowledge on the relationship between the effectiveness of change leaders and the organizational outcomes (Ford et al., 2014; Oreg & Berson, 2019). While transformational changes in organizations are associated with a high degree of complexity, uncertainty, and unpredictability regarding the link between management actions and the eventual outcomes (Hannan & Freeman, 1984), the findings from this study on senior change leaders' effectiveness in their roles also makes an important contribution to understanding achievements or setbacks to the change they are leading. These achievements and setbacks can in turn influence the organizational and personal resources the leaders need to implement the change successfully, resulting in self-reinforcing gain and doom loops, and eventually contributing to the success or failure of the change itself.

Contribution to Advancing Knowledge About Leadership. Transforming their organizations is considered a very important part of the top management role (Burnes et al., 2018, Ford et al., 2014). Yet as the review of the literature has revealed, there is a paucity of systematic research when it comes to understanding what experiences senior leaders go through when leading strategic transformational changes, what behaviors they actually engage in, and what factors influence these reactions and behaviors. This research contributes to closing this gap in knowledge by examining the reactions of top management team members with the responsibility of initiating, sponsoring and implementing planned transformational organizational changes. Out of that inquiry, a grounded theory model was developed that provides insights into what reactions leaders experience and what factors influence these reactions.

The model also explains the relationship between the senior change leaders' reactions to their roles, their behaviors and the eventual outcomes, both for the organizations and the change leaders themselves. By doing so, this research also contributes to the body of knowledge on leadership stress (Collins & Jackson, 2015; Harms et al., 2017; Kets de Vries et al., 2009) by detailing the challenge and hindrance stress experienced by senior leaders in the organization while leading transformational change. In particular, by providing examples of how senior leaders can engage in destructive behavior in the context of organizational change, the findings of this research support studies which state that leaders—when confronted by situations of goal blockage or inability to deal with the demands facing them—will experience a negative reaction, and that negative reaction can result in them engaging in destructive leadership behavior (Aasland, Skogstad, Notelaers, Nielsen, & Einarsen, 2010;

Einarsen et al., 2007; Krasikova et al., 2013; Mawritz et al., 2014). This research also advances our knowledge of the executive job demands (Hambrick et al., 2005) by studying the demands the top management team members face while leading change, the factors driving these demands, and explaining the relationship between these demands and the leaders' reactions and subsequent behaviors using grounded theory model.

Contribution to Resource-Based Theories of Stress. This research also advances the knowledge in resource-based theories of stress such as conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, Halbesleben, Neveu, & Westman, 2018) and Job Demands-Resources theory (Demerouti et al., 2001) by studying how the interactions of job demands, valence and resources of change leadership role lead to stress reactions in individuals in senior leadership positions in organizations in the context of transformational change. By describing the self-reinforcing gain and loops in the context of the SCLs' reaction to change, and the complementary, and sometimes self-reinforcing nature of some types of organizational and personal resources available to SCLs, it also contributes to the discussions on resource gain and loss cycles (Halbesleben, Neveu, Paustian-Underdahl & Westman, 2014; Hobfoll, Halbesleben, Neveu & Westman, 2018).

It also provides support for ongoing discussions (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) in areas where these theories need to be further developed in order to increase their explanatory powers in the context of more complex and demanding occupational settings such as organizational change leadership roles. First, it would be useful for future research to expand the concept of personal resources to include not only the

psychological characteristics of an individual but also their knowledge, skills, experience and personal support network, all of which have been seen to be useful in dealing with role demands in challenging job contexts. Second, the findings from this study suggest that valence plays an important role in motivational reaction, particularly in situations when job demands are high and the resources to deal with them are low, and individuals are experiencing ego-depletion (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007). There may be merit in considering the valence of an individual's situation as an explicit factor in these theories. Third, the explanatory power of theoretical models such as JD-R may be enhanced with respect to explaining an individual's reactions to complex settings by explicitly introducing the concept of appraisal to the model. Finally, the findings of this research have shown that (depending on individual circumstances) similar factors leading to an increase in job demands (such as encountering resistance to change) can lead to hindrance stress in some individuals and challenge stress in others. Therefore, as suggested by Bakker & Demerouti (2017), it may be more appropriate to use the terms 'hindrance' and 'challenge' to describe individuals' reactions as opposed to specific stressors.

Contributions to Practice

This research was inspired by the practical problem of high failure rates associated with planned transformational changes and aimed at generating insights that would be relevant to practice as well as theory. Several insights for practice have emerged that can be leveraged to make substantial improvements to the effectiveness of senior change leaders and therefore enhance the success rate of change. Contrary to the prevalent belief in practice that senior change leaders as agents of change are

always motivated to implement the change and that they have all the resources to execute the change effectively, this research provides systematic evidence that the senior change leaders themselves are impacted by the change they are leading, and therefore are also recipients of the change. As recipients, they experience reactions, which in turn influence their motivation and ability to be effective in their roles. Unlike most change recipients, however, senior change leaders have considerable influence over the content and process of change across the organization, and therefore their reactions can have a substantial impact on the change outcomes. This insight has several implications for current approaches to managing change. While most recognize the importance of managing change recipients' reactions to change, they do not direct enough emphasis on managing the reactions of senior change leaders as recipients of change.

The approaches to change management should take into account that leading change can be demanding on senior change leaders, and if they do not have sufficient resources to deal with these demands, there can be negative consequences to the leaders themselves and therefore organizational outcomes. A thorough assessment of the impact of the change itself or the change leadership role may have on senior change leaders, the demands they are going to face in their role, and the resources that have available to deal with these demands could provide insights into ways to support change leaders appraising their situation in a more positive light, and therefore be more effective in their roles. One of the important factors that should be considered is the valence of the change and/or of the role itself for the leaders. For example, if a change leader is going to be negatively impacted by the change (e.g., a loss of the leaders' own

power base as the result of the change) or the role itself (e.g., taking on the leadership role of a complex transformational project is seen as a ‘sideways’ move in the growth in the career trajectory they expected), then organizations need to find ways of making the role beneficial for the leader in other ways (e.g., by giving clarity around the career path after the change is implemented). Similarly, if the role is going to be too demanding for change leaders, they need to be provided with proper support to cope with these demands (e.g., taking some responsibilities off their shoulders while they deal with the challenges of implementing the change, extending timelines or recalibrating expectations for their other, non-change related responsibilities, or providing more organizational resources or supporting them to gain personal resources through coaching, mentoring and training).

A second implication relates to the selection of candidates for senior change leadership roles (and their team members). The findings of this study suggest that leaders be assessed on their personal resources and not just their personal qualities, but also the skills (both ‘hard’ and ‘soft’) and their previous experience of leading change and the strength of networks they have within the organization. If any gaps emerge as a result of such assessment, ways of compensating for them need to be identified (e.g., providing training for the leaders or adding members to the team who may be able to complement leaders’ skills or who have networks and connections in areas of the organization with which the senior change leader may not be familiar with).

Since this research has shown that the demand the SCLs face and the impact of the change on the SCLs evolves over time, these assessments should be conducted not just as a one-off exercise at the time of the initiation of change but also at inflection

points where they may be a substantive change in the demands facing the leaders (e.g., after achieving a key milestone or at the beginning of a new phase of the change).

A third insight revolves around the value of increasing self-awareness either as a result of interaction with coaches and mentors or as a result of self-reflection, which has been shown to be an important resource that helps change leaders to better cope with their demands—particularly when the demands overwhelm the change leaders and push them into hindrance stress territory or even the doom loop. Therefore, providing change leaders with regular mentoring and coaching sessions, as well as training in reflexivity and self-awareness, may be useful in making them effective in their roles. Similarly, making senior change leaders aware of the challenges and demands they will face in the role, in the complexities and uncertainties of the change itself, in the reaction to change among the key stakeholders and the politics surrounding change, as well as the resource constraints they will face along the way would make them better prepared to deal with these challenges.

Finally, large-scale transformational changes are like marathons, requiring the sustained expenditure of emotional, mental and physical energy over a long period of time. However, organizations frequently overlook this fact and implement transformational change in a series of sprints with very little if no time for recovery in between. This creates a risk of change leaders and their teams being depleted, which may result in them being ineffective, facing setbacks and entering self-reinforcing doom loops of further resource losses and setbacks. It may therefore be useful to rethink the way the organizations plan the implementation of transformational changes. Rather than trying to implement change as a series of sprints, a more effective approach may

involve a consistently moderate pace, factoring in periods where the individual leaders or even whole teams have an opportunity to recharge and refresh to enable a continued engagement throughout the implementation of the organizational change effort.

Limitations

As with all studies, this research has limitations. First, this research is based on using retrospective interviews with senior change leaders to explore their lived experiences of leading change. While retrospective interviews have a distinct advantage over other methods of data collection when it comes to drawing out the narratives of the participants' experiences from beginning to end—especially when it involves individuals' experiences of stressful situations in emotionally intense settings such as transformational organizational change (Margolis & Molinsky, 2008)—this form of interviewing also has certain limitations. There is a risk of the interviewees 'performing' for the interviewers, adjusting their responses in order to maintain a positive self-image and create favorable impressions, selectively remembering and smoothing over their experiences, and not always giving the full picture of what their actual behavior was (Charmaz, 2014; Higgs & Rowland, 2011). These concerns have been addressed to a certain degree by using critical incident interviewing techniques and triangulating the data obtained from the participants through interviews with individuals who had observed the participants from close quarters during their role as change leaders and validation with archival data. Nevertheless, there is still the possibility of some individuals smoothing over elements of their experiences. This concern is particularly valid because most of the triangulation interviews were conducted with people selected by the change leaders themselves and therefore more were more likely to either portray

the change leaders in a favorable light out of loyalty to them or have the same views and interpretation of events as the change leaders.

A second limitation relates to the sampling of the participants. In order to capture as much variability as possible while exploring the phenomenon under investigation, a sample of change leaders with a wide diversity in terms of geography, cultural background, industry, type of change, different levels (initiators/sponsors/senior responsible owners/program managers) was chosen for this research. However, there are two aspects in which the sample is homogenous. First, they all had advanced qualifications (MBAs, Masters in Management, PhDs) from institutions in Western Europe or North America. In addition, most of them had attended some form of executive education or leadership development programs in leading business schools in the West. Second, the sample was predominantly male (only 1 out of 32 change leaders and 2 out of 9 change practitioners were female). This is mainly because there was a low representation of female leaders at senior positions in most parts of the world (e.g., regions like the Middle East, Asia-Pacific, and Eastern Europe). In addition, the response rates among male senior change leaders approached were around 80%, while the rate among the female leaders was only about 10%. Future studies in this area need to consider a more diverse sample in terms of gender and educational backgrounds.

A third limitation pertains to the method of data collection. Most of the interviews for this research were conducted through video conferences using platforms such as Zoom, Skype, MS Teams, Facetime and WeChat. There were definite advantages to using video conferencing. The usual logistical challenges involved in travel and setting

up appropriate on-site meeting locations associated with face-to-face interviews did not exist. As a result, there was also more flexibility in scheduling the interviews. I would not have been able to interview participants across a wide geographic spectrum (including Chile, Brazil, the United States, Canada, Russia, Ukraine, Saudi Arabia, China, Singapore, New Zealand, Switzerland, Germany, and the UK) had I not been able to connect with them remotely through video conference. At the same time, there were some limitations to video conferencing. As noted by other researchers (Cater, 2011; Deakin & Wakefield, 2013), I found that building rapport with participants over a video conference, particularly in the first interaction with an interviewee, was not as easy as in a face-to-face meeting. In addition, not being in the same physical space with the participants limited my ability to pick up on the body language cues of the interviewees, as well as any other activities that could have been going on outside the field of view of the camera that may have been distracting the interviewee. I was therefore not always able to adjust the interviewing style to account for these cues as I would have had I been able to do face-to-face interviews. Furthermore, in some of the interviews, there were connectivity issues leading to occasional lapses in the quality of the audio or video signals. These interruptions may have impacted the quality of the interaction with the interviewee, and therefore the richness of information provided by them (Seitz, 2016). Although these disadvantages may have been offset by the advantages researchers have documented of participants being more expressive and open about discussing deeply personal and sensitive topics from the comfort of the space of their choosing without the interviewer being there present in person (Gray, Wong-Wylie, Rempel &

Cook, 2020), the limitations of using video conferencing as a channel of communications should be acknowledged.

Finally, there may be some limitations related to the epistemological foundations of the research methodology itself. I have used the interpretivist approach in exploring the research question and developing the grounded theory around it. As such, the theory that has been developed is a result of interpretations, first by the informants as 'knowledgeable agents' (Corley & Gioia, 2011) of their lived experiences of leading change, and second, by me as a researcher, also as a 'knowledgeable agent', determining patterns in the data, bringing to the surface concepts and relationships that might escape the awareness of the informants, and formulating these concepts in theoretically relevant terms. As Kevin Corley has said 'I would not expect someone who had been at my research site asking the same questions I did to come up with the same grounded model that I did, because they're not me. They didn't interact with my informants in the same way' (Gehman et al., 2108: 296). It should therefore be recognized that the deliverable produced by this research – the grounded theory model – is not making any truth claims. Rather, by engaging with people who have experienced the phenomenon, this research has attempted to provide deeper insights into the phenomenon of the senior leaders' reactions to the transformational change they were leading. It is also important to note that a researcher with a different background approaching the same participants could arrive to different conclusions than those found in this research.

Areas for Further Research

By systematically studying senior leaders in the context of transformational organizational change, this study has developed a grounded theory model that advances our understanding of the reactions of leaders to their roles. But the findings of this research barely scratch the surface of this important and profound topic. Further systematic research in this area would therefore be useful in developing knowledge in this area.

For example, this research used retrospective interviews as the main source of data developing a grounded theory model of leaders' reaction to change. The findings of this research could be further validated and elaborated by studying senior leaders in action using other methods of data collection. Using longitudinal studies with multiple interviews and observations of senior change leaders during the course of initiation and implementation of change and complementing this data with a retrospective interview after the leader has completed the role could provide richer insights and more perspective into the lived experiences of these leaders (Ford et al., 2008; Piderit, 2000).

Nor are the experience of reaction to change is limited to senior change leaders. experiences limited to just senior change leaders. Although the grounded theory model was based on studying senior change leaders' reactions to change, the conceptual framework of the model (that views the reaction to change as a consequence of an individual's appraisal of their situation as well as the concepts and shifts involved in self-reinforcing gain or doom loops) may also be useful in understanding and explaining the reactions of change recipients who may be lower in the organizational hierarchy (and therefore possess a lesser degree of influence on the content and process of the

change). Similarly, the framework could also be potentially useful in advancing the understanding of senior leaders' reactions to other aspects of their roles which place substantial mental, emotional and physical demands on them.

There are also some specific factors that influence change leaders' reactions that could be explored further. For example, it was seen that for some change leaders, the valence of the change or the role evolved over time. Studying further how the valence changes for leaders over time and what factors cause this could provide deeper insights into leaders' appraisal of their situation and their reactions to the demands of their role. Similarly, it was seen that some leaders who believed that they had alternative career options found that it gave them more confidence to deal with the challenges of their roles. It may be useful in studying the differences in reactions of those leaders who believe that they can 'give back the keys to the board' at any time and those who do not have the same confidence of finding other career options.

The knowledge of senior leaders' reaction to change could also be advanced if relationships that have emerged from the grounded theory model were empirically tested using quantitative methods. For example, the hypothesis around the relationships among various types of demands, resources, valence, leaders' appraisals, and resulting reactions and effectiveness could be developed and empirically tested. Similar studies could be conducted to provide empirical evidence behind the relationship among the interaction of valence, demands of the role, and the resources available to change leaders. Of particular interest would be studies of the mediating and moderating role of resources and valence on the appraisal process, and the role appraisal itself plays in mediating the relationship between the reactions that leaders experience and the

factors that cause them. Since the emergent model implies that the reaction to change among senior leaders evolves over time and that it can lead to self-reinforcing loops which could be broken (either temporarily or in a more sustainable manner through positive or negative shifts), it would also be useful to conduct longitudinal research gathering empirical evidence around the complex, dynamic and often ambivalent nature of the reactions to change (Ford et al., 2008; Piderit, 2000), on the workings of these 'loops' and shifts and how reactions evolve over time.

One of the key insights of this study has been the important ways in which personal resources play in change leaders' appraisal of their situations and their subsequent reactions and effectiveness in their roles. There is a potential for creating additional theoretical insights by further studying the impact these resources have on leaders' appraisal. Further studies could assess the role of different types of personal resources (various personal qualities, skills and experience, support networks and routines to recharge) in buffering the impact of different types of demands. Personal resources such as maturity and having alternative career options were also seen to influence the ways leaders appraise the severity of the demands facing them and the strength of their resources, i.e., these resources appeared to have a mediating impact on the relationship between demand, other resources and appraisal. Personal resources such as self-awareness, resilience and routines to recharge were also seen to help leaders in generating new personal resources (e.g., looking for support from coaches/ mentors, reflecting on their own behaviors and finding ways of growing as a leader, regaining personal energy) when the leaders were experiencing hindrance stress and depletion as a consequence of high demands and low resources. These new

resources, in turn, helped the change leaders generate a positive shift which allowed them to bounce back from the ‘dips’ or even break doom loops. The mediating and resource generating role some personal resources play could be explored by further qualitative and quantitative studies.

CONCLUSION

It is well understood that leaders play a crucial role in initiating, implementing and sustaining organizational change through the decisions they make about the content and process of change, the actions they take, and the leadership styles they adopt. Yet there is a paucity of literature examining how change leaders may themselves be impacted by the change they are leading and how these reactions to the change could be influencing their effectiveness as change leaders. The literature on organizational change offers abundant evidence that change recipients react to change and that these reactions may in turn influence their behaviors towards the change. What is not well understood, however, is what happens when the change recipient is also the individual leading the change. While an assumption in the literature is that change leader reactions are uniformly positive (Ford & Ford, 2012); change leaders are often not the initiators of a transformation but are acting instead at the behest of their bosses, boards, or shareholders, or in response to competitive or institutional pressures, and therefore have a much wider and more diverse set of reactions and responses to change.

This dissertation used an interpretative grounded theory approach to develop a model of SCL's reactions while leading planned organizational transformations and how these reactions impact their behaviors and effectiveness as change leaders. By analyzing retrospective interviews with 32 SCLs in a wide range of geographies, industries and change contexts, the emergent model offers both a theoretically integrated approach to studying leadership during change and practical insights that may increase the success rate of organizational transformation programs. The grounded theory model that emerged from the analysis suggests that change leaders

find that their role makes substantial demands on their physical, emotional and mental resources, resulting in an experience of stress (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Crawford et al., 2010). However, the nature of the reactions that change leaders' experience and the subsequent impact on their effectiveness depends on the leaders' appraisal of their situation that is based on their perception of the valence of the change and the demands of the role and the available resources.

If SCLs appraise their situation positively, they experience challenge stress; they are sufficiently motivated to lead the change because they perceive it to be aligned with the organization's interests or their own interests and they have sufficient resources to address the demands of the role. The kind of stress experienced by change leaders results in a positive emotional state, with them feeling energized, engaged and willing to invest resources to attend to the challenges posed by the change. As a result, they are more effective in their roles -- making decisions and taking actions that support the change while engaging with employees, peers and stakeholders constructively. This behavior ultimately results in a higher likelihood of change goals achievement and a resulting gain in resources. If the positive appraisal and the resulting challenge stress are sustained over time, leaders enter a self-reinforcing 'gain loop' of positive change outcomes—more effective behavior, greater success, which leads to further gains and ultimately positive outcomes for the change initiative.

However, if SCLs appraise their situation negatively, they experience hindrance stress; they likely believe that the change is not in either their own interest or in the interest of the organization, or that they perceive that they lack the resources to cope with the demands of the change. Hindrance stress is associated with a cascade of

negative emotions, and such reactions result in leaders being less effective in their roles, unable to make decisions and take action that benefits the transformation efforts. Their behavior suffers as they also tend to engage with employees, peers and stakeholders in a negative or even destructive manner, resulting in setbacks for themselves including subsequent resource loss. If this pattern continues, it can result in SCLs entering a self-reinforcing 'doom loop' of further ineffective behavior, setbacks and additional losses in resources, which ultimately can undermine both the change initiative and their position as a change leader.

Although the feedback loops created by 'challenge stress' and 'hindrance stress' are significant and self-reinforcing, SCLs are constantly reappraising their situation as the demands of their role, resources available to them and even the valence of the change evolve over the course of the change journey. A leader in a doom loop may experience a positive shift towards challenge stress if there is a decrease in demands or an increase in resources or valence. If these changes are only temporary, however, the leader experiences a momentary 'spike' of challenge stress and then reverts to experiencing hindrance stress. By contrast, if this positive shift is substantial and sustained, the pattern can be broken and the leader may enter a gain loop. In a similar fashion, an increase in demands and reduction in resources and valence may result in a leader experiencing a shift towards hindrance stress. If the shift is sufficiently substantial and sustained, the leader may enter a doom loop; however, if these factors can be mitigated, the leader may only experience a 'dip' into hindrance stress.

These findings contribute to both the theory and practice. From a theoretical perspective, the grounded theory model advances our understanding of the reactions to

change by offering an integrated picture of the demands, resources, reactions and behaviors that SCLs experience and the resulting impact on change outcomes. On a practical level, the application of the insights gleaned from the model to change management methodologies considerably expands our understanding of SCLs *as recipients of change* and offers helpful guidance regarding ways to avoid pitfalls and support leaders who are initiating and implementing organizational transformations.

CONCLUSIÓN

Es bien sabido que los líderes desempeñan un papel crucial en el inicio, la implementación y el mantenimiento del cambio organizativo a través de las decisiones que toman sobre el contenido y el proceso de cambio, las acciones que emprenden y los estilos de liderazgo que adoptan. Sin embargo, no abundan los estudios que examinen cómo los propios líderes de cambio pueden verse afectados por el cambio que están liderando y cómo estas reacciones al cambio podrían estar influyendo en su eficacia como líderes de cambio. La literatura sobre el cambio organizativo ofrece abundantes pruebas de que los receptores del cambio reaccionan ante éste y de que estas reacciones pueden influir a su vez en sus comportamientos hacia el cambio. Sin embargo, lo que no se comprende bien es lo que ocurre cuando el receptor del cambio es también la persona que lo dirige. Mientras que en la literatura se asume que las reacciones del líder de cambio son uniformemente positivas (Ford & Ford, 2012); los líderes de cambio a menudo no son los iniciadores de una transformación, sino que actúan a instancias de sus jefes, consejos de administración o accionistas, o en respuesta a presiones competitivas o institucionales y, por tanto, tienen un conjunto mucho más amplio y diverso de reacciones y respuestas al cambio.

Esta tesis utiliza un enfoque interpretativo de teoría fundamentada para desarrollar un modelo de las reacciones de los SCL mientras lideran transformaciones organizativas planificadas y cómo estas reacciones afectan a sus comportamientos y a su eficacia como líderes del cambio. Mediante el análisis de entrevistas retrospectivas con 32 SCL en un amplio abanico de territorios, industrias y contextos de cambio, el modelo emergente ofrece tanto un enfoque teóricamente integrado para el estudio del

liderazgo durante el cambio como ideas prácticas que pueden aumentar la tasa de éxito de los programas de transformación organizativa. El modelo de teoría fundamentada que surgió del análisis indica que los líderes de cambio descubren que su función comporta grandes exigencias sobre sus recursos físicos, emocionales y mentales, lo que resulta en una experiencia de estrés (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Crawford et al., 2010). Sin embargo, la naturaleza de las reacciones que experimentan los líderes del cambio y el consiguiente impacto en su eficacia depende de la evaluación que hacen los líderes de su situación, que se basa en su percepción de la valencia del cambio y de las exigencias del papel y los recursos disponibles.

Si los SCL evalúan positivamente su situación, experimentan estrés por desafío; están suficientemente motivados para liderar el cambio porque lo perciben alineado con los intereses de la organización o con sus propios intereses y tienen suficientes recursos para hacer frente a las demandas del rol. El tipo de estrés que experimentan los líderes de cambio se traduce en un estado emocional positivo, ya que se sienten llenos de energía, comprometidos y dispuestos a invertir recursos para atender los retos que plantea el cambio. Como resultado, son más eficaces en sus funciones: adoptan decisiones y realizan acciones que apoyan el cambio, al tiempo que se relacionan con los empleados, los compañeros y los *stakeholders* de forma constructiva. Este comportamiento se traduce, en última instancia, en una mayor probabilidad de alcanzar los objetivos del cambio y en la consiguiente ganancia de recursos. Si la evaluación positiva y el estrés resultante del desafío se mantienen a lo largo del tiempo, los líderes entran en un "bucle de ganancia" de resultados positivos del cambio que se refuerza a sí mismo: un comportamiento más eficaz, un mayor éxito,

que conduce a más ganancias y, en última instancia, a resultados positivos para la iniciativa de cambio.

Sin embargo, si los SCL evalúan su situación de forma negativa, experimentan estrés por obstáculo; probablemente creen que el cambio no ofrece interés ni para ellos ni para la organización, o perciben que carecen de recursos para hacer frente a las exigencias del cambio. El estrés por obstáculo se asocia a una cascada de emociones negativas, y tales reacciones hacen que los líderes sean menos eficaces en sus funciones, incapaces de adoptar decisiones y emprender acciones que beneficien los esfuerzos de transformación. Su comportamiento se resiente, ya que también tienden a relacionarse con los empleados, los compañeros y los *stakeholders* de forma negativa o incluso destructiva, lo que provoca contratiempos para ellos mismos, incluida la consiguiente pérdida de recursos. Si este patrón continúa, puede dar lugar a que los SCL entren en un "bucle de fatalidad" que se refuerza a sí mismo con un comportamiento más ineficaz, contratiempos y pérdidas adicionales de recursos, lo que en última instancia puede socavar tanto la iniciativa de cambio como su posición como líder del cambio.

Aunque los bucles de retroalimentación creados por el "estrés por desafío" y el "estrés por obstáculo" son significativos y se refuerzan a sí mismos, los SCL están reevaluando constantemente su situación a medida que las exigencias de su papel, los recursos disponibles e incluso la valencia del cambio evolucionan en el transcurso del viaje de cambio. Un líder en un bucle de fatalidad puede experimentar un cambio positivo hacia el estrés por desafío si hay una disminución de las exigencias o un aumento de los recursos o la valencia. Sin embargo, si estos cambios son sólo

temporales, el líder experimenta un "pico" momentáneo de estrés por desafío y luego vuelve a experimentar estrés por obstáculo. Por el contrario, si este cambio positivo es sustancial y sostenido, el patrón puede romperse y el líder puede entrar en un bucle de ganancia. De forma similar, un aumento de las exigencias y una reducción de los recursos y la valencia pueden hacer que un líder experimente un cambio hacia el estrés por obstáculo. Si el cambio es lo suficientemente sustancial y sostenido, el líder puede entrar en un bucle de fatalidad; sin embargo, si estos factores pueden mitigarse, es posible que el líder sólo experimente un "tropiezo" en el estrés por obstáculo.

Estas conclusiones contribuyen tanto a la teoría como a la práctica. Desde una perspectiva teórica, el modelo de teoría fundamentada avanza en nuestra comprensión de las reacciones al cambio al ofrecer una imagen integrada de las exigencias, los recursos, las reacciones y los comportamientos que experimentan los SCL y el impacto resultante en los resultados del cambio. En el plano práctico, la aplicación de las ideas extraídas del modelo a las metodologías de gestión del cambio amplía considerablemente nuestra comprensión de los SCL *como receptores del cambio* y ofrece una orientación útil sobre las formas de evitar los escollos y apoyar a los líderes que inician y ejecutan las transformaciones organizativas.

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APPENDIX A: SENIOR LEADERSHIP ROLES IN PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Adapted from Zein (2010)

Definition of Program Management: *"the action of carrying out the coordinated organisation, direction and implementation of a dossier of projects and transformation activities to achieve outcomes and realise benefits of strategic importance to the business"* (Great Britain Office of Government Commerce, 2011: 6)

Table A.1 Senior Leadership Roles in Program Management

Change leader role	Responsibilities
Sponsor	• Authorizing the program on the basis of its mandate and business case; • Appointing the SRO to represent the interest of the sponsor; • Approving and authorizing the funding for the program; • Resolving cross-program issues and strategic issues with senior stakeholders; • Approving the program's progress against the organizational strategy and objectives; • Demonstrating "visible" support to the program and its management team; • "Leading by example" the transformational change brought about by the program; and • Confirming successful delivery and signs-of at the program closure.
Senior Responsible Owner (SRO)	• Guarding the viability of the vision and the business case; • Getting the money from the sponsors; • Leading the program to its successful completion; • Managing key "strategic" risks; • Maintaining strategic alignment between the program and the organization; and • Interfacing with the senior stakeholders.
Program Manager	• Daily program management throughout the program life cycle; • Defining the program governance (controls); • Planning the overall program and monitoring the progress; • Managing the program's budget; • Managing risks and issues and taking corrective measurements; • Coordinating the projects and their interdependencies; • Managing and utilizing resources across projects; • Managing stakeholders' communication; • Aligning the deliverables (outputs) to the program's "outcome" with the aid of the business change manager; and • Managing the main program documentation such as the program initiation document.

APPENDIX B: SOURCES FOR TRIANGULATING RETROSPECTIVE INTERVIEWS

Table B.1 Sources For Triangulating Retrospective Interviews

Sub-questions arising from the main research question ('slices' of data collected)	Primary source of data	Sources of data for validating the narratives in retrospective interviews and triangulating the findings
What cognitive and affective reactions (thoughts and emotions) leaders experience in response the impact change leadership role had on them?	Retrospective interviews with change leaders	• None – the thoughts and feelings the change leaders were experiencing can only be uncovered from the narratives of the change leaders themselves
How did these reactions impact leaders' behaviors (decisions, actions, leadership styles) and effectiveness?		• Interviews with people who had worked closely with the change leaders (e.g., subordinates, superiors, peers) • Archival data (e.g., project documentation, minutes of the meeting) • Publicly available data (e.g., press releases, news, investor communications)
What factors influence this impact (e.g., context and complexity of change, organizational environment, resources available to the leader, etc.)		
What were the outcomes (both for the organization and the leaders themselves) of leaders' reactions and behaviors?		• Interviews with people who had worked closely with the change leaders (subordinates, superiors, peers, in some cases consultants/ coaches) • Archival data (e.g., project documentation, minutes of the meeting) • Publicly available data (e.g., press releases, news articles, investor communications, leaders' Linkedin profiles (for change in roles))

APPENDIX C: PROFILES OF INTERVIEWEES – SENIOR CHANGE LEADERS

Table C.1 Senior Change Leader Profiles (at time of the change program that was discussed)

Interviewee ID	Education/ years of work experience	Organization/ revenue/ employees	Interviewee's position	Where change program was implemented	Context of the change program(s) discussed	Role of the interviewee in the change program(s)
L1	MBA (W. Europe)/ 20+ years	Medical services company/USD 45 million/ 250 employees	CEO	Asia-Pacific	Multiple change programs to transform and grow the business	Initiator / sponsor of change
L2	MBA (W. Europe)/ 20+ years	Industrial goods company/ USD 20 billion+/ 100,000+employees	Head of a global function in a business unit CEO - 3	Global	Operational efficiency program	Program Manager - responsible for designing and implementing change initiated by others, including in areas of business outside own direct responsibility
L3	MBA (W. Europe)/ 20+ years	Chemicals company/ USD 12 billion +/ 5000+ employees	CEO	Global	Health and safety performance improvement and culture change program	Initiator/ sponsor of change

Table C.1 (cont.)

Interviewee ID	Education/ years of work experience	Organization/ revenue/ employees	Interviewee's position	Where change program was implemented	Context of the change program(s) discussed	Role of the interviewee in the change program(s)
L4	MBA (W. Europe)/ 20+ years	Global FMCG company A business unit with USD 70m+ in revenue and 2500+ employees	Head of business unit	Asia-Pacific	Turnaround of a failing business	Senior Responsible Owner for implementing change in area under own direct responsibility
L5	MBA (W. Europe)/ 20+ years	Global financial services company USD 25 billion+ revenue 60,000 employees	Head of function in Europe CEO-3	Europe	Transformation of go to market model	Program Manager - responsible for designing and implementing change initiated by others, including in areas of business outside own direct responsibility
L6	MBA (W. Europe)/ 20+ years	Global Engineering Services Company/ USD 700 million +/ 2500+ people	CEO	Global	Overall business transformation	Initiator/ sponsor of change
L7	MBA, Ph.D(W. Europe), / 20+ years	Construction USD 1billion + revenue/ 6000 + employees	CEO	Europe	Turnaround during the crisis in the industry	Initiator/ sponsor of change
L8	MBA (W. Europe)/	Chemicals company/	Head of BU in Europe CEO-3	Europe	Organizational restructuring	Senior Responsible Owner for implementing

Table C.1 (cont.)

Interviewee ID	Education/ years of work experience	Organization/ revenue/ employees	Interviewee's position	Where change program was implemented	Context of the change program(s) discussed	Role of the interviewee in the change program(s)
	20+ years	USD 60+ billion revenue/ 110,000+ people				change in area under own direct responsibility
L9	MBA (W. Europe)/ 20+ years	Software company USD 400million + revenue / 2000+ people	Head of Region CEO-1	Global	Business transformation accompanied by rapid growth	Initiator/ sponsor of change
L10	MBA (W. Europe)/ 20+ years	Medical equipment/ USD 30 billion +/ 80,000+ people	Head of sales and marketing for a Business Unit CEO-2	Global	Business transformation, organizational transformation and cost reduction program	Senior Responsible Owner for implementing change in area under own direct responsibility
L11	MBA (W. Europe)/ 20+ years	Construction materials company/ USD 30 billion +/ 90,000+ people	Head of Business Transformation CEO-2	Europe	Change programs aimed at enhancing competitive position	Senior Responsible Owner for implementing change including in areas of business outside direct control
		Global Transportation Company USD 30 billion +/ 80,000+ people	Global Head of Safety/ CEO-2	Global	Health and Safety performance enhancement program	Sponsor of change (initiated by the Board) implemented in areas outside own direct control
L12	MBA (W. Europe)/ 20+ years	Transportation Company	Chairman of the Board	Eastern Europe	Business transformation and growth	Initiator/ sponsor of change

Table C.1 (cont.)

Interviewee ID	Education/ years of work experience	Organization/ revenue/ employees	Interviewee's position	Where change program was implemented	Context of the change program(s) discussed	Role of the interviewee in the change program(s)
		USD 200million + revenue/ 2000+ people				
L13	MBA (W. Europe)/ 20+ years	Information Technology company/ USD 30 billion +/ 100 000+ people	Group Vice President CEO-2	Global	Business Transformation involving fundamental changes to the business model	Program Manager - responsible for designing and implementing change initiated by others, including in areas of business outside own direct responsibility
L14	MBA (W. Europe)/ 20+ years	Global Mining Company/ USD 40 billion+/ 70,000+ people	Head of Global Function CEO-2	Global	Organizational restructuring	Program Manager - responsible for designing and implementing change initiated by others, including in areas of business outside own direct responsibility
L15	MBA (W. Europe)/ 20+ years	Financial Services Company/ USD 300million +/ 700+ people	Head of Function CEO-2	Western Europe	Organizational restructuring after merger	Program Manager - responsible for designing and implementing change initiated by others, including in areas of business outside own direct responsibility
L16	MBA (W. Europe) 30+ years	Travel services/ USD 500 million +/ 4000+ people	CEO	Middle East	Multiple change programs aimed at enhancing the company's	Initiator/ sponsor of change

Table C.1 (cont.)

Interviewee ID	Education/ years of work experience	Organization/ revenue/ employees	Interviewee's position	Where change program was implemented	Context of the change program(s) discussed	Role of the interviewee in the change program(s)
					competitive position	
L17	PhD (US), MBA (Middle East)/ 30+ years	Utilities USD 500million +/ 2000+ people	CEO	Middle East	Business Transformation aimed at strengthening the company's capabilities in anticipation of competition	Initiator/ sponsor of change
		Government agency 700+ employees	CEO	Middle East	Program aimed at transforming service to beneficiaries	Sponsor of change (initiated by the Board) implemented in areas under own direct control
L18	M.Sc MBA (W. Europe) 30+ years	Metals and Mining USD 2 billion+ revenue 20,000+ employees	CEO	Eastern Europe	Organizational restructuring and efficiency	Change sponsor – responsible for implementing the change initiated under directions from the Board in areas directly under own responsibility
L19	MBA (US) M.Sc (W. Europe) 30+ years	Engineering services USD 200m + revenue 1000+ employees	Managing Director of a Business Unit CEO-1	W. Europe	Transformation of a failing business unit after purchase by a private equity firm	Change sponsor – accountable for delivering the results for transformation initiated by the Board in the areas directly under own responsibility
L20	MBA (W. Europe)	Utilities	CEO	Middle East	Transforming the business to	Change initiator – responsible for initiating

Table C.1 (cont.)

Interviewee ID	Education/ years of work experience	Organization/ revenue/ employees	Interviewee's position	Where change program was implemented	Context of the change program(s) discussed	Role of the interviewee in the change program(s)
		USD 500million +/ 2000+ people			prepare it for impending unfavorable changes in regulation while fixing performance	and leading change in the areas directly under own responsibility
L21	MBA (W. Europe)	Fast Moving Consumer Goods USD 25 billion +/ 70,000+ people	VP for strategy and transformation CEO-2	Global	Transforming the business model by introducing new product category intended to phase out the current core category of the company	Senior Responsible Owner – responsible for designing and implementing change initiated by the Executive Committee including in areas outside own direct responsibility
L22	MBA (W. Europe) 25+ years	Oil products USD 400m+/ 500+ people	CEO	Africa	Transforming the business model and turning around performance	Change sponsor – accountable for designing and implementing change (initiated by the Board) in areas directly under own responsibility
L23	MBA (W. Europe) 25+ years	Construction services USD 2billiion _ revenue 3000+ employees	Chief executive for Talent, Culture and Leadership (CEO-1)	N. America	Transformation of business model from time and material to value-based propositions	Change initiator/ sponsor – responsible initiating and facilitating implementation of change, including in areas of business outside own direct responsibility

Table C.1 (cont.)

Interviewee ID	Education/ years of work experience	Organization/ revenue/ employees	Interviewee's position	Where change program was implemented	Context of the change program(s) discussed	Role of the interviewee in the change program(s)
L24	MBA (W. Europe) 25+ years	Transportation USD 9 billion + revenue 40000 + employees	CEO	Americas	Restructuring and turning around the business in crisis	Change initiator/ sponsor – responsible for initiating, sponsoring and facilitating the implementation of change in areas directly under own responsibility
L25	MBA (W. Europe) 30+ years	IT and Telecommunication services USD 1.8 billion + revenue 4,700+ employees	Senior Vice President – Business Transformation (CEO-1)	Global	Transformation of the business model of the organization across	Change sponsor - responsible for designing and implementing change (initiated by the Board) in areas of business outside own direct control
L26	MBA (W. Europe) 25+ years	Engineering services USD 4 billion + revenue 40,000+ employees	Head of Corporate Strategic Projects (CEO-1)	Global	Global quality improvement and culture change program	Program Manager – responsible for designing and implementing change (initiated by the Executive Committee) in areas of business outside own direct responsibility
L27	MBA (W. Europe) 25+ years	Chemicals USD 9 billion + revenue 26,000+ employees	CEO	E. Europe/ Asia	Transformation journey of the company over 10 + years (fundamental changes in the asset footprint, portfolio, governance	Change initiator/ sponsor – responsible for initiating and facilitating implementation of transformational changes in the areas directly under own control

Table C.1 (cont.)

Interviewee ID	Education/ years of work experience	Organization/ revenue/ employees	Interviewee's position	Where change program was implemented	Context of the change program(s) discussed	Role of the interviewee in the change program(s)
					model, processes and culture)	
L28	Masters in Economics (US) 25+ years	Mining USD 500 million +/ 5000 + people	General Director	Asia	Operational turnaround	Change sponsor – responsible for designing and implementing change (initiated by the Board) in the area of business directly under own responsibility
L29	MBA (W. Europe) 30+ years	Advisory services USD 9+ billion in revenue 46,000+ employees	Head of Integration and Change (CEO-2)	Europe	Consolidation and transformation of businesses after a series of mergers	Program Manager – responsible for designing and implementing change (initiated by the CEO), including in areas of business outside own direct responsibility
L30	MBA (W. Europe) 30+ years	Telecommunication services USD 1.8 billion revenue 1700+ employees	CEO	Europe	Turnaround of the business after acquisitions by private equity	Change initiator responsible for implementing delivering the change in the areas of business directly under own responsibility
L31	MBA (W. Europe) 20+ years	Government Agency USD 19 billion+ budget 21,000+ employees	Deputy for Strategy and Transformation (CEO -1)	Middle East	Transformation of sectors of economy under the supervision of the agency and the operating	Senior Responsible Owner – responsible for facilitation of design and implementation of change (initiated by the government and sponsored by the Head of

Table C.1 (cont.)

Interviewee ID	Education/ years of work experience	Organization/ revenue/ employees	Interviewee's position	Where change program was implemented	Context of the change program(s) discussed	Role of the interviewee in the change program(s)
					model of the agency itself	Agency), predominantly in areas outside own direct control
L32	PhD (W. Europe) 25+ years	Engineering goods USD 2.5 billion+ revenue 15,000 employees	CEO	Global	Transformation of the business model of the company	Change initiator and sponsor – responsible for delivering results in areas of business directly under own control

APPENDIX D: CHANGE LEADERS BY ORGANIZATION SIZE AND POSITION

Table D.1 Distribution of Interviewed Change Leaders

Size (# of employees) / Position in the hierarchy	100-1,000	1,001-5000	5,001-10,001	10,000+
CEO or head of organization ("N")	L1, L22	L6, L12, L16, L17, L20, L30	L3, L7, L28	L18, L24, L27, L32
N-1		L4, L9, L19, L23, L25		L26, L31
N-2	L15			L10, L11, L13, L14, L21, L29
N-3				L2, L5, L8

Table D.2 Change Leaders Interviewed by Organizational Size and Position

Size (# of employees) / Position in the hierarchy	100-1,000	1,001-5000	5,001-10,000	10,001+	Subtotal
CEO or head of organization ("N")	2	6	3	4	15
N-1		5		2	7
N-2	1			6	7
N-3				3	3
Subtotal	3	11	3	15	**32**

APPENDIX E: PROFILES OF INTERVIEWEES – CHANGE PRACTITIONERS

Table E.1 Change Practitioner Profiles

Interviewee ID	Education/ years of work experience	Interviewee role	Roles of change leader(s) discussed	Geography where change programs were implemented
P1	MBA (W. Europe)/ 20+ years	Management Consultant	Change agents responsible for implementing transformation programs across industries	W. Europe
P3	Ph.D (US) / 40+ years	Academic/ Executive Coach	Change leaders -initiators of transformation programs across industries and geographies	Global
P4	Graduate (W. Europe)/ 40+ years	Executive Coach	Change leaders -initiators of transformation programs across industries and geographies	W. Europe
P5	Ph.D (W. Europe)/ 20+ years	Executive Coach	Change leaders -initiators of transformation programs across industries and geographies	W. Europe
P6	Ph.D (W. Europe)/ / 20+ years	Executive Coach	Change agents responsible for implementing transformation programs across industries	W. Europe
P7	Masters (W. Europe)/ 30+ years	Management Consultant/ Executive Coach	Change leaders -initiators of transformation programs across industries and geographies	Global

Table E.1 (cont.)

Interviewee ID	Education/ years of work experience	Interviewee role	Roles of change leader(s) discussed	Geography where change programs were implemented
P8	MBA (W. Europe)/ 35+ years	Management Consultant/ Executive Coach	Change leaders -initiators of transformation programs across industries and geographies	Global
P9	MBA (W. Europe)/ 35+ years	Management consultant	Change leaders – initiators and sponsors of IT driven business transformations across industries and geographies	Global
P10	MBA (W. Europe)/ 20+ years	Management consultant	Change leaders- initiators and sponsors of strategic business transformations across industries and geographies	Global

APPENDIX F: PROTOCOL FOR INTERVIEWS WITH CHANGE LEADERS

A. What was the context of change and the role of the interviewee in the change program?

1. Please describe the context of the change initiative you were involved in:
   - Why was the change necessary?
   - What were the objectives of the change initiative?
   - What was the scope of change?
   - Who initiated the change?

2. What was your role in the change initiative?

B. What demands did the change leadership role place on the resource base?

1. What did you think expectations were about your role and the outcomes of the change program when the program was launched?

2. What was the reality? How was it different from the expectations

3. What were the demands of change leadership role on your:
- Time
- Energy
- Emotions
- Other areas (e.g., relationships, reputation, etc.)

4. What was the most challenging parts of the role? What factors were driving these challenges?

C. What organizational resources were available? How effective were they in offsetting the demands?

1. What organizational and personal resources did you have at your disposal to deal with the demands and challenges of your role?

2. Which resources were most helpful?

3. How sufficient were the resources at your disposal to perform your role successfully?

D. What reactions did the leader experience to change? What role did the leader's personal resources play in influencing these reactions?

1. How did you personally experience the change initiative you were leading? How did your feelings and attitudes towards the change initiative evolve over time? How did that impact your behavior?

2. How would you assess the impact of your own attitudes, feelings and behaviors on the outcomes of the change initiative?

3. What are the key capabilities and qualities that a change leader needs to have in order to make the change effort successful?

E. What can be done to help leaders to enhance their personal resources to be more effective at leading change?

1. What advice would you give to people taking up a transformational leadership role?

2. What resources would you recommend providing change leaders to help them prepare better to deal with the demands and challenges of change leadership role?

3. What recommendations do you have for enhancing the success rates of change programs?

APPENDIX G: PROTOCOL FOR INTERVIEWS WITH CHANGE PRACTITIONERS

A. How would you describe the role of a change leader?

1. What role does a change leader play in the successful implementation of the change program?

2. What capabilities and qualities does a leader need to have to successfully lead a change program?

B. What demands does the change leadership role place on the leaders?

1. What demands does the change leadership role make on time, energy, emotions and other resources of a change leader?

2. What are the key challenges a change leader faces?

C. What organizational resources are available to a change leader?

1. What resources are usually at a change leader's disposal to deal with demands and challenges of the role?

2. Which of these resources are most useful?

D. How do leaders react to change they are leading?

1. How do leaders experience the change program?

2. How do their attitudes, feelings and behaviors change over time?

3. How does that impact the change program?

E. How does the leaders' reaction to change influence the success (failure) of the change program?

From your experience of a successful (failed) change program, could you please describe:

- What were the things that the change leader was doing right (wrong)?
- What factors influenced the leader to do the things they were doing right (wrong)?
- What were the demands and challenges the leader was facing?
- How did the leader cope with the demands and challenges?
- What resources were at the leaders' disposal?
- How did the change leader's reaction to the demands and challenges of the change program impact the outcome of the program?
- What qualities and capabilities did the leader possess? How did they evolve over time? What support was provided to the leader in growing these capabilities?

F. How to enhance the success rates of change initiatives?

1. What recommendations do you have for enhancing the success rates of change programs in terms of:
    - Selecting candidates for the change leadership role?
    - Preparing candidates for the change leadership role?
    - Providing resources and support to the change leaders during the course of the change program?
    - Developing change leadership capabilities and qualities in an executive?

2. What additional recommendations do you have for enhancing the success rates of change programs?

APPENDIX H: PROTOCOL FOR DATA TRIANGULATION INTERVIEWS

Following protocol was used for interviews with the change leaders' colleagues to validate/ triangulate the data collected from the interview with change leaders L1-L32.

1. Please describe your role in the [*organization X*] during the [*change initiative described by the change leader*].
Follow-up questions:

- What were your responsibilities?
- How was your work related with the work of [*change leader name*]? How closely were you working with him/her?

2. Based on your observation of [*change leader name*], what aspects of the role do you think were motivating /exciting for him/her and what aspects were challenging/ demanding?

3. How would you describe the situation during the [*critical incident mentioned by the change leader*][7]? What was going on for him/her?

- How did this reflect in [*change leader name*]'s behavior?
- What was the impact of his behavior on the people, organization and the change initiative?
- For how long did the situation last? How did it evolve? What factors led to the change in situation?

4. Is there anything you would like to add about what was going on for [*change leader name*] during the change initiative?

[7] Critical incidents included situations such as tough discussions with Board Members and colleagues, operational or financial crisis, touch decisions (e.g., firing people, closing plants), facing threats on personal safety etc.

APPENDIX I: REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES FOR KEY CATEGORIES, SECOND-ORDER THEMES AND FIRST-ORDER CONCEPTS

Table I.1 Representative Quotes for Key Categories in Data Structure (Figure 3.1)[8]

Categories, second-order themes and first-order concepts	Representative quotes by first-order concepts
Category: Valence of change	
A. Organizational valence	
1. Conviction in the need for change	1.1 [The change was needed because] internally the organization is not able to pull at the same pace that the market is changing. So, it is really frustrating and demoralizing to see our customers, who we had nurtured for a long time, switch to competitive products. Can't blame. Yeah, you will feel angry you will feel disappointed, you feel screwed. (L13) 1.2 I believed in what I had to do (implement the change), that it was the right thing to do, to do otherwise was cowardly and stupid if not stealing (from the shareholders who hired me to protect their interests)… Therefore, I had no choice what to do. (L18)
2. Making a difference	2.1 We have to support [our] patients. It's not about, "I'm so happy because I've made a change producing from red box to yellow box, that's a major change and I'm so excited about it." For me and if you look at what's happening now, our sector ultimately is actually changing. … And there are disorders, single-gene disorders, diseases, cystic fibrosis. I'm Caucasian and one in twenty-five carry a gene of cystic fibrosis. There are a number of these disorders that we can fundamentally eliminate. And people get very uncomfortable with this sort of discussion and it's ok. I find these kinds of discussions very interesting, that's a lot what motivates me. We can do a better job …. (L1) 2.2 When I think about, you know, why do I wake up every morning? What is it that drives me, if it's not my own personal ambition? You know, it is very easy for me, I just, you know, feel that we can do something very different for our customers. (L24)
B. Personal valence	
3. Personal benefits of change	3.1 I decided to take on that role. And one thing is, yeah, it's simply a very good opportunity for my career development. (L4) 3.2 Once I became convinced [that I would benefit from change], it became easier to my body language, my words…my presentations, my analysis, my things with the people, it all reflected over time, it didn't happen like this, but over time started reflecting. (L13)

[8] The letters for second-order themes and numbers for first-order concepts correspond to Figure 3.1.

Table I.1 (cont.)

Categories, second-order themes and first-order concepts	Representative quotes by first-order concepts
4. Sense of achievement	4.1 So, you've done this a few times, then it doesn't get easier. But if you're the guy who says I like these challenges, and I know when I leave, then I will have led to something which has really added benefit… then I would say this is at least for me the biggest motivation. (L32) 4.2 The achievement itself, in my opinion, is motivation...For me, always I look at that achievement as motivation to start …stage two…to your journey to the next achievement. (L20)
Category: Change leadership role resources	
C. Organizational resources	
5. Support from leaders	5.1 We got all the executive team members to do a video…[to] lend their support and also bring examples on what they are doing and saying "Yes, we are supporting this". Our CEO was coming out with a video every quarter. He was he was mentioning the program, in every town hall meeting… he was saying this is important. … the message to the very top management [was] that this is not going away.. that we want to change …that there is no way that we will not do this. (L26) 5.2 I remember my boss (the CEO) told me … "It's a lot of money, but because you are the one who proposed and you are the one who will do it, we trust you to carry on. Because many people probably cannot make it happen." … Also, the other thing is that the fact that…I proposed the strategy and then the CEO approved, that also gave me very high confidence. (L4)
6. Strong team	6.1 You need people to believe in your direction. For example, …we started [the program], invited the consultants. It all appears obvious, but nothing is happening. I change the boss there and the change starts moving. And then, all the experts and consultants start [delivering results]. You need a foundation for that- people who are responsible. It's hard if there is no team around you, when you cannot rely on anyone. Therefore, the number one priority is to assemble or hire a team.. from existing people or from outside. (L28) 6.2 I have the Program Management Office.. we use an external firm for that. And so the senior person from [the Consultant] that does that... That helps me a lot. I think that's been a real success factor in terms of being able to drive the project… We have..legal teams, and regulatory teams that are part of the extended group that indeed, facilitate that transaction… in terms of tax, the tax specialist [was]brought in from [an external organization]. (L25)
7. Allies/ mentors	7.1 I think this is probably a red thread in my career… I have found that it's very important to recruit allies. Find people who are of a similar mind, even if imperfectly so, and … can find common ground and work together to effect the change. (L6) 7.2 You need to have someone … mentor or some other acquaintance that … you really trust - may be in your own company to come back to him and talk a little bit what happened….It helps to be able to speak to other people what is happening to you and try to get some suggestions, something that helps to

Table I.1 (cont.)

Categories, second-order themes and first-order concepts	Representative quotes by first-order concepts
	recreate a little bit of your energy…Just to be comforted somebody that you trust. (L5)
8. Authority	8.1 And the board is giving me a lot of freedom as well. So it's easier in the sense that I have that. That ability to put at work what I have in my mind because I'm the number one [decision maker]. (L24) 8.2 I had pretty carte blanche … because that was the only requirement but I put down to take the job… as I said, "I'll take it, but then I want a free rein to do pretty much anything." (L11)
D. Personal resources	
9. Personal qualities	9.1 But you know, sh*# happens all the time. You need to be…at times be quite cool and not overreact. And you need quite thick skin when it's tough going. (L19) 9.2 Actually being stubborn… to a degree... Resilience is a better word, I suppose it…. Accepting that life is all about... things can go wrong can go right. I love life. I love what I do..... adversity is, is a weird thing... adversity to me either from a business point of view, personal point of view, health point of view. I love life….I won't allow myself to, be pushed into a negative corner. (L29)
10. Skills and previous experience	10.1 I think my skills in my commercial roles…because I managed the sales and marketing functions in my previous role. So, that was helpful. My financial knowledge, my analytical skills…. My leadership skills, communication skills [were also helpful]. (L4) 10.2 For the last 25 years, I was always responsible for change. I never had the fortune to drive a company to administer, it was always about getting a company from A to B, and in most cases, raising profitability, going into new business fields, changing company culture… So, it starts with something very basic in terms of what you're asking for what makes you happy, what makes you sad. You must be willing to do these kinds of things, it must be fun to you to change. (L32)
11. Routines/ to recharge/ relationships	11.1 I do sports…I take time for myself…I like doing the right thing, staying fit and healthy…[I'm] reasonably fit guy. I like to stay like that way…it did help me. (L29) 11.2 I think the family plays a certain role, the family can be supportive, the family can share your sorrows, give advice. My own family, my own children…I could tell them, they could take some pressure away from me…. I don't have a lot of friends. I have maybe 5, which are close. Of course, I was speaking with them, I was talking to them, what the situation of our business [was]. And this was also helpful. I think whenever you can share a little bit of your sorrow, that is helpful. … you can unload a little bit of this pressure from you. (L7)
12. Alternative career options	12.1 You know what made it easier for me? When I told the shareholders that they did not need me, deal with the business yourself. We agreed that I would stay at the end…. I believed that I was employable. It's easier to be a hero when you are wealthy and your children are grown up. (L18)

Table I.1 (cont.)

Categories, second-order themes and first-order concepts	Representative quotes by first-order concepts
	12.2 [If] I find myself reaching point that I'm not progressing, I think I'm able to jump and change my job easily… go to another company or government …For me it's simple, once I believe there is no progress, then change is better for me and the company. It's not even good for company for me to stay if I'm not delivering. (L20)
Category: Change leadership role demands	
E. Change context	
13. Adverse external factors	13.1 We had a double hit…. Basically, the price fell to the production cost, which mean the factories were making no profit anymore…. Then, came … national bank decided to let the currency float free and the [currency] was at 1.2 or 1.25 or something like this, 1.3 may be to Euro and like this the currency rose to parity, almost parity… what happened after it was from the prospective of our customers … the German import got 20 percent cheaper...When I saw the income statements from all the factories... all the profitability…emptied as we speak. (L7) 13.2 I took over a CEO only seven months ago and I'm still trying to find the clause in my contract where it says that you need to lead the company in the middle of a pandemic…. When we went into chapter 11, because of the pandemic, unlike many other companies we didn't get any government help. (L24)
14. Uncertainties	14.1 I think the most difficult... for me psychologically [was] the fact that … there was a for a long time the feeling of uncertainty.... lot of things were unpredictable. (L12) 14.2 During the financial crisis…when the company had to make difficult choices. What to do? The toughest choice was to stop the investments or not. If you stop the investments you will lose them for sure, if you continue hoping for the improvements, but if they don't [materialize], you will be in the crisis infinitely…. You can lose the company. Emotionally, these points were much more emotionally charged, than other projects. (T27 colleague of L27)
15. Complexity/ scale of change	15.1 Everything was done by external contractors - 4000 pages contract to govern the relationship of the consortium of contractors…very complex contract….difficult to manage. With so many moving parts, I had to pay attention to everything. And there were always some unexpected things coming up that I had to get involved to sort out. (L17) 15.2 The challenge was how do we get to the whole world with 60,000 people to understand what [the change] means. And it took us almost 18 months [to] find the common glue. (L26)
16. Performance pressure	16.1 In addition, our boss had launched three very substantial and complex initiatives at the same time as I had joined… They had to be delivered under tight timelines. There was a lot of complexity, lot of alignment with internal and external stakeholders involved, a lot of politics going on around them. And I had to deliver

Table I.1 (cont.)

Categories, second-order themes and first-order concepts	Representative quotes by first-order concepts
	these under tight deadlines with almost no resources of my own. And my boss is very demanding. This was a very tough start indeed. (L31) 16.2 In the first year …. you were projecting a difficult outcome and results weren't still coming our way, because it was early …. I was under a lot of pressure to deliver because they want kind of very quick results… I knew we're doing the right things. But sometimes change takes a while to make. And it's not like a magic wand when you're trying to do structural changes, which is what I was trying to do as a CEO there. I had these …shareholders…and they're like …very brash, very aggressive… they just felt I was a very soft guy [who] wasn't willing to take tough decisions to make things happen fast in some ways…. And that's what was causing stress for me, because the business performance was weak. (L22)
F. Organizational context	
17. Lack of support/ sense of urgency	17.1 People get defensive when you start a new transformation. You have to start with making the management believe that you are worse than others. It's not a simple task. Especially if you got some intermediate results. When you achieve something, you get a feeling that we did it, it was hard, we deserve some rest and we are not sure the others are even better [than us]. …This constantly creates negative emotions in people. To create that internal movement, you have to say that we could do better here. They (the competitors) did that and you could've benefited from it. We should have that but we don't have it. You keep challenging people all the time… [This] thing is emotionally hard. It is hard to tell the people in a karmic way they are not the best. (L27) 17.2 After having defined your target, your plan - 20% will applaud, 20% will say this is the sh**tiest of the s**t and 60% were saying now let's see what happens, how long [will] he survive… So we have a big mass of people who are just waiting, how much energy is going to be put into the system how persistent is all of this you have …… [People spend] an enormous amount of energy to prevent this (the change) all for good reasons. The classical ones [are]. 'We've tried this before, the company is 150 years old…all organizational forms have been tried in the past, you invent nothing new…that (solution) was invented that was tried out in 1855 and it didn't work. Why are we doing it again?' (L32)
18. Lack of alignment around vision for change	18.1 I would love to tell you that we had a 100% laid out blueprint (for the change), but we didn't…. Almost in a, in a Buddhistic type of way, walking meant more to us than understanding the true end, somewhere the end of the street… the high level of flexibility was needed. I'm a continental European … raised in a very Germanic process drive type of approach….[The approach] sometimes it gave me grief…I don't mind, I really don't mind change, I embrace change, I don't mind insecurity or secure outcomes. But sometimes it can be a level too much. (L29) 18.2 My conclusion was, since there's no structure, no follow up. nobody's really interested in this (strategy cascaded from 'upstairs'). And if there's nobody interested, I better spent my time somewhere else. Be it in the job or be it somewhere outdoors. (L8)

Table I.1 (cont.)

Categories, second-order themes and first-order concepts	Representative quotes by first-order concepts
19. Organizational politics/ culture	19.1 The biggest challenge was to get my team to think about the interests of the company as a whole... There was a lot of silo thinking. People were trying to assign tasks, sometimes even blame, to other departments... I then had to spend energy, my time to resolve the differences. (L17) 19.2 I would have appreciated a Chairman that I could have a discussion with, rather than just taking orders... [The CFO said] "If you can't stop [the Chairman] bullying us, I'll quit." (L19)
G. Personal context	
20. Being personally impacted by change	20.1 I'm [now] a step removed, from the day-to-day operating, you know, I'm not running a P&L. When you run a P&L for 20 years, all you think about is your P&L… I found myself in the first month or two really missing that rhythm.. a little bit out of a fish out of water. (L25) 20.2 It was a new industry as well for him. So, it was complicated and new for him. The thing that he liked getting to know everything was making it very tough for him… psychologically, intellectually …. He used to spend lots of time to figure out everything. I would say that sometimes it was too much….It was difficult (for him) to figure out everything. Everything was huge and new. (T18, colleague of L18)
21. Having multiple roles	21.1 The other thing that was going on as well as the pressure on the business didn't go away. So, while we were going through transformation, we were still expected to deliver our numbers. (L10) 21.2 In my case there was also a complication that I was running a local organization and running a global one. I realized [each] one of those times can be full time job… and the other [demand] is this project. Of course, you are still going with business you have, lot of other things. There could also be other initiatives, other objectives that you might want to have sight of. (L2)
22. Facing personal hardships	22.1 I decided that we don't move the family….I was doing the commute. Every two weeks, I fly back and forth from S to Y (five-hour flight each way). The physical challenge is huge. (L4) 22.2 [There] was lack of sleep, okay...not spending time with my family. Spending way, way more time with close colleagues than with my wife. …So it really took a bit of a toll on my personal life. And everything is better now. But at that time, there was only one priority (the change initiative). (L29)
Category: Appraisal	
H. Positive appraisal	
23. Embracing the change	23.1 I had to take a decision … do I want to play or do I not want to play, do I want to be part of this new organization or not?... You need to take your own decision, do I want to play … For me[there's] nothing in between… It's about

Table I.1 (cont.)

Categories, second-order themes and first-order concepts	Representative quotes by first-order concepts
	accepting this new environment, accepting this uncertainty… My experience shows that that was for me the right approach. (L8) 23.2. When I was thinking about it seriously how to fight with [the adverse external factors], but the drive to win, to complete [the project] was huge… I did not recall a moment when I did not want to move forward. (L12)
24. Finding it relatively easy	24.1 I'm more familiar with dealing with complex issues. So issues outside of leading the change, I'm not worried about complexity. I can manage complexity pretty well. That is probably the part of change that I don't fear because if I look at a project of change then I right understand all the issued that come from… Dealing with complexity is the part which I'm more familiar with and probably less scare me. (L5) 24.2 Sales is something I've done for a long time. I have [also] done start-ups before, so, handling that kind of ambiguous, unstructured environment, willing take decisions based on incomplete information, willing to give people a chance, but also not being afraid to take difficult decisions if it was not working out. Somehow, that unstructured part of the role I found was, I kind of picked up, adapted to it very quickly. (L9)
I. Negative appraisal	
25. Feeling threat/ fear of failure	25.1 I was very scared [of the unions] I had maybe a kind of a distant concern that my own safety will be in danger….Emotionally, I felt vulnerable during that period of time… (L4) 25.2 I was kind of going to fight a very powerful person in the company, you know, leading 20% of the revenues worldwide, in one country organization. And he had three executive team members aligned with what he was thinking he wanted to do, because he didn't want to put that investment in [implementing the change]. And this was for me was very stressful for days…[I was thinking] How do you get out of this? (L26)
26. Finding it difficult	26.1 I saw too many of the factors as controllable and arguably, probably they weren't…. you get that terrible feeling of sinking into quicksand, right? … That whatever, whatever avenue you're trying externally or internally.... it just doesn't seem to be working. (L1) 26.2 So [it was] quite a tough situation. And [there was] a Chairman, who I never got really tight with him…The first year and a half were really difficult. There were, there were certainly moments where I sort of was thinking about, okay, fine…they'll have to sort this out themselves. So I'm, I'm off and I'll do something else. (L19)
Category: Gain loop	
J. Challenge stress	
27. Experiencing	27.1 I think initially it starts with excitement. I mean you are proud of whatever it is, the initiative, the strategy that you define with your team… I think at this time you are still very positive and committed. (L2)

Table I.1 (cont.)

Categories, second-order themes and first-order concepts	Representative quotes by first-order concepts
positive emotions	27.2 It costs me a lot from the energy point…I remember sometimes I was really exhausted but it was very nice. I was very happy, actually. I think it was one of the happiest moments of my life. (L5)
28. Being energized	28.1 And that was all very exciting. I really thought that that was kind of a really interesting time, when we were making really good progress, still lots of energy. (L25) 28.2 I felt that I was over the hump, and things became easier for me. I think I'm more confident and more energized now. (L31)
29. Being engaged	29.1 I think it's reflecting on the journey what gives you buzz, really. (L1) 29.2 It's an interesting challenge for me personally, as well, but I know that it is taking a toll on me, but I'm really motivated by it. (L6)
K. Effective behavior	
30. Effective decision making	30.1 We had 57 million[in] back orders…. Everybody [was] screaming and at some point, you just have to say, 'Okay, you can only do as much as you can do'…There are a lot of things around you that you cannot influence especially in a large organization….[We were] focusing on what you can control. Because otherwise it can get very stressful, you feel like you're not moving anything. (L10) 30.2 [L27's] main approach is he is not afraid to change as you go… there is no tragedy if there is a deviation from the plan…Because there are so many uncertainties… you cannot predict them. What you should not do is not to react [negatively]. This is his main priority and he demands it from everyone. (T27, colleague of L27)
31. Constructive leadership style	31.1. I tried to be out leading from the front as much as possible, which, was trust, of course, … I met, I don't know how many customers… 60, 70, 80, with the team and that and that then spreads quite quickly…. So, that's the kind of reaching the heart of it, being out there. So giving everybody the conviction that it's not somebody sitting somewhere in the middle of nowhere in an ivory tower that comes up with something that doesn't,[work] but I was out there with the team doing[things] there …You go through that together, you commit to each other. And, and that's then it keeps you going. (L10) 31.2 I liked the fact that I could be more inspirational rather giving direction… when I tried to inspire people, [they] are beginning to behave in a certain way because they liked the new way to do things. (L5)
32. Personal effectiveness	32.1 You need [to] give more authority, delegate… [There was a crisis, but] I was on the beach [on vacation]… not worried because [the team] have the authority. I did not receive a single call. (L6)

Table I.1 (cont.)

Categories, second-order themes and first-order concepts	Representative quotes by first-order concepts
	32.2 I made a rule that I try not to think about work in the evenings before bed. …. It seems that all is lost in the evening but in the morning, you are full of energy and you think 'this is how we do it'. (L12)
L. Achievements	
33. Making progress	33.1 I organized a big strategy workshop. My boss could see that I could manage different stakeholders, sometimes with very different interests, and align them around his agenda. He saw a lot of value in that…In addition, I sorted out the issues with the Program Management Office. The initiatives started turning with red to green, and the top stakeholders noticed it. This was a huge achievement for my boss, and he could see that I had helped him in this. (L31) 33.2 And I'm asking myself if I were a board member today, and I would appraise myself, for seven months of CEO, how would it feel? I said, Okay, this guy, you know, yeah, he can manage the crisis, he was able to get, you know, Chapter 11….and financing… he's a good leader so far. (L24)
34. Increasing engagement	34.1 It's very exciting to see when people are pairing with you. Meaning, let's say that we all go in the same direction. They are supporting our objectives and our goals. And this is so exciting. (L8) 34.2 The highest point of excitement was when you know, when we were able to hit also, the, from that from the employees, this, when you are able to get this response from the employees around the world, we had a 90% response rate on the engagement survey. And almost everybody who went into this programme came back with a thumbs up. They said,' We have 100% impact. It has not just impacted me in my work, it has impacted my department, it is impacted my country [organization]. '…Not one response we got was negative. (L26)
M. Gain in resources	
35. Gaining support	35.1 [I] came back to the CEO and said, "You know, I think we can do this a year faster". It's a big… move for such a big project. So … presented [the proposal] to the board. [They said] "Great if you can do it faster, maybe even lower risk…How are we going to say no? Go ahead." (L25) 35.2 So this [the progress] is something we can touch even… I think when the Board saw that's there is progress in some areas, they have the trust in the leader (CEO). I think they (the Board) believe [in me] more. (L20)
36. Gaining confidence	36.1 In the last quarter it was clear that [the change was] going to work. Step by step and you get confidence, you are pleased, comfortable. (L28) 36.2 I chose very well the pilot and 2-3 countries where... they were getting payback [from change] and that motivated me to continue... And once I got on the initial stage of having a number of countries [with successful implementation] I got back the momentum. …[we] could use the support from the successful countries to use as a success story. Hey guys [the change] works, why cannot it work in your country? (L2)

Table I.1 (cont.)

Categories, second-order themes and first-order concepts	Representative quotes by first-order concepts
Category: Doom loop	
N. Hindrance stress	
37. Experiencing negative emotions	37.1 I have to say that I found my own negative responses to this resistance surprised me a bit. I think it was more that I was frustrated that the scale of the challenge was much greater than I appreciated it. And then when I was confronted with resistance, it really was the fact that I was now realizing the scale. (L6) 37.2 The number one frustration I have in this job is, you know, I don't feel I have control over things, right. … I don't have confidence that this will succeed, or I will make a meaningful difference. … My frustration is in that people say that they want to do it (the change). But then when you try and implement things, or you try and change things, you run into this…it's not passive aggressive, but it's just kind of, "Well, not now, maybe later" or "You need to talk to 25 people." (L11)
38. Being depleted	38.1 It starts draining you … Draining could be in a way frustrating. You put in energy but you don't get it back… At a certain stage, it could be reflected in not being able to concentrate correctly on the tasks, have the energy to start new things… (L2) 38.2 I was spending all my bloody time on this, but it was, it was terribly energy sapping. (L1)
39. Being disengaged	39.1 You start to question as to whether [the change is] required or not. … And then you think of, do you want to be part of it or not. (L9) 39.2 When it's very bad, you can even challenge your participation in the mission. (L21)
O. Ineffective behavior	
40. Ineffective decision making	40.1 When you get under pressure, when you have this emotion of fear you have like this tunnel view. You just see the problem in front of you. Actually, it is dangerous because it takes away your capability to see other options. (L7) 40.2 The ability to process information… it was like my risk taking ability was increasing. Basically, I was taking more risks, I was taking decisions faster, quicker, without thinking, I'm sure [they were] more emotions-based decisions. (L9)
41. Destructive leadership style	41.1 I have sometimes had a burst out. You could start swearing or you could start having burst outs which is not the best. Those are some of the reactions I was having. Afterwards I regret [using such language]. (L2) 41.2 L18 was putting pressure on everyone. … I pay less attention to details than he does. And when he was asking me some very specific questions, I didn't have answers. I was told off a few times for what I think was not important. It was blown out of proportion and in public. (T18, colleague of L18)

Table I.1 (cont.)

Categories, second-order themes and first-order concepts	Representative quotes by first-order concepts
42. Not coping well with stress	42.1 I put on lots of weight in [during that period]…I still cannot get rid of it. …I was away from home. In the evenings after work my colleagues would say, let's go for drinks. At that moment I realized that I was drinking every day. I cannot say that I felt like an alcoholic, not really, but there was a connection (between stress and alcohol consumption). (L12) 42.2 This was taking a lot of time and energy. I did not have much personal time left. Even on weekends, when I was supposed to be with family, spending time on my personal development, I was thinking about the work. It was stressful. (L17)
P. Setbacks	
43. Not achieving expected results	43.1 The measure of success at the moment for us, this is what I tell the people that I work with, it's not whether or not we score the goal, it's whether we move the ball up the pitch… That is how we have to measure success and kind of judge our own performances is not whether we score goals or whether we move the ball up the pitch. (L11) 43.2 This is not good for the company… all the delay that [is] happening now… the vendors they don't like to work with us anymore. (L20)
44. Increasing resistance	44.1 So, when I talked to my peers [to work with them]…they were like, 'Well, how do I know you're not gonna screw me?' (L14) 44.2 People say that what we have today is good, it's what we were intending to achieve, let's take a breath, let's stop torturing ourselves (with change) and we will spend more time with our families. (L27)
Q. Loss of resources	
45. Loss of support	45.1 There were moments when my bosses were doubting me…perhaps the leadership had doubts if I would be able to cope, if the team would be able to cope. (L12) 45.2 When I showed the Board the progress report, from the first second they realized that I'm doing well in this area and I'm not doing well in this area. After the meeting immediately, the chairman called me and they said unless you build your team, you will not move…the honeymoon period is over. (L20)
46. Loss of confidence	46.1 If your primary purpose is the reason why you took a job … because they want you … to effect change. And then you find yourself not being able to do that. then you start a [to] question your own self… "Why am I even here right now?" (L11) 46.2 There is a difference between success and failure, it's a thin line. At this moment you think, it looks as if it's not going to work, I would get fired, I would not be able to work on [other] projects. Such doubts were creeping into my head. …Sometimes you think, maybe they [the detractors] are right? This thing bring doubts if you are doing it right or not. (L12)

Table I.1 (cont.)

Categories, second-order themes and first-order concepts	Representative quotes by first-order concepts
Category: Loop breakers and oscillations	
R. Positive shift	
47. Decrease in demands	47.1 Well, the market itself has moved from a recession to a growth situation. (L12) 47.2 And then in the autumn 20xx the prices started to rise... So, it's not so that we completely ourselves managed the situation. It was, maybe, something like 50/50, or maybe 30/70…We did what we could do but the main [contribution to success] came from outside… For me the pressure was going down when I saw the prices picking up. (L7)
48. Increase in resources	48.1 I probably learned more doing that job then I had had in the two previous positions… In terms of thinking about things… One of the things that… dawned on me was the need to be able to articulate very clearly what the problem is… I found that to be incredibly liberating…because it's, it makes me a better leader, a better manager. (L11) 48.2 That was important too to find allies, as well as psychological allies…Our partners, some people we were dealing at some point, some contractors, people that help you psychologically. They support you, support your confidence, some specialists that can give you good advice. (L12)
S. Negative shift	
49. Increase in demands	49.1 And we have the backorder [issue] (because of unexpected problems in the supply chain)..We have these different factors that are there… We saw a big drop in engagement. (L10) 49.2 The most stressful [with the financial crisis hit] was the fact that I thought I could finance my initiatives and suddenly I realized that I couldn't finance anything. Secondly, as soon as market situation worsens people think all company problems are your fault. If you were doing a transformation and it's almost done, but stopped short because of the crisis, everyone who did not believe in [the change] will blame you personally and the transformation. (L27)
50. Decrease in resources	50.1 What's interesting is that … the boss who called me gave me this role… He's the best ever leader I ever had… I don't know why when I was in that role, he actually almost disconnected from me, is very strange… He suddenly disappeared. (L4) 50.2 There was an additional complication… So, our CEO left, my boss, left. (L10)

APPENDIX J: PROCESS DESCRIPTION AND DATA FOR CASE VIGNETTE 1

Table J.1 Representative Quotes to Describe Case Vignette 1 (L3)

Case vignette 1 (L3): Breaking the doom loop and entering the gain loop			
Process element		**Description**	**Representative quotes (L3 unless otherwise specified)**
Appraisal	DOOM LOOP	**Negative (threat)** Perceives initial resistance to change from his team as a threat to his legitimacy as CEO	*We had several discussions around what we could or should do and I got some push back because my background was finance. That was an initial challenge for me. OK I was a CEO, I had a formal power, as you like, the formal title but when it comes to very industry, very technical discussion, they felt they could lecture me on what was possible or not, look, that is not how things are handled, this is not how the things should happen and I struggled in the beginning.* *There was a legitimacy issue, even inside of me. Are these guys right? Should I be going against these older guys, all kinds with previous experience... You got to know, industrial guys had a lot of power. I had the formal power, but, you know, how people talk behind the back, how people talk among themselves….It was a challenge.* *We can see how proud are these guys, who've been running visual plans for 20, 30 years and this new guy comes from finance and tries to tell us what to do for safety and he is trying to tell us what to accept and what not. It was a rough start.*
Stress		**Hindrance stress** Negative emotion (frustration) Being overwhelmed Working long hours	*Frustration was associated with almost everything we talked about here. We don't have part of your team validating leadership. You are not as efficient as you wanted to be. All of a sudden you are not providing people with the standard you expect them to have. So, frustration was coming from all different areas.* *it takes part of your mind, eats a piece of your mind, it takes focus, it takes energy, it takes time.* *I was working at a certain point 14 hours a day. Of our 5 day week, 2 or 3 times I would leave at 10, eventually 11 pm.*
Behavior		**Ineffective** Dealing with reaction to change in a confrontational manner	*Because L3 was saying, I want zero accidents. But he was trying to tell that zero accident. It's very, very expensive to achieve. Yes. It's not the right word. But in a complex company like B with too many assets and many people, it's almost impossible in that year to have zero accidents. You know, what he was trying to say is, that it's we can have we can, we need to mitigate and managing in a company, we needed to manage the risk, to reduce the risk. But to go to zero, it's expensive, you can do that. But it's very, very expensive, you know. So, in a year with four plants, with more than I know, 50,000 people working*

Case vignette 1 (L3): Breaking the doom loop and entering the gain loop			
Process element		**Description**	**Representative quotes (L3 unless otherwise specified)**
		Becoming less productive (long, ineffective meetings)	*every day in the plants, with zero accident. This was the way he was trying to communicate. But my point for the cause that L3 understood the different way. L3 understood as a resistance, okay, that the guys don't believe that we can go to zero. L3 told me at that time, he was afraid that people don't believe in safety, things like that. (T3)* *And another interesting thing that happens, is that one of the ways that they would push back is that they would revert the question back to me. 'How do you propose us to do that?' and I was stuck.* *You schedule a 4 hour meeting, started at 9 to get to finish at 1 pm. You now you have hundreds of things to discuss about performance of the business unit and you realize you spent 2.5 hours about safety because instead of getting to work I was spending time with a pushback, the discussion. And with the question and with the comparisons and with all that other things. And I was getting anxious, right. 11:30 in the morning I had a lot of thing to do after that business unit, to finish at 1 pm and had covered, like, 4 out 54 slides. So, that impacted the whole discussion about all the other things that we had to discuss. Sales, industrial productivity, quality….. And these would have this chain effect where it was affecting the whole day and everybody's day, actually.*
Impact on change initiative		**Setbacks** Not achieving results - Change initiative not getting any traction in the organization	*Naturally, I was not getting the results in safety itself.* *I was not giving the other topics a lot of time. I was not providing a company with a good example.*
Impact on leader's resources		**Loss of resources** Loss of support (starting to lose credibility) Loss of self-confidence (having inner doubts, feeling like an 'imposter')	*People would say, 'This L3 guy, he is a nice guy, I like him, but he doesn't have a clue'. It was a challenge. I had to work on my self-confidence.* *Of course, I never gave anyone the pleasure to know that I had these doubts….this comes with insecurity, to make matters worse I knew that if I could not convey the idea, if I myself was not fully convinced, I was not able to convince them. Self-fulfilling prophecy, right. If I have my inner doubts, sometimes it comes across, and then it going to be tough to push that agenda.*
Loop breaker-positive shift		**Increase in resources** Organizational - Gaining allies within the organization Personal – boost of self-confidence from meeting with	*And then, sometimes we would have someone that would come to me after a meeting saying, 'you know, I personally believe you are right, there are lots of things that we could do, now, it's not that my boss is wrong, but this is something we could do.'*

Case vignette 1 (L3): Breaking the doom loop and entering the gain loop			
Process element		**Description**	**Representative quotes (L3 unless otherwise specified)**
		CEO of a competitor who also happened to come from finance background	*And I met a CEO of the number one chemical company in the world. A German guy, probably with PhD in something specific. He was the ultimate chemical company CEO. I was very happy to hear from him… [when I asked] 'Which area are you coming from?' and he said, ' I was a company CFO' and I said, come on, if B's CEO could come from a financial side of things, who is a saying that [my company's] CEO could not come from financial side as well. If the Germans can do it, we can do it as well. (L3)*
		Personal – growing as a leader by reflecting on own behavior and assumptions and gaining confidence	*Actually, they provided the confidence that event guy with other experience, some of them tell me that can be done. And I start to see some of the flaws of that industry guys. I was asking myself, this guy, he has experience, the guy, he is a core of the company. There must be something about him, why I'm the CEO, but him. And eventually, you go back realizing they have the issues. They could not see the broad picture. Some of them were outdated. Some of them did not have a clue what was happening outside the country, some of them did not have a clue about how to make money.* *[I realized] it's not for me to tell the industrial guy how to solve your problem. It not. Because I'm challenging it. it doesn't bring to me the responsibility to know more than they know on how to do it. That's responsibility is still with them whether they like it or not.*
Reappraisal	GAIN LOOP	**Positive (opportunity)** Seeing the change as opportunity to grow own leadership skills	*The combination of all these different things gave me more confidence to say, 'I'm gonna come after these guys'. Eventually, we commit and eventually we will advance, embrace that role.*
Stress		**Challenge stress** Excited, energized, motivated	*You stop and say, 'I know it's hard, but I had that before, I had that before and overcame it and it was worth [it]'.*
Behavior		**Effective** Engaging with team in constructive manner (adapting coaching and supportive leadership style)	*First of all, leading by example, I was always very happy in helping in things I asked people to do. First I gonna tell a guy, you have a leadership problem in this plant, you should go and visit that plant because the leader you have in that specific plant, probably not the right guy. And he would say, wow, I have to spend at least 4 days talking to people to understand whether that's a problem or not. And I cannot afford to do that now. And I was very keen on saying, let's go together.*
		Being open to learning	*Learn, the knowledge is there, the knowledge is inside the room. I feel and the knowledge is inside the room and if you keep your ears open regardless of how frustrated you are…*

Case vignette 1 (L3): Breaking the doom loop and entering the gain loop			
Process element		**Description**	**Representative quotes (L3 unless otherwise specified)**
Impact on change initiative		**Achievements** Increasing engagement Achieving results	*[I told the industrial team leaders] 'I knew you guys can do it. No, I knew you guys are such a great team, I knew you could keep going on'. And you know what, although we had all these discussions I also could see he wanted that as well. Naturally, as a head of this industrial area, I saw the concern, but I also saw that he wanted that. Actually, the guy never wanted that in the first place but [says] 'you know, L3, yes, sure. I mean we all wanted that'. So, you take that yourself and this helps to make this change with something that he owns.*
Impact on leader's resources		**Gain in resources** Gain in knowledge Being respected as a leader Growing support for the change	*I caught someone by surprise and the guy was… I was talking to them and I could see him thinking 'how come he knows that kind of things, who told him that?'* *But I think he acquired a lot of industrial competencies at the CEO level. So at the end of his journey as a CEO, he was much more prepared to understand the industrial guys and this area (T3).* *Of course, he [leader of industrial team] really owns. Because at the end of the day it was not my nice speech and so on, me being able to convince him, but at the end of the day he was the one who made it happen. So, the merit is really with them.*
Eventual outcome		Positive: Change is delivered successfully	Company made significant improvement in health and safety performance. (Archival data)

APPENDIX K: PROCESS DESCRIPTION AND DATA FOR CASE VIGNETTE 2

Table K.1 Representative Quotes to Describe Case Vignette 2 (L14)

Case vignette 2 (L14): Breaking the gain loop and entering the doom loop			
Process element		**Description**	**Representative quotes (L14 unless otherwise specified)**
Appraisal	GAIN LOOP	**Positive (opportunity)** Embracing the change (Perceives the change to be positive for the company)	*At the end of the day, I felt we were two fat as an organization. In fact, when you talked to most people they would have said the same thing. Right. So from that perspective, this [restructuring] should happen, right?* *I was committed to actually saying 'we need to skinny down the organization, we need to save costs'. We can automate some things and we need to make sure that our managers have, you know, not too many direct reports, but not too few. I was committed to that, for sure. It definitely needed to happen. Definitely.*
		Finding it relatively easy (Strong network in the organization)	*I had a very good relationship with all the reports into the Chief Commercial Officer. I mean, really, like, I could walk into a room and look at body language, look at faces and figure out how I needed to pitch something. It was almost second nature to me, to be honest. It was one of those things where people will watch me and know me from the past and I was impatient and didn't know how to work to manage groups and stuff. And people couldn't figure out how I could do this, but I could actually get these guys to fall into line pretty easily, because I knew how to work it, and I knew all the personalities so I knew which things would get a reaction which things wouldn't. And so, I would take all the data and say that's going to get a reaction from her, that will get a reaction from him. So, for her I need to talk to her about this, for him. It is normal, right? It's like going to the zoo and make sure you have the right foods for the right animal. So, I looked at this and said, I can manage this really well. Okay, this should not be an issue.*
		Confident of his ability to implement the change	*And because I was on a fairly good job. I was in a good relationship with the peers, his director reports. That part for me anyway I feel like I can manage, and he said 'yeah, you know, I mean that's why I'm picking you because I know that you can manage all these folks'.*
Stress		**Challenge stress** Ready to take on the challenge	*And I could see what they [the consultants] were pushing for was a bit ambitious. But you know, you sort of buy into that and say, Okay, let's see what we can do.* .
Behavior		**Effective** Seeking support from stakeholders (Trying to align the consultants and the organization)	*I looked at this and said [to consultants] we need a bigger game to engage. When you engage, the more we convince people that this change is the right thing to do…That was what I needed was more time to actually get these guys [in the organization] to settle down. Give us the right data so we made the right decision.*

Case vignette 2 (L14): Breaking the gain loop and entering the doom loop			
Process element		**Description**	**Representative quotes (L14 unless otherwise specified)**
		Suggesting the ways the consultant could give confidence to the organization about their proposed approach	*[I suggested to consultants] Bring in some of their HR folks, you know, high-level partners to say I've seen this across many organizations…. Even if you had somebody that had a lot of experience with a great CV to talk to these folks, you will get a little bit more movement in the right direction … Instead, you know it's like I pulled it [the data and benchmarks] out my ass.*
Loop breaker Negative shift		**Increase in demands** Program sponsor using the change for achieving his own political agenda	*So, the CEO said to the CFO 'go and do this', the CFO now is going to say we're going to do this, some how covert. [What] I don't understand …this question is how are we going to go this and how will this work, and is not necessarily being the honest broker about this, with his own peers.* *The CFO at the time, was also in a battle to become CEO. This project had to work. But he had to show that it was going to work.*
		No science behind the proposed approach – only pressure	*The problem was that the senior management side was a bit leaky and a bit 'push, push, push', even when they were getting feedback that perhaps this was moving too quickly… but they're trying to create a burning platform in the wrong way.* *The CFO said that he did say that we should at least have a 20% reduction in workforce.*
		Consultants not doing the things right way	*I think they were, they [the consultants] were flying by the seat of their pants a little bit too. And they could never admit that, right?*
		Deteriorating relationship with consultants	*So, your relationship to the management consultants becomes a bit of out of balance as well… The management consultant was very happy to take that data and come back with what it is that has to happen. And now the thing is that you've got the wrong data and you're making the wrong assumptions, this is gonna be a mess.*
		Getting pressure both from the consultants and the peers	*That's where and then I could see that where it could be a big problem for me is that I was the meat in the sandwich between [the consultants], but also some internal folks.*
Reappraisal	D O O M	**Negative** Finding the situation too difficult to handle	*Because you're trying to make sure everything is done in the right way. I tell you, it was so hard to manage. I really was at the end of the bubble and no matter which way I turned, I couldn't get support.* *It was a nightmare.*

Case vignette 2 (L14): Breaking the gain loop and entering the doom loop			
Process element		**Description**	**Representative quotes (L14 unless otherwise specified)**
	LOOP	Feeling loss of control over the process	*And it made life, extremely difficult. And try as I might, in this particular instance. I couldn't, I couldn't, I couldn't get my head around. I couldn't for me. I couldn't get one piece to sit still long enough, so I could deal with to the other piece, there were too many variables. Right. So, I had my peers, who were to responding to some fake news and some real news. And the management consultant company who was pushing to get things done quite quickly. Right. And then, you're on, you had a third dimension of where you had some senior leaders giving messages about needing to move quickly that you felt you couldn't represent your peers very easily back to the management consultant which put me into real conflict because I felt I was not in control of the process, and the process was controlling me.*
		Not seeing a solution to the problem	*I need[ed] to actually put up my feelers and figure that all out, take it in and then look at and say okay, now this is how I can solve particular problems we have. In this instance, I couldn't figure it out. I just couldn't do it.*
		Feeling fear of failure	*Fear of not performing so, when you get faced with something that is particularly difficult you have to struggle to concentrate.*
Stress		**Hindrance stress** Being disengaged	*[My wife] broke her foot and she needed me to stay home for two weeks and I was just so happy now that didn't have to deal with the emails from this project but I didn't bother to even stay engaged for the next week because I knew my team was in control, but I just think I need a break from this. And after the first week I spoke to my wife and she said, like, aren't you doing to work and, yeah, you know, because she knows me pretty well, that I would spend two or three hours doing stuff on the way just to stay on top of stuff I said, 'you know what, I can't be bothered'. I just want to get away from this thing, it's just awful.*
		Not enjoying the role	*And part of me actually is just ready to take a break. You know, and it has made it real for me, that I just want to get away.* *There wasn't anything I can find in the role that I can look at to say I really enjoyed this.*
		Feeling 'unmoored'	*Even my wife said she could tell …. I was coming home late again, and I wasn't that enthused, and I wasn't sleeping.* *So, emotionally, I felt unmoored because I was not able to actually just unpack it and figure out which thing do I prioritize to solve.*
		Overworking	

Case vignette 2 (L14): Breaking the gain loop and entering the doom loop			
Process element		**Description**	**Representative quotes (L14 unless otherwise specified)**
		Being overwhelmed Feeling depleted	*And by the time I got to the end of that period I was really, sort of, you know, in the hours I was working like 80 hours a week already, because I would figure it out to put more time into it and I'll stop, which never works, but I went back to old days because I couldn't figure out how to it. I don't know if that helps you understand my mindset around there, but it was hard. And it was hard.* *And sometimes that becomes very, it overwhelms your thought process rather than looking at things a little bit more in a balanced way.* *So I think as far as working and being awake and stuff like that. I had energy, whether or not it was the right energies of different sorts where energy was being driven more by fear and then more by sort of self-generation, right. More fear, driving me to work harder than sort of the whole journey of things and enjoying what I was doing, and then making a difference because you can feel energetic you can seem to be operating. You know, as from 7 am to 10 pm. Okay and doing stuff in the weekend, being able to manage all the balls in the air. But you are a driver for doing it slightly differently. And that I think is quite taxing on your psyche. It's quite taxing on you mentally.*
Behavior		**Ineffective** Not asking support (from his boss) when needed Becoming less productive Impairment of decision-making capability	*Now on top of that, for me and the Chief Commercial Officer, we did, and this is where, I think, I got it wrong. When I reported directly into while in my [previous] role I would not bother him too much, because I knew he had a lot of other stuff on his plate and we knew each other for years. I mean really like. I didn't walk up to him and say 'can we have a conversation?' and get his attention. …But because I don't want to rely on that. …This is my mistake. I should have said then. I know, I need to speak to you more often because I need more guidance, this thing is, actually, it's a little bit tough.* *What you do is you just try to concentrate, more, more, and you waste a lot of bloody time. Where's the average individual so you know what some reason I'm a mental block, we go off and do something else and I'll come back to that. Right. But this fear is such a shit. No, I can't. I really gonna focus on this because if I don't get this done I'm gonna have a problem. I'd be more nervous and …* *I think the quality of some decisions wasn't very good because you get distracted and you're starting to question everything that you're doing.*

Case vignette 2 (L14): Breaking the gain loop and entering the doom loop			
Process element		**Description**	**Representative quotes (L14 unless otherwise specified)**
Impact on change initiative		**Setbacks** Increased resistance to change (Unable to convince the peers to cooperate)	*When I talked to my peers and in working with them. They were like, 'Well, how do I know you're not gonna screw me?', and then when I go gathering information some of that information was not always correct because they were assuming what I was going through so they started to read the information in such a way to hopefully work out the way they wanted to work out, but I could pick up on that, and it was very hard for me to get the real data.*
Impact on leader's resources		**Loss in resources** Losing self-confidence	*Then I got to this one. It wasn't working for me. I couldn't find the solution. I couldn't. And it isn't the first time we've actually spoken about this but I think that is what happened to me. That this situation was such that I actually my past experience, and the things I had done that it gave me confidence that actually basically made me feel that I could do almost anything was starting to get eroded. And they asked you. That was not a feeling I had had for the previous 10 years.*
		Feeling like an imposter – questioning his own past achievements	*My confidence was gone. I think part of it was because I had 10 years of success, good success and legitimate success, not lucky success, but legitimate success, not like this shit. Maybe all that stuff I did in the last 10 years is a joke. Maybe I was just lucky, which is a typical A sort of feeling because you feel like you're an imposter.* *So therefore, I actually think I'm a bit of imposter, I'm just getting lucky. And so, what happens is, is that a lot of the stuff you do is out of fear, rather than out of curiosity, or liking it, or what have you, or just being on the journey and see where it takes you. A lot of that is fear.*
		Losing trust of peers	*I need more help, but now, at this point I'm wondering if my equity has been spent on both sides, because these guys [my peers] are really not into trusting me, this other side [the consultants] is not working that well either.*
		Losing confidence to lead his own team	*But then, the team I had the team was working pretty well, but it was sort of, I didn't feel like I could lead it anymore because of everything that was going on, because I felt I had been sort of my, my ability to work with my peers have been eroded.*
Eventual outcome		**Negative** L14 leaves the organization	*I'll be honest you, this is the thing that took me to a point where I said, I don't want to do this anymore, which is why I left [the company].*
		Change did not deliver the expected outcomes	*I actually said to my colleagues and said so how did that go, and they said it was awful. They said, when those guys [the consultants] left the building it was like a collective sigh of relief.*

APPENDIX L: PROCESS DESCRIPTION AND DATA FOR CASE VIGNETTE 3

Table L.1 Representative Quotes to Describe Case Vignette 3 (L30)

Case vignette 3 (L30): 'Dipping' into a hindrance stress zone only to bounce back into gain loop			
Process element		**Description**	**Representative quotes (L30 unless otherwise specified)**
Appraisal	GAIN LOOP	**Positive (opportunity)** Seeing the opportunity	*I saw the opportunity with the company that when I walked in of what this company could become, but I saw the pitfalls and I knew that I have the ability to change that by primarily by changing the culture of the company, because it had all it had all the good assets, they were just not put to work. So actually, one of the key messages that I gave to, to both the close team and eventually also to the broader one, the leadership team I said look, this is like a raw diamond that needs us to polish it for everyone to see how it can shine.*
		Having the resources – support from the board of the PE firm	*In my case, it was easier because it was a private equity owned. So both the incentive of the turnaround success is very much aligned with the owner, but also you have one owner, one representative of the owners, but when you align with them, you become very effective.*
		Personal valence Stood to gain in case of successful turnaround	*L30 had invested substantially in the business himself - T30, (L30's counterpart from the PE firm)*
Stress		**Challenge stress and gain loop** Motivated about change	*In terms of, well, I think the key, the key motivation that I always need, there is clarity of what can be the outcome, okay, and, and on that, that drives that the activities. The really motivational part for me is the ability to coach people to build the team. And because that's, I've always been doing it and for big organizational change, you know, you need a huge group of people that are executing in a coordinated manner.*
		Ready to take on the challenges – seeing as the opportunity to grow	*So for me, that has been part of the growth and experience of selecting the team members growing and coaching team members, and then also coaching a much more broader leadership team within the organization to achieve the result.*
		Being energized by challenges	*No matter how stressful it is if it energizes you because you know you're doing the good thing.*
Negative shift		**Increase in demands** Increase in uncertainty and complexity (Discovering that challenges were higher than he had anticipated)	*When I found the... a skeleton in the closet, which was …[a] supplier contract to be put actually take your take financial performance through the bottom, that was scary and it brought nervousness to the table.*
Reappraisal	DIP	**Negative (threat)** Seeing the challenge as 'life threatening' to the company	*Somewhere, three months into the job when I discovered a number of gaps from where I thought we were actually far more behind, there were some contracts that were sort of **life threatening** in terms of their size to financially to the company. And we just need to renegotiate everything*

Case vignette 3 (L30): 'Dipping' into a hindrance stress zone only to bounce back into gain loop			
Process element		**Description**	**Representative quotes (L30 unless otherwise specified)**
		Experiencing fear of failure	*…. that was very scary….. Of basically knowing that there are a couple of key milestones that will have the just we had to achieve but yeah, there was nothing certain at that point in time renewed.* *Renegotiating a contract with a single supplier where you had the exclusivity is not a given.* *I'd say that was a pretty hairy time. [For L30]…his whole reputation was on the line. I mean, he had been a successful CEO of T, the successful CEO base in B. And suddenly, there was this one, his first private equity owned one. And it looked like it wasn't going to be successful. (T30)*
Stress		**Moving into hindrance stress** Being physically impacted by stress Feeling more and more depleted	*I basically... I lost for a period of time I lost a bit of the balance meaning that didn't get enough sleep. Basically just go to bed with a thought and you wake up and you see class because in the middle of the night you think of something and then you cannot go back to sleep.* *While he's [L30] under stress was …. he had back pain. He wasn't sleeping ….these are things that I know, are gonna interrupt. (T30)* *So basically, with when this was going on for a period of two, three months, the also the family members knew that. Also, for the weekend, when we were doing something, it basically for me became a 24 by seven job, which we just need to get through, and it was top priority and everything else was secondary.*
Positive shift		**Reduction in demand** Reduction in uncertainty (Renegotiating the contract with the vendor) Threat going away	*So we, he [L30] and I went to the CEO of the vendor, we renegotiated….. So in the end, we entered into a very, very important contract with them, which is where we stopped trying to levy penalties on them. They would stop charges for things. And instead, it was like a reset …. we paid them extra if they delivered extra. And they really did. And the company then became really the number one company in N, which, as you've lived in N, who knows no mean feat? Because the standard performance set by our competitor is very high….. And so I'd say that was a pretty hairy time, but it's exciting. (T30)* *So there were more heads around the table helping me figure out the solution. But the actual solution came once we figured out a way how to renegotiate the contract, and came to sort of a solution with a supplier to do so. But it required a lot of an innovative approach a lot of different areas to coordinate it, and we did it.*
Reappraisal and shift to	GA	**Positive** Situation no longer seen as 'scary'	*But you just I would say that the stressful level was two months. But I would say the scary part where you have the ability to go into the doom loop was probably shorter.*

Case vignette 3 (L30): 'Dipping' into a hindrance stress zone only to bounce back into gain loop			
Process element		**Description**	**Representative quotes (L30 unless otherwise specified)**
challenge stress	IN LOOP	Confident in his ability to 'work his way out' Shift to challenge stress	*Because once you identify it, you dig into it, you see the or the scare of it, but then you start resolving it. So the I would say the scary part is up to the point where you are also able to assess what's the worst case scenario, and then you work your way out of that.*
Impact on change initiative		**Achievements** Increasing employee engagement Improving performance Successful IPO with a good valuation	*When I walked into the company, and I had first an all employee meeting, and I asked, there were like 500 people in the room, I asked who's proud to be S[the company], I think there were probably 20% of hands that went up. And that was scary, right? And then two years later, to be able to basically say, the people actually believed in and that completely changed. It became like 80% of people said or were absolutely proud to be part of S…* *When I started, I hardly attract senior leaders to the company because the company had a very bad image on the market as the employer. Two years later, when I needed to place a position in the senior part of the company, I had all the choice the market. So it was it was really making people proud to be part of S that – both a combination of the performance of the company on the market because we came from the worst in the market to the best one in the very short period of good two years.* *And basically it allowed us to have improved the pricing and therefore improve the profitability of the company. But those were just the results that came out of just the excitement of the team, that basically, they believed that they are working for the of the three operators, the best operator on the market. And the pinnacle was our ability to do the biggest, one of the biggest IPOs of the X Stock Exchange, I mean, that that sort of underlined and solidified the, all the performance and the hard work of the turnaround into concrete financial result.*

APPENDIX M: PROCESS DESCRIPTION AND DATA FOR CASE VIGNETTE 4

Table M.1 Representative Quotes to Describe Case Vignette 4 (L21)

Case vignette 4 (L21): Breaking the gain loop by oscillating between challenge and hindrance stress.			
Process element		**Description**	**Representative quotes (L21 unless otherwise specified)**
Appraisal	GAIN LOOP	**Positive (opportunity)** Sees the change as something good for the company Feels that he had support and appreciation from his leadership team Pride of ownership	*And thereby, we are doing significantly good for the individual consumers that want to continue to use our products. But also, at the same time, we have a business model around it that is creative. So it's also good for the shareholders. And the whole thing makes it very rewarding. A, you create value. B, you do good for the individual consumers. And C, you do good for the public at large.* *I was almost like the founder of this [new product line]. And I worked at that time, I similar to go live example, I had a very senior management team member as my sponsor. And we kind of like a tag team that made this whole thing happen.*
Stress		**Challenge stress and gain loop** Motivated about change Ready to take on the challenges Being energized by success Ready to keep on going despite receiving 'punches on the nose' Going the extra mile	*It's constant pressure. But in my case has lasted for the last seven years. And you have this constant, both internal and external requirements to meet your mandate, week after week after week. And it is really not months on months off, or even current week by week.* *It is such an energizing and motivating agenda that we're working on.* *It's, you're feeding off the energy, and you are feeding off the success. So whenever things are going well, and you're on a roll, and you get some recognition of this, but this is a very personal thing, then it always feels good.* *Either you are in the flow, and in the flow in my role for periods of two to three years where everything goes well, you know, you know, you get some recognition, you get some results. You know, accountabilities and opportunities are being added to your portfolio. And the whole, the whole thing is kind of like a very energizing and self-reinforcing.* *And I think, during those periods, I mean, obviously, you also get these, you know, punches on the nose. Yeah. And it goes back, it goes very, very quickly. And you just, you just feel good. And you are, you're basically running with it, right?* *Here's something coming up, let me, here's how we, I mean, you must, you basically tackle it straight on and you'll find that extra 20 minutes and you basically get people motivated around the task.*

Case vignette 4 (L21): Breaking the gain loop by oscillating between challenge and hindrance stress.			
Process element		**Description**	**Representative quotes (L21 unless otherwise specified)**
Negative shift		**Decrease in resources** Losing the sponsor	*[My sponsor] then retired. And then …. I had to find my own feet with a new set of management, etc. And that's where you start to challenge really. …. And I guess it's maybe something with the personal energy and chemistry as well.*
		Increase in demands Newcomers creating extra work, working against the change	*But sometimes it's also frustrating because a lot of things are happening. And sometimes, particularly when things are happening, which is not totally aligned with the strategic intent, which I think was the agreed strategic direction or intent, or if people are breaking up, it becomes frustrating that... because then you know, that you have to go back and you have to, either you have to, and you have to keep an open mind as well. So sometimes I have to push myself back a little bit and say, L21, maybe there is a better way of doing this, and, and reopen, reopen my mind, but it also means reopening the work, and the strategic direction that I thought we had locked. And some of the investment programmes that I thought we had set in motion, so you have to go, you have to actually have to go backtrack and tear down what you had, either mentally or physically been building.*
		Decrease in valence Outsiders joining the leadership team	*We have had…. an injection of a, of a new leadership team, which is, which is from the outside. So I have to, I have to make sure that they get wired and they succeed. And that erodes, right, and I have to make sure that whenever they make strategic plans, that it's aligned with the category logic, without sounding like the old, like the old fart. So I've had this, I've had this period where I have had this reflection that maybe, maybe I should be the one that would be injected into a leadership team somewhere with a fresh idea. I'm suddenly the I'm suddenly the xxx veteran with all the history and all the conventional wisdom that needs to be challenged.*
		Feeling that he's been passed over for promotion	*So that has put me into this thing, really is a time for me now to go and figure out maybe, I don't know if it's a midlife crisis, or but it's this. I think it's triggered by this, this feeling of being partly passed over, and partly pushed into this position, where I'm the same the historian or the veteran or... I'm the legacy. And I've never tried that before. So it's new to me. And I'm not sure I, I particularly appreciate that role in the time.*
		Not seeing the future in the organization	*Somehow I think I mean, if I should take it to the higher level, I think it's somewhat if the ownership is being eroded a little bit, you see what I mean? If suddenly, I don't feel that I fully own the solution, I think it's more that kind of pride was going on.*
Reappraisal		**Negative (threat)** Finding it difficult	*Somehow I think I mean, if I should take it to the higher level, I think it's somewhat if the ownership is being*

Case vignette 4 (L21): Breaking the gain loop by oscillating between challenge and hindrance stress.			
Process element		**Description**	**Representative quotes (L21 unless otherwise specified)**
	D I P		*eroded a little bit, you see what I mean? If suddenly, I don't feel that I fully own the solution, I think it's more that kind of pride was going on.*
		Losing the sense of ownership	*A little bit loss of control, a little loss of ownership, a little bit loss of leadership as well. I mean, this may be the combination of these three, three things. I but that's a very personal thing for me.* *It can be very tiring, and you kind of like go back to tearing down your own pyramids in a way.*
Stress		**Shifting into hindrance stress** Feeling less energy	*And I'm not sure that I fully got the energy back from that. From that, that prior period…. I'm certainly not in the same level flow as they were back then.*
		Oscillating between high and low energy levels	*I think I'm oscillating for a little bit, depending on what week I'm in. Sometimes, as I mentioned, it can be very, it can be very tiring … and other days and other weeks, it really gives you a kick. So I'm not sure that I'm you know,*
		Feeling deflated	*I always get a little pumped back when I think that people don't appreciate what has what has been done. Or when or when decisions are being made, which are not totally aligned with what I would do.*
		Questioning the participation in mission – being disengaged	*I do think that you can get this negative energy where at least you think about all the way you think negatively about the whole setup. And you can even you can even at sometimes when it's very bad You can even challenge your participation in the mission.* *I think it certainly impacts my what I would call leaning forward and my maybe my energy and my sets back my energy a little bit.*
		Being disengaged	*So therefore, therefore, whenever you get these punches and issues you have some of really Here we go again, and is it? Is it worth it? Or should I try something else, which is different and more rewarding? And then I have to come up and think you should you see what I mean?*
		Feeling more and more depleted	*And actually, actually, my litmus test is, you know, every day, when I come down from our in home office, my wife asked me, so how was your day? And so, and it's not every day I can, I say that. It's a fantastic day today. Right. I think that probably it's, I have more days where I feel a little, you know. That it's been a tough day. But I don't necessarily think that. But the consequence of that is not that I'm delaying stuff. Yeah, that I'm shying away. But in some somehow more my inner energy as opposed to my outward energy.*

Case vignette 4 (L21): Breaking the gain loop by oscillating between challenge and hindrance stress.			
Process element		**Description**	**Representative quotes (L21 unless otherwise specified)**
Behavior		**Ineffective behavior** Letting others make mistakes, even if it is detrimental to the organization	*I just let go a little bit. I say, Okay, if you want to run that way, why don't you just run? I know, you're gonna hit the wall. And it's totally unreasonable, in a way, because if I have these strong commercial views, I should interfere. And I should muster the energy, and really take the battle head on, but sometimes there's so many battles to be fought. Yeah, that some of that sometimes you just @*$# it, I mean, you just go and break your neck. Right? Which, which you shouldn't, which you shouldn't do, but it's this kind of disengagement.*
		Avoidance behavior	*Why do you? Why do you get involved in something? That is somebody else's mess?*
Temporary positive shift	SPIKE	**Gain in resources** Personal- resting over the weekend, ability to pull oneself out of a negative situation	*A good weekend…a nice time with family and friends. Suddenly you discover something that gives you energy. All the things that that that my context or my position represents, as, and then finding the energy and all the, you know, the positivity and recognizing that a lot of people are also depending on the positive vibes that I can kind of like pass on to them.*
		Reappraisal – positive	*[I have] Resilience…which is essentially your, your own personal ability to bootstrap yourself with whatever tools out of a negative situation like that. Yeah. And maybe, I don't know, maybe I think I'm quite good at bootstrapping myself. Hmm. I, I don't necessarily need a lot from my boss, or I don't need a lot from my peers. But I can bootstrap myself.*
		Challenge stress – feeling energized/ motivated	*It is stepping up thinking about why I should be motivated about what I'm doing.*