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Discursive positioning and planned change in organizations

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Abstract

This study uses discursive positioning theory to explore how planned change messages influence organizational members' identity and the way they experienced organizational change. Based on an in-depth case study of a home healthcare and hospice organization that engaged in a multiyear planned change process, our analysis suggests that workers experienced salient change messages as constituting unfavorable identities, which were associated with the experiences of violation, recitation, habituation, or reservation. Our study also explores the way discursive and material contexts enabled and constrained the governing board's change messages as they responded to external and internal audiences. We highlight the importance of viewing messaging as a process of information transfer as well as discursive construction, which has important implications for the way change agents approach issues of sense making, emotionality, resistance, and materiality during planned change processes.

Keywords

emotion, materiality, organizational communication, organizational discourse, planned change comunication, positioning theory

Planned change research has given little attention to the way that employees make sense of messages about change and how their sense making subsequently positions them to act in the future (Bartunek et al., 2006). The dominant focus of planned change research has emphasized the importance of creating messages that enable a shared understanding

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among organizational members of what change means and how resistance to change initiatives can be overcome (Jabri et al., 2008; Kotter, 1996). The production of change messages tends to be cast within an information transmission model of communication where change agents are portrayed as needing to make decisions about how the style and content of messages can be crafted so they are clear, motivational, and persuasive, as well as what channels and networks can be used to disseminate change messages within organizations (Lewis et al., 2006). The implication in planned change studies is that the primary purposes of messages about change are informational — what change is being made, when, how, and by whom — and persuasive — why people need to comply with the directive to change.

The idea that the primary function of messages is informational is unwarranted as it has long been recognized that messages work at multiple levels with various purposes. Bateson (1972) was one of the first communication theorists to suggest that messages simultaneously convey information about content, but also work at a contextual level, marking what the context is and how messages should be interpreted. Messages are not simply interpreted within a pre-existing context; they have constitutive power as they frame the context within which they are interpreted (Fairhurst, 2007; Fairhurst and Sarr, 1996). Moreover, the flow of messages within dynamic human relationships socially constructs situations and relationships, calling forth particular identities and subjectivities (Pearce, 2008). Messages do more than simply convey information; when we communicate we position ourselves and others and call various identities and relationships into being, and since communication is a dynamic process, these newly created identities and relationships are (re) negotiated with each new turn in the conversation (Barge and Fairhurst, 2008).

The purpose of this study is to investigate how change messages position organizational members to make sense in particular ways and to take up specific identities and relationships that influence the way they experience change. Rather than view messages as an attempt by change agents to foster compliance among organizational members through information management and persuasive techniques, we view messages as an invitation by change agents for others to take up different positions; furthermore, these positions, in the forms of identities and relationships, influence the ways organizational members experience change initiatives. Change scholars have focused on the way that change messages can be used to persuade and make the case for organizational members to adopt a new set of practices (Fiol, 2004; Whittle et al., 2008). However, such research tends to ignore the implicit identity and relational implications of change messages, and instead, focuses on the informational and persuasive functions that are performed. We suggest that there are multiple messages within a single change message, meaning that all change messages simultaneously contain identity and relational messages, and these messages have implications for how people experience a change initiative. We begin by situating our study in a discursive approach to change and then offer Harré and van Langehove's (1999) positioning theory as a resource for exploring the connection between positioning and change messages.

Organizational change and discursive positioning

Change scholars have increasingly turned toward the field of organizational discourse as a resource for investigating organizational change (Heracleous and Barrett, 2001; Marshak

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and Grant, 2008a; Oswick et al., 2005; Tsoukas, 2005). While the term 'discourse' has been used by scholars in different ways, Alvesson and Kärreman (2000) provide a useful distinction between 'little-d' discourse and 'big-D' Discourse. 'Little-d' discourse refers to the way people use language in communication, whether in speech or written communication, in a variety of informal contexts such as spontaneous hallway conversations with a colleague, as well as more formal contexts such as strategic planning meetings, and to construct social arrangements. Inspired by Foucault, 'big-D' Discourses, or what might be called macro-level narratives, are worldviews, ideologies, and perspectives that circulate within human systems such as organizations and societies that determine what counts as knowledge, how knowledge is generated, as well as what forms of argument, evidence, and forms of reasoning are viewed as appropriate and legitimate by social actors.

Though the field of organizational discourse is quite diverse, Marshak and Grant (2008b) suggest that most discursive approaches to change embrace the following set of assumptions. First, d/Discourse shapes our social worlds. The language or 'little-d' discourse we use constructs our understanding of what change is, how it might be accomplished, and what the likely consequences might be of pursuing a particular change initiative. It acts as an animating force for the way that organizational actors make sense of their experience, create social arrangements such as identities, relationships, and cultures, and construct forms of organizing that facilitate the accomplishment of tasks and goals. Moreover, Marshak and Grant (2008b) observe that 'big-D' Discourses or what they refer to as 'established discourses' '"rule in" certain ways of thinking and talking about organizational change while "ruling out" other ways' (p. 37). Second, Discourses provide a context for change. 'Big-D' Discourses such as free market capitalism, the green economy, and corporate social responsibility exist and circulate within workplace and cultural settings. Multiple Discourses comprise the discursive context for organizations and the success or failure of change initiatives will fall partially on the ability of change agents to address the opportunities and constraints created by their discursive context. Third, power dynamics, discourse, and change are intertwined. Quoting Hardy and Phillips (2004: 299), Marshak and Grant observe:

> [P]ower and discourse are mutually constitutive: . . . the power dynamics that characterize a particular context determine, at least partially, how and why certain actors are able to influence the processes of textual production and consumption that result in new texts that transform, modify or reinforce discourses. In other words, discourse shapes relations of power while relations of power shape who influences discourse over time and in what way.

Fourth, changes in discourse generate new interpretive frameworks and ways of acting that create change in organizations. For example, Barge et al. (2008) demonstrated how new shared meanings and possibilities for action emerged during a strategic planning process – a process aimed at developing the economic prosperity of Indian people through improvements in the information technology infrastructure and training at United States tribal colleges and universities. Such a process was the result of shifting from problem-centered to dialogical and appreciative forms of discourse.

A discursive approach draws our attention to the way that change messages are connected to 'storylines' within organizational life. We take storylines to mean the way

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actions, characters, setting, content, and the unfolding chain of action cohere (Barge, 2004; Boje, 2001). Storylines provide people with a sense of orientation to emerging situations and help them make sense of unfolding action. As Boje (2001) observes in his discussion of antenarrative, however, storylines are multiple, dynamic, evolving, and unfinished. Multiple storylines may exist to characterize a change initiative. Moreover, the storylines associated with a change initiative may shift over time depending on the introduction of new characters, action, and content. For example, the planned organizational change literature suggests that organizations need to create a story of urgency to facilitate change. Kotter (2008) contends that organizational members will be more likely to undertake change if they believe that it is urgent and the organization may fail if it does not make the change. However, if organizational members are encouraged to use that storyline to make sense of an organizational change, and subsequently discover that lower-level employees were disproportionately hurt by the change and top-level management benefited, the introduction of this new information will most likely lead to a new storyline and move employees to experience change differently.

The shift from an information transmission perspective toward a discursive one focuses our attention on the ways in which identities and relationships are constructed and the way this influences how organizational members experience change. Consider the case of middle managers in top-down planned change processes. Middle managers are typically described as 'buffers' within organizations as they often have to manage conversations among disconnected internal stakeholders, such as top-level management, who tend to view change in terms of abstract strategic change, and lower-level employees, who tend to view change in terms of concrete cultural practices (Corley, 2004). Wooldridge et al. (2008) suggest that middle-level managers, who are involved in two-way conversations with top-level management, are more likely to be supportive of strategic change and are better able to help lower-level employees make sense of change when compared with middle-level managers who receive one-way, informational exchanges from top-level management. Why is this? From an information transmission perspective, we might explain this effect as the result of creating shared meaning and buy-in from middle-managers. From a discursive perspective, we would say that that the middle-level managers' sense of identity and relationships with top-level management has shifted because they have been positioned differently as a result of the two-way conversation. They have been positioned as important players within the change process whose knowledge and expertise is valued, and that they are in a unique position to assist the organization. The emerging storyline that is constructed by the change messages positions them as significant players and collaborators who are working with top-level management as opposed to lowly minions and enforcers of new changes, who work at the beck and call of top management. And it is this positioning that moves them to experience the change differently.

Harré and van Langenhove's (1999) positioning theory offers some insight into the way that change messages can position people in terms of their identity and relationships. They suggest that 'positioning can be understood as the discursive construction of personal stories that make a person's actions intelligible and relatively determinate as social acts and within which the members of conversations have specific locations' (p. 16). A position is similar to a role in that it is associated with permissions, obligations,

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and prohibitions for how to make sense of situations and how to act, but it is much more fluid and dynamic as social acts continually (re)position individuals during conversations. A position-driven analysis explores the connection among positions, storylines, and speech acts. For example, top-level management could attempt to invite a storyline about the need for change being driven by globalization by creating change messages that focus on the rise of foreign competition. By creating messages reflecting a globalization storyline, top-level management begin to position employees as competing against workforces that are paid less. The idea of cheaper labor costs is easily connected to a theme of why investing in technology is important to stay competitive, which will likely lead to downsizing and less job security. This pattern of messages positions employees as commodities and invites an organization-employee relationship that is grounded in economic value and the company's bottom-line. Positioning theory explains that identity and relationships emerge within conversation, where notions of selfhood are continuously confirmed and challenged. When 'individuals claim identities by taking up positions in discourses' they experience 'the world from and speak from the vantage point of that position' (Jorgenson, 2002: 358).

Harré and von Langenhove (1999) explain that positions created in messages can be separated into first-, second-, and third-order analytic categories. First-order positions are performative in that they enact identities and relationships, which may or may not be taken up by other organizational members. In the preceding example, top-level management produced a first-order positioning where they invited employees to enact the identity of commodity and economic relationship. Employees might respond with another first-order positioning by agreeing, thereby accepting top-management's invitation. However, employees may also seek to challenge that social arrangement by producing a second-order positioning. Second-order positioning occurs when first-order positions are not taken for granted or challenged by one of the participants, which leads to a negotiation about the first-order positioning. Second-order positioning becomes accountative when the positioning results in talk about talk. Returning to the preceding example, employees could respond to the global competition storyline by saying: 'This is not the way to have this conversation'. In this utterance, employees challenge top-level management's first-order position using an accountative second-order positioning by talking about the talk (this conversation) and questioning the subject position offered by top management. Finally, third-order positioning refers to accountative positioning that happens outside of the initial discussion and may even involve other conversational partners than the ones originally engaged in conversation. Taken together, these analytic categories begin to illuminate how 'positioning . . . is the discursive process whereby selves are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines' (Davies and Harré, 1990: 48).

Our interest is in how change messages between change agents and employees create storylines and positions that influence how employees experience change. To be sure, change research from an information transmission perspective has been instrumental in determining the effectiveness of communication strategies to facilitate change (Lewis, 1999, 2000), which audiences senders of planned change messages engage with the most (Lewis et al., 2003), when change messages should be disseminated (Smeltzer, 1991), how workers perceive ambiguous messages (Brummans and Miller, 2004), how planned

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change messages relate to worker uncertainty (Bordia et al., 2004), how workers react to or resist planned change messages (Grunberg et al., 2008; Napier et al., 1989; Piderit, 2000; Sahdev, 2003; Susskind, 2007), how planned change messages can undermine effectiveness (Molinsky, 1999), and which types of workers will be amenable to planned change messages (Miller et al., 1994). However, such research has not explored the way identity and relational messages are embedded in planned change messages and how they influence the way employees experience change initiative. Therefore, the research question guiding this study was: 'How do planned change messages position organizational members?'

Research context

We researched how planned change messages position organizational members in the context of a small home healthcare and hospice organization (HHO; a pseudonym), which underwent planned changes. The organization's main purpose is to provide in-home healthcare to the dying and indigent as well as to their families. HHO provides this care through the expertise of registered nurses (RNs), nurses' aides, physical and occupational therapists, clergy, and social workers. In 2004, the organization's major budget deficit was reported publicly. After learning about the organization's financial troubles and planned restructuring from a local newspaper, the first author requested and received access to study the organization from top-level management. During a first round of interviews with employees, participants repeatedly and intensely described an occasion in which the chair of directors held an organization-wide meeting and mandated employees' silence regarding the immediate replacement of the executive director. Given that this mandate was an important message for organizational members, we chose to investigate how the chair was positioned prior to issuing the mandate, and what positions the chair's mandate invited from the workers' perspectives.

We chose the moment of the chair issuing the silence mandate, as the event represented an important turning point in HHO's planned change storyline. Similar to Bullis and Bach's (1989a, b) turning point analyses, we collected retrospective accounts of a crucial event (or turning point) that marked changes in how individuals related to their organization. From a discursive point of view, we take turning points to be significant plot developments within unfolding change stories, which have consequences for the direction a particular storyline takes and how individuals make sense of it. Despite the fact that we did not ask participants explicitly about the silence mandate during first-round interviews, most participants told us about this event and oriented their remarks toward this message. We interpret these data as indicators that the participants constructed the silence mandate as a significant turning point that had important consequences for the way the change was construed. As a result, it became the focal point for our analysis.

Method

We answer Pettigrew (1990) and Kuhn and Corman's (2003) call to study organizational change as a contextual and historical process. Additionally, and in order to temper a

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purely social constructionist reading of HHO's planned change messages, we take seriously the critical realist charge that 'discourse is necessarily dependent on a pre-constituted set of separable, yet interdependent, material conditions and social structures' (Reed, 2004: 415); and therefore 'organizational discourse analysis [is] an exercise in historical reconstruction' (p. 418) to determine how social actors are 'faced with a set of institutionalized economic, political, and cultural constraints that will limit the range of strategic and tactical discursive options available to them' (p. 416; see also, Reed, 2000, 2001). In other words, we weave an historical analysis that includes — so far as we can know — the financial and political landscape into our discourse analysis of management's planned change messaging. We believe this method allows us to describe organizational change communication as a structurational process in which institutional forces constrain communicative options, while at the same time, communication calls new institutional forces into being, thereby producing new constraints on future communicative options (Giddens, 1979).

Field observation and interview data collection and analysis

This field research was conducted between the fourth quarter of 2005 and third quarter of 2007. Table 1 summarizes all data collection stages. The qualitative data collection and analyses are described followed by the survey data collection and analyses.

Field observation and interview data collection proceeded in three stages. First, the first author attended four management team meetings and recorded field notes (Silverman, 2005). A portion of discussion at each meeting dealt with the implementation of the board's directives. Additionally, newspaper articles written about the organization were collected.

Second, 25 of HHO's 80 employees were selected using a random number generator to be solicited for face-to-face interviews (Social Psychology Network, 1996–2005); 17 agreed. Participants held a variety of positions (e.g. part-time nurse's aide, occupational therapist, and bookkeeper) and tenures (i.e. less than four months to 15+ years). Two key informants were also interviewed. Both informants worked for the HHO for more than 15 years. Informants served as member checks of the researchers' interpretations of findings (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002). Participants signed consent forms. First-round interviews followed an eight-question schedule and lasted approximately 30 minutes

Table 1 Stages of data collection

Quarter and year	Description of data collected
4th quarter 2005	Field observation Newspaper articles
1st quarter 2006	Interviews, random sampling Key informant interviews
3rd quarter 2006	Information adequacy and job satisfaction survey
2nd quarter 2007	Repeat interviews, purposive sampling Key informant interviews
3rd quarter 2007	Information adequacy and job satisfaction survey

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(Appendix A; Dillon, 1990). Digital recordings of interviews were professionally transcribed and verified for accuracy (Ochs, 1999). First-round interview data totaled 104 single spaced pages of text.

Third, the first author interviewed five of the 17 employees a second time. These five employees were interviewed again because of their ability to articulate their own experiences reflexively. Thus, for second-round interviews, the initial random sampling of 80 employees was followed by a purposive sampling of the 17 who ultimately agreed.

A strategy of conducting random sampling for first-round interviews and purposive sampling for second-round interviews was adopted in order to reduce the economic strain on the HHO, which allowed employees to participate in interviews during work hours. Additionally, interview data collected in the first round were retrospective in nature and answered the research question adequately. In other words, the purposive sampling conducted for second-round interviews was operationally useful in the field and reasonable given the moderate degree of conceptual saturation achieved before these interviews were even conducted (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002; Silverman, 2005). Participants signed consent forms. Second-round interviews followed a five-question schedule and lasted approximately 60 minutes (Appendix B; Dillon, 1990). Digital recordings of interviews were professionally transcribed and verified for accuracy (Ochs, 1999). Second-round interview data totaled 41 single spaced pages of text.

Qualitative analysis procedures

A constant comparative analysis (Dey, 1999; Glaser, 1992; Glaser and Strauss, 1967) was conducted on transcripts with the aid of NVivo 7 software. Transcripts were read and re-read in an iterative fashion. During readings, portions of transcripts were categorized into workers' experience(s) with planned change messages. Categories and their combinations remained changeable until late in the analysis process; tentative categories were identified, all data were checked for negative, opposite, or better categories to describe data (Charmaz, 2000). By the conclusion of the analysis, all data were accounted for comprehensively by at least one of the categories. Additionally, alternative storylines — or rare experiences that did not seem to fit within one of the categories — were accounted for through a process of creating a list of alternative experiences. This so-called *deviant case analysis* enhances the credibility of analysis by using anomalous data to improve and nuance theory development (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002; Silverman, 1989, 2005).

Survey data collection and analysis

Survey data collection proceeded in two stages. We collected information regarding HHO workers' job satisfaction and information adequacy as a means to better understand the evolving organization-member relations that contextualized participants' interview responses. During first-stage survey collection, 33 employees (N = 41%) responded voluntarily to a questionnaire regarding job satisfaction and information adequacy. Fourteen respondents identified themselves as office staff; 19 were field staff. The average respondent worked at the HHO for eight to 10 years. Participants signed consent forms.

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Measures and internal reliability

The Job Descriptive Index (JDI) is a 72-item measure, which identifies respondents' job satisfaction regarding work, co-workers, supervisors, pay, and promotions (Smith et al., 1969). The JDI asks respondents to answer 'yes', 'no', or '?' [don't know?] to a series of adjectives describing one of the five factors of job satisfaction. Responses are then transformed to a 0-3 scale. Scores of 1 or lower represent the lowest third of satisfaction, while 2 or higher represent the highest third. Internal reliability estimates of the JDI range from .75 to .92 (Fields, 2002). For the first use of the measure, Cronbach's alpha = .83.

Also, respondents completed the Receiving Information Scale (RIS; Goldhaber and Rogers, 1979). The RIS is a 13-item measure that identifies the quality and amount of information respondents receive regarding their job and organization, and compares this score with the amount of information respondents believe they need to receive. Computing the difference between *information needed* and *information received now* results in a measure of information adequacy. The RIS asks respondents to answer on a 5-point Likert-type scale, which ranges from *very little* to *very great*. Internal reliability estimates of the RIS range from .86 to .93 (DeWine, 1991). For the first use of the measure, Cronbach's alpha = .91.

In a second-round of survey collection, 37 employees (N = 46%) responded voluntarily to a questionnaire. Eighteen of these employees identified themselves as office staff; 17 were field staff and two did not identify themselves. The average respondent worked at the HHO for six to eight years. Participants signed consent forms.

Measures and internal reliability

Similar to the first stage of survey data collection, respondents completed JDI and RIS measures. For the second use of the JDI, Cronbach's alpha = .93. For the second use of the RIS, Cronbach's alpha = .91.

Statistical analysis procedures

An independent samples *t*-test was computed to determine whether employees' overall job satisfaction changed from the first to the second measurement. Also, a one-sample *t*-test was computed for each of the two rounds of survey collection to determine whether employees reported needing to receive significantly more information than they reported receiving now (i.e. information adequacy). A score of 0 represents information adequacy (i.e. neither overload nor underload; see Scott et al., 1999). Afterwards, an independent samples *t*-test was computed to determine whether employees reported information adequacy changed from the first to the second round of survey collection (Cohen, 2001; Green and Salkind, 2005). Distributions of responses did not violate assumptions of normality.

Results and interpretation

We provide a timeline of HHO's multifaceted, multiyear organizational change to aid the reader in our description of the social and material influences on the organizational

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change messaging process (Figure 1). We use this historical recreation of events in order to portray change messaging as a process in which organizational members act *from* context *into* context. In other words, we argue that the unfolding discursive and material context creates opportunities and constraints for the possible utterances that organizational actors may perform as well as the positions they invite themselves and others to take up.

Positioning and the chair's change message

In late 2000, Medicare restructured its payment procedures. Healthcare payments for insured patients were no longer based on number of home visits but on a complex system of diagnosis and treatment. HHO relied heavily on Medicare payment; as much as 60 percent of the organization's annual revenue was received from the government insurance program (Ranney, 2005). Yet, HHO did not respond by changing their billing procedures immediately. HHO's executive director retired in late 2002 and was replaced by a past executive director who returned to her post (Paget, 2002). More than three years after the Medicare changes, HHO reported falling $580,000 dollars short of its budget (Fagan, 2004). During a first wave of changes in late 2003, initiated by the HHO's executive director and board of directors, HHO limited wage increases, overtime, and stopped admitting new patients into its uncompensated care program (Take a Stand, 2004). Six months later, HHO's board of directors hired a consulting firm, Consult (a pseudonym), to make recommendations to break the financial instability.

The organization received regular support from the city it serves. During the summer of 2004, HHO leaders requested an additional $79,957 from the city commission in order to help alleviate the budget deficit. The city commission denied the request, *reduced* its contribution from the previous year by a total of $50,000, and one city commissioner

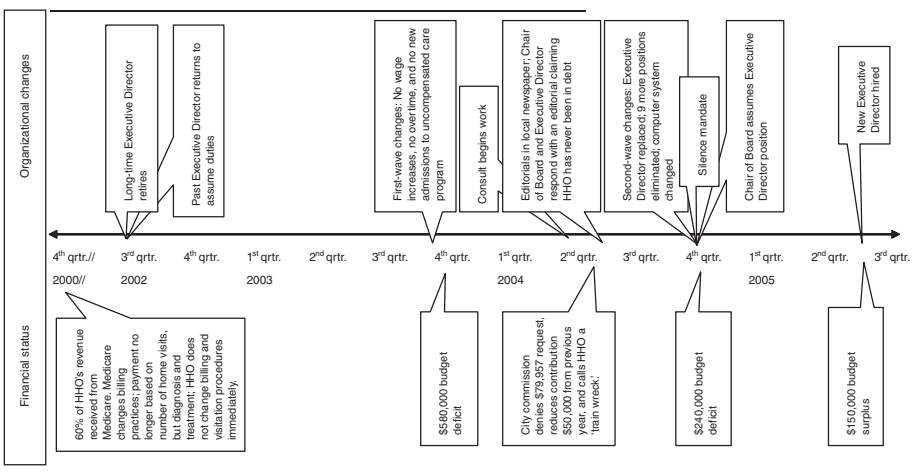


Figure 1 Timeline of events, 4th quarter of 2000 through 3rd quarter of 2005

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went on to describe the organization publicly as a 'train wreck' (Financial Wreck?, 2004). The chair of directors and the executive director of the HHO responded by publishing an editorial in the city's newspaper. They argued that the HHO was financially sound, had sufficient cash flow 'to meet payroll and ongoing expenses', maintained 'adequate reserves' to 'permit a reasonable period of operation', and 'is not [in]debt and never has been in debt in the 36-year history of the organization' (Take a Stand, 2004).

A second, more dramatic wave of planned change was initiated during the fall of 2004. Following recommendations made by Consult, the board of directors terminated nine positions and required immediate changes to the organization's computer system. Additionally, the executive director was replaced — either terminated or resigned. Immediately following a private discussion with the executive director that resulted in her leaving the facility, the chair called a mandatory organization-wide meeting of workers, which was not scheduled beforehand. In the meeting, the chair mandated that employees not speak with one another or the media about the replacement of the executive director (i.e. he mandated their silence). Beginning that day, the chair became the acting executive director for the next eight months. In addition to these planned changes, several employees quit voluntarily in the days and weeks following the organization-wide meeting. Eight months after this second wave of changes, the organization reported a budget surplus of $150,000 (Back on Track, 2005).

How was the chair positioned prior to his meeting with workers where he announced the replacement of the executive and imposed a gag order on workers? First, the financial context appears to have influenced the way that the chair was positioned. Changes in Medicare and failure by the HHO to respond to these changes created a $580,000 budget deficit. HHO responded subsequently by instituting cost saving measures to reduce the deficit; yet, first-wave actions such as limiting overtime and care admissions while maintaining current wages had meager effect on reducing the deficit. As a result, the chair and the board were positioned by the financial material reality to become aggressive cost-cutters and undertake a more drastic second-wave of actions that could be accomplished by reducing personnel costs, replacing the executive director, and eliminating a further nine jobs. Second, the discursive context also positioned the chair to become a defender and protector of the HHO, its mission, and its integrity. The city commission criticized HHO portraying it as a 'train wreck' (a first-order position), implicitly casting the chair and the leadership team as the engineers responsible for the accident. The editorial response from the chair was a second-order positioning in which the chair challenged the first-order position offered by the council through enacting the identity of defender and protector of the HHO, and attempting to (re)position HHO as financially solvent. The second-order positioning was an attempt to renegotiate the negative identity constituted by the city commissioner who ridiculed the organization publicly.

The intersection of the material and discursive contexts positioned the chair as the protector and defender of the HHO, which influenced the construction of the change message articulated in the meeting of HHO workers. First, the chair's message had to respond to the material reality of a mounting budget deficit or the HHO's identity would be viewed as lacking legitimacy by external stakeholders (e.g. referring doctors). Second, his message also had to address the discursive context created by the city council; if the city council heard further reports from HHO workers that the organization was still a

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'train wreck', they would be unlikely to reinstate their financial support. Therefore, the chair was positioned to create a change message that signaled to workers that important changes were being made to strengthen HHO's financial viability and that it was also important for workers to not perpetuate the negative images of HHO's identity swirling around the larger community. The identity of defender and protector moved the chair to be both a strong advocate for the HHO as well as a gatekeeper to limit damaging information leaking from the organization to the general public. Any gossip from members about the planned changes being implemented may have undermined the identity he attempted to create with external stakeholders. In fact, one participant made this connection explicitly. She speculated that the chair:

> was worried about stuff getting out to the paper, because . . . we hadn't hired an executive director yet . . . and it probably wouldn't be looked upon very well [with] all this money that we're receiving from the county. (10, number represents interview)

While speculative, one reading of the chair's first-order positioning in this meeting is that he is attempting to pick up and sustain the identity of defender and protector of the HHO, initiated in his editorial defending the HHO against the attack by the city council and invite a storyline where the chair, the board, and the workers must act together to defend HHO's public image and identity.

Positioning and HHO workers' experiences

Our analysis of interviews demonstrated that HHO workers challenged the chair's first-order positioning regarding the silence mandate and engaged in second- and third-order positioning. In the process of defending and protecting the HHO from outside forces, the chair's change message simultaneously communicated a lack of trust in HHO workers and recast their identity from being a member of a close-knit family or group of friends to being subordinates who could not be trusted, and created a more distant relationship between the chair, top management, and the HHO workers. A storyline of reservation about HHO was created by workers that evolved over time in four distinct experiences: (1) violation, (2) recitation, (3) habituation, and (4) reservation. For these participants, the organization-wide meeting and silence mandated by the chair was a powerful symbol that immediately led them to experience a deep sense of violation by the chair, which over time was transformed into a story of reservation — a story where employees knew the changes needed to be made but were now reserved in their feelings toward the organization and management given the way it was managed. Table 2 summarizes these experiences as they unfolded over time.

Violation The initial experience reported by nearly all participants was the feeling of a violation of their existing identity and relational expectations they held regarding their place in the organization. The silence mandate represented a departure from work-life expectations at the HHO, where employees described their workplace as 'a close-knit family-type deal' (7), 'a grassroots organization' (5), 'a group of friends' (1), 'a family' (18), 'a home environment' (8), 'a mom and pop organization' (18), 'a wonderful place

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Table 2 Workers' experiences with change message positionings

Experiences	Characteristics
Violation	An offensive first-order positioning occurs within the change messaging process. The message constitutes a rupture in workers' taken-for-granted expectation of the positions into which management can/will place them discursively.
Recitation	A frustrated third-order positioning ensues with others outside the initial discourse driven by a desire to remediate the offensive first-order positioning. Depending on the change message and its source, identities and subjectivities may not be renegotiated dialogically due to discursive closure(s).
Habituation	First-order positioning is constructed as historic; however, certain identity and subject positions that were once inconceivable are now thought of as possible in managerial discourse.
Reservation	Distrust of leadership arises out of the desire to maintain and protect acceptable identity and subject positions. Workers are cautious of unshared information and information sources, which functions to reduce the likelihood of another violation. Taken-for-granted expectations about the range of possible identity and subjectivity positions are fundamentally different than the taken-for-granted expectations prior to violation.

to work' (12), 'down-home' (22), 'family-oriented' (13), and 'having heart' (3). All but three participants reported feeling outraged by the silence mandate because of the social environment they came to expect of HHO — a social environment marked by openness and high degrees of self-disclosure. The silence mandate was a first-order positioning that enacted a new set of power relations. The mandate ruptured workers' taken-for-granted expectations of the identity and subject positions into which management would place them discursively. The mandate positioned HHO workers as subordinates — a particularly unusual positioning created by the chair's message given that HHO workers rarely, if ever, interacted with board members.

During this period, participants reported feeling 'anger' (18), 'frustration' (7), 'mad' (10), 'paranoia' (10), 'really emotional' (8), and 'sadness' (13). Additionally, respondents struggled to describe the meaning of the message they heard in the meeting. Respondents explained the meeting, was 'a shock' (12), 'came out of the blue' (1), 'caught me off guard' (17), 'cold' (17), was 'hard to explain' (2), 'pretty heavy-handed' (22), was 'tough' (7), was 'traumatic' (22), 'was devastating' (14), 'upsetting' (1), and 'war-like'. A participant remembered thinking: 'Whoa, this has never happened like this before' (13). Similarly, another respondent remembered wondering: '"Oh my God, is the ceiling going to fall in today?" And then the ceiling did fall in' (3).

Respondents found the change message so difficult to comprehend because of how the chair positioned them. A participant described the chair as 'acting like he was the one and only president or something' (23). Another said: 'Yeah it was kind of like, the surprise that we were told and *how* we were told. You know they were giving you an order, you know, "you are not to talk about this"' (13). In keeping with the workers' identity of the HHO being a close-knit family or group of friends, an open relationship between the

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chair and top management and the workers was expected. But this relational expectation was violated by the chair's change message. As one participant explained:

> We really thought they were going to come in and talk to probably each person here, you know, like all the office staff, plus bring in the clinical — the field staff — too, and talk to them. And that didn't happen. (13)

Another participant distinguished the importance of the *positioner* of the message as particularly salient, she explained: 'I think maybe part [of the outrage] was because *who* said that to us. What right did *he* have to stand up there?' (21). During the first hours and days of the firing of the executive director and subsequent silence mandate, participants regularly recounted the incomprehensibility of the first-order positioning offered by the chair — a shift to an employee identity and a more distant relationship between the chair and top management and workers. Surprise and anger permeated their descriptions.

Recitation Most participants subsequently reported discussing the silence mandate with co-workers, friends, and family — an experience we label recitation as a means of describing the repeating of an utterance or action to an audience. Discussions were characterized by conjecture and speculation about how change would affect the individual's identity as well as the *manner* in which they were told. Given the shift in identity from close-knit family member or group of friends to untrustworthy subordinates, HHO workers found it important to talk to other people inside and outside the organizations to make sense of the shift in identity and relationship embedded within the chair's change message. Discussions with coworkers, family, and friends were third-order positionings; positioning that occurred outside the initial meeting with the chair. These discussions functioned as a mechanism to overcome violation. In interpersonal relationships, we may expect for first-order violations to initiate second-order renegotiations of positions within the course of conversation; however, in the organizational context, the moral right to position others is unequally distributed. The chair's silence mandate produced discursive closure through a process of disqualification, or the 'denial of the right of expression . . . through rendering the other unable to speak adequately' (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000: 178).

Following the replacement of the executive director and subsequent silence mandate, respondents ironically reported discussing the event with others. Participants reported discussing the restructuring with: 'a friend' (5), 'co-workers' (7), 'my mom' (2), 'my next door neighbor' (16), 'my spouse' (3), 'my supervisor' (13), and 'our department' (10). Another explained: 'I was back there then and talked with, and talk about it (laughter) with the other [department] people' (13); still another explained: 'I'm sure that night me and my wife went on quite awhile about it' (22). Similarly, another participant explained:

> I mean you talk to a family, you know, each other [HHO coworkers]. And to me, for [the board of directors] to think that we weren't going to talk . . . we were together every day, we went through a lot of different things, why wouldn't we talk about this? Why wouldn't we get back together and think 'I wonder why they're doing this?' (21)

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Similarly, during a follow-up question within an interview another participant explained:

> Interviewer: Was it hard to make sense of why she [the executive director] would be put on administrative leave?
>
> Participant: I think there were some people that thought that should have happened a long time ago but [laughter] so yeah, but there was no explanation, official explanation. So you're only, can only, and we were told – actually, that was the thing that I think upset a lot of people. [The chair] said, "and if you talk about this . . . you can be fired for discussing this". . . . That upset people. It's like you're doing something to us and then we're not allowed to, you know, like process it. (17)

Interestingly, the participant conceded that the move to fire the executive director may have had merit, at least from some workers' perspectives. She then associated her anger with the way in which the chair's message positioned her and others (i.e. you're *doing* something to us). She described the mandate as an act in which she is rendered a passive object of another's action, rendered that way because she is not allowed to engage in dialogue. Yet another participant described the event:

> That was a time where, because he said, "Don't talk about it," it made us want to talk about it more. It's almost like, "You can't tell us what to do; this isn't Communist China." . . . Nobody did talk about that, but we talked about how he approached us. (8)

Here, the participant explained that the offensiveness of the first-order positioning invites a kind of frustrated third-order positioning, in which workers discuss how they were positioned, perhaps as a means to remedy the unfavorable identity and subject positions created by the silence mandate. In an ironic turn, the silence mandate imposed by the chair highlights workers' need to process collectively. Discussions among workers often included a frustrated attempt to reposition themselves in ways that would remedy the first-order violation.

Habituation Many participants also reported experiencing habituation. Participants recalled that months after the organization-wide meeting, they attempted to see the violation as historic and past. Emotional exhaustion created by violation and recitation experiences may have motivated workers to achieve a sense of normalcy and regularity. When asked how he feels about the planned change currently, a participant said: 'I feel like we're at a new status quo' (22). Another reasoned that she 'should no longer be as emotional' as she once was about the planned change because '[That is] the way it's going to be' (21). One respondent explained: 'For me it's not as stressful as it was. I think my baseline of stress is at a higher level than it had been prior [to the meeting] so that what becomes normal is a notch up' (3). Yet another individual explained:

> One of the things that I noticed personally as time went on . . . the level of emotion I felt became less and less. . . . I felt like I was anesthetized to it. . . . I think now if you get away from things you get more perspective. It's always there; a part of you, but it becomes less acute, so to speak. . . . The biggest upheaval was over. . . . life just takes you through different cycles. (19)

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Similarly, after describing anger at the manner in which the silence mandate was communicated, another participant responded to the question 'What is it like coming to work now?' by saying:

> I think it's a lot better. . . . but I just try to . . . stay positive. . . . We had to change. We had to. If we didn't change, we would have closed, and I'm just appreciative of all the people that stayed with us that worked so hard. . . We do have the potential to get back to being strong again and growing. (14)

Yet another participant explained that she perceives the HHO 'will still, I think, will continue, will still go on, will still do its function, provide services. . . . It'll just be like any business anywhere and probably just become more maybe, corporatized or something' (17).

Despite workers' making sense of the planned change as historic, their need for information from change implementers and top management remained high. One participant explained: 'Historically, when there wasn't a problem there [was] less need for information' (22). Another reflected: 'I think overall things have worked out okay, but . . . I wish there could have been more communication with the staff' (7). A one-sample *t*-test was conducted on participants' scores on the Receiving Information Scale (RIS), completed during the third quarter of 2006, to determine if a significant difference existed between how much employees reported needing to receive from top management and how much information they reported receiving now. Computing the difference between *information needed* and *information received now* results in a measure of information adequacy. Respondents' reported information inadequacy ($M = .96$, $Mdn = .85$, SD = .74) was significantly different from 0, $t(32) = 7.51$, $p < .001$. Thus, respondents deemed the amount and quality of information they received from top management to be inadequate, despite describing their violation as generally past.

Reservation Many participants reported experiencing a reservation and distrust of top management and the chair in particular. The distrust arose out of workers' desire to guard against another first-order violation. Here, we invoke multiple meanings of reservation. We mean reservation as a way of connoting that which is reserved or held back. Workers reported holding back their trust of top management's planned change messages, which resulted in a quiet, cautiousness — a description of someone who is reserved. Reservation is a defensive posture taken against the source of identity mismanagement. Two and a half years after the organization-wide meeting, a participant explained: 'I think there probably will still be some change, because for me, I don't think we're finished yet' (21). Similarly another individual described:

> I think the hesitancy is: Once you've gone through that, do you ever trust that it's totally over? . . . That stays with you after the dust has settled, so to speak. And so then I think there's always that little thing in the back of your mind. (20)

Yet another participant explained her distrust of change implementers, which remained after the two and half years, by saying: 'When someone shows their true colors, apology or not, you're always on the defense' (23). The lack of trust implied in the chair's initial change message and the renegotiation of the relationship between the chair, top management,

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and the workers lingered on, and had become incorporated into the way that the HHO workers make sense of their current identity and relationships within the organization.

Interestingly, participants also tended to agree that change was needed. A participant suggested: 'I like the way things are running now' (15); another opined: 'I'm very optimistic [about the future]' (12). Yet another stated eloquently: 'I think that sadness, for me, will probably always be there, but I see us doing good things, too, and see us getting better' (13). These quotations point to an interesting distinction in the source of workers' reservations. Participants, despite generally approving of the effectiveness of changes, were still weary of top management and the board as communicators. A participant explained that, from her perspective, 'it's going to be really hard to build that trust again [in top management]' (20).

Informational needs from change implementers and top management remained high during the experience of reservation; however, in addition to this high informational need, workers enacted a distrust of the content of information, regarding what is shared and unshared with workers. One participant complained: 'I feel like I'm not heard because there's no conversation really' (19). Another individual explained that top management and change implementers are 'giving us just what they want us to have or to hear. And I think too we're just given the good stuff when we know [there are] things that aren't good' (21). One participant was frustrated with the contents of a newsletter that was regularly distributed after the planned change as a way of addressing workers' need for information about top-level decision making:

> [They are] not giving a full picture of what's going on. It feels like there's selective information given. I hear a lot of talk about trying to improve communication. We have this newsletter to improve communication. The newsletter has recipes in it (laughter)! I don't think management gets what it is we're wanting. (22)

A one-sample *t*-test was conducted on participants' scores on the Receiving Information Scale (RIS), completed during the third quarter of 2007, to determine if a significant difference existed between how much employees reported needing to receive from top management and how much information they reported receiving now. Again, respondents' reported information inadequacy ($M = .71$, $Mdn = .54$, SD = .77) was significantly different from 0, $t(36) = 5.6$, $p < .001$. Thus, respondents deemed the amount and quality of information they were receiving from top management to be inadequate. In fact, there was no difference between the informational inadequacy reported by participants' between the third quarter of 2006 and the third quarter of 2007, $t(68) = 1.42$, *ns*, which suggested information sharing continued to be deemed inadequate by workers. Additionally, participants' job satisfaction declined significantly between the third quarter of 2006 ($M = 1.76$, SD = .34) and the third quarter of 2007 ($M = 1.25$, SD = .36), $t(68) = 6.04$, $p < .001$ — findings that further indicated a differentiation between habituation and reservation experiences.

Alternative experiences

Three participants' retrospective accounts of the planned change messaging process did not fit into the four experience categories. One participant worked at the HHO for only

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four months before she was interviewed; thus, she was hired after the silence mandate. She explained: 'I can't have any negative feelings about the change, because it hasn't affected me personally and I don't know how it was before' (15). The participant cited her lack of contextual knowledge as a primary reason why she felt unaffected by the emotional turmoil she readily recognized in her coworkers with longer tenures. Additionally, two other participants generally reported a lack of concern about the planned changes and planned change messages. Both participants worked at a satellite office, in which only one nurse was on-duty at a time. One of these participants, much like the participant just described, was hired to work at the satellite office a year after the silence mandate occurred. The other participant who worked at the HHO's satellite office for six years explained: 'I don't think it affected [the satellite] at all' (4). These alternative narratives provided two parameters to these experiential categories and mark important modifiers to this grounded theory. Distance, in both time and space, can reduce the effects of an offensive first-order positioning on organizational members.

Discussion

Most planned change research views messages as vehicles for information transfer and persuasion. However, identity and relational messages are also co-present and influence the way organizational members experience change. Positioning theory describes how everyday discourse calls identity and subject positions into being, and how those positions can be taken up with little notice or countered fiercely (Harré and von Langenhove, 1999). Planned change messages (re)position organizational members in different ways and generate consequences for the individual and collective in terms of sense making and emotionality.

The present study highlights five important implications for a discursive positioning perspective toward change messages. First, a discursive positioning perspective complements existing information transmission approaches by drawing our attention to the importance of sense making in change processes. Using the vocabulary of information transmission, the chair of the HHO issued an edict (Nutt, 1986) and used a 'need to know' communication strategy (Lewis et al., 2001). The key issue from this perspective is whether the selected strategy provided needed information and persuaded recipients to comply. From a discursive positioning perspective, the primary concern shifts to the way messages contribute to the ongoing 'in-formation' of social arrangements and how different kinds of sense making are encouraged over others.

All but three participants reported experiencing violation connected with the silence mandate, as it was a break with employees' taken-for-granted expectations regarding identity and subject positions. This dynamic ironically led many participants to make sense of the violation through recitation. Employees would not engage the chair directly because of the discursive closure produced by the silence mandate, and the unequally distributed power positions created by the command structure. In the language of positioning theory, a first-order positioning (i.e. the silence mandate invited the identity of untrustworthy employee) was not taken for granted by workers, but could also not be remedied in a second-order positioning (i.e. through overt disagreement due to discursive closure). Thus, workers attempted to remedy the offensive first-order positioning by engaging in third-order positioning (i.e. talking to others outside the initial conversation).

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Was it possible to generate an edict that retained the basic content of the message and strategy for delivering it, but positioned employees in a more favorable manner? The simple answer is yes. The chair could have called a meeting, announced the departure of the executive director, explained that he was unable to discuss it because it was a personnel matter, and acknowledged that – owing to the negative images being generated by the media regarding HHO – it was necessary to refrain from making statements to the press if they were to weather the crisis. Such a message would function as an edict, but we suspect would position organizational members differently because it would communicate the motives informing the edict and what was at stake for the organization.

Second, discursive positioning facilitates exploring the social aspects of sense making during change initiatives by addressing the processes of articulation, resistance, and reflection simultaneously. Studies of organizational change typically focus on the cognitive process of sense making (Bushe, 2009) by exploring the ways top-level management attempts to give sense to the change through the way they structure messages (Stensaker, et al., 2008), the role of individual or collective resistance to change messages (Larson and Tompkins, 2005), and how sense making is constructed prior to implementation (Purser and Petranker, 2005). Few studies explore the way that articulation (the way identities are constructed through first-order positioning), resistance (whether second-order positioning accepts, resists, or modifies first-order positions), and reflection (third-order positioning where people reflect on change messages) intertwine over time during change. In the present study, these three different types of positioning activities surfaced in the conversations participants had with both people inside, and outside, the organization as they managed the first-order positioning created by the chair. The types of positioning offered by Harré and von Langenhove (1999) suggest that future research could focus on the role that collective conversations play by: (a) exploring the connections among articulation, resistance, and reflection; (b) investigating how these processes unfold over time; and (c) inquiring into how conversations internal and external to the organization affect sense making during change.

Third, discursive positioning moves us to consider the relationships among emotion, positioning, and resistance. A growing number of change scholars have highlighted the importance of understanding the role of emotion in planned change initiatives (Bartunek et al., 2006; Clark et al., 2007; Gooty et al., 2009). Our analysis suggests that the change message evoked strong emotional reactions such as anger, sadness, and shock; from a discursive point of view, emotions are socially constructed and dynamic, created in the moment through conversation. These emotional reactions are not surprising because the change message positioned employees as untrustworthy and as needing information only when necessary. Reichers et al. (1997) noted that some organizational members are *cynical* of organizational change efforts, in that they are pessimistic about the effectiveness of change initiatives, and blame the failure of change efforts on management for being 'incompetent, lazy, or both' (p. 48). *Skeptics*, on the other hand, refer to those organizational members who doubt change efforts will succeed but remain hopeful. Resisters usually refer to those organizational members who undermine change efforts out of self-interest (Folger and Skarlicki, 1999).

Contrary to these descriptions of organizational change members who are unenthusiastic about change initiatives, the notion of *reservation* emerged from this study to refer to an experience that followed a sense of violation produced by an offensive first-order

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positioning. Reservation is the experience of distrust in a change implementer because he was seen as the source of identity mismanagement. Many of the same participants who reported experiencing a sense of reservation about change implementers and their messages also reported believing that changes were needed and optimistic about their effectiveness. It stands to reason that these organizational members were not cynical or skeptical about the success of change efforts, but about the manner in which the planned change messaging process positioned them, which initially created strong negative emotional reactions

A discursive positioning approach highlights important areas for future research into emotion, positioning, and resistance. Specifically, discursive positioning provides a rich framework for unpacking the way that organizational members mobilize resources for enacting resistance leadership through discourse and agency. Zoller and Fairhurst (2007) argue that researchers need to pay closer attention to the connection between leadership and resistance. They explain that leadership and resistance to a leader's change message are not opposites. In fact, they encourage researchers to observe how leadership can emerge *in* resistance efforts when workers mobilize or even create resources to resist change efforts. Reservation — as well as cynicism and skepticism — may be viewed as forms of resistance leadership undertaken by organizational members to resist change messages from managerial leaders by challenging seemingly fixed meanings. The notions of first-, second-, and third-order positioning provide a set of analytical tools for teasing out the way resistance leadership is performed and sustained during change efforts. Avery et al. (2008) also observe that mindfulness influences people's ability to access psychological capital, which affects the way changes are experienced emotionally. Since change messages draw attention to certain features of the change storyline but not others, they influence organizational members' perceptions of what is important and what is not. Future research could explore how different storylines within change messages constitute forms of sense making and emotional experience. Furthermore, the present analysis suggests that many of the emotions experienced initially by employees in the wake of an offensive first-order positioning were negative. The question then becomes what are the consequences of particular patterns of emotion on absenteeism, performance, and turnover? Finally, Sanchez-Burks and Huy (2009) suggest that managers need to develop the skill of making sense of the emotions of groups through a process they call emotional aperture. Future research could explore how change agents can develop the ability to attune to unfolding situations and construct appropriate storylines.

A fourth implication of a discursive approach to change messages is that it moves us to explore the discursive as well as the material contexts for message production. In the case of the HHO's planned change messaging, the chair's silence mandate to workers was a response to previous discursive (re)positioning of the organization as financially solvent. Repositioning the organization as solvent was a discursive response (and second-order positioning) directed to a remark made by a city commissioner who positioned the organization's financial identity as a 'train wreck' (i.e. an offensive first-order positioning) (Financial Wreck?, 2004). However, our analysis allowed us to demonstrate how both discursive (e.g. organizational image) and material (e.g. budget

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deficits) contexts were implicated in the planned change messaging process. We avoided a purely social constructionist interpretation of the HHO's planned change messaging by accounting for some of the financial and political forces that limited top management's range of communicative choices (Cloud, 2005; Reed, 2000, 2001, 2004). We believe that coupling historical analysis with discourse analysis marks an important methodological move for exploring planned change communication.

Fifth, we believe our analysis of this turning point (i.e. the silence mandate and its identity and relational implications) within the storyline of the HHO's planned change represents another potential methodological contribution of this work. Similar to Bullis and Bach's (1989a, b) turning point analyses, we collected retrospective accounts of a crucial event that marked changes in how individuals related to their organization. We take turning points to be a particularly significant narrative development, which produces a kind of trajectory that alters how workers interpret the storyline of planned change. Future research could investigate genres of turning point change messages, how they work, and their consequences for implementing change.

We cannot know if the chair's positioning of the HHO workers significantly altered the *success* of the HHO's planned change without a control comparison. However, we read the workers' experiences of being positioned by the silence mandate to represent an important illustrator of the ways in which planned change messages constitute (often contested) social arrangements. Many HHO workers agreed that changes were needed and were effective. However, these same participants were still weary of top management as communicators because of the unfavorable ways in which the chair positioned them. Thus, this case study allowed us to view the unique contribution of the identity-shaping force of planned change messaging without the need to parse this force from workers' perceptions of change as unneeded and ineffective. Additionally, we believe that these data are presented with adequate description to encourage researchers and practitioners to determine how these findings might transfer to other planned change interventions (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002).

Conclusion

The present study does have limitations. For example, retrospective accounts were collected after the most major events of the planned changes at the HHO. As a result, we were unable to collect conversational discourse among employees over time to document the sequence of change messages. Additionally, we observed large variances in the survey data. Such variances may suggest that there was systematic disagreement about job satisfaction and information adequacy among sub-groups of workers; however, we did not collect the data to allow us to answer that question. Future survey research could explore planned change messaging across multiple organizations comparatively to determine if significant differences exist between how members of relevant sub-groups experience being positioned by planned change messages in management communication. Nevertheless, our hope is that the ideas regarding discursive positioning presented here can provide insight into planned change messages, and the ways in which organizational members experience and make sense of them.

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Appendix A

Interview schedule for first-round interviews

1. How long have you worked at the HHO?
2. How many positions have you held? Describe each.
3. Describe the HHO before, during, and after the recent organizational change.
4. Describe how the recent organizational changes have affected your interactions with coworkers and managers.
5. Describe a time when you discussed the organizational change with someone else.
6. Describe emotions you felt throughout the reorganization process.
7. What do you believe will be the outcome of the changes?
8. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

Appendix B

Interview schedule for second-round interviews

1. When I interviewed you more than a year ago, I asked you to describe the HHO before, during, and after the recent organizational restructuring. A common answer at that time was that the HHO was still undergoing change. Is that still true today; why or why not?
2. Who was/is your biggest support? Who did you/do you talk to the most about the restructuring? What topics come up most often?
3. During my last interviews, many persons described the organizational restructuring to be a very stressful, uncertain, and emotional time. Is that still true today? If so, why? If not, what has changed?
4. Many people talked about some resentment they felt toward how the board handled the firing of the HHO's leadership. Has that changed your view of HHO's culture? Has that changed your view of the board? Why or why not?
5. Is there anything else I should know?

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