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GUEST EDITORIAL

Transitions: a Theoretical Model for Occupational Health and Wellbeing

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Life is change, it involves a constant flow from one temporary state to another. Each of these changes is a transition or "a passage from one state, stage, subject, or place to another" (Transition, 2018). On the surface, an intern in management consulting, an assistant professor approaching tenure review, and a retiring auto worker would not appear to have much in common but each is transitioning in their own way from one stage of their job to another.

Yet not all transitions are equally meaningful. For example, when two employees have a routine conversation, there is typically a transition into and out of the dialogue. The employees greet one another, discuss a topic, and then say good-bye. Or when employees engage in a routine commute, they depart their home, travel, and then enter their office building. These micro-transitions (Ashforth et al. 2000) are relatively minor, everyday work transitions that do not result in significant enduring shifts for the employee or organization. In this paper, we focus on relatively meaningful transitions.

Meaningful transitions are those transitions that prompt significant subjective change in the lives of individuals. In the case of new employees adjusting to an organization, promoted employees accepting new responsibilities, and retiring employees shifting their focus and identity, these changes are marked by formal signs, typically involving paperwork, job title changes, and financial implications that underscore the significance of these transitions. Teams and organizations also undergo transitions, such as those prompted by shifting structure, policies, or leadership (Ashford 1988).

In this paper, we examine theories that contribute to the understanding of transition, identify how transitions may affect health and performance, and propose an occupational health model of transition. We begin by focusing on assumptions underlying

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transitions and close with a discussion of the broader implications for occupational settings and research.

Assumptions

Before presenting a transition model, it is important to recognize fundamental assumptions about transitions in an occupational context. In this section, we review several basic components of transition characteristics (see Table 1 for an overview).

First, transitions are inevitable. Although organizations tend to focus on large-scale events such as buy-outs, restructuring, and mergers (see Nadler 1982), there are small-scale transitions occurring all the time. These small-scale transitions, such as onboarding and changes in team composition, are both individually and cumulatively important to consider in understanding the adaptation of individuals and organizations. For example, the way in which interns are onboarded in an organization will set the stage for their expectations, norms of behavior, and ultimately their commitment to the organization which, in turn, will influence the organization's culture (Allen 2006; Ashford and Black 1996; Bauer and Erdogan 2011). In contrast to daily micro-transitions, small-scale transitions are relatively infrequent and result in more permanent change within the work context (what Ashforth et al. 2000, termed "macro-changes").

Second, transition points are artificial. Typically, transitions are talked about as if they are discrete date-based events (i.e., the date of a leadership change, the date of an initial public offering) but in fact these transitions are not easily defined by time. Transitions are more realistically marked by at least two phases: a lead-up period (e.g., anticipation) and by subsequent adjustments (e.g., a sequence of after-effects). For example, a new leader's promotion can be defined by a start date but in fact the effects of the event may be seen both before and after, and such effects can trickle through an organization for months afterwards. Time is also an important consideration because perception of the transition, including the degree to which it is viewed positively or negatively or the degree to which it is viewed as a violation of the psychological contract with the employer, may shift as individuals habituate and reappraise their situation.

Third, transitions are an opportunity. Even if the triggering event is catastrophic, like in the case of British Petroleum's massive oil spill involving Deep Water Horizon, the organization has the potential to respond by growing stronger from the experience. Similarly, individuals can respond positively to a transition, leading to a period primarily defined by personal growth. Of course, it is possible for transitions to be perceived both positively and negatively at the same time. Similarly, transitions can be bad for some and good for others. For example, Carrier's layoffs in Ohio can be

Table 1 Assumptions about transitions

Transitions are inevitable
Transition points are artificial
Transitions are an opportunity
Transitions occur at the individual and organizational level
Transitions present organizations with a paradox

economically and psychologically harmful to employees losing their jobs and good for employees in Mexico who have a new job (Isidore 2018).

Fourth, transitions occur at the individual and organizational level, but their effects can shift from one level to the other. While it is perhaps more intuitive to consider how an organizational transition impacts employees during periods of organizational crisis or layoffs, an individual’s personal life transition may also impact the organization. That transitions may reflect boundary-crossing activities involving family, work, leisure and other pursuits has been fully articulated in the Boundary Theory of Transition (Ashforth et al. 2000). For example, when employees have their first child, this transition may affect the larger organization. On the one hand, a new baby may prompt an employee to feel more commited to the organization because of a greater need for financial stability. On the other hand, an employee may become more attuned to problems with work-family balance and be reluctant to put in longer hours at work. The employee's response to this personal transition may influence work attitudes and productivity, affecting the larger organization. Thus, the integration and/or segmentation of differing roles across work and family domains can impact commitment to the organization, job satisfaction, job performance, intentions to remain in the organization, and turnover (Bauer et al. 2007; Hom et al. 2012, 2017).

Fifth, transitions present organizations with a paradox. Employees like predictability at work, and simultaneously they don’t like stagnation. That inherent contradiction illustrates the complexity by which transitions are understood. For example, while employees may want cutting-edge technology and software to do their job more efficiently, they may resent the introduction of new software solutions. Changes are typically associated with disruptions in routine and demand a steep learning curve. Despite potential benefits, employees may feel anxious and may be resistant to the change.

Existing Transition-Related Concepts

There are several theories that can be used to inform a comprehensive approach to conceptualizing transitions in an occupational context. One well-known theory was initially established to account for the experience of students entering college and later was applied to career transitions. This theory of transition was developed and refined by counselling psychologist Nancy Schlossberg (cf., Schlossberg et al. 1995) who posited that when a transition occurs, a process takes place that requires individuals to integrate changes into daily life. Schlossberg also identified four major factors that influence a person’s adjustment to a transition. The first factor, the situation, includes such variables as the pre-transition context, timing (e.g., if the change is developmentally expected or not), degree of personal control over the event, duration of the change, and concurrent stress. The second factor, self, includes demographic characteristics and psychological resources. The third factor, social support, includes interpersonal relationships, networks, and larger organizations. The fourth factor, strategies, includes a range of coping responses.

The theory highlights the potentially important nature of transitions and their significance in understanding adjustment, and provides three steps to improve a transition experience depending on the degree to which these steps are within the individual’s control (Griffin and Gilbert 2015). The first step is to examine the degree to which a situation can be altered to enhance the transition, and the second step is to

examine whether it is possible for the individual to alter the meaning of the problem using reappraisal strategies. If these steps do not work, the third step is to manage the resulting stress in the aftermath of the transition.

The primary limitation of the theory is that it was developed for counselling psychology. The focus is therefore on the individual, and the impact of a transition on a team or larger organization is not explicitly considered. Another limitation is that the theory starts at the point of transition, and the schematic models depicting the theory reinforce this perspective. We believe that this approach is a strategic mistake given that transitions can encompass ongoing processes that affect occupational health before, during, and after a discrete event. Indeed, many transitions begin slowly and have ongoing effects. For example, a decline in sales may precede mass lay-offs, demonstrating that the transition period begins before the specific day on which lay-offs are announced, and extends to the period after the lay-offs occur during which the entire company may experience psychological strain. Even a sudden event, like a natural disaster, while occurring without warning, may have lasting effects as the organization attempts to recover.

This focus on discrete events is echoed in Morgeson's Event Systems Theory (EST; Morgeson, Mitchell, and Liu, 2015) where automatic routines and expected behaviors are understood to exist in an organization until they are disrupted by discrete events. This disruption can affect various levels, from the individual and team to the larger organization. By acknowledging these levels, EST offers a broader perspective than Schlossberg's Theory of Transition; this broader perspective has explicit relevance to occupational contexts although it remains focused on a discrete time frame, and transitions that are restricted to the organizational context. Furthermore, EST does not offer an integrated view of how multiple transitions affect an organization over time. Despite these limitations, EST advances our understanding of how salient events impact organizations.

The Military Transition Model, proposed by Kintzle and Castro (2018), provides an occupationally-specific example of how a process-oriented transition model can be applied across a time span that covers initial entry to departure from one occupation. The model takes into account multiple transitions, including entering the military, relocation, and deployments, and explicitly acknowledges the role of organizational culture in understanding transitions. Such cultural variables include developing a military identity upon entry into the military, and adapting that identity upon departure. In addition, the model offers a novel approach by including both health and performance outcomes. The Military Transition Model, while providing important advances in understanding transition, is of course limited to the military context. The model also does not fully capture how transitions occurring outside of the organizational context might affect the organization.

Each of these models, Schlossberg's Model of Transition, Morgeson's EST, and Kintzle's and Castro's Military Transition Model, make an important contribution to understanding transitions. Here, we acknowledge these contributions and build on them by explicitly addressing the numerous and continuous nature of transitions, the different levels of transitions, the role of personal and societal transitions that impact organizations, and the general influence of occupational culture in framing transitions. In the following section, we propose an integrated model of occupational health transition.

Characteristics of Transitions: Integrating Model

In the proposed integrated model (Fig. 1), several characteristics of transitions are highlighted. The model begins with entry into the organizational system, the first transition from the perspective of the employee (Bauer et al. 2007; Bauer and Erdogan 2011). This entry can entail a formal on-boarding process in which individuals are provided an introduction into the organization's values, or job-specific training where new employees learn how to operate machinery or how to accomplish tasks through a given set of procedures.

Interestingly, onboarding does not just have to be the organization's inculcating new employees in corporate culture. Rather, an individual's entry into the organization can potentially influence that organization. For example, when star performers are recruited to join an organization, they can enhance the organization's professionalism and performance, or when new leaders are brought in, they can elevate the organization's energy and positivity. As described by Cable et al. (2013), onboarding that appeals to personal-identity socialization can also allow newcomers to feel authentic and that their own strengths are valued, potentially resulting in less turnover and better performance, and thus positively impacting the organization as a whole. Either way, on-boarding efforts signal to the employee what the organization prioritizes, what the norms are for the organization, and how employees fit into the larger whole. We view on-boarding as a multi-dimensional organizational socialization process (Chao et al. 1994) that sets the stage for how individuals understand and process subsequent transitions.

The model ends with exiting out of the organizational system. Barring sudden death, individuals will transition out of the organization, whether through voluntary departure, involuntary separation, or retirement (Beehr 2014; Dingemans and Henkens 2014; Feldman and Beehr 2011) and these decisions will be informed by the intersection of desired employment status and perceived volitional control (Hom et al. 2012).

Some organizations have formal mechanisms for managing this exit whereas others are more informal, and short of sending a final pay check, the individual's departure is

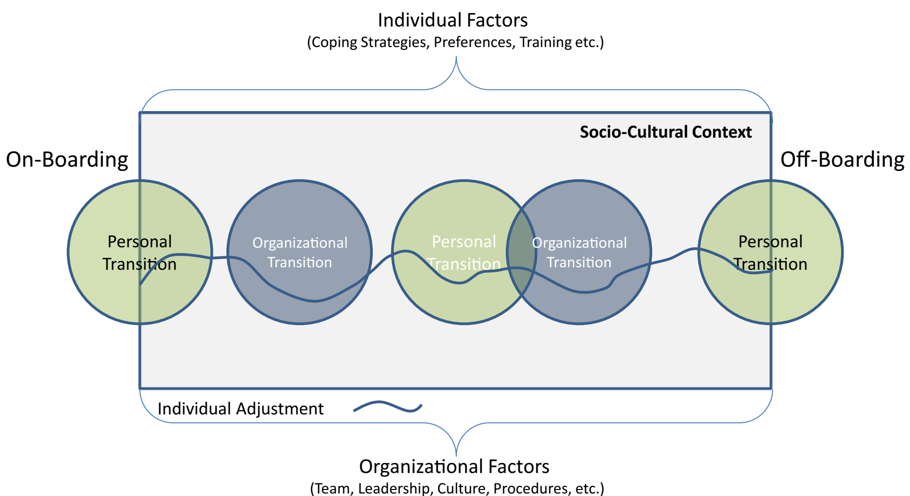

Fig. 1 Occupational health model of transition

not marked by any particular event. These exit transitions signal to the remaining workers much about the way individuals are regarded. In companies with high turnover, typified by minimum wage and low skills, departure may be so routine that individual departures barely register among other employees. In other companies, departure is acknowledged and a formal ceremony marks the way in which the organization values the contributions of that employee.

In between entering and exiting the organizational system, there can be a continuous series of transitions. These transitions, represented by circles in Fig. 1, reflect two sources. The first source of transition is represented by personal transitions. Individuals experience personal transitions that can impact their management of work-life balance. Personal transitions include obtaining a new degree, getting married, or dealing with the declining health of parents. Second, the organization itself may be marked by transition, including changes in strategy, internal restructuring, or changes in leadership. As depicted in Fig. 1, the experience of both of these kinds of transitions can be influenced by differences at the level of the individual and the organization.

The two sources of transition in our model can also influence one another, as illustrated in the overlapping circles in the model. Each instance of overlap demonstrates how a change may be felt in both spheres. For instance, if there's a change in the work environment, that change can result in a change in the personal environment. Or if an individual attains new credentials, they may institute a change in the organization (an organizational transition). This conceptualization of transition overlap is consistent with the Role Segmentation-Role Integration Continuum model (see Ashforth et al. 2000).

Transitions have implications for the individual and organizational. Typically, these measures boil down to a form of health and performance outcome. The results of these transitions, such as onboarding or restructuring, can impact employee psychological and physical health (e.g., Ashford 1988; Caverley et al. 2007; de Jong et al. 2016), safety (e.g., Okun et al. 2016), performance (e.g., Cable et al. 2013), and turnover (e.g., Cable et al. 2013). There are also numerous examples of organizational transitions impacting the functioning of an organization.

One such example occurred in 2008. On the 27th of March, Heathrow Airport, located outside London, opened a new terminal for British Airways designed to be state-of-the-art with a state-of-the-art baggage handling system (Corkindale 2008). This system was fully automated and was expected to outperform older systems and prevent the loss of baggage. The system was never fully tested, however, for a variety of reasons. Later accounts point to cost overruns which precluded a full testing of the system (instead the system was tested at 50% capacity with empty bags). In addition, decisions regarding testing may have been influenced by organizational optimism and leaders being overly enamored by the technology. Unfortunately, when the system was actually put into full operation it quickly became overwhelmed. Bags that were now fully packed took an additional 2–3 s for the system to handle. While 2–3 s may not sound like a lot, given the number of bags, a crisis soon erupted resulting with the system unable to process nearly 20,000 pieces of luggage. The resulting failure were epitomized by photographs of large barges piled with thousands of bags slowly making their way to Spain for sorting where there were warehouses large enough to properly sort all the bags by hand.

This example of a transition gone awry is telling on many levels. First, the source of transition was influenced by both society's demand for high-tech solutions and the

organization's intent to upgrade services. Second, the impact of the transition was felt across the organization (British Airways) in terms of public relations and cost. The transition also presumably stressed employees at various levels – senior leaders responsible for the poor management of the transition and line employees dealing with irate customers. Given studies documenting the link between work stress and health and performance outcomes (e.g., de Jong et al. 2016; Okun et al. 2016), employees likely experienced elevated psychological stress and increased risk of injury. Even society was affected in that the fiasco resulted in UK society questioning their ability to successfully manage large-scale projects (Corkindale 2008).

Yet the outcomes – or threatened outcomes - resulting from an unsuccessful transition can also prompt a corresponding response by the organization or by employees. For example, in the wake of the Heathrow malfunction, the organization responded by sending airport personnel to greet passengers entering the terminal and to offer them a glass of champagne. Thus, the organization attempted to respond to the transition and make it more palatable to those affected.

In fact, the art of managing a public relations disaster demonstrates that the impact on the organization can, in turn, affect the course of the transition. One example of an effective response is Johnson & Johnson's immediate reaction in 1982 to discovering that tampering of their bottles of extra-strength Tylenol had resulted in the death of seven people. The company's massive recall, proactive measures, and transparency enabled them to navigate what would have been an impossible blow to most companies, demonstrating that the response itself can impact the course of the transition (Rehak 2002).

There may be external forces, what we term the socio-cultural context, that affect the system as well. The socio-cultural context can influence individuals and organizations through changes such as technological advancements like the internet or social media, or some other societal shift. These larger societal changes such as shifting attitudes toward recycling, smoking, or acceptance of individual differences can permeate the context in which individuals and organizations function. For example, following a highly publicized terrorist attack, individuals and organizations may respond by coming together for a common purpose, or being distracted by concerns related to personal safety. Or the change may be dictated more slowly. Cultural transitions toward more environmental awareness may lead to tightened regulations. Such regulations may affect the way in which a corporation manages production or packages products. Thus far we have described the model in terms of the initial entry and exit, as well as the sources of transition, their associated outcomes, and the bidirectional nature of the transition and the response to that transition. Now we also make explicit the point that any one individual may thrive under conditions of transition, may falter, or may do a bit of both. This variability is represented by the curving line running over time from entry to exit (Fig. 1). Individual reaction will be a function of overall stress load, subjective perception of the transition, and the context around which transitions are encountered.

Stress Theories and Transitions

Individual differences in reaction to transition can be understood through the lens of various stress theories. For example, given that transitions are rarely a single, discrete

event but are instead a series of events, they can be understood in terms of allostatic load, or the consequences of chronic stress on an individual's physiological system. Allostatic load provides an over-arching framework that takes into account how cumulative stress, such as stress that can accompany a transition, can impact an individual's capacity to respond effectively (Ganster and Rosen 2013; McEwen 1998; Seeman et al. 1997).

Other theories of stress also provide the basis for insights into the impact of transitions on employee health and performance outcomes. For example, in their model of stress appraisal, Folkman and Lazarus (1980) highlight the importance of primary appraisal, or the degree to which stressors are perceived as harmful, threatening or challenging, and secondary appraisal, or the degree to which individuals believe they have the resources to respond effectively. This appraisal of resources will determine the coping response, and ultimately health outcomes (Lazarus and Folkman 1987). This theory is readily applied to the stress of transition, as exemplified in Schlossberg's theory where transition is regarded as a subjective experience (Griffin and Gilbert 2015). Similarly, Conservation of Resources theory also addresses the subjective appraisal of resources in determining the degree to which stress is experienced (Hobfoll, 1989).

The job-demands-resources theory (Bakker and Demerouti 2007) also provides a useful framework from which to view transitions and their potential impact on health and performance. To the extent that a transition involves an increase in job demands without a commensurate increase in personal or job resources, individuals may experience an increase in psychological strain. Importantly, however, this relationship may be bidirectional, with motivated individuals able to mobilize resources in order to respond effectively (Bakker and Demerouti 2007).

Theories of organizational justice (e.g., Colquitt et al. 2001) may also apply in the context of transition as transitions may impact perception of distributive, procedural, and interactional justice (Cassar and Buttigieg 2015; Cropanzano et al. 2018). Employees who perceive a lack of justice may respond with greater psychological strain (Ndjaboué et al. 2012) and physical health problems (e.g. Rineer, Truxillo, Bodner Hammer, & Kraner 2017; Ybema et al. 2016). While the relationship is likely bidirectional, with greater mental strain also contributing to justice perceptions (Lang et al. 2011), organizations should consider how transitions impact perception of fairness given the downstream impact on employee health.

Not only are these theories useful in understanding how response to transition occurs at the individual level, but they also provide insight into how teams and organizations might respond as well. Teams and organizations may develop group norms regarding appraisal of threat, appraisal of resource adequacy, and perceptions of justice. For example, teams and organizations may differ on their primary and secondary appraisal of the transition, or may fuel perceptions of organizational injustice that negatively influence health and performance outcomes.

Whether at the individual, team, or organizational level, transitions can have varying levels of psychological intensity. For example, transitions can be sudden and unexpected with intense shocks to the personal and organizational systems, and the individual's proximity to that shock. In the case of a critical incident, like an industrial accident involving loss of life, or an incident involving workplace violence, the transition may be traumatic. According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for

Mental Disorders, 5th Edition (American Psychiatric Association 2013), traumatic events expose individuals to actual death, serious injury or sexual violence or to threat of death, serious injury or sexual violence. These events are risk factors for a host of serious psychological sequelae, from posttraumatic stress disorder to depression, anxiety, and heightened levels of aggression. Although beyond the scope of this paper, numerous studies have documented the health-related consequences of these kinds of events on employees (Castro and Adler 2011; Lanctôt and Guay 2014; Lee et al. 2014). Whether traumatic or non-traumatic, transition events can impact individual employees and their families as well as shape the organization as a whole. How this impact is managed by the employee and the organization can have long-term implications.

Mitigating the Effects of Transition

Transition management can mitigate or exacerbate the effect of transitions on health and performance. Research on individual mitigation factors often examines the role of an individual's coping strategies, taking into account degree of personal control and tolerance for ambiguity. For example, in a study of Bell Telephone System employees, Ashford (1988) demonstrated that feelings of personal control, sharing emotions, and tolerance of ambiguity attenuated the relationship between stressors associated with the uncertainty and disruptions involving a large divestiture and psychological stress, while cognitive reappraisal and problem solving strategies either failed to ameliorate the transition stressors or amplified them. Similarly, Bordia et al. (2004) found that the negative impact on psychological health of uncertainty associated with organizational restructuring was fully mediated by perceptions of control.

Given these findings, it is important to consider the degree of control that employees perceive. Where individuals have little control, social support and emotion-focused coping may be a useful approach. For example, in a study examining the on-boarding of soldiers into the military, Britt et al. (2015) found that recruits who focused on accepting the reality of their new occupational context (a form of emotion-focused coping) were better able to adapt to the demands of that culture. Thus, when confronting a transition where there is little or no control, seeking acceptance through such practices as mindfulness meditation or emphasizing the importance of emotional support from others may be of benefit.

Of course, there are times when problem-focused coping can be a positive way to manage stress by looking for ways to change or remove a given problem. For example, Cunningham et al. (2002) found that high decision latitude in psychologically demanding jobs, an active problem-solving style, and high levels of self-efficacy were associated with greater readiness for organizational change. At the level of the individual employee, problem solving may mean attaining an additional educational degree or relocating an aging parent closer to home in order to reduce travel time. At the level of the organization, this approach may involve actively eliminating a threat to its reputation, as in the case of Johnson & Johnson managing the danger of Tylenol tampering.

There is also a special case of problem-focused coping: departing or exiting the system. In this situation, individuals or organizations can choose to manage a stressor by removing themselves from the equation. At the individual level, the person can quit a particular job,

change occupations, or retire. At the organizational level, the organization can divest itself of a product line, outsource a particular service, or sell or close down a subsidiary.

This approach to exiting a particular market is exemplified by the 1985 Coca-Cola Company launch of a new taste for Coke. In an effort to respond to a changing market for soft drinks and to compete more effectively with Pepsi and other rivals (Rachid 2015), Coca-Cola updated Coke's secret formula. Instead of providing the hit that the company expected, consumers were angry and competitors derided the change. The company rapidly recognized its mistake and within three months, original coke was returned to the market. Ultimately, the new Coke product was discontinued. In this case, the exit of original Coke was the antithesis of successful whereas the exit of new Coke was considered a logical step. Thus, system exit is not inherently good or bad but it is the type of adjustment to transition that may occur.

Teams also engage in a variety of coping methods. Teams that engage in avoidance may try to ignore the transition or may shut down attempts to discuss it through collective behavior and cultural norms. In contrast, teams that engage in emotion-focused coping may create a norm in which they share concerns, encourage one another, and validate each other's emotional experience. While support can be helpful, emotion-focused coping can also lead to teams that encourage rumination or spread rumors, behaviors that can paralyze the group and impede effective navigation of the transition. Teams that engage in problem-focused coping may generate plans, create timelines, or launch a group of specialists ("Tiger Teams") selected to tackle a particular problem associated with the transition.

In understanding how the team's response will influence individual employees and the larger organization, shared climate and culture needs to be considered. For example, if a team is highly cohesive, the coping style adopted at the group level may very well permeate the group. This process can be facilitated by explicit and implicit modelling, reinforcement, and contagion. If the team is not cohesive, diverse coping styles may be adopted.

Although not a study focused on transition per se, Bliese and Britt (2001) surveyed US soldiers deployed to Haiti and found that a consistent, common perception within work teams can be associated with better adjustment even if that common perception is negative. While overall group perception of leadership quality during the deployment was a significant moderator of the relationship between work stressors and outcomes such as morale and depression, group consensus about the quality of unit leadership was also a significant moderator of that relationship. That is, group agreement about the perception of leaders was as important as the actual rating of the leader. Perhaps group disagreement reflects the presence of group factions, a lack of shared experience, and less cohesion. Regardless, such findings suggest that group consensus about a transition may influence the team's adjustment over and above whether the team has adaptive attitudes.

Emotional culture in teams will also likely influence adaptation in the face of transition. Emotional culture is a relatively new concept that describes the shared affective experience of teams. Previous work has demonstrated that emotional culture, or shared affective characteristics, can lead to better performance. For example, Barsade and O'Neill (2014) found that a culture of "companionate love" (or "feelings of affection, compassion, caring and tenderness" [p. 552]) in teams working in long-term care was associated with less employee absenteeism and emotional exhaustion, and better patient outcomes. Such findings suggest that the emotional culture of the team should be considered in understanding how teams navigate transitions.

Both cohesiveness and emotional culture may influence the way in which teams respond to a transition. Depending on how teams respond to the transition, they may pull together, offering one another support, or they may turn against one another, engaging in scapegoating. Thus, managing a team's response to a transition becomes important above and beyond the degree to which individuals respond to the transition.

The Role of Managers

Besides the role of individuals and teams, managers also play a key role in how transitions are managed. There are several facets related to this role, including how the transition is communicated. How managers address the transition, even questions about the transition that they do not know how to answer, matters. Transparency has become a popular term and can differ in meaning depending on the context but in this case transparency means not only being open about the changes to come but also being open about what aspects of the changes are unclear. Managers may be tempted to wait to share the transition plan until after it is finalized because they do not want to fuel rumors or add to the uncertainty of the organization. While this approach is well intended, it can inadvertently catch individuals off guard, can fuel rumors anyway, and does not allow for employees to provide input into the plan and identify potential second and third order effects that managers may not have otherwise considered.

Still, there may be conflicting interests at stake when it comes to planning for transitions. For example, it may be in the best interest of the organization to keep a lid on a transition because supervisors are concerned about individuals reacting precipitously and departing before the organization is ready for them to leave. Yet it may be in the best interests of the individuals to know ahead of time that a major change is coming so that they can come up with an exit strategy. This potential for conflicting interests can leave supervisors in a difficult position because they will feel a dual loyalty to the organization and their team members. Besides the obvious stress that an individual faces in response to a major change that has implications for their employment, supervisors also face significant stress because they have to balance loyalty to their personnel and loyalty to their organization. This balancing act presents a classic ethical dilemma that many supervisors will face at one point in their career.

Related to transparency is the degree to which the processes associated with transition are inclusive. The degree to which employees have been part of the transition process from the start can influence the transition itself. In 2010, the Media News Group informed staffers at The Pioneer Press in St. Paul, Minnesota that they would have to face pay cuts or face immediate firings (Grant 2010). The employee union came up with an alternative: employees would not just take a pay cut but would work fewer hours, and there would be no firing. By engaging employees and integrating their feedback, companies can weather periods of financial transition and upheaval.

In turn, it is important to ensure that the individual's perception of the transition is consistent with the leader's perception. In the case of Honeywell choosing employee furloughs over layoffs in 2010, senior management wanted to show solidarity with employees and also planned to go on furlough (Cote 2013). In response, the CEO directed senior management to exempt themselves from the furlough because of their critical role in shepherding the company through a period of turmoil. These senior

managers had to shift their perspective to align with the CEO's vision, and the CEO had to communicate this expectation across the organization.

Besides communicating clearly, there is another facet to management during a transition phase that needs to be considered. This facet reflects the emotional intelligence (Little et al. 2012) and emotion regulation (Little et al. 2012; Little et al. 2016) of managers. Emotional intelligence (EI) is defined as a broad ability to perceive, facilitate, understand, and manage self and others' emotions (Mayer et al. 2001). EI represents one's resources or one's innate ability (Mayer et al. 2001. While the importance of EI has probably been overstated (for example, see Cavazotte et al. 2012), that EI plays a significant role in management of transition should not be minimized (see Harms and Credé 2010). Ideally, managers can use their emotional intelligence to anticipate, monitor, and leverage their own emotional response to transition. Managers are not immune to the stress of a difficult transition – whether that's their own personal transition or an organizational transition. In order to be optimally effective as team leads, they need to be conscious of their own stress levels, reactions, and challenges. Without this self-awareness, they will be less effective in helping their employees and may falter in efforts to model productive behavior. Managers also need to use their emotional intelligence to anticipate, monitor, and influence their employees' emotional reactions. In essence, the manager's task is helping a team regulate their emotional response to a transition in order to maintain health, a positive unit climate, and performance.

Managers can begin to address the team's emotional reaction by explicit recognition of the transition. Lab-based research by Schunn et al. (2001) shows that explicit awareness of a change in task is associated with better adaption. While it is clearly a jump from changing the rules of an experimental task to an occupational context, the benefit of explicit awareness may still apply. In an occupational setting, direct acknowledgement of a transition ahead of time allows individuals to marshal their resources, consider alternative strategies, and focus their energy on adaptation once the change actually occurs. Acknowledgment of the transition can help the team feel understood and can validate their experience. In turn, the team may feel less pressure to communicate distress through counterproductive behaviors because they believe that their distress is understood and even shared by others.

Thus, it may be useful to broaden the conceptualization of how team leaders manage emotions associated with transition. In a survey of personnel affected by the closure of a military base, for example, leadership behaviors associated with transparency, self-disclosure, and acknowledgement of the difficulty caused by the transition were associated with better mental health adjustment for both soldiers and civilian employees even after controlling for individual coping style (Thomas et al. 2018). We suggest that expanding the concept of emotion management to include these kinds of behaviors is an important step in harnessing the power of managers to facilitate a positive adjustment to a transition, especially under conditions of low control.

Similarly, senior leaders and managers need to consider not only whether a transition will occur but they also need to consider what tone they want to establish for the organization. This tone will be felt directly and indirectly by employees. For example, organizations need to consider carefully how willing they are to accept errors during transition. When individuals transition to new positions of responsibility, for example, the cultural attitude toward errors will

influence how that new manager adapts. In the context of zero-tolerance, the creativity of the new manager may suffer and instead the new manager may regress to the installment of heavy-handed processes. Such processes ostensibly protect individuals from an organizational climate with a "gotcha" mentality but unless there is a dearth of process, this ratcheting up of such practices may freeze the development of the team or larger organization.

Senior leaders and managers themselves are in a tough situation. They may be in a highly visible role, their personal identity may be tightly linked to their success, and they may have few confidants. If they do not manage their stress levels, they may find themselves succumbing to the stress in a way made quite public in this era of viral videos (Hill 2016). A company's board of directors may even be particularly averse to admitting that the CEO they appointed is encountering stress or health problems. Yet there are also cases where CEOs do request time to address stress-related problems and then successfully return to work. For example, within a year of coming on board as the CEO of Lloyds Banking Group to steer the company through a tough financial period, António Horta Osório took a high-profile leave of absence due to fatigue. Osório then returned and guided Lloyds back to profitability ("Antonio Horta Osorio", 2018).While it may be difficult for individuals at the senior most levels to acknowledge their limits during periods of high-stress transition, by being aware of the transition's impact on their own behaviors at home and at work, they may stave off greater personal distress, have a better chance of stabilizing their organization, and even recognize their risk of making poor personal decisions.

Future Considerations

In thinking about how transition can be conceptualized in future research, we believe it will be important to develop a typology of transitions in order to optimally link best practices with real-world challenges. By developing a typology of transitions, organizations can understand what types of transitions need the most attention and what management strategies might be included.

We believe there are several transition types: (1) Transition of structure (e.g., restructuring, downsizing), (2) Transition of culture (e.g., diversity/inclusion, multinational business collaboration), and (3) Transition of process (e.g., technology, policies). There is likely to be overlap as well as these types of transition are also likely to be impacted by changes in management. Future research should contrast how transitions differ depending on the type of transition in question.

Moreover, it might be worth considering how transitions that occur at the individual level might have a counterpart at the team or organizational level. For example, just as individuals who join an organization encounter onboarding, newly created work groups encounter an equivalent of team formation, and organizations integrating a new subsidiary encounter a period of cultural adjustment. Similarly, an individual promotion, which may include new job responsibilities and new team members, could be regarded as analogous to an organization experiencing significant growth, or going through an initial

public offering, with newfound responsibilities and accountability to stakeholder.

It is also useful to continue to adapt the concept of readiness for change in understanding individual and organizational attitudes toward transition. The readiness for change concept was originally developed to understand individual attitudes toward shifting away from risky health habits such as smoking (e.g., DiClemente et al. 1991 and excessive drinking e.g., Mitchell and Angelone 2006). Five different levels of readiness have been described from precontemplation and contemplation to preparation, action and maintenance (Norcross et al. 2011; Prochaska and DiClemente 1983). Previous researchers have considered how to adapt this concept of readiness for change at the individual, team, and organizational level (Rafferty et al. 2013; Weiner 2009; Weiner et al. 2008). This approach may be useful given that different interventions are recommended commensurate with an individual's level of readiness for change.

We now turn to a discussion of how transition may be impacted by three trends in the future of work. First, we examine retirement, one of the biggest personal transitions with implications for individuals, teams, and organizations. Indeed, many theories and models have been developed to explain or describe retirement (see Beehr 2014). While retirement can be seen as a reward for years of employment and a chance to prioritize non-work activities, it may be a challenge for individuals, organizations, and society, especially with many societies unable to provide the means to meet the needs for the elderly. Given that people are living longer and that science has demonstrated the benefits of continued mental engagement, social integration, and physical movement, retirement may not be healthy for some individuals. Retirement of experts in fields with a gap in expertise is also not ideal for organizations. In the future, organizations may want to prioritize a set of alternatives for maintaining the involvement of older employees in the work setting. Such involvement could include providing workers with emeritus status, much like in academia, or providing mentoring status to help bridge gaps in expertise.

This approach would require a cultural shift from how employees think about their jobs such that stepping out of the workforce is no longer the default alternative. The benefit would be that the transition would be less abrupt, the organization could gain the benefit of experience, and society would likely have a cognitively and physically healthier population. Of course certain limitations would have to be considered, including diminishing capacity and endurance as well as the financial cost of including senior workers. Notwithstanding these limitations, bridge employment involving employment in one's career field after "retiring" is associated with fewer major diseases and functional impairments and improved mental health for employees compared to those who did not engage in bridge employment (Zhan et al. 2009, 2015). Government incentives could be used to encourage companies to develop these options for their employees rather than the traditional options associated to retirement. Clearly, it would be provocative to imagine a society without retirement. For some, such a society would represent a profound break from a preferred and expected lifestyle or represent an impossible burden given physical or mental limitations.

And yet retirement is not culturally universal (Luborsky and LeBlanc 2003), a fact that challenges our perception of what is regarded as normal.

Our second theme about the future of work is related to the gig economy. The increasing reliance on a gig economy suggests that in the future, transitions may not affect employees in quite the same way because employees may not be as financially or emotionally aligned with a specific company. Moving between short-term contracts, workers may experience work-related transitions independent of the organization's transition. The individual worker may move in and out (and in and out) of the company while the organization's leadership grapples with strategic changes. This situation might require an alternative model in which individuals may be less emotionally impacted by organizational change because they are less embedded within that organization. In turn, managers may have less impact on the way the employee experiences the transition. Nevertheless, changes in organizational policy can still impact gig employees, as in the case of Uber introducing changes felt by its drivers (Mullin 2017). Related to the gig economy is the "virtual" employee, where employees are not physically located where the company is located, and thus may not form the intimate social connections associated with traditional employment. Given the changing work context, it may be that organizational transitions are less meaningful to employees who work remotely and rely on a virtual office for their work climate. Virtual employees may experience less disruption associated with an organizational transition because their identity as a worker is less embedded within the organization.

The analysis of extremely large, complicated, and integrated data sets (known as "big data") to identify patterns and trends has also increasingly been employed to gain insight into business processes. As Bliese et al. (2017) have suggested, big data may also offer insights into large scale transitions. By examining questions of change using methods such as discontinuous growth modeling, researchers can uncover different trajectories of adaptation. In addition, artificial intelligence (AI) may be used to analyze complex data in developing predicative analytics. AI approaches can assist senior managers in decision making related to transition. While big data solutions and AI do not tend to offer subtle cues or mediating explanations, they can point researchers in directions worthy of more focused examination.

In sum, we believe that transitions require employees, managers, and organizations to shift their mental set and accommodate changes to their psychological schema of work, or cognitive framework for organizing and interpreting information within the occupational context. This shift may require a shift in personal identity, and this new identity may feel foreign and threatening, even if the change itself is welcomed. Research is needed to optimize the way these changes can be best achieved across all levels of an organization, given that occupational transitions are a constant.

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