

Caribbean Society and Organisation: Change and Transformation

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Abstract

Established and strongly embedded forms of inclusion and exclusion, tension and dynamic between the formal and the informal exists within Caribbean organisations. A study of organisational change was undertaken in two Jamaican organisations of 22 participants each, and questions raised about this transformational problematic of organisation/development and change. The study, set against the backdrop of structural-psycho-socio-cultural dynamics, investigated the way that employees cognitively appraised organisational change. A comparative multi-dimensional systems approach was employed and also an examination and discussion of different levels of organisational embeddedness, with intersecting levels involving interstitial margins. The findings confirmed the importance of focused leadership, communication and high levels of disruption, uncertainty and expectancy associated with prolonged change efforts and the role of status and power. The study is the first of its kind, however, further research is needed to better understand the interactions of structural and psycho-socio-cultural demands on organisational change in diverse organisational settings.

Keywords: organisational change, cognitive appraisal, cognition, emotion, post-colonial, organisations, institutions

Introduction

A society is an assembly of organisations of various types interacting with each other, within which there are tensions and conflict among the different elements of the system. In the Caribbean, with historically established and strongly embedded forms of inclusion and exclusion, there is an obvious tension and dynamic between the “formal” and the “informal” across and within organisations. In such a context, to pursue and ask for developmental organisational change that goes beyond this

dynamic of exclusion, the conversation has to be about transformational organisational change, with significant internal and external articulation. The distinction between the formal and informal has been widely applied in social and economic analysis in

- a. contrasting traditional and modern societies;
- b. contrasting economic/community sectors within societies; and
- c. contrasting types of organisations and actions within organisations.

In our analysis, the formal and informal distinction is established in terms of forms and activities within or outside of an ongoing explicit regulatory framework. The formal is within and the informal is outside of the regulatory framework. Although this has been contextualized first at the micro level in the Caribbean, by reference to “state” processes of inclusion and exclusion historically, the distinction can be and is applied across many domains, both outside and inside of formal bureaucracies. This distinction still remains fluid, in that it does not create pure types and it can also be applied to psychological and behavioural forms and activities.

Informality is at variance with formality in that it is “an alternative system of regulation that operates below and beyond the framework of state regulation” (Meagher, 2008). State institutions (which are primarily bureaucratic in nature) are generally formal institutions recognized by their explicitly stated policies, laws, rules, and regulations. However, within formal institutions, Ofori (2012) advances the concept of bureaucratic informalism, which

Meagher (2008) argues is not a new concept. It is where the state bureaucracy is transformed by the norms, values, expectations, and practices associated with relational “goodwill” — which intervenes and reconfigures the way that formal practices are undertaken. In his notion of the informal and the formal, Hart (2008) posits that “both the bureaucracy and its antithesis contain the formal and informal dialectic within themselves as well as between them” (p. 12). Depending on circumstances, the formal and the informal can be both negative and positive in varying ways. How then, in mediating the formal and informal in Caribbean society and organisations, can positive developmental results be produced? Table 1 further elucidates the characteristics of the formal and informal at the macro and the micro levels within society. It highlights the tension within and between the formal and informal systems, thus suggesting that each is intricately supported by positive and negative elements.

Table 1

Schematic Distinctions

Formal (State, Economy Foundations) Positive and Negative	Informal (Personal, community foundations) Positive and Negative
1. Hierarchy 2. Articulated command and control systems 3. Contractual relations 4. Task-orientation 5. Standardized rule-invoked performances 6. Relatively stable resource acquisition and deployment 7. Restrictive psycho-relational dynamics	1. Non-contractual 2. Voluntaristic participation 3. Fluidity 4. Family, socialization, emotional, care-centred support 5. Forms of civility 6. Expansive psycho-relational dynamics

Caribbean Organisation Scholarship

Stryker and Burke (2000, p. 285) see society “as a mosaic of relatively durable patterned interactions and relationships, differentiated yet organized and embedded in an array of groups,

organisations, communities and institutions and intersected by cross-cutting boundaries of clan, ethnicity, age, gender, religion and other variables”. Organisation theory is often a

part of sociological theory and it starts with a conception of society consistent with the above. The form is an institutional process—on the relationship between structure and action; on the psycho-socio-cultural; on organisations; and on organizing. A sociological framework is used here, in that it places organisations as embedded (internal and external) networks of power (agency) characterized by multi-level, intersecting, and overlapping transgressive spaces.

In sociological and organisational analyses, from Weber (1922) to Morgan (2006), the metaphor has been an important feature in developing analysis, explanation, and understanding of complex socio-cultural phenomena. One dominant and classic metaphor used in the Caribbean is that of the plantation, which is conceptualized both as a type of society and an organisational type. Essentially, the plantation metaphor has to do with over-determination. It first represents the total institution, yet is a paradoxical metaphor because over-determination survives because of under-determination. In these interstitial under-determined margins there are “provision grounds” — another metaphor referring to the under-determined and the excluded. The challenge then is that of re-evaluating the total institution and its untapped potentials in these “provision grounds”. In a full psycho-socio-cultural sense, how do we establish a positive dialectic in this plantation, society, organisation, self, and identity?

In the last fifteen years, there has been a growing body of organisational scholarship in Jamaica and the Caribbean. Over a dozen PhD theses have been produced on Caribbean organisational processes. In varying degrees, this scholarship has had:

- a. historical and developmental focus;
- b. focus on a wide variety of organisational forms;
- c. formal and informal contrasts;
- d. a societal location (extending to inter-societal relations), examining the implications of interactions in organisational fields and between organisational types;
- e. attention to positive and negative dialectics (internal and external) of interacting organisations and organisational types; and,
- f. a psycho-socio-cultural emphasis focusing on organizing and processes, and raising questions about individual, organisational, and societal transformation (transcendence) and development.

E. Jones (2015) attempts a societal and historical developmental interaction framework impacting organisational structure and processes, stating:

Together then, these institutional regimes—the colonial and plantation systems, family-owned firms and community-based organisations, the international institutions of aid and advice, as well as a body of descriptive and applied public administration scholarship – imparted significant influence on the emerging administrative culture. Put another way, these forces constituted a compelling source of the formation of the current organisational culture. They also shaped the national culture, influencing the orientations and behaviours of the organisations’ leaders, the nature of the organisations’ business, as well as their resultant social interactions. We are interested in possible implications and legacies of the foregoing account.

E. Jones (2015, p. 18)

In the Caribbean, as elsewhere, organisational change and development is linked to societal dynamics; and likewise, societal development is linked to organisational change and development. Given the historical and developmental status of the Jamaican society, substantial transformational change at the societal level is required for sustainable development. Organisational change, as is the practice in most organisations, “is the process by which organisations move from their present state to some desired future state to increase their effectiveness” (G. R. Jones, 2013, p. 295). Organisational transformation, on the other hand, while improving the operations and efficiency of the organisation, is primarily focused on radically changing the mind-sets (perceptions, thoughts, and behaviours) of those within the organisation (Cummings & Worley, 2005, p. 480).

Transformation questions the assumptions held by organisational members and promotes cognitive reorientation.

In order, therefore, to accomplish transformational change, society must be examined as an assemblage of organisations, while at the same time identifying separate organisational types. Each type must be examined within fields that are influencing and constraining, but with some capacity and potential to go beyond current consolidations and to establish new modes and levels of transcendence. This examination should focus on the internal dynamics of organisation and their transformational potential. How do we identify and limit the negative dynamics in the field of interacting elements and establish the means for promoting more positive dialectics? In exploring this, we must look at the character of “formation” and “information” in the inter-organisational, societal field and in the intra-organisational context. In doing this, insights and conclusions are provided from an indepth study of organisational change across different organisations in Jamaica.

Statement of the Problem

Within the global environment, Caribbean islands, including Jamaica, are subject to economic and social challenges. Jamaica has vicious circles of high inflation, high-interest rates, low growth, high fiscal deficits and rising debt levels paired with high crime rates, low levels of literacy, low employment, and low productivity. These factors provide a challenging context for organisations — one requiring not only change, but transformational initiatives.

In instances where organisations determine that change is critical for survival, a drastic approach to the implementation of change is a quick response solution. Based on the complexity of change and the factors associated with it, components that can be more easily controlled or demand fewer resources are invariably ahead of human resource factors (Bartunek, 1984). The result is often inadequate preparation of employees for the impending change.

Successful change in organisations depends on commitment (Jaros, 2010), communication (Elving, 2005), and buy-in from all members (Armenakis et al., 2007). Most Caribbean organisations struggle with issues of trust, work ethics, performance and interpersonal relationships (Jamaica Business Development Corporation, 2016). Thus, change may further exacerbate an already fractious work environment. This is especially the case, since organisational change can be stressful, disruptive, and unpredictable; tensions that already exist point to further upheavals and are indicative of an emotionally charged environment.

Purpose of the Study

This study aimed to investigate the effects of organisational change features on employees' emotions, perceptions, and behaviours. It investigated the dynamics of cognitive-emotional appraisal of lower-level/lower-status employees in organisations with embedded power relations that were attempting planned change processes. Specific focus was placed on the psycho-social impact of change protocols, communication, participation, and other aspects of the change process. Of primary importance were individuals' cognitive-emotional appraisal of the change process. The epistemic value of the study was an examination and emphasis on the evolving cognitive-emotional appraisals of participants, who were expected to embody and implement the change objectives in their relations and work performances.

This study constituted a comparative multi-dimensional systems approach to organisational analysis across two organisations, and examined organisational change within an elaborated Caribbean social theory framework which was complemented by psycho-social theory. The study was set against the backdrop of structural-psycho-socio-cultural dynamics and their influences on employees' cognitive appraisal of change.

The following six research questions guided indepth face-to-face interviews, focus groups, and the interrogation of archival records—as illustrated below:

1. What are the characteristics of change that lower-level employees (not involved in the decision-making process) will be most concerned about?
2. What are some of the contextual features of the organisational environment that will influence employees' cognitive appraisal of the change?
3. What are some of the emotions that lower-level employees experience during the change?
4. What perceptions do lower-level employees hold in relation to the change?
5. Given the socio-cultural context, how do lower-level employees respond to the change based on how they experience and interpret it?
6. What are the behavioural patterns that are associated with lower-level employees' interpretation of the change?

Caribbean Social Theory: Postcolonialism

Postcolonial theory (Said, 1993) has its origins in Caribbean history and was primarily focused in its early years on the extremes of domination and exploitation. It is also referred to as a continuing history of deprivation and catastrophe (M. G. Smith, 1965; Brathwaite, 1971; Beckford, 1972; R. T. Smith, 1988). Postcolonial theory argues that postcolonial societies have not overcome the original colonizing sins of domination, racism, and exploitation, and so the majority of their populations are still excluded from the full benefits of development — even in 21st Century Caribbean societies. Two sets of theories are implicated under the umbrella of structure: (a) Caribbean social theory as postcolonial theory and as a theory of marginalization, of inclusion and exclusion, and of interstitial margins, and (b) organisational theory of bureaucratic structures, of tensions between formal and informal, and of the social and the psychological.

Caribbean social theory emphasises the impact of structures of power from the socio-cultural to the psychological, with resistance

mainly in interstitial margins which, according to Mann (2013, p. 315), concerns resistance and power. Power, he articulates, plays an important role in creating unexpected or unintended and widespread problems for societies at all levels. The history of domination continues to produce struggles — not only between the oppressors and the oppressed, but also within groups of oppressed peoples. In Mann's theory, power plays an important role in the preservation of inequality and lack of inclusion. However, Mann notes that power is not totalizing—that is, it does not represent all that is considered unfavourable in organisations, as institutions create both zones of exclusion and of resistance. It is therefore essential to understand and incorporate these zones in analysis at the societal and organisational levels. In the analysis of social life and social organisation, one often has to adopt a perspective that looks at how power relations implicate inclusion and exclusion, and incorporate levels of analysis involving the socio-cultural and psychological.

Caribbean postcolonial theories constitute a number of sociological models, each serving as a guide to the historical, sociological, cultural, and psychological landscapes of plantation society (Beckford, 1972); plural society (M. G. Smith, 1965); creole society (Brathwaite, 1971); class society (R. T. Smith, 1988); and the informal system. Each model approaches colonialism from a different perspective, while explaining the interactions and exchanges between racial and cultural groups that developed from the foundations of slavery and colonialism. The models also provide insights into the intricacies, inconsistencies, and complexities that have shaped composite societal structures, and more importantly the individual.

Historical depictions by Caribbean sociologists illustrate the constellation of influences on the lives of what came to be the Jamaican population. The period of emancipation from slavery and subsequently Jamaica's independence, should have signalled a time of rebirth, renewal, and restoration. This time should have marked a moment in the lives of Jamaicans where they could freely occupy and transform the space for which they had violently fought. It was also a time

for them to consciously construct an acceptable image and identity of themselves based on the diverse experiences and image of the future they envisioned. On the contrary, due to the ongoing practices toward maintaining the status quo, as proffered by R. T. Smith (1988) — the class system prevailed. Despite the fierce opposition from many Jamaicans and the departure from colonial rule, emancipated Jamaicans did not feel empowered to transform and personalize what had now become their legacy. Consequently, those who emerged as the ruling class and who were keen to maintain and preserve the institutions of power and domination continued to reproduce the familiar.

Psycho-Social Theories — The Cognitive Appraisal Theory of Emotion

The process of judging the personal significance of a situation or event as good or unpleasant defines the nature of the Cognitive Appraisal Theory of Emotion (Cornelius, 1996). This theory posits that individuals will assess events based on their interpretation of its implications for their well-being (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). Thus, individuals focusing on the same event may have different interpretations depending on personal significance (Smith & Kirby, 2001). For example, some individuals may interpret a change event as a positive one, while others may view it negatively and ultimately feel threatened (Lazarus, 1991b). Two key assumptions underpin the Cognitive Appraisal Theory of Emotion: (a) an individual may experience an emotion based on their evaluation of a situation and its meaning and implications for personal well-being; and, (b) depending on the situation, each evaluation may evoke different emotions (Smith & Kirby, 2001).

Cognitive appraisal operates in three stages. The first stage refers to an input, event, or stimulus to which an individual is exposed. The second stage is an iterative process of evaluation, which alternates between assessment and various types of emotions. This stage is known as the cognitive appraisal process, as the individual seeks to make sense of the situation. Fugate et al.

(2010) assert that when an individual identifies a situation and internalizes its meaning, they first of all evaluate the situation to determine its personal significance. If they believe it has positive implications, they may seek further information and may, thereafter, commit to working with the situation. Alternatively, if perceived to be negative (i.e. the situation is not likely to be of personal benefit), they may decide to do just enough to get by, or they may withdraw psychologically or physically. The individual's reaction to the situation represents the final stage of the process, where certain overt, erratic, or covert actions or behaviours may manifest in response to their understanding of events (Fugate, 2013; Scherer, 2001).

The Organisations & Contexts

Change generally unfolds in stages. Lewin (1951)—referred to as the father of change—argues that change occurs in three stages: (a) unfreezing the organisation from its current state; (b) implementing the change; and (c) refreezing the organisation in its new and desired state. According to Lewin's Change Theory, refreezing is an important part of the process, because if managers do not undertake this final step, resistance to change will be evident as employees revert to their original behaviour (G. R. Jones, 2013).

This study revealed that organisations must first of all enter a preparation mode (unfreezing), wherein all employees are fully aware of events and are trained to operate in and with new processes and systems; therefore being able to think and behave differently. Case One illustrates aspects of the change process, suggesting that the change was planned, led, and managed to some extent. On the contrary, Case Two did not appear to have instituted a plan of action: although employees were aware of the proposed change, they were in no way prepared psychologically for it.

The study entities were two large organisations operating in different sectors within a post-colonial developmental context. Case One operated in the financial sector and Case Two in

the educational sector. Both organisations span national, regional, and international dimensions and constitute multiple organisational sectors, departments, and sections. The depth and breadth of these organisations were quite extensive, and their actions structured. The latter due primarily to their highly bureaucratic nature.

Case One transitioned from a building society to a commercial bank, requiring employees to cognitively re-orientate as they attempted to adjust to the new context and commercial banking environment (Guiette & Vandenbempt, 2013). A building society differs significantly from a bank, in that the former is a mutual organisation designed to benefit its members. Members have voting rights and consequently a greater say in the management of the building society. Additionally, the law limits building societies' offerings to mortgages and savings accounts. Commercial banks, on the other hand, trade on the stock market and are owned by shareholders. They are given greater latitude by the regulatory body for financial institutions to offer various financial products to customers, from chequing and savings accounts to certificates of deposit, among many others. The commercial banking industry is highly lucrative and competitive.

Archival records showed that the history of Case One dated back to the late 1800s when private citizens wanted to find practical low-cost housing solutions for disenfranchised Jamaicans by encouraging them to save (Walvin, n. d.). Slavery had created divisions within society and many black citizens were deprived of opportunities to advance in society. Using the British model for creating building societies, the decision to cater to this group was twofold — it would encourage people to save by establishing mutual organisations, while giving them the opportunity to own their own homes.

From the early beginnings of a small building society, the organisation grew consistently by merging and acquiring a number of smaller mutual organisations. Preparation of its human and technological resources, customers, and business practices to make the transition to the commercial banking environment took a number

of years (Gordon, 2015). Official communication by senior organisation executives suggested that the transition had been on the institution's radar for close to 10 years prior to the change.

Employees described the context and the culture of Case One as family/employee/customer-oriented, trustworthy, and supportive. While many felt that communication could be better, they also admitted that they were kept informed of all change-related plans and so did not feel they were operating in the dark at any time. This made them feel valued and as a result were excited about the proposed change of which they were a part. They were also excited to transition to the commercial banking environment as in their estimation, it had greater status and was a more attractive option. The understanding that there would be no job losses garnered more support and enthusiasm.

In the beginning of the change process (referred to as Stage 1) communication and leadership stood out as two very important variables of which employees were highly appreciative; and although events occurred very slowly, they understood the reasons because they were kept informed. Employees also expressed satisfaction for the time and effort leadership devoted to ensuring that all members of staff were included in various change-related events where questions were answered and doubts and fears allayed. Two years prior to the actual change, the level of communication and training were heightened in order to accommodate the implementation of the change (Stage II).

Stage II of the process began as expected, and as employees already appraised the situation and knew there was nothing to fear personally, they approached the implementation of the change with excitement, vigour, and pride. However, months after implementation, employees did not perceive that leadership and communication were consistent with their expectations. In addition, challenges that emerged because of the change were unresolved, expectations of financial rewards were unrealised, and the workload for which there was no prior discussion, grew exponentially. According to theorists, in

this period (Stage III), there should be close monitoring of the implementation programme by change agents to ensure that employees do not inadvertently revert to the previous stage, and that they remain engaged.

Case Two represented the first faculty of a university that was established in Jamaica. Several years after its opening, the European model that was adopted (which was primarily focused on promoting higher education, learning, and research) was reconfigured to also embody current trends in its specific areas of training. Although efforts were made to adapt the programmes being offered to local needs and limitations, the institution still managed to maintain much of its European ideals. Overall, the curriculum modelled those offered in overseas universities (Branday & Carpenter, 2008).

Since the early 1990s, many countries and organisations around the world have embarked on various projects to facilitate the building and development of knowledge economies. This trend resulted in immense pressure on higher education institutions to offer courses aligned with the needs of these new and growing economies. Globalization acted as a catalyst for technological growth, and this trend resulted in tertiary institutions being forced to identify creative ways to be competitive (Rust & Kim, 2012; Gordon, 2015). Additionally, global, structural, and fiscal crises forced governments to institute severe funding cuts to tertiary institutions. Consequently, it was expedient for these institutions to identify innovative ways to meet the growing economic challenges by identifying new income streams.

Case Two proposed and implemented many new strategies as they sought to rationalize their educational systems. One decision taken was to expand its facilities and resources in order to accommodate the increase in student numbers which the institution had been experiencing for a number of years. This would require merging employees from disparate departments and teams from a variety of locations to operate under one roof. The institution, therefore, constructed a tailor-made state-of-the-art, multi-

purpose and multi-functional facility which would serve as a comprehensive educational setting for its students. The move would also serve to consolidate human, physical, technological, and financial resources while increasing its competitive advantage.

The context and culture of this faculty were characterized as weak communication, weak leadership, and toxic relationships. Respondents reported that although they were informed of the change (over a span of approximately 10 years) they were not prepared for it. They were advised that a state-of-the-art, multi-purpose, multi-functional building would be constructed for them; and were also advised of how the building would be designed and organized. The understanding by employees was that they would be allowed to select and occupy specific spaces in the building for their teams and departments, thus implying that once in the building their spaces would already have been prepared and ready for the specific needs of each group.

One factor that gave prominence to the relocation activity was that although senior members of the team recognized that the new space would be a welcome change, they were reluctant to move. To demonstrate their loyalty to their senior leaders, many team members also resisted the move, until they felt they had no choice. Many employees believed the reluctance to relocate by some senior managers was because of the perceived reduced power status that would result in teams and departments no longer being in charge of their own resources: all resources would be shared, except for human resources. Thus, strong sentiments, poor communication, toxic relations, and weak leadership accompanied employees to the new location.

Once in the building, respondents reported being met by another group of employees who were not previously part of the planned change. They were in the building at the invitation of the CEO, who did not advise anyone of the change of plan and more importantly, once all were in the building, he did not attempt to communicate with, or intergate the different groups.

Methodology

In light of the different ontologies, epistemologies, and models of human nature, social scientists are inclined to employ different methodological approaches in their study of social phenomena (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Social science researchers (including these researchers), recognize that the study of social phenomena cannot be approached from a state of *tabula rasa*. We are aware that our worldviews and beliefs inform our chosen approach, while recognizing that it is the actual approach to these studies that contributes to the distinct research styles (Creswell, 2007).

The ontological views that guided this study are, therefore, based on the personal and contextual nature of the experiences of those that are being studied; also recognizing that their individual responses to shared or unique realities are not absolutes. Therefore, these experiences and contexts cannot be generalised to other situations or contexts. In addition, the context in which the emotions and realities of individuals are constructed is of extreme importance, in that they not only refer to the nature of the environment but also have implications for the wider society from which individuals are associated. Epistemological views were based on "interpretivism", which suggests that it is important to understand the social world and explore its parameters from the perspective of those who experience it. In that sense, the chosen qualitative methodological approach is predicated on the belief that knowledge of participants and their environments can only be acquired and learned through close interaction. Thus, in these cases, it was important to understand the extent to which the planned events, relationships, and behaviours within the studied contexts impacted individuals.

The research design specifically employed a multiple-case study approach in its investigation of how some employees cognitively appraised organisational change, and their attendant emotions and behaviours. Qualitative research was chosen, as it has the ability to produce "thick description" of participants' experiences, emotions, and perceptions (Geertz, 1973, p. 27).

McGrath and Johnson (2003) states that there has been an ongoing tension between the use of qualitative versus quantitative research methods. Many have trivialized it as the difference between numbers and opinions. However, McGrath and Johnson (2003) also argue that the difference is much more involved than that; it is essentially a matter of the researcher's choice of paradigm. The practice of qualitative research demands a representation of voices and issues that are relevant to those voices. It is unfortunate that the use of these voices continues to preserve the belief that qualitative research lacks rigour and robustness. However, this belief is countered by research proponents who are as emphatic in their beliefs that qualitative research is just as rigorous and robust as the widely used quantitative methods. These views are supported by Stake (2010, p. 15) who purports that the following five qualities lend credence to the argument of employing qualitative research: it is interpretive, empirical, situational, intuitive, and credible. Yin (2014) also reminds scientists that there are numerous empirical research strategies available, thus their presence should be viewed more as pluralistic than competitive.

The justification for employing a case study approach is also supported by:

- a. Crabtree & Miller (1999), who argue that case studies allow for a better understanding of individuals' actions due to the opportunity for interactional exchange between researcher and participants. They also assert that it allows individuals to: (1) express their thoughts and feelings about the phenomenon of organisational change; (2) explore the context in which it occurs; (3) give their interpretation of the nature of it, and (4) state how they believe they have been impacted. The case study approach allows researchers to probe beyond the initial questions and identify underlying issues respondents might not have fully articulated.
- b. Creswell (2007, p. 73) also argues that a case study or a multiple-case-study approach is an opportunity to explore a

particular issue in a bounded or multiple bounded system; that is, the system is connected, albeit lines are sometimes blurred.

- c. Yin (2014, p. 56) further argues that multiple-case studies are compelling and robust, as they (1) allow for the study of indepth, contemporary, and contextual real-world research and; (2) are useful when there is an unclear demarcation between the phenomenon being studied and the context.

Selection of Organisations

The two organisations selected for this study qualified because they were identified as having gone through change at least two years prior to the study. Initially, the aim was to identify two private sector organisations from which participants would be drawn. However, owing to the difficulties presented with access, the researchers found access instead in one financial organisation from the private sector (Case One) and another from the faculty of an educational institution (Case Two).

Selection of Participants

Participants for this study were selected from a list of employees obtained from the human resources departments of each organisation. Twenty-two employees in each organisation were selected by the researchers based on three specific criteria: (a) participants could be characterised as lower-level employees because they were not involved in the decision-making process; (b) they were 24–65 years old; and (c) they were employed with the organisation for at least two years prior to the change initiative.

Data Collection, Analysis and Interpretation

Data was collected over a 6-month period by way of documentary evidence, observations, individual indepth face-to-face interviews, and focus groups. The cases were comparatively analysed using a mix of qualitative data analysis and correspondence analysis or mixed methods analysis.

Respondents were interviewed by way of a face-to-face, indepth, and unstructured interview protocol. Interviews were recorded with the permission of each respondent. Questionnaires were assigned a special numerical identifier obtained from each participant which facilitated member checking, further anonymity, and confidentiality of participants. Individual interviews, focus group interviews, and field notes were transcribed and uploaded to the Qualitative Data Analysis software (QDA Miner) as text files. Each file was identified as one unit and each organisation was identified as one case. Familiarization with each unit and each case was done in QDA Miner.

By way of analysis, the data was coded, which helped to better understand respondents' feedback. Codes were identified based on themes frequently referred to by individuals. The rules of analysis involved organizing relevant themes into colour-coded categories. Initially, seven categories were identified: change, emotions, behaviours, perceptions, organisational contextual factors, leadership, cultural and societal factors. Leadership (which respondents repeatedly referred to as part of the context) was later merged with organisational contextual factors; thereby resulting in six major categories (change, emotions, perceptions, behaviours, organisational contextual factors, and cultural/societal factors), each with a number of dimensions/variables. The analysis captured individuals' articulation about their organisational context, the change, the way they understood the change, the emotions experienced, their perceptions, and possible behaviours. Using the data already uploaded to QDA Miner, the categories were subjected to a mixed-methods analysis consisting of qualitative data analysis and quantitative correspondence analysis. Correspondence analysis is a multivariate exploratory technique used to analyse large quantities of categorical data. It allowed for a closer examination of the themes within their respective categories. The result was a correlation of the categorical data, which was represented by the creation of multidimensional graphical or perceptual maps.

Ethical Issues

Based on the nature of the study, minimal risks to participants were anticipated. Participants were advised that they might experience some emotional discomfort when asked to recall specific emotional experiences and behaviours during the change event. Where this occurred, the researcher allowed the participant time to recover, while providing a supporting presence. Participants were asked whether they wanted to continue or withdraw, and advised of the availability of experienced counsellors. No participant expressed a desire for the interview to be terminated or requested access to counselling. At the end of each interview, participants were asked if they would grant a second interview should the need arise.

Limitations

It was understood that the study may have been impeded based on its subjective nature. Potential subjectivity arose from the study's strong reliance on participants' ability to recall some of the nuances of the change that took place in their organisation and how they experienced it. However, due to the significance of the change that participants experienced, they did not appear to have had a problem with recall in relation to either the change or the emotions that many appeared to still be experiencing.

Because of the interrogative nature and length of most interviews, it was anticipated that participants would experience fatigue; however, this was not the case when asked by the researchers. A few respondents expressed gratitude for the opportunity to speak about their experience, which, as they reported, proved cathartic.

Researcher bias posed a threat to the credibility of this study; however, these researchers were aware that connecting with respondents was important in order to avoid preconceptions and personal biases (Miles & Huberman, 1994). While it was difficult to leave all such considerations behind, awareness of personal biases was a strong point of focus before and during each interview. It was important to mitigate any influence this could have had on the overall study.

Findings

Both organisations demonstrated challenges with the change they experienced. Although respondents in both cases were psychologically prepared for the change and there was significant management of the change in Case One; unknown outcomes, perceived expectations, and the inability of staff to make sense of their experiences resulted in emotions and behaviours that were counter-productive.

In Case One, having not realised their expectations during the change, the excitement, optimism, and pride that many employees experienced were exchanged for resentment, ambivalence, and discouragement. One employee indicated that in the early stages of the change she was very happy and proud that they were changing and that they were going to be in the same league as their main competitors. Another employee stated, "I am also very excited for what it might mean for me; I foresee growth and opportunity." However, two years after the change, negative emotions were high for many, as the level of stress due to the heavy workloads continued unabated.

"I need this job, but in the back of my mind, I'm thinking that I'm just gonna do what I need to do and get out of here because I am just a means to an end".

Another stated, "I feel stressed and sometimes I feel like they don't recognize our efforts...."

Case One was known for its excellent customer service, and while many respondents continued to experience stressful days, they were also mindful that they must continue to provide customers with the service for which the organisation prides itself. Emotional labour, referred to as the forced expression of emotions for the economic benefit of an organisation (Pinder, 2008, pp. 136–139), and specifically surface acting, was prevalent among many respondents. Surface acting refers to when the employee pretends to be the character as specified by the employer for the benefit of the customers. For example, they are expected to smile with the customer when they do not feel that emotion (Hochschild, 1983). The expectation that they must display emotions they did not feel added

to their stress levels, thus resulting in increased absenteeism and psychological withdrawal as many respondents were of the opinion that their well-being was threatened. Paul said, "It's all about the image—whatever image they want you to portray; you have to smile even if you're not feeling well ... they say it's all about the customer, so we have to be upbeat all the time."

Employees also believed that their relationship with the leadership had changed, signalling that they were no longer valued by the organisation. The takeaway for many was that leadership no longer valued them and that the culture of the organisation had changed to focus more on sales and less on their well-being.

"I don't think my organisation has my best interest at heart ... no, no, no, emphatically no!"

Case Two highlighted the socio-structural features of the organisation as fundamental to the cognition and behaviours of respondents prior to their relocation to the new building, and after occupation.

"We started packing up and I was so very excited to come up here because of this nice pretty building", one respondent indicated. Several elements of the context, however, stood out as having greater significance in the new building—the importance of the physical environment, the role of power, the role of leadership and communication, and inclusion and group integration. Janice said, "The moment we got here, we realised we were not being accommodated ... all the spaces that were assigned to us were given to [the other groups]".

Many respondents reported that the events in the building left them feeling helpless, as they realised they had lost control of what they previously thought was their building. "No one told us that other departments other than us would be occupying the building, they just turned up; and they were now in charge."

The distress many felt resulted in them being highly vocal with their leaders/managers in the hope that they would lobby on their behalf in order to get the justice they believed they deserved. Although some respondents reported that their managers made attempts to seek redress, their concerns were overridden by the senior

leadership. Others felt they could not trust the actions of their leaders and managers, either because they did not believe they cared enough to act or because they thought the decisions were already made and nothing would change the course of events. This led one respondent to say,

"... our heads go to a meeting and the issues in the building are discussed but once they leave the meeting, they do nothing with it, they end up doing whatever they want to do". Feelings of injustice prevailed, which resulted in aggressive and passive-aggressive behaviours directed toward those considered as intruders, and vice versa. "You hear a lot of quarrelling among members of staff sometimes ... the fight/resistance is essentially about territory, because the building was designed for us."

Reprisals also led to conflicts and hostility which were not seriously addressed by leaders and managers, so any hope of integrating the groups was lost. This led to one respondent noting,

"... every section has a head and nobody wants to feel as if they are not in control of their area, so everybody is protective of their area. We can't just go into an area."

The way that matters were handled by the senior leadership left employees feeling angry, frustrated, and defeated—further diminishing any vestiges of trust and support that might have been present in the environment. With a big sigh, Jon said, "... I have passed that point of waiting for something to change that would make me feel better about coming to work."

Discussion

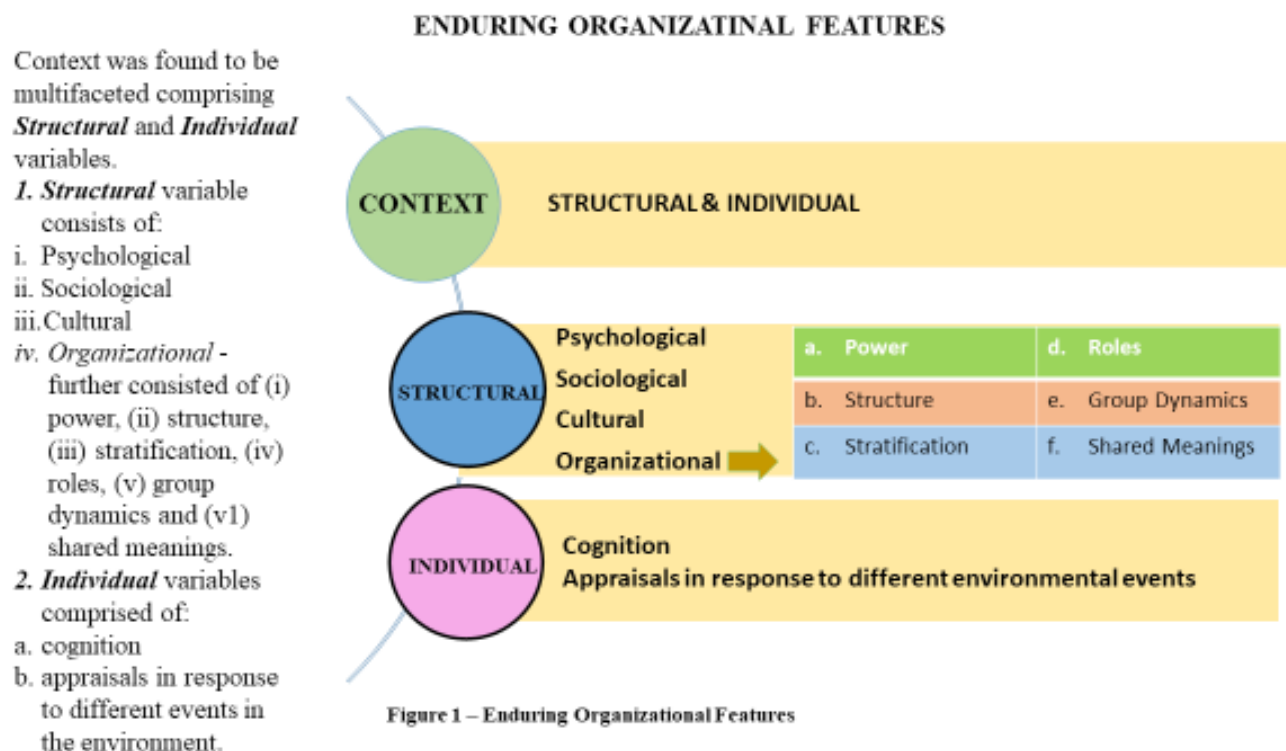
Change is inevitable, and evidence in the Jamaican post-colonial society suggests the arrival at a strategic pivot point; where pressure is being applied by civil society, religious, and human rights groups on public and private sector organisations and the society to change and transform. Based primarily on the post-colonial context, organisational change might not produce the effects intended by the change process. The effectiveness of the change that is necessary

requires the creation of a new way of thinking to achieve transformation. For the change to be effective, it requires a complete overhaul of processes, structure, human cognition, and a strong focus on removing profound and enduring colonial legacies, primarily, exclusionary tendencies.

In addition to the nature of the organisational contexts, both organisations confirmed a myriad of factors that are encapsulated in change. Many of these factors point to enduring organisational characteristics that predispose the organisations to behaviours which inevitably make them averse to change (see Figure 1). The added problem is that when paired with the complexities of human actions, the likelihood of successful change outcomes proves challenging. This study revealed a uniquely blended psycho-socio-cultural framework that is embedded in the Caribbean context, which further contributes to the change-averse nature of these post-colonial organisations (McDonald, 2020).

The following highlights some of the findings and interpretations of the contextual and change-related environments that could act as a guide for other organisations attempting change, namely,

- a. The process of change has many dimensions. Change is more open-ended than it is closed. Therefore, many emerging conditions are produced that impact the way employees cognitively appraise events.
- b. Time is a critical factor during the change process, as it also allows for the reconsolidation of embedded organisational practices, wherein any achievements and expectations in relation to change are often reversed.



- c. There are weaknesses of systems of continuous monitoring that are employed to sustain the change momentum and to meaningfully respond to the emerging challenges that previously existed — for example, monitoring without an understanding of what is being monitored, results in inconsequential findings. Long and unmanaged change processes further exacerbate the process.
- d. Sustaining change requires structural and participatory adjustments that, in these contexts, are difficult to concede and not usually intended to be up for debate in the top-down initiated change process.
- e. Finally, the change process generally yields minimalist change, with continued alienation and disillusionment added to the defensive cognitive-emotional maintenance of appraisal systems.

In light of these revelations, the following recommendations are proposed:

- a. Leadership and communication should be built into all change-related plans and specifically at all stages of the change process. Those in leadership should demonstrate their commitment to the change and ensure that communication across the organisation is ongoing.
- b. For transformation to occur, leadership must also understand the role of cognition and its benefits to the overall success of the organisation. This also requires that leadership challenges prevailing assumptions, including what it means to be a leader.
- c. In addition to strong and convincing leadership and communication, change and transformation require a strong and convincing employee-centered approach in order to meet the impending challenges. Employees are the backbone of any change initiative, it is important that they: (1) understand the nature of the change—what the change is about and how it is likely to affect them; (2) fully

understand the various change-related messages, and (3) are aware of historical influences on self and organisation, for e.g., the role of power, trust and respect.

- d. Organisations must embrace the full participation and empowerment of employees in order to avoid marginalization and defensiveness. Enduring exclusionary practices, for example, excluding levels of employees from relevant areas of decision making are counterintuitive to this strategy.
- e. Even before change is considered, time should be spent in understanding existing organisational issues and a decision taken to mitigate their potential effects.
- f. Deliberate and consistent actions, that is, actions that are seen to be thoughtful and stable must be maintained across all phases of the change, to ensure that it becomes part of the organisational culture.

Conclusion

Change produces a number of unwanted conditions, particularly when due consideration is not given to factors such as those found (demonstrable disrespect, and failure to communicate important information) in these case studies. It is imperative that organisations become mindful of such occurrences so that they can continue to respond to the variables as they emerge. Building a culture of leadership, communication, participation, feedback, regular evaluation, and revision, allows for greater learning and respect, and drives creativity. In addition, inviting input from various levels within the organisation (individuals and groups) further engenders growth and encourages systemic change and transformation.

Complex systems with multiple embedded parts (such as a university) invariably struggle to change and transform — as one element changes, other parts of the system are highlighted for change. Change largely appears to occur without the experience of change and as such, the system

quickly reverts to the status quo. Difficult issues such as psycho-socio-cultural challenges with which most Caribbean cultures struggle, namely; trust, leadership, communication, respect, power, and stratification can prove to be insurmountable or are ignored when addressing change in these organisations.

Failure to address such issues continues to perpetuate the psychology of the Caribbean people who are still struggling to overcome the colonial mindset, thus resulting in major hindrances to change and transformation (McDonald, 2020). Ironically, organisations, and specifically, institutions of learning that are expected to be proponents of change and transformation and from which the rest of society learns and transforms, appear to make themselves redundant in this regard due to their inability to achieve transcendence.

These two case studies raise questions regarding (a) the possibilities for development and the future of universities and businesses in the Caribbean (specifically Jamaica), and (b) the features of the change dynamics and the interactions between the organisation and society. Each of these entities, however, has a different function. Universities are communities of learning and personal development. They are perceived as experts in their fields as they create opportunities for new knowledge through research and as such contribute to the development of the society. Organisations are diverse in their activities and in relation to their internal and external interactions. However, they are primarily social systems, with the aim of satisfying varying personal and societal needs. Are these entities actually using the opportunities afforded them in an efficient way to show internally and externally how change could be managed?

Despite the challenges, both case studies are somewhat promising, at the conceptual and at the implementation level. Both, however, have limitations. If these limitations are addressed, beginning with the acceptance that: (1) colonial influences continue to thwart our development, (2) long and enduring assumptions that preserve

the colonial legacies (including exclusionary tendencies) do not serve the greater good, (3) relevant and strong leadership both at the organisational and national levels are needed for strategic direction, and (4) a healthy appreciation of the importance of leadership and communication at all levels of the organisation and society should be a matter of course.

While, on their own, these factors do not guarantee transformation, they will, however, position organisations and society on the path toward cognitive re-orientation and transformation/transcendence.

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