Feeling valued: the role of communication in preparing employees for change

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Certificate of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at Charles Sturt University or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgment is made in the dissertation. Any contribution made to the research by colleagues with whom I have worked at Charles Sturt University or elsewhere during my candidature is fully acknowledged.

I agree that this thesis be accessible for the purpose of study and research and in accordance with the normal conditions established by the Executive Director, Division of Library Services or nominee, for the care, loan and reproduction of theses, subject to confidentiality provisions as approved by the University.

Name: Ivana Crestani

Signature: ……………………………………………………………….

Date: 25 August 2018
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Ethics Approval

The research conducted for this dissertation received approval from Charles Sturt University’s School of Communication and Creative Industries’ Human Research Ethics Committee (SHREC).

Protocol number 112-2013-14
Confidentiality

The references to the two organisations in this dissertation are confidential. While attempts have been made to de-identify the work, it remains possible to determine the organisations. For this reason, the work must remain confidential in perpetuity.
Publications

There have been two peer reviewed publications from this doctoral research:


Abstract

This doctoral research explored the role of communication in preparing employees for transformational change and enhancing their sense of feeling valued. It investigated the research questions: (1) What does feeling valued mean to employees? (2) How does communication affect employees’ sense of feeling valued in preparing for transformational change? The literature review suggested that the employee emotional experience of organisational change was under-researched and that feeling valued could improve employees’ support for change.

The inquiry was conducted from a social constructionist perspective adopting Appreciative Inquiry (AI), juxtaposed with the Jungian Shadow. The methodology was based on a qualitative multiple case study comprising three projects, namely an Integrative Literature Review (ILR) and case studies of non-managerial employees in two Australian agricultural organisations. In addition to literature, the multiple case study was based on Appreciative interviews, organisational documents and my reflective memos. Charmaz’s constructivist grounded theory methods (2014) were used for the data analysis, complemented with Saldaña’s affective coding methods (2016).

The first project, an ILR, provided early ideas for conceptualising feeling valued through synthesising findings from 17 relevant publications, although not in organisational change contexts. Through emotion coding and grounded theory analytical methods, the different perspectives of feeling valued were integrated. Ultimately, seven feeling categories were co-constructed for the meaning of feeling valued to employees, namely belonging, contributing, meaning and feeling supported, trusted, respected and appreciated. These seven feelings were not mutually exclusive.

The second project was a case study of 15 non-managerial employees who had experienced mostly positive change in their farmer-owned research and marketing organisation. The purpose of this case study was to understand, in a real-life setting, what feeling valued meant to participants and how communication influenced that feeling when preparing for change. Values coding was used for the participants’ Appreciative interviews to understand the cultural context for feeling valued and communicating change. Three categories, accepting, contributing and feeling supported were co-constructed as being the cultural strengths for feeling valued in that
organisation. For communicating change, feeling valued meant communicating supportively, being open and contributing to change.

The third project was a case study of 12 non-managerial employees with a contrasting experience of organisational changes in an agricultural government department. Values and Versus coding of the participants’ Appreciative interviews revealed the underlying tension and conflicting values, beliefs and attitudes between the participants and those in authority. Through moiety analysis and grounded theory methods, two subcultures were unearthed, ‘Service-Giving’ and ‘Political-Power’. Feeling valued was constructed from the ‘Service-Giving’ values, beliefs and attitudes as contributing, belonging and empowering. In terms of communicating change, feeling valued meant being open and contributing to change. Participants viewed the ‘Political-Power’ subculture as controlling information with change driven from the top, separating or divisive, forcing a predetermined solution and requiring meaningless work.

The key concepts from the three projects were theorised further to construct a tentative framework of Change Communication processes for leaders, managers and change practitioners to communicate change in a way that employees feel valued. The proposed framework is discussed through the lens of the eight AI theoretical principles and the Jungian Shadow. Questions are posed for its further development and research. The framework challenges a fundamental belief of rationalist change management approaches.
Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

In this dissertation, I explore the role of communication in preparing employees for organisational change and how it may contribute to their sense of feeling valued. Ultimately, I aim to develop a framework of Change Communication processes (CCF) that can enable leaders, managers and practitioners to communicate change in a way that enhances employees' sense of feeling valued. My focus is on transformational change which requires a shift in employee mindsets, feelings and behaviours to something new (Daszko, Macur & Sheinberg, 2005). I draw from texts and stories from non-managerial employees in two organisations in the Australian agricultural sector.

Through my research, I hope to contribute to a more ‘valuing people’ approach to change management in practice. According to the Change Management Institute (CMI), the first professional body for change practitioners, change management is a method for implementing organisational change and is defined as “a structured approach to transitioning individuals, teams and organisations from a current state to a desired future state” (2009). Based on CMI publications, it would appear that communication could account for up to 70 to 80 per cent of the change practitioner’s role (CMI, 2012). As such, my focus is on change communication, defined as “communication about change as well as communication involved in organisational change processes” (Cheney, Christensen, Zorn & Ganesh, 2011, p. 353). As an experienced change practitioner, I am keen to contribute to improving how change is communicated to employees in practice.

1.2 Research context

Organisational change programs have had a consistently high failure rate with around 70 to 75 percent not meeting their objectives (Aiken & Keller, 2009; Burke, 2018). Communication (Kitchen & Daly, 2002) and culture (Schein, 2010; Burke, 2018) are often cited amongst the key reasons for the success or failure of change initiatives. There are a plethora of models and frameworks for practitioners to use in managing change. More recently, scholars and practitioners have been questioning the relevance of these traditional models in this age of disruption, the digital and social revolution,
increasing pace of change and complexity (Kotter, 2012). They are functionalist, linear, rational, driven from the top and treat change as a single event. Yet, organisations appear to be in constant change, with at least three or more changes occurring simultaneously and frequently, leading to change exhaustion (Bernerth, Walker & Harris, 2011; Klarner, By & Diefenbach, 2011).

There is limited research on how employees experience change (Oreg, Michel & By, 2014) and the role of communication in engaging employees in change (Elving, 2005; Reissner & Pagan, 2013). Change communication approaches have been criticised for "largely ignoring the role of emotions in organizational change" (Palmer, Dunford & Akin, 2009, p. 297). Practitioners rely on the ‘Change Curve’, a model of grief, where each stage – denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance—is used to determine the appropriate communication approach (Myers, Hulks & Wiggins, 2012, p. 278). Bell and Taylor (2011) challenge the appropriateness of the staged grief approach for organisational change and offer a ‘continuing bonds’ perspective, rather than a break from the past.

Scholarly works focus mostly on employee dysfunctional behaviour, particularly resistance and the negative emotions triggered by stress, fear and the uncertainty of change. This focus on resistance stems from Kurt Lewin’s model for change outlined in 1947 and many of the change management models that are used and studied today are adaptations of Lewin’s model.

In recent years, there has been a greater focus on change readiness as it is considered to be important for employees to support change, and that “a state of readiness must be created” to reduce resistance (Holt, Armenakis, Field & Harris, 2007, p. 234), and for the success of change initiatives (Rafferty, Jimmieson & Armenakis, 2013). Change readiness can be defined as the extent to which individuals or a group think, feel and anticipate that change will be a positive for themselves and the organisation (Kirrane, Lennon, O’Connor & Fu, 2016). Communication is considered to be important for creating a state of readiness for change, reducing uncertainty and gaining employee commitment (Armenakis, Harris & Mossholder, 1993).
1.3 Rationale

With this background, I wish to focus on the employee emotional experience of transformational change and the role of communication in preparing employees for change, or change readiness. In terms of emotional experience, I am interested in what feeling valued means to employees, as literature indicates that this emotion may improve employees’ support for change and engagement with their organisation (Stumpf, Tymon Jr, Favorito & Smith, 2013).

I have been a change practitioner for about 30 years and since 2000, I became interested in the concept of feeling valued and what it means within the context of organisational change. The catalyst for my interest was the correlation between feeling valued and engaging employees that emerged in over a hundred employee engagement surveys that I had conducted for my clients. Robinson, Perryman and Hayday (2004) and Reissner and Pagan (2013) had similar findings. I also observed on many occasions how leaders and managers communicated change in a way that inadvertently disengaged employees. Quite often, employees were ‘scared’ into change when leaders spoke to them about it as a journey and stated they could either ‘get on the bus, or get off’. I have heard a number of Chief Executive Officers (CEO) use this analogy, sometimes replacing the bus with a train. In one instance, a CEO who had just met his Executive team suggested that if anyone was at all ‘unsure’ about getting on the bus, they should consider ‘getting off the bus, now!’

In addition to threats, there was tendency for leaders to position change where ‘the past was bad’ and the ‘future is new and exciting’ and employees were encouraged to ‘forget the past’ and to ‘move on’. From my experience in practice, I would observe and hear leaders becoming frustrated and blaming employees for the change being too slow, while employees would feel devalued, alienated and powerless. This would be compounded with frequent and multiple changes affecting employees’ well-being.

Sadly, I have been engaged as an external consultant to rescue some poorly managed change programs that led to serious emotional consequences namely suicide at work and death due to extreme levels of stress. This has motivated me to undertake my doctoral research to find a better, more humane way of introducing change to reduce unnecessary stress and anxiety for employees, their families and communities. In having
had to deal with these tragic consequences, I am alert to the far reaching impacts of change beyond the organisation, yet this awareness is not usually included in the many change models and approaches available to practitioners today. Nor are practitioners necessarily skilled in dealing with such circumstances. As a member of the Change Management Institute, the professional body for change practitioners, I am keen to improve how change is communicated in practice.

While quantitative surveys have shown the importance of feeling valued in engaging employees and supporting change, the Literature review indicates that there are very few qualitative studies exploring what feeling valued means to employees (Claxton, 2014). Furthermore, Johansson and Heide concluded that future studies need to provide practitioners with “more realistic models and tools” (2008, p. 300). My research is in response to this call for better frameworks for practitioners to assist with communicating change and to address the need for a greater focus on the emotional side of change, particularly feeling valued.

1.4 Research aim and questions

The purpose of my research is to explore the role of communication in preparing employees for transformational change where they feel valued. As such, my study addresses two research questions: (a) What does feeling valued mean to employees? (b) How does communication affect employees’ sense of feeling valued in preparing for transformational change?

I approach my research from a social constructionist perspective which proposes that knowledge, understanding and meaning are constructed through human relationships and how people use language and conversation to construct their reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Crotty, 1998; Patton, 2015). Understanding the historical and cultural context are important for shaping meaning, particularly as social constructionism emphasises “the hold our culture has on us: it shapes the way in which we see things (even in the way we feel things!” (Crotty, 1998, p. 58) Social constructionism is my natural worldview. I am conscious that my dissertation is a social construction as I explore and co-construct meaning with scholarly works, interviewing participants, analysing their views, and discussing my research with my supervisors. From my research findings, I aim to co-construct a framework of processes to assist
with communicating change in a way that employees feel valued. For simplicity, it is called the Change Communication Framework (CCF).

1.5 Research approach

For the Doctor of Communication qualification, a professional doctorate, I am required to undertake a Dissertation or Portfolio of “three related research areas written up as research projects” and an exegesis to enhance the professional practice of communication. My research is presented as a dissertation, rather than as a portfolio with an exegesis, as this approach better enables me to co-construct the CCF for practice through consistency in analysis methods, rather than an array that is possible through a portfolio approach.

I have chosen a qualitative multiple case study design (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2014; Creswell, 2013) as it allows me to investigate feeling valued within real organisational change contexts, as the literature review indicates this has not been studied in practice previously. However, feeling valued has been studied mostly with a focus on employee engagement, leadership and employee satisfaction. Embedded in social constructionism, my theoretical perspective is Appreciative Inquiry (AI) (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stavros, 2008) juxtaposed with the Jungian Shadow (Jung, 1938/1958; Ketola, 2012; Fawkes, 2015). Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a positive approach to change that builds on strengths. It values the best in people, systems and organisations and consequently an ideal perspective for studying what feeling valued means to employees. While AI’s focus is on a positive approach to change, knowledge of the Jungian Shadow provides a constructive way to understand and appreciate negative emotions and discourse that erupt during change. It also provides insight into unconscious potential for change.

The overall approach for my research is summarised in Table 1 which outlines its epistemological and theoretical foundations of the exploratory multiple case study comprising three studies which are different, although interlinked. I refer to the studies as projects, in keeping with the aim of the Doctor of Communication requirement. The three projects are:

- Project 1 – Conceptualising feeling valued
- Project 2 – Communicating new ways of working
- Project 3 – Coping with a sea of change
Table 1. Research design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>My approach</th>
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<tr>
<td>Epistemology</td>
<td>Social constructionism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Perspective</td>
<td>Appreciative Inquiry (AI) and Jungian Shadow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Qualitative Multiple Case Study</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Data collection methods | Project 1. Conceptualising feeling valued                                    |
|                        | Integrative Literature Review on feeling valued.                            |
|                        | Project 2. Communicating new ways of working                               |
|                        | A case study of non-managerial employees in a research and marketing farmer owned company, involving semi-structured in-depth interviews, documents and my reflective memos. |
|                        | Project 3. Coping with a sea of change                                     |
|                        | A contrasting case study of non-managerial employees in an agricultural government organisation, involving semi-structured in-depth interviews, documents, press releases and my reflective memos. |

| Data analysis methods  | Charmaz Constructivist Grounded Theory (2014) with three different affective coding methods. Cross-case analysis of the three studies, comparing similarities and differences. |

Note: The terms in Table 1 are fully explained in Chapter 3 on research methodology.

The first project is an Integrative Literature Review (ILR) to provide initial conceptual ideas for the multiple case study design on what feeling valued means and to develop early thinking for the CCF. The second and third projects examine feeling valued in real-life contexts with non-managerial employees who have contrasting experiences of change. Each project is explored independently and a cross-case analysis is conducted to synthesise, design and propose a tentative CCF, drawing insights and findings from each of the three projects. These projects are explained briefly below.

1.5.1 Project 1—Conceptualising feeling valued

In this project, I endeavour to unearth some early conceptual ideas for understanding what feeling valued means to employees, given that scholarly research on this topic is a recent occurrence. In particular, I wish to identify feelings associated with feeling valued to address my focus on the emotional side of organisational change. An Integrative Literature Review (ILR) method (Torraco, 2005) is adopted to critically evaluate 17 relevant scholarly and industry publications from which four different perspectives of feeling valued are identified. Through emotion coding (Saldaña, 2016)
and Charmaz’s constructivist grounded theory analytical methods (2014), I integrate the four conceptualisations of feeling valued. As a consequence, seven feelings are co-constructed to underpin the meaning of feeling valued.

1.5.2 Project 2—Communicating new ways of working

This is the first of the two real-life case studies. In this project, I share the findings from interviews with 15 non-managerial employees in an Australian research and marketing company owned by farmers, known as Organisation A. The interviews are complemented with a collection of organisational documents and my reflective memos. The participants experienced mostly positive change over the period 2012 to 2014. I adopt the interviewing protocol from the Appreciative Inquiry Discovery process.

Through another affective coding method, namely Values coding, the data is coded for Values, Beliefs and Attitudes (Saldaña, 2016). I use Charmaz’s constructivist grounded theory methods for the data analysis (2014). Through this process, I co-construct the cultural positive core of feeling valued and analytic concepts for communicating change to engender this feeling.

1.5.3 Project 3—Coping with a sea of change

The second real-life case study is based on interviews with 12 non-managerial employees in an Australian agricultural government department, referred to as Organisation B. Organisational documents and my reflective memos also contributed to the case study. The participants had a contrasting experience to transformational change, compared to Organisation A, with dissatisfaction in how the changes were introduced over 2012 to 2014. I complemented Values coding with another affective coding method, Versus coding (Saldaña, 2016) to unearth the conflict and power differences in the subcultures in this organisation. Versus coding led to moiety conceptualisations and through Charmaz’s constructivist grounded theory method (2104), two subcultures were identified for Organisation B. Three analytic concepts and their moieties were co-constructed for the cultural positive core of feeling valued. For communicating change to foster this feeling, I based my analysis on participants’ communication preferences, rather than their experience as there was no formal communication to prepare employees for most of the changes, except one.
1.6 Structure of the dissertation

My dissertation has eight chapters and a summary overview is provided below. Chapters 1 to 3, incorporate the Introduction, Literature Review and Research methodology respectively, thereby framing the background for my multiple case study analysis with findings in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. In chapter 7, the findings are discussed through a cross-case analysis and synthesis of the case studies. Chapter 8 is the final chapter where I present my conclusions, propose a tentative CCF, my Appreciative reflection and discuss the implications for practice. Possibilities for future research are outlined.

In writing my dissertation, I have adopted a reflective and reflexive style throughout in keeping with social constructionism and for co-constructing meaning of texts and participant stories.

Chapter 1. Introduction

In this chapter, I provide an overview and objectives for my research, the context and the motivation for my research, the specific research aim and questions. I also outline the research approach for the three projects and the structure of my dissertation. I conclude this chapter with how my research contributes to practice and scholarly knowledge.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

This chapter critically examines literature to identify the context for my research and to develop my research questions. I conducted a literature review on change management, change communication, organisational culture, emotions and organisations and feeling valued. The review raised the need for research on the employee perspective of change, the emotional side of change, change readiness, change communication and a better understanding of the meaning of feeling valued. Hence, my research questions address those needs.

Chapter 3. Research methodology

The chapter outlines the research design driven by my research questions. It discusses my social constructionist epistemology, Appreciative Inquiry and Jungian
Shadow theoretical perspective, and the multiple case study methodology. Data collection and analysis methods are discussed for each of the three projects.

Chapter 4. Conceptualising feeling valued

This chapter is an Integrative Literature Review which critically evaluates current perspectives of feeling value to synthesise these conceptualisations and propose early ideas of what feeling valued may mean to employees.

Chapter 5. Communicating new ways of working

In Chapter 5, I present the findings from the case study of non-managerial employees in a farmer-owned research and marketing organisation, known as Organisation A. The aim is to understand feeling valued within the context of transformational change and what this means for communicating change to employees in one particular case study.

Chapter 6. Coping with a sea of change

In Chapter 6, I present the findings for the case study of non-managerial employees in an agricultural government department, known as Organisation B. Similar to Chapter 5, the aim is to understand what feeling valued means within a context of change and how to communicate to employees to engender this feeling in another case study.

Chapter 7. Discussion of findings

I conduct a cross-case analysis and synthesis of the findings from the multiple case study and discuss their meaning in relation to scholarly literature.

Chapter 8. Conclusions and implications for practice

I conclude with revisiting my aims, questions and research methodology and propose a tentative CCF which is discussed in terms of AI’s core principles and the Jungian Shadow. I consider the implications for practice and future research. Finally, through an Appreciative reflection, I share my learning from undertaking my dissertation.
1.7 Contributions of this study to practice

I am motivated to bring a more humane perspective to change management where the potential of employees and their ability to contribute to change are enhanced. My study provides significant and original contributions in this regard.

First of all, my study contributes to a wider understanding of the emotional aspects of change particularly in relation to feeling valued and how to communicate change to enhance this feeling in employees. Such knowledge can assist with improving employee support for change. While there are quantitative studies measuring feeling valued, my study will add to the limited qualitative research on the meaning of feeling valued to employees.

An original contribution is the tentative CCF that I propose for preparing employees and communicating change in practice where they feel valued. The processes embrace the positive and Shadow emotional aspects of feeling valued and the impact of culture and subcultures in communicating change. These insights can assist with more constructive and effective approaches to communicating and preparing employees for change in practice, thereby providing an alternative to the dominant rationalist approaches to change management.

My study challenges rationalist change management models and their need to break from the past, cause dissatisfaction with the status quo and concentrate on managing resistance. Instead, my study contributes to the understanding of change readiness and adds significantly through focusing on emotions such as feeling valued.

With regard to Appreciate Inquiry (AI), a positive change management method, I suggest making communicatings ‘honestly’ and ‘supportively’ more explicit rather than leaving it to chance from the AI processes. Furthermore, I make a case for acknowledging the Shadow with empathy and respect for individual’s feelings. This enhances the context for introducing AI in preparing employees for change.

My study uses moiety analysis to unearth subcultures in one of my case studies. This method can provide considerable insights into understanding the cultural context of
organisations, power, conflict and tensions to understand the readiness of the organisation, individuals and groups to adopt change.

The proposed CCF processes go beyond the informative role of communication that is usually the main focus of change practitioners, to providing a broader understanding of change communication, thereby enhancing the professional practice of communication. Finally, through the tentative CCF, I hope to enrich future dialogue between practitioners and scholars on what it could mean for change management and communication in practice.

1.8 Summary

In this chapter, I have provided a synopsis of my dissertation including the context, research aim and questions, research methodology, and overview of the three projects and their contribution to practice. In particular, the CCF that is proposed may enrich scholarly and practitioner dialogue, and guide future research to assist with communicating change to employees where they feel valued, thereby improving the professional practice of change communication.

The next chapter is a literature review to identify current and emerging issues relating to my research.
Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I explore and critically evaluate relevant scholarly and practitioner literature on change communication and the employee experience of being prepared for transformational change. As such, my specific topic areas are change management, change readiness, change communication, culture and the emotional experience of change, including feeling valued. I aim to identify what is known and unknown in my topic areas to create space for my research and develop the research questions for my area of inquiry. A substantial part of my literature review has been published in a peer reviewed book chapter, “Change communication: Emerging perspectives for organisations and practitioners” (Crestani, 2016).

2.2 Change management in changing times

I start with reviewing literature on change management as it provides the context for the role of communication in organisational change. Change management is not a specific discipline and draws knowledge from organisational development (OD), business management, psychology, sociology (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015) and organisational communication (Kitchen and Daly, 2002). According to the Association of Change Management Professionals (ACMP), change management is defined as the “application of knowledge, skills, abilities, methodologies, processes, tools, and techniques to transition an individual or group from a current state to a future state to achieve expected benefits and organizational objectives” (2014, p. 76). There are various types of organisational change and can include those that are transformational which require a significant change in employees’ mindset and behaviour, or those that are incremental which involve adjustments for continual organisational improvement.

The practice of change management is changing and traditional methodologies are being questioned by both scholars and practitioners for their relevance in this age of disruption, the digital and social revolution, increasing pace of change and complexity and focus on innovation (Jick & Sturtevant, 2017; Kotter, 2012). Many of the change management models that are used and studied today, are considered to be adaptations of
Kurt Lewin’s three-step model for the change process outlined in 1947 consisting of unfreezing, moving (changing) and (re)freezing the organisation (p. 35). Kurt Lewin is recognised as the father of OD, Action Research and group dynamics (Cummings, Bridgman & Brown, 2016, p. 34). Unfortunately, Lewin died just after his paper was published in 1947. He had envisioned a participative approach with groups to introduce change (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015; p. 249; Myers, Hulks & Wiggins, 2012, p. 51).

It was not until the nineties, that the management discipline, rather than OD, became prominent in change management theory propelled with Kotter’s eight steps for leading change (2011) first introduced in 1996, which is still popular in practice today. The steps are: 1) establishing a sense of urgency; 2) creating the guiding coalition; 3) developing a change vision; 4) communicating the vision for buy-in; 5) empowering broad-based action; 6) generating short-term wins; 7) never letting up; and 8) incorporating changes into the culture. It is interesting to note that communication is the fourth step and culture is the last step. Kotter intended the steps to be followed sequentially. While Kotter’s model has been linked to Lewin’s three steps (Myers et al., 2012, p. 213), Kotter and other management approaches were a departure from Lewin’s intended ‘participative’ approach. The management models introduced ‘directed’ change management (Myers et al., 2012, p. 212) in which employees were not involved in the design and planning of change initiatives. Rather, these models promoted a top down approach where leaders and managers developed the need and vision for change and communicated it to employees (Kotter’s step 4).

Nevertheless, many ‘directed’ change management models perpetuate Lewin’s first step ‘unfreeze’ involving a break from the past, communicating dissatisfaction with the status quo and managing resistance to change. Diefenbach suggests it is “primarily not about a better and promising future, but about a bad and dangerous present” (2007, p. 129). I am not surprised that employee resistance is the outcome of this ‘directed’ approach as the underlying thinking and processes of these models set up the environment for employee resistance. Communication is often relegated to an information providing role with the focus on messaging for the launch. Consequently, in implementing change, communication becomes reactive in having to deal with resistance. In practice, I have witnessed on many occasions where these approaches lead to ‘scaring’ and ‘threatening’ employees to change and “putting people in a permanent state of fear, alertness, and worries to lose what they have got” (Diefenbach, 2007, p. 129).
Change can mean loss on many fronts, namely loss of identity, status, power, position, competence and group membership (Schein, 2010 pp. 304-305). The confusion, uncertainty and anxiety that result, strike at the heart of the organisation’s and individual’s identity leading to questions of ‘who are we?’ and ‘who am I?’ It is not surprising that lack of clarity about the future is met with employee resistance as employees try to make sense of how to belong to an organisation with an unknown and fuzzy future.

Over time, a number of scholars have criticised the change management models for their simplistic, linear, managerialist and rational approaches, driven from the top that are “still beholden to the 50-year old classic approaches to organizations” (Wetzel & Van Gorp, 2014, p. 116). Current theories and models tend to use a step-by-step linear approach, whereas in practice, “what actually occurs is anything but linear. The implementation process is messy” (Burke, 2018, p. 10). They assume change is a single event, yet multiple and frequent change is now common in organisations.

Overall, much of the information in the change management literature is repetitive (Wetzel & Van Gorp, 2014, p. 115) and confusing (By, 2005). Al-Haddad and Kotnour (2015) conducted an extensive literature review of the various change management models. There appears to be broad consensus amongst scholars and practitioners that the traditional change models are not working, given the high failure rate of change programs. The often cited statistic is that about 70 to 75 per cent fail to achieve their objectives, and disturbingly, this has been the situation for more than 20 to 30 years (Aiken & Keller, 2009; Burke, 2018).

Interestingly, Al-Haddad and Kotnour’s literature review did not include Appreciative Inquiry (AI), a positive change management approach which has been available from the USA since 1987. In contrast to the functionalist approaches, AI is a form of social constructionism and has evolved from the OD discipline. It is both a theory and a research methodology, similar to Action Research. AI was originally conceptualised by Cooperrider and Srivastva (Cooperrider, 2017) as a strengths-based approach, drawing out the positive core of an individual or collective system and identifying what is valued. AI is discussed further in the section on change communication in this Chapter, and outlined in detail in Chapter 3 on the research methodology for my dissertation.
Given the history of poor success, the change management field is open to new ideas. Recently, some change programs are adopting Agile techniques typically used for software development in the 1980s, and Design Thinking or user-centred design (Jick & Sturtevant, 2017). Agile is a “way of thinking, a philosophy” (van Ruler, 2015, p. 191) to provide flexibility where change is accepted as being a normal part of life. It adopts an inclusive process where stakeholders and employees are involved throughout the process to delivering outcomes. With the increasing focus on innovation, Design Thinking is becoming popular (Eneberg and Svengren Holm, 2013). It involves projects using an iterative process, with collaboration built on design being social in nature, with tolerance for ambiguity and facilitating communication through tangible ideas. It can also include empathy mapping to obtain a better understanding of how customers and stakeholders think and feel.

Some of the key scholars such as Kotter, Jick and Burke have been reviewing their earlier change management methods for their relevance in today’s complex and challenging environment. While academic research led the development of change management frameworks in the early days, it would appear that in the last decade “practitioners and consultants are driving more of the thinking and the refinement of methods” (Jick & Sturtevant, 2017, p. 76). There is a suggestion that practitioners “would benefit greatly if academics could find ways to better integrate themselves and their expertise into – or even ahead of – today’s pace of development of change techniques” (Jick & Sturtevant, 2017, p. 76).

In 1998, Lewis and Seibold argued that change implementation should be reconceptualised as “a communication-related phenomenon” (p. 94). From a practice perspective, I would agree with this view. As a practitioner, 70-80 per cent of my role is communication, hence why I am perplexed that communication is not prominent in rationalist change management models. How can change be achieved without communication?

2.2.1 Change management in practice

In practice, change management (CM) and project or program management (PM) usually work hand in hand to implement a change initiative. Often, a change practitioner is a member of the project team. There may be instances where the project team does
not have a change practitioner. In everyday practice language, the change practitioner focuses on the ‘people’ side of change while the project or program manager focuses on ‘delivery’ of the initiative. Projects may involve a new strategy, structure, system, technology, product or culture change. Increasingly, CM and PM are being integrated where some project managers are taking on the role of change manager as well.

In reviewing scholarly literature on CM, I was unable to identify a focus on PM. Most studies seem to concentrate on the content and context of change rather than the implementation process (Ziemba & Oblak, 2015, p. 48). It would appear that the literature on “change management is not related appropriately to process, project and program management” (Gareis, 2010, p. 314). One scholar recently expressed that “our knowledge for how to plan and implement organization change is limited” (Burke, 2018, p. 10).

The two global change management associations for practitioners, the Change Management Institute (CMI) established in Australia in 2005 and the Association of Change Management Professionals (ACMP), established in the USA in 2011, have developed change management approaches, standards and provide learning vehicles through conferences, webinars and the accreditation process. Recently, the CMI (2013) developed a change practitioner’s manual containing the Change Management Body of Knowledge (CMBoK). The key roles outlined for the practitioner include developing a Change Management plan for a project, incorporating a Vision for the change, Impact assessment, a Stakeholder strategy, a Communication and Engagement strategy, building Readiness, Benefits assessment and management, Skills Capability development and facilitation.

Change practitioners are still using these rationalist models and the new collaborative models such as Agile and Design Thinking. These are discussed in the section on change communication. As an external consultant for nearly 30 years, I have used a range of change management approaches eclectically, including “practice wisdom and practice artistry” (Higgs, Titchen & Neville, 2001, p. 129). Each situation and context is different regarding change management and reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action (Schön, 1991) may help, given the circumstances.
2.2.2 Change readiness

In recent years, there has been a greater focus on change readiness as it is considered to be important for employees to support change and that “a state of readiness must be created” to reduce resistance (Holt, Armenakis, Field & Harris, 2007, p. 234), and for change initiatives to be successful (Rafferty, Jimmieson & Armenakis, 2013). Change readiness can be defined as the extent to which individuals or a group think, feel and anticipate that change will be a positive for themselves and the organisation (Kirrane, Lennon, O’Connor & Fu, 2016). Communication is considered to have an important role in creating a state of readiness for change, thereby reducing uncertainty and gaining employee commitment (Armenakis, Harris & Mossholder, 1993; Elving, 2005). Rafferty et al., (2013) acknowledge that change readiness has concentrated mostly on cognitions, not affective elements, and they suggest a multi-level approach that focuses on individual, group and organisational readiness.

The level of complexity of change has increased over time with employees experiencing an increasing number of changes simultaneously, leading to change exhaustion or fatigue (Bernerth et al., 2011; Klarner et al., 2011). Scholarly and practitioner literature is now recognising that what may appear to be employee “resistance” to change may be partly due to “exhaustion” as a result of constant changes in organisations with little time for recovery (Heath & Heath, 2010; Pasmore, 2011). Participative approaches and giving employees a voice are viewed as ways of reducing resistance (Lewis & Russ, 2012, p. 268), as employees are less likely to resist ideas they have proposed themselves. However, it would appear that evidence “suggests that participative communication approaches are underused” (p. 268).

2.3 Change communication

Communication (Goodman & Truss, 2004; Johansson & Heide, 2008; Kitchen & Daly, 2002) and culture (Burke, 2018; Schein, 2010) are cited amongst the key reasons for the success or failure of change initiatives. Yet the literature review indicates that there is limited research on change communication, specifically its role in engaging employees in change (Elving, 2005; Reissner & Pagan, 2013) and “what change looks like and feels like” from the perspective of employees, since many of the studies are written from a management perspective (Oreg et al., 2014, p. 14). Employees are a ‘lost voice’ and rely on researchers to interpret their stories, as employees generally do not
write about how change has affected them. Borrowing from Foucault, one could say that employees are the ‘docile bodies’ that are being changed (as cited in Goldstein, 1984, p. 175). What is telling is that many scholarly textbooks on change management devote only a few pages to communication, yet communication can account for about 70 to 80 per cent of the change practitioner’s role when taking into account the activities of stakeholder engagement, communication and facilitation (CMI, 2012). Communication and change management are inextricably linked. The other roles of a change practitioner are in relation to co-ordinating or conducting training and development, if required, mapping and actualising the benefits of change.

Given the dominant managerialist and functionalist approach to change management, it is not surprising that change communication approaches have been criticised for being “too rational and cognitive and largely ignoring the role of emotions in organizational change” (Palmer et al., 2009, p. 297). There is limited scholarly research on emotions that employees experience during change (Kiefer, 2002; Myers et al., 2012; Yeomans, 2007). Emotions and change are discussed in detail in section 2.4 of this Chapter. From a practice perspective, the challenge nowadays is how to communicate yet another change initiative to change saturated and fatigued employees and hope they can be engaged.

While there are communication theories and organisational change theories, there is a gap in change communication theories (Elving, 2005; Frahm & Brown, 2005), with only a few scholars in the field (Johansson & Heide, 2008), and limited advice to practitioners based on theoretical insights (Wray & Fellenz, 2007). Even today, within this field of limited research and scholars, the different perspectives on change communication whether functional, subjective or critical can create confusion for practitioners. Theories may not even exist for practitioner needs, particularly in new and complex situations of change. Practitioner publications do not always describe the research undertaken in detail, nor its theoretical perspective and assumptions, as do scholarly research, preferring to focus more on the practical application of the research (Alred, 2006). Communicating change in practice has become increasingly aligned to projects and programs and driven by the change practitioner who involves both the Internal Communication and Human Resources functions, when appropriate, at various stages of the project or program cycle (CMI, 2013).
According to Kemmis and McTaggart, the many and varied theories and approaches to studying practice can lead to confusion because researchers “from different intellectual traditions tend to focus on different aspects of practice when they investigate it” (2000, p. 1). They provide a useful framework for deciphering the different approaches to studying the education practice. I believe it to be suitable for reviewing the change communication practice as it extends beyond the usual classifications in sociological literature namely, functional, interpretive and critical perspectives to incorporate the psychological and individual dimensions.

Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) identified five traditions of research into practice. Four of the five traditions were based on the individual-social and objective-subjective dichotomies. They believed these dichotomies to be false and to be “transcended by seeing both in dialectical terms” (Kemmis, 2003, p. 2). This led to a fifth approach integrating all four dichotomies, namely a reflexive-dialectical perspective (2003, p. 2). Each of the five approaches in relation to the change communication practice is summarised in Table 2, followed with a more detailed explanation. This framework incorporates, and goes beyond the two roles of informing and creating a community spirit in communicating change (Elving, 2005, p. 131) or the transmission model, the social construction model and the dialogic model (Jabri, 2016, p. 43).

1. Objective—Social approach

In the objective-social approach, change communication as a practice is studied objectively, as an outsider, and is focused on the social or collective perspective. Research relies mostly on social systems and functionalist approaches using quantitative and experimental methods. It is the most common approach in change management studies (Al-Haddad and Kotnour, 2015) and in practice. Communication is considered to be an instrument or a tool for change, driven with top down information, or an event (Jabri, 2016, p. 43; Johansson & Heide, 2008, p. 292). Leaders and managers provide information down the hierarchy. It is based on the message-sender-receiver model and scholarly works and practitioners focus on the communication strategy, messaging and channels, and targeting messages to various stakeholders (Lewis, 2011). The role of communication is to inform and explain the change to employees (Elving, 2005; Johansson & Heide, 2008), and is one of the steps in the process of leading and managing change (Kotter, 2011).
Table 2. Five approaches to the study of the change communication practice

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<th>1. Objective-Social</th>
<th>2. Objective-Individual</th>
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<td>\textit{Change communication is studied objectively as social behaviour}</td>
<td>\textit{Change communication is studied objectively as individual behaviour}</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change communication is an instrument or tool driven with top down information or an event</td>
<td>Communication is a mental or cognitive process</td>
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<td>\textit{Change communication is studied subjectively, as socially constructed}</td>
<td>\textit{Change communication is studied subjectively, as individual action}</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication as understanding and meaning, and shaped by discourses</td>
<td>Communication as lived experience shaped by meaning and values</td>
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<th>5. Reflexive – Dialectical</th>
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<td>\textit{Change communication as reflexive, studied dialectically}</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication as social transformation, socially and historically constituted by human agency and social action</td>
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Source: Crestani, (2016), p. 228

Larkin and Larkin (1994) criticised change communication that focused top down, arguing that communication must be receiver-centred to change behaviour. In their opinion, adopting ‘top down’ approaches led to failure, based on both practitioner and academic research of a range of change programs including mergers, major cost reductions, information technology enterprise initiatives, outsourcing, joint ventures, cultural integration and strategic change (Larkin and Larkin, 2006). They reported that it was “9 times more likely employees will support the change if they hear it from their manager compared with reading about it in the company newspaper,” and it is “almost 4 times more likely employees will support the change if they hear it from their manager compared with a face-to-face meeting with top management” (2006, p. 28).

A key role of this top down communication is to reduce employee resistance to change through reducing uncertainty and creating readiness for change (Elving, 2005, p. 131). Armenakis & Harris (2009) emphasise the importance of creating readiness for
change rather than waiting to reduce resistance (p. 129). They propose communication with five-message components based on beliefs, namely discrepancy (change is needed), appropriateness (change is appropriate), efficacy (change can be implemented), principal support (leaders are committed) and valence (change provides benefits) (p. 129). Resistance can be expressed in many ways including anger, hostility, sabotage, being critical, remaining silent, not participating, absenteeism, withholding information, humour (making a joke of aspects of the change initiative) and nostalgia (Anderson, 2011, pp. 74-75; Bovey & Hede, 2001, p. 537).

Two recent developments from an objective-social perspective that are considered to impact on the role of communication and on practice is, firstly, the rethinking of organisational design to assist organisations to respond faster to disruptions in their external environment (Kotter, 2012). Secondly, there is greater integration of change management into project and program management as discussed previously. Kotter and other management scholars believe the traditional hierarchy and processes that characterise many organisations are not agile enough to respond quickly to the increasing complexity and exponential change experienced in the business environment, compared to network structures of innovative organisations (2012). Kotter proposes a dual operating system based on an organisation design with both a hierarchy and a network that “must be inseparable, with a constant flow of information and activity between them” (2012, p. 49). This new system is reliant on internal volunteers who form a network rather than having a few change agents. He sees communication as being fluid and faster with the potential of going viral, I assume with the availability of social media platforms and their collaborative working tools, in contrast with “messages cascading down the hierarchy” (2012, p. 54).

From a practice perspective, what Kotter suggests is not necessarily new, although he proposes it as the organisational design of the future. This may reflect the lack of attention of studies on how change management and project or program management work together, which is the reality of most change initiatives in practice. One could view programs to be “organizations to manage the changes” (Gareis, 2010, p. 314), when defined as:

A temporary flexible organization structure created to coordinate, direct and oversee the implementation of a set of related projects and activities in order to deliver outcomes and benefits related to the organisation’s strategic objectives. A program is likely to have a life that spans several years. (BIS, 2010, p. 23)
Programs could be reworded as ‘networks’ or ‘communities’ to manage the change initiatives. For projects and programs, apart from its informative role, a significant focus of communication would be on envisioning and communicating the future and engaging stakeholders. The aim would be to bring employees on the journey from the current to an unknown future state. A challenge for the practitioner would be how to enable leaders to communicate an unknown future, in tangible terms to employees.

Finally, the **objective-social** perspective focuses on information about the change, rather than communication, as it excludes how employees make sense of the information for meaning and understanding. As mentioned previously, this is the dominant focus for practitioners as they prepare the communication strategy with key messages and channels for communicating the change (CMI, 2013, pp. 73-82).

2. **Objective—Individual approach**

   In the **objective-individual** approach, change communication as a practice is studied objectively, from an outsider’s perspective and is focused on individual behaviour. Research is predominantly based on quantitative and experimental methods. Communication is viewed as a mental or cognitive process and draws on theories and research from areas such as cognitive psychology, behavioural science, personality theory and more recently, developments in neuroscience. As such, the study of change communication is focused on individual needs, preferences, personality, motivation, appraisals and reactions to change. This perspective provides an understanding into how individuals perceive change, how they are likely to react to change, how they want to be informed, the type of information they want, how they would like to be involved in the change and how to deal with uncertainty and resistance to change. Practitioners use various psychological instruments to assist with communicating change, including tailoring messages for different psychological types (Short, 2005), coaching leaders and managers. Barger and Kirby (1995) focus on personality preferences based on the MBTI® to counteract the view that: “Everyone knows that people are different, yet organizations often make and implement change plans as though everyone were the same” (1995, p. 8).

   In addition to psychological instruments, Prosci® developed the ADKAR® Model in 1999 based on their research to facilitate individual change or personal transition (Hiatt & Creasey, 2003). ADKAR is the acronym for awareness, desire, knowledge,
ability and reinforcement (2003, p. 46) and is widely used by practitioners. In Australia, many organisations require practitioners to hold a Prosci® certification in addition to an appropriate tertiary qualification.

Studying practice from the individual-objective perspective highlights that it is dominated by the work of practitioners. An emerging development has been the application of neuroscience research to assist with change management, engaging employees, leadership communication and coaching. Dr David Rock introduced the SCARF model in 2008 to assist with influencing people and collaboration. The acronym stands for status, certainty, autonomy, relatedness and fairness which are the five key areas that previous academic studies had shown to create threat or reward responses in people (Rock, 2008). Based on neuroscience research, Rock states that stories “rule the day when it comes to influencing others” because stories allow people to “digest complex information faster and easier” (2011, p. 6). An important finding is that “reminding people of their past successes generates dopamine in their brains and, in the right quantity, dopamine helps people learn and to feel more positive” (Scarlett, 2015). This finding is in contrast with the many change management approaches whose starting point for individuals is to forget or separate from the past.

Neuroscience research highlights the importance of communication during change, employee involvement and developing social connections at work. This is not surprising, since Maslow, a psychologist, in 1943 identified belonging as a core human motivational need. Recent neuroscience research supports this finding as it indicates “our brains are wired to be social” (Scarlett, 2015). Belonging or relatedness (Rock, 2008) is also considered to be deeply embedded in our unconscious (Kimbles, 2006).

Schaufenbuel (2014), a neuroscientist, points to the importance of communication’s role in reducing “stress and anxiety by focusing on the positive aspects of the proposed change, asking questions, and listening actively to employees’ concerns” (2014, p. 7). Research conducted by Reissner and Pagan (2013) into management communication activities for engaging employees during a culture change, identified that employees responded positively to communication activities where they were listened to and involved, in other words, having a voice (Ruck and Welch, 2012).
In summary, the *objective-individual* perspective is popular in practice particularly with consultancies and their various psychological and neuroscience instruments and accreditation. The shortcoming of this approach is that it assumes changing individuals one-by-one, leads to change without taking into account the cultural context of the organisation or how meaning is socially constructed.

3. **Subjective—Social approach**

In the *subjective-social* approach, change communication as a practice is studied subjectively, from the perspective of an insider and is focused on the social or collective. Communication is studied as a socially constructed process through which individuals talk about the change initiative to make sense of it and “produce a plausible account” (Johansson & Heide, 2008, p. 294). Meaning and understanding are shaped through discourses using narrative, sensemaking, symbolic interactionist and ethnographic approaches. Research methods are qualitative and interpretive.

Scholars dominate studies in this area rather than practitioners. Sensemaking and narratives/storytelling are the two key perspectives in scholarly research that focus on conversation and dialogue, to understand the different realities of change.

Communication is the medium in which change takes place (Johansson & Heide, 2008, p. 294). Frahm and Brown (2005) propose three types of change communication, namely monologic, dialogic and background talk. Monologic change communication is required for employees to receive the information and make sense of it; dialogic change communication allows for collective sense-making and clarification; and background talk allows employees to voice their opinions and concerns.

Boje (2008), a key scholar on storytelling, states that storytelling is ideal for change communication to engage individuals and teams to achieve shared meaning about change. He believes organisations are storytelling organisations defined by their stories and narratives, textually, orally and visually which create the collective memory of the organisation. Reissner (2008, 2011), identifies three narratives from her research on organisational change, stories of “disagreement and confusion that reflect the ambiguity and uncertainty inherent in change”; “stories of inconsistencies and contradictions” and stories of loss and regret of the “good old days”. Based on their research, Bryant and Frahm (2011) endorse storytelling for communicating change for practice and propose a
multi-genre approach as they believe practitioners need different stories for different audiences.

While these studies indicate the importance of storytelling and sensemaking, they do not yet offer useful practical tools for practitioners. They generally focus on the ‘why’ and ‘what’ of storytelling and not ‘how’ to do it in practice. Nevertheless, storytelling is becoming a focus for practitioners with consultancies now providing training on storytelling to assist with engaging employees in change.

4. **Subjective-Individual approach**

   This approach studies change communication subjectively, with the researcher as an insider, and is focused on the lived experience of individuals, shaped by meaning, values and verstehen or empathetic understanding. It includes phenomenological, humanistic and constructivist approaches. Research methods are qualitative and interpretive.

   This perspective is usually the domain of studying the individual’s emotional reaction to change and the role of communication. The Change Curve (CMI, 2013, pp. 23-24), based on the stage model of grief from Kübler-Ross (1969), is a popular model amongst practitioners to explain employees’ emotional reactions to change, how employees cope and finally accept change (Kiefer, 2002; Klarner et al., 2011, p. 333). Each stage of the Change Curve—denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance—is used to determine the appropriate communication approach (Myers et al., 2012, p. 278). The aim of communication is to move individuals through the various stages of change with initially convincing them to “let go” of the past (Bridges, 2009, p. 23) and “move on” to embrace the change, the new vision or the future. The Change Curve is discussed further in section 2.4 on culture and emotions. One could question, is the Change Curve valid as it does not recognise positive and mixed reactions that individuals may experience? How can it apply if an individual is experiencing multiple and frequent change?

   Recently, Bell and Taylor (2011) challenged these staged approaches and the need to break with the past. Instead, they proposed a ‘continuing bonds’ perspective which accepted the past, as this had shown to be more meaningful to employees experiencing organisational change, than the “materialist, empiricist tradition of conceptualizing
change on a before/after basis” (2011, p. 6). The notion of employees letting go of the past can contribute to breeding a fertile ground for resistance.

Perhaps the subjective-individual perspective to studying change communication requires deeper attention as many scholarly change and communication models do not study in-depth the emotions that individuals experience during change (Kiefer, 2002; Myers et al., 2012; Yeomans, 2007), and the implications for communication. Scholarly works have focused mostly on employee dysfunctional behaviour and the negative emotions triggered by stress, fear and the uncertainty of change, or resistance. Bridges’ transition model (2009, p. 5) is focused on assisting individuals with the emotional side of change based on three phases: 1) ending, losing, letting go; 2) the neutral zone; and 3) the new beginning. Bridges (2009) proposes the 4P model for communicating change and involves outlining the Purpose for the change, creating a Picture of it, developing a Plan and communicating the employees’ Part in the journey.

The work of the practitioners, Noer (1993) and Barger and Kirby (1995), has been useful in providing insight from the perspective of the person ‘being changed’ and treat change as an employee’s personal experience and journey. They exposed how individuals felt isolated when undergoing change. Noer, in his pioneering and original research as a practitioner, coined the term ‘layoff survivor sickness’ to reveal the impact that downsizing, whatever its cause, had on employees remaining in the organisation. He made the observation that while companies had outplacement services for the victims of downsizing, the survivors were forgotten. Noer used survivor stories, metaphors, analogies and thematic analysis from group interviews conducted five years apart, to highlight the turmoil survivors experienced and to counteract the limited and “laboratory oriented research” at the time (p. 52).

Further understanding in studying practice is required of the positive emotions experienced with change and communication as they “may increase the level of commitment and emotional engagement” (Klarner et al., 2011, p. 333). As discussed earlier, neuroscience research revealed that reflecting on past successes helped people learn and feel more positive about change. Furthermore, individuals’ suppression or expression of emotions maybe affected by the social rules or organisational culture, which Hochschild (2003) referred to as ‘emotional labour’ in 1983 to indicate how employees managed their emotions and expressed those that were acceptable at work.
5. **Reflexive-Dialectical approach**

The *reflexive-dialectical* approach brings together all four approaches outlined above to provide an integrated approach to studying practice. This approach moves away from ‘either-or’ thinking to ‘never either, always both’ thinking (Kemmis, 2009, p. 21). Kemmis explains that “thinking in dialectical terms is to think relationally—for example, to think how the individual is made by the social, and how the social is made by individuals, and how things seen from the inside appear from the outside and vice versa” (2009, p. 21). Dialectics involves taking opposing views (thesis and antithesis) and resolving these through integration (synthesis). A dialectical approach manages the tension between the two polarities (e.g. objective and subjective) through transcendence and connection, recognising “dualities through demonstrating respect, empathy, and curiosity for differences” and using these differences to achieve insights (Bartunek & Rynes, 2014, p. 1191).

In the reflexive-dialectical approach, communication is considered to be transformative and emancipatory in being constructed socially and historically through discourses, human agency and social action. Researchers examine the relationship between communication and action, including power and dominance to “highlight the struggle and negotiation of meanings in the communication processes where change is socially constructed” (Johansson & Heide, 2008, p. 296). Importantly, it is “the translation between past, present and future discourses that allows organizational members to make the transformation from past to future organizational meanings, and to achieve organizational change” (p. 298). Research methods for studying practice dialectically include Action Research, Appreciative Inquiry (AI), symposium research, critical methods and multiple methods which can be qualitative and quantitative.

Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) proposed Participatory Action Research (PAR) as an example of a reflexive-dialectical approach to studying practice where participants collaborated in improving or changing their practice. Participants would understand their practice:

… from *both* its individual and social aspects and understand it *both* objectively and subjectively. They view practice as constructed and reconstructed *historically* both in terms of the *discourses* in which practices are described and understood and in terms of socially and historically constructed *actions and their consequences*. (2000, p. 574).
Practitioners would be involved in a process of reflection and self-reflection as insiders and “not standing outside in the roles of recorder or commentator, or above it in the roles of conductor or controller” (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000, p. 578). Communication is intertwined in the PAR process, and drawing on Habermas’ theory of Communicative Action, Kemmis and McTaggart believe that PAR “opens communicative space between participants” (2000, p. 578) through collaborating to achieve a better social outcome. Armenakis and Harris (2009) strongly advocate active participation of employees through action research, in keeping with Lewin’s original intention (1947).

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is another example of a reflexive-dialectical approach to change and is considered to be a positive form of action research. As mentioned previously, AI was first conceptualised in 1987 (Cooperrider et al., 2008) and is deeply rooted in social constructionism. It moved away from the traditional problem-focused and deficit discourse, to a generative and constructive approach that built on individual and organisational strengths. According to Cooperrider et al., (2008, p. 3):

AI is based on the simple assumption that every organization has something that works well, and those strengths can be the starting point for creating positive change.

Through AI questions, method of interviewing, focus on stories, dialogue and the participatory process, leaders, employees and change practitioners co-construct the desired change. The hierarchy is suspended and the AI process and guiding principles are considered to be energising and empowering for participants. Qualitative and quantitative methods can be used.

Given communication is central to AI (Real, 2016, p. 21; Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010, p. 82) with its emphasis on dialogue and narratives, AI could be reconceptualised as a change communication process for creating conversations of meaning and empowering employees in change. Real (2016) reviewed the role of communication and generativity in AI practice through examining communicative aspects in eight peer-reviewed AI articles published from 2009 to 2016 (p. 15). He concluded:

When organizations and groups use the AI process, they engage themselves in a communicative process, a series of interactions at multiple levels that generate ideas and maps for achieving goals based on visions developed in the process. Appreciative Inquiry provides the framework in which people socially construct new ideas through a series of communicative processes. (Real, 2016, p. 21)
The AI process that Real mentions, is the 4-D model (Discover, Dream, Design and Destiny or Deliver) which is a reflexive-dialectical approach for communicating change where the dialectical tension exists between the past (thesis) versus the future (antithesis), leading to transformation (synthesis) (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Appreciative Inquiry as reflexive-dialectical

Participants, through paired interviews and stories at a meeting or an AI summit, share the past through the discovery process, living in the present while also dreaming about future possibilities. Through collaboration and empowerment, participants design the future, identifying actions to deliver transformation of their project, program or organisation. Given AI is inherently communicative, practitioners are working ‘in’ and ‘on’ practice, collaborating with participants as partners, ‘reflecting-in-action’ and ‘reflecting-on-action’ (Schön, 1995).

The 4-D process encourages “social engagement and the reinforcement of social bonds through the exchange of stories and interpretation of each other’s strengths” (Real, 2016, p. 21). In so doing, Real suggests that AI creates a social environment that supports the satisfaction of basic psychological needs (2016, p. 19), including relatedness or belonging (Maslow 1943).
AI has been criticised for its emphasis on positivity and denying discussions about power, resistance and negative emotions (Koster-Kooger, 2016). This seems to be at odds with AI’s social constructionist stance of embracing multiple realities in denying conversations and meaning on these areas, suggesting AI “still contains positivist premises” (Koster-Kooger, 2016, p. 59). While AI deliberately moves focus away from a problem-centric to a strengths discourse, as a practitioner, I do not view negative emotions, resistance and power as bad or problems, like lack of customer focus, outdated technology and products, inefficient systems and processes, low employee retention and increased competitive market conditions. Rather, I view negative emotions, power and resistance as constructive elements towards human adaptation to change (Kiefer, 2000) and conversations on these would need to be considered in the social constructionist worldview for meaning. This view is further discussed in Chapter 3 and in my peer reviewed published article, “Appreciative Inquiry as a Shadow process in communicating change” (Crestani, 2015).

As mentioned earlier, the emerging approaches of Agile and Design thinking are collaborative and participative with communication integrated into their processes. Design Thinking is considered to be dialectical in that it aims to resolve dissonant needs through dialogue (Connell, 2013). It uses both qualitative and quantitative methods, starting with understanding needs empathetically before analysis and synthesis.

The most common framework for implementing Agile is Scrum, based on iterative planning or cycles, called Sprints (van Ruler, 2015, p. 192); the team planning meeting determines the work for that sprint. A standout feature is the daily scrum which is a 15-minute standup team meeting. Betteke van Ruler (2015) has applied the Scrum to Public Relations and has named it the ‘Reflective Communication Scrum’ (2015, p. 191). A challenge of the Scrum is that it affects the hierarchy in organisations as it works with self-steering teams (2015, p. 193). These new approaches move away from the traditional hierarchical and step-by-step linear methods where communication is one step. In some ways, they reflect the participatory methods of OD, specifically the cycles of Action Research and the Appreciative Inquiry process.

Such participative and empowering approaches can contribute to creating a community spirit which is an important role for change communication to engender commitment, trust in the organisation, its identity and its leaders, and readiness for
change (Elving, 2005, p. 133). This is in keeping with the research by Johansson, Miller & Hamrin on the concept of Communicative Leadership (2014, p. 155) where the leader “engages employees in dialogue, actively shares and seeks feedback, practices participative decision making, and is perceived as open and involved” (p. 86). This style of leadership encourages employee empowerment defined as “employees’ ability to voice their concerns, to influence their work in dialogue, and take independent action” (Johansson, 2015, p. 104). Employee voice is used “interchangeably with employee involvement, participation and empowerment” (Mowbray, Wilkinson & Tse, 2015, p. 385). For employees to have a voice, they need to be well informed, have organisational support and a sense of belonging and feel they align with the values (Ruck & Welch, 2012).

2.4 Culture and emotions

Culture is at the heart of transformational change which occurs when there is a significant shift or change in the way people think, feel, behave and work, their beliefs, values and in the underlying assumptions that affect the organisation’s purpose, strategy, structure, systems, policies and processes (Daszko, Macur & Sheinberg, 2005). In comparison, incremental change relates to continuing improvements or adjustments. The study of organisational culture has been in waves with scholars from anthropology, sociology, cognitive psychology and management contributing to this field. The tension exists between studying culture explicitly or implicitly, objectively or subjectively, formally or informally (Ouchi & Wilkins, 1985). Smircich’s and Calás’ observation in 1987 is still valid today: “the organizational culture literature is full of competing and often incompatible views. Functionalist, interpretive, and critical voices are all speaking at the same time” (p. 245).

While there are many definitions of organisational culture, Schein has attempted to make sense of the growing field of information and research about culture (2010). He provides a definition that recognises the adaptive aspect or change, and is not internally focused like many other definitions of culture. Culture is defined as:

A pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (Schein, 2010 p. 18)
Schein specifies three levels for understanding culture, both visible and invisible aspects, namely: the first level comprises the visible and conscious artefacts, behaviours, myths and stories; the second level relates to the espoused beliefs and values, and the third level refers to the invisible and unconscious basic underlying assumptions and unwritten rules (Schein, 2010, p. 24). According to Schein, it is when the underlying assumptions change that we have cultural or transformational change.

Given the high failure rate of change programs, the focus on culture has intensified recently in literature and in practice. Burke outlined the need to rethink organisational change given the difficulty with changing culture and the limited scholarly knowledge about planning and implementing organisational change (2018, p. 10). Counter to this perception, practitioners would say there are many methodologies for planning and implementing change that embrace a focus on culture, including the processes outlined by the two professional change management associations.

Smollan and Sayers (2009) state that cultural or transformational change is emotional as organisational culture is “imbued with emotion” (p. 435). Smollan and Sayers (2009) take a social constructionist approach where “emotions are phenomena that are culturally mediated and developed through interaction in social relationships” drawing from Antonacopoulou and Gabriel (2001). They propose that cultural factors “influence not merely the experience of specific emotions (such as shame, anger or pride) but also influence how appropriate their display is” (Smollan & Sayers, 2009, p. 439). According to Hochschild (2003), this is called ‘emotional labour’ as it reflects the emotions employees feel they can express openly or need to suppress at work.

Given that emotions are an important consideration in transformational change, it would appear from literature that employees’ emotional experience of change has been under-researched (Dasborough, Lamb & Suseno, 2015), until the recent ‘affective revolution’ (Barsade, Brief, & Spataro, 2003). There has been a surge in academic research into emotions and organisational behaviour in the last 15 years in the fields of psychology, sociology, neurobiology and neuroscience. In 2003, Ashkanasy developed the five level model of emotion in organisations to identify how emotions were being researched namely 1) within the person; 2) between persons; 3) interpersonal; 4) groups and teams; and 5) organisation-wide (Ashkanasy & Humphrey, 2011, p. 215).
In terms of organisational change, the main approaches to understanding emotions available to practitioners appear to be at Ashkanasy’s level 1, or within the person. The most popular is the Change Curve discussed previously in section 2.3 of this chapter. It may help some individuals express how they feel by using the labels such as anger, depression etc. In literature, however, the Change Curve is presented as if all individuals react to change in this manner. It neglects individuals who may feel positive or have mixed emotions about the change. However, with the frequency of change and the number of changes that an individual can experience at any one time, it begs the question, can an individual be at different stages on the one Change curve e.g., denial for one initiative, anger for another initiative, depression for another and so on? Or are individuals exhausted and suffering change fatigue and what may appear as denial or resistance, is self-preservation?

Grief theorists have rejected grief cycles based on detachment, stages and phases. While employees can feel positive, negative and mixed emotions with organisational change (Jones, Watson, Hobman, Bordia, Gallois & Callan, 2008; Kiefer, 2002, p. 42; Myers et al., 2012; Smollan & Sayers, 2009, p. 436), change management literature tends to focus more on the negative emotions (Jones et al., 2008, p. 5; Kiefer, 2002, p.42; Smollan & Sayers, 2009, p. 441) and resistance.

Schein names the feelings that people experience during organisational change as ‘survival anxiety’ in response to imposed change in that it implies that unless we change, something bad will happen to the individual, the group and/or the organization (2010, p. 301). These feelings can occur immediately when the change program is announced, with employees realising they need to learn new beliefs, attitudes, values, assumptions and capabilities (Schein, 2009 p. 105). This survival anxiety can be amplified if a restructure or redundancies are announced with the new change. More recent studies examine a range of emotions that employees experience during change. Palmer et al., propose that the lack of attention to emotions during change may be due to providing yet “another burden for the change manager to address – another dimension contributing to change communication breakdown” (2009, p. 297). Fox, Amichai-Hamburger and Evans (2001) point to a need to seek congruence between our cognitive perception of change and our emotional understanding of it. It is through emotional appeals that urgency can be communicated, vision instilled, and powerful change coalitions of employees established (2001, p. 85).
Recent literature states that the emotional side must be addressed before the rational side of change for successful change (Heath and Heath, 2010). Indeed, Kotter and Cohen (2002) later recognised the importance of emotions and added this aspect to Kotter’s eight steps discussed above. Research suggests that “feeling valued” can improve employees’ support for the change, satisfaction and engagement with the organisation (Stumpf et al., 2013). Yet, there are very few qualitative studies exploring what feeling valued means to employees (Claxton, 2014). These studies have focused on the meaning of feeling valued within the context of employee satisfaction, employee engagement and leadership, rather than organisational change. They are examined in detail in Chapter 4 to provide early conceptual ideas for my research.

2.5 Conclusion

A review of the literature has highlighted that despite the abundance of scholarly and practitioner approaches in change management, the current challenge is to reconsider these, given the high failure rate of change programs. Change management itself is being disrupted. The traditional approaches are criticised for being too simplistic, rational, management-driven, linear and do not reflect the complex, dynamic nature of change with organisations experiencing frequent and multiple changes. The models assume the methods will lead to success. It is not surprising, given the dominant functionalist nature of the change models, that there is limited research on the employee perspective and emotions. The dominant focus is on employee resistance and negative emotions largely due to many change management methodologies being founded on the need to break with the past and communicate dissatisfaction with the status quo. More recently, there is also a focus on creating readiness for change as a counter strategy to resistance. Elving (2005) proposed that communication has a role in creating a community spirit to assist with improving readiness for change.

Communication and culture are amongst the key reasons for the lack of success of transformational change. The literature review unearthed the five approaches to studying change communication in practice. The most common approach is viewing communication as a tool or instrument to inform employees about change (Elving, 2005). Constructive models of sensemaking, narratives and storytelling have emerged in scholarly research as other approaches of communicating change (Boje, 2008; Bryant & Frahm, 2011). Psychology, behavioural science and more recently, neuroscience,
provide another perspective for studying change communication where it is treated as a mental or cognitive process. Practitioners and consulting companies dominate this approach and are popular in the change community. Given the high failure rate of change programs, these models also need revisiting.

An integrated or reflexive-dialectical approach incorporates the four approaches to studying communication in practice, and change communication has a role in social transformation through human agency and action. This fifth approach fosters empowerment with collaborative, iterative, reflective and flexible processes found in Action Research, AI and Design Thinking.

The individual’s emotional experience of change, positive, negative or mixed and consequent implications for communication, are areas requiring further investigation. ‘Feeling valued’ is a positive emotion linked to employee support for change. The literature review suggests that there are only a few studies on understanding what feeling valued means to employees.

Having reviewed appropriate literature in my topic areas of change management, culture and change communication, I develop the research design and questions for my area of focus in the next chapter, specifically focused on feeling valued, employee experience and change communication.
Chapter 3. Qualitative multiple case study design

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the objective, research questions, epistemology, theoretical perspective and methods for a qualitative multiple case study design. Initially, I discuss social constructionist epistemology and Appreciative Inquiry-Jungian Shadow as the theoretical perspective which inform the research. This is followed with an explanation of the multiple case study methodology, sample selection, data collection and data analysis methods.

Three separate projects are required for the Doctor of Communication qualification and they form the multiple case study. I introduce each project, discuss sample selection and how the data collection and data analysis methods are implemented. Finally, reflexivity, ethics, research quality and limitations are presented.

3.2 Research objective and design

In undertaking my research, I am seeking to understand the role of communication in preparing employees for transformational change where they feel valued. In so doing, I am responding to the need for a greater focus on the employee emotional experience of change that was identified in my literature review. Furthermore, I am concentrating on feeling valued as it is an emerging concept that would benefit from further investigation particularly with the finding that this emotion could improve employees’ support for the change and engagement with the organisation (Stumpf et al., 2013). Hence, my study addresses two research questions:

1) What does feeling valued mean to employees?
2) How does communication affect employees’ sense of feeling valued in preparing for transformational change?

The specific elements of my research design are summarised in Table 3 and followed with a detailed explanation of each element.
### Table 3. Summary research design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>My approach</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Epistemology</strong> – what is the nature of knowledge and how do we gain knowledge?</td>
<td>Social constructionism</td>
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<td><strong>Theoretical Perspective</strong> – a philosophical stance that informs the research methodology</td>
<td>Appreciative Inquiry (AI) and Jungian Shadow</td>
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<td><strong>Methodology</strong> – strategy for inquiry</td>
<td>Qualitative Multiple Case Study</td>
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<th><strong>Data collection methods</strong></th>
<th><strong>Project 1. Conceptualising feeling valued</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integrative Literature Review (Torraco, 2005) to provide the initial conceptual ideas.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Project 2. Communicating new ways of working</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Case study of non-managerial employees in Organisation A.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Semi-structured in-depth interviews using Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider et al., 2008; Reed, 2007), documents and reflective analytic memos.</td>
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<td><strong>Project 3. Coping with a sea of change</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Contrasting case study of non-managerial employees in Organisation B.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Semi-structured in-depth interviews using Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider et al., 2008; Reed, 2007), documents and reflective analytic memos.</td>
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<td>Cross-case analysis involving the three projects, comparing similarities and differences.</td>
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### 3.3 Social Constructionism

My research is based on a social constructionist epistemology which proposes that knowledge, understanding and meaning are constructed through human relationships, communication and how people use language to construct their reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Crotty, 1998; Patton, 2015). It encompasses the view that multiple realities are constructed through our experiences, cultural and historical background and
interactions with people (Creswell 2013, p. 36). Crotty emphasises the importance of culture in shaping meaning, particularly in the way we see and feel things (1998, p. 58).

Over the decades, there have been debates about what constitutes social constructionism and its ontological and epistemological claims. While notions of social constructionism can be traced back to the early 20th century, it is widely accepted that sociologists Berger and Luckmann introduced the term ‘social constructionism’ in 1966 in their pioneering book, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise on the Sociology of Knowledge*. Andrews (2012) argues that Berger and Luckmann made no ontological claims as they were addressing how knowledge was constructed. Rather, social constructionism has an epistemological perspective and accepts an objective reality (Andrews, 2012). Ihlen, Bartlett and May (2011), in looking at organisational communication and corporate social responsibility refer to a dialectical relationship between ontology and epistemology, rather than an either/or situation:

> The notion of social constructionism (Berger and Luckman, 1966) is now relatively uncontroversial, at least when it is coupled with a recognition that material structures do exist and the epistemological and ontological is seen as having a dialectical relationship. (p. 10)

A closely related term ‘constructivism’ has been used interchangeably with ‘social constructionism’ although it is different (Crotty, 1998; Andrews, 2012) and sometimes both terms are incorporated under the one umbrella term ‘constructivism’ (Charmaz, 2014). Crotty (1998) clarifies the difference between the two terms and states that *constructivism* relates to the “meaning-making activity of the individual mind”, whereas *constructionism* includes “the collective generation [and transmission] of meaning” (p. 58).

Constructionist research is focused on “what is constructed and how the construction process unfolds” (Holstein & Gubrium, 2008, p. 5). Patton (2015) outlines the core questions for social constructionism inquiry as:

> How have the people in this setting constructed their reality? What is perceived as real? What are the consequences of what is perceived as real? (p. 121)

Hence, as a social constructionist researcher I would co-construct the diverse meanings of a phenomenon or situation (Patton, 2015, p. 122).
Social constructionism and communication as a process and field of study are considered to be naturally aligned. I am choosing social constructionism for four main reasons. Firstly, social constructionism is incorporated in the reflexive-dialectical approach to studying practice outlined in Chapter 2 that I adopt. In this approach, the study of practice is constructed socially and historically through discourses, human agency and social action. Multiple perspectives are valued, not an either/or thinking, rather dialectical or relational thinking. Secondly, social constructionism provides the scope to deepen the meaning and understanding of my topic and explore multiple perspectives rather than relying on predetermined hypotheses to test or to prove a particular perspective. Thirdly, social constructionism enables verstehen or understanding of the participant’s situation (Patton, 2015, p. 57) which is important in that I can empathise with participants’ feelings when they relate their experiences of change. Finally, social constructionism is my natural worldview. I am conscious that my dissertation is a social construction as I explore and co-construct meaning with scholarly works, interviewing participants, analysing their views, and discussing my research with my supervisors, colleagues and practitioners.

3.4 Theoretical perspective—Appreciative Inquiry and the Jungian Shadow

I have chosen Appreciative Inquiry (AI) as the main theoretical perspective for my research as it is one type of social constructionism in practice (Reed, 2007, p. viii) and is focused on transformational change. AI is juxtaposed with the Jungian Shadow to provide a complementary lens to my research, thereby focusing on the ‘invisible’ or unconscious aspects of feeling valued and communicating change, as well as the ‘visible’ through AI communicative processes. This can contribute to a broader understanding of feeling valued and communicating change, as explained later in the chapter. I use AI as a research method rather than as a change management approach.

3.4.1 Appreciative Inquiry

As part of its theoretical foundation, AI has a number of principles, assumptions and processes (Reed, 2007). While AI initially emerged from the Organisation Development (OD) discipline for developing positive change in organisations, it is also used as a research method (Reed, 2007), similar to Action Research. The origins of AI are outlined in Chapter 2. AI is a philosophy or a way of thinking and is defined as:

*Ap-pre’ci-ate, v., 1. to value; recognize the best in people or the world around us; affirm past and present strengths, successes, and potentials; to perceive those*
things that give life (health, vitality, excellence) to living systems. 2. to increase in value, e.g., the economy has appreciated in value. Synonyms: value, prize, esteem, and honor.

In-quire’, v., 1. to explore and discover. 2. to ask questions; to be open to seeing new potentials and possibilities. Synonyms: discover, search, systematically explore and study. (Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros, 2008)

As such, AI enacts processes that draw out the strengths or ‘positive core’ of an individual or organisation, thereby identifying what is valued. Consequently, I have chosen AI because it encompasses a ‘valuing’ lens to appreciate how employees feel valued within the context of transformational change.

(a) AI theoretical principles

AI’s eight theoretical principles underpin my inquiry. Originally, Cooperrider and Srivastva proposed five guiding principles (Cooperrider et al., 2008) which were “central to AI’s theoretical basis for organizing for a positive revolution in change” (Cooperrider et al., 2008, p. 10). Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2010) added three principles, the Wholeness, Enactment and Free-Choice principles, derived from their experience of using AI for organisational and community change.

The eight AI theoretical principles are based on descriptions in Cooperrider et al., 2008, p. 10 and Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2010):

*The Constructionist Principle.* Our words and stories of past, present and future create meaning. There are different stories and reality is subjective, socially constructed through language and conversations.

*The Simultaneity Principle.* Inquiry is simultaneous with change. The moment we ask a question, we begin to create a change.

*The Poetic Principle.* We can choose what to focus on in our story. What we choose makes a difference as it describes and creates the world we know.

*The Anticipatory Principle.* The way people think about their future shapes their approach to the future. The more positive and hopeful their image is of the future, the more positive will be their present-day action.

*The Positive Principle.* Asking positive questions engages people’s interest and involvement, leading to positive change, social connections and bonding.
The Wholeness Principle. Wholeness brings out the best in people and organisations. Bringing all stakeholders together in large group forums stimulates creativity and builds collective capacity.

The Enactment Principle. Acting “As If” is self-fulfilling. Positive change occurs when the process used to create the change is a living model of the ideal future.

The Free-Choice Principle. Free choice liberates power. People are more committed and perform better when they have freedom to choose how and what they contribute. Free choice stimulates organisational excellence and positive change.

Given that the AI principles are based on valuing the best in people, I am proposing to view my research findings through the lens of the eight principles when discussing the findings in relation to my research questions.

(b) AI assumptions

There are several assumptions that assist with implementing AI’s eight principles.

Continuity with the past is central to AI:

AI begins with a focus on organizational continuity, the understanding and appreciation of the system’s connective threads of identity, purpose, pride, wisdom, and tradition that perpetuate and connect day-to-day life in the organization. It is paramount to recognize that continuity is a necessary part of change or transformation. (Cooperrider et al., 2008, p. 23)

Consistent with continuity is the assumption that if parts of the past are to be carried forward, then those must be the best:

AI is based on the simple assumption that every organization has something that works well, and those strengths can be the starting point for creating positive change. (Cooperrider et al., 2008, p. 3)

This assumption recognises the worth and value of what has happened and builds confidence in people to embrace the change. Other AI assumptions relate to the social constructionist perspective, namely there are multiple realities, the importance of valuing different perspectives and our language creates our reality.

AI’s position on continuity is a fundamental difference to most rationalist change management approaches discussed in the literature review in Chapter 2. Regarding change readiness, or ‘unfreezing’, Lewin (1947) indicated the need to communicate a
break from the past, and to deal with the consequent resistance. Continuity is in keeping with the “continuing bonds” perspective of Bell and Taylor (2011) for grieving and organisational change.

(c) **AI processes**

At the heart of the AI processes is identifying the ‘positive core’, or organisational strengths, through the 4-D Cycle, namely Discovery, Dream, Design and Delivery or Destiny. (A fifth ‘D’ for Define, is sometimes added before Discovery where a topic for inquiry is defined.) The 4-D process begins with Discovery in which an affirmative topic is determined to value the ‘best of what is’. This is achieved through participants sharing their stories in interviews or conversations and dialogue about the affirmative topic. The output of this process is articulating the positive core. It forms the platform for the Dream phase which involves envisioning what could be the future. The Design phase engages individuals in co-constructing their ideal future while the Delivery/Destiny process is about action and how to sustain the future through learning, reflection and improvisation. The positive core is intertwined throughout the 4-D process. According to Cooperrider et al., (2008, p.3):

… AI links the energy of the positive core directly to any change agenda. This link creates energy and excitement and a desire to move toward a shared dream.

(d) **AI as a research method**

In undertaking my research, I am focused only on the Discovery process as it is the main data collection activity for AI. This involves conducting Appreciative interviews using an AI interviewing protocol and is discussed later in this chapter. AI does not prescribe a way of analysing data and can embrace both qualitative and quantitative methods (Reed, 2007, p. 53). Traditional research methods can be adopted. Reed (2007) outlines how AI can be used with other research approaches such as ethnography, case study, narrative methodology and Action Research.

I believe that AI is appropriate as a theoretical perspective and research method for my study on three levels: firstly, it is focused on transformational change, which is the context of my research; secondly, AI concentrates on valuing the best in people and organisations which is in keeping with my focus on employees’ feeling valued; and thirdly, it is communicative with its processes focused on stories and dialogues, thereby aligning with my research objective of understanding the role of communication in preparing employees for change where they feel valued.
3.4.2 Jungian Shadow

In keeping with social constructionism and the reflexive-dialectical approach to studying practice, I complement AI with the Jungian Shadow, thereby adding another perspective to co-construct meaning in my research. AI processes focus on the ‘conscious’ and visible aspects and draw out what is valued in the organisation, teams and individuals. As mentioned previously in Chapter 2, Schein proposed that transformational change occurs when the underlying assumptions or unwritten rules and blindspots, which are mostly unconscious and invisible, are changed (2010, p. 24). Perhaps AI processes tap into the underlying assumptions and ‘unconscious’ aspects, indirectly.

Nevertheless, I adopt Carl Jung’s approach to understanding the unconscious in the human psyche (Corlett & Pearson, 2003; Fawkes, 2015; Jung, 1938/1958). In particular, I want to concentrate on the Jungian Shadow, which comprises the repressed parts, both negative and positive, of our being that are unconscious to us (Fawkes, 2015; Jung, 1951/1968, p. 8). When we talk about things we normally do not feel comfortable talking about, we enter the realm of the Shadow (Fitzgerald, Oliver & Hoxsey, 2010) which “personifies everything that the subject refuses to acknowledge about himself” (Jung, 1968, p. 284). The Jungian Shadow is part of the unconscious and is not necessarily bad, just disowned (Fawkes, 2015) and:

If the repressed tendencies, the shadow as I call them, were obviously evil, there would be no problem whatever. But the shadow is merely somewhat inferior, primitive, unadapted, and awkward; not wholly bad. It even contains childish or primitive qualities… (Jung, 1938/1958, p. 78, para 134)

Furthermore, Jung stated that a deeper understanding of the dark aspects of the Shadow “that is, the inferiorities constituting the shadow—reveals that they have an emotional nature … On this lower level with its uncontrolled or scarcely controlled emotions one behaves more or less like a primitive” (Jung, 1951/1968, pp. 8-9). Fitzgerald et al., (2010) adopt a broader definition of the Shadow as “censored emotional and/or cognitive content” (p. 220).

According to Jung, everyone has a Shadow and becoming aware of it and into one’s consciousness, releases energy for growth and development, whereas pushing the Shadow further into the unconscious makes the Shadow denser:
Everyone carries a shadow, and the less it is embodied in the individual’s conscious life, the blacker and denser it is … if it is repressed and isolated from consciousness, it never gets corrected, and is liable to burst forth suddenly in a moment of unawareness. (Jung, 1938/1958, p. 76, para 131)

Hence, the Shadow can manifest itself in different ways such as anger, competitiveness, hostility, despair, confusion, scapegoating, helplessness, deceit, corruption, rivalry, (Bértholo, 2018), power dominance, resistance and anxiety.

It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to focus on the Shadow’s relationship with the Jungian concepts of the Ego, Persona and Self (Fawkes, 2015; Jung, 1951/1968; Jung, 1968; Ketola, 2012). They are discussed in my published peer reviewed article, “Appreciative Inquiry as a Shadow process in communicating change” (Crestani, 2015). My focus on the Shadow is in the narrower sense, in keeping with the current radical discourse in AI.

I juxtapose AI with the Jungian Shadow for the following reasons. One intention is to delve into suppressed and unexpressed emotions employees may experience during organisational change. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Hochschild (2003) referred to this phenomenon as emotional labour where people manage their emotions at work within accepted expectations and put on a brave face.

Furthermore, understanding the Shadow may help with understanding organisational change as employees can experience significant anxiety and Schein names these feelings as “survival anxiety” (Schein, 2010, p. 301). This anxiety arises from the feeling that unless we change, something bad will happen to the individual, the group and/or the organization” (2010, p. 301). These feelings can occur immediately, erupting from the Shadow when the change program is announced, with employees realising they need to learn new beliefs, attitudes, values, assumptions and capabilities (Schein, 2009 p. 105). Resistance is considered to be a normal reaction for individuals facing organisational change, going from the known to the unknown (Bovey & Hede, 2001, p. 534; Lewin, 1947). It is the defence mechanism that resides in their Shadow to deal with anxiety. This does not discount the recognition that some people will embrace change and the opportunities it brings.

A key reason for complementing AI with the Jungian Shadow is that I wish to contribute to the recent radical discourse led by Fitzgerald et al., (2010) which suggests
that AI’s bias towards the positive may evoke the Shadow. This discourse brings to light the discomfort that practitioners may experience in ‘shutting down’ or suppressing the expression of negative emotions, or reframing negative dialogue into the positive (Fitzgerald et al., 2010). This discourse is considered to be radical in that it moves away from AI’s sole focus on positivity to embrace the negative, not as a problem in the deficit sense, rather as a constructive approach to viewing negative emotions. Johnson (2014) states that embracing the Shadow must be done with “a radically appreciative gaze” and:

> What we typically construe as negative may actually be a potent source of insight that serves more robust “vocabularies of hope” than might otherwise be available. (p. 204)

Another reason for using the Jungian Shadow is address scholars’ criticism of AI’s focus on the positive. Boje (2010) criticises AI for ignoring the ‘side shadows’ and failing to embrace the different voices in the workplace and ambiguity. He advocates the need “to create safe spaces for those in the side shadows and the main light ... to be dialogical, to fully embody their respective standpoints and in that to achieve the cogenerativity that AI explicitly desires” (Boje, 2010, p. 240). Bushe (2012, 2013) stated that embracing both the positive focus and acknowledging the Shadow can add to the generativity of AI although he raised concern with the ability of AI practitioners to work with the Shadow. In my own experience, I have had to reflect on how to acknowledge the Shadow, particularly with difficult organisational change involving redundancies. As a counter argument, one could assert that a benefit of AI’s focus on the positive is, that even in dark experiences of organisational change, AI reminds us to search for what is good about that organisation and people, rather than potentially drowning in a sea of anxiety and negativity, based on my experience as a change practitioner using Appreciative Inquiry.

In addition, I have found it challenging to introduce AI when employees are experiencing strong negative emotions including anger, aggression and despair. Likewise, some of my colleagues have expressed a similar view to me. I found working on the Shadow opened up conversations to move genuinely to the positive focus of AI. Personally, as a practitioner, I believe ignoring the negative emotions that people express could be seen as uncaring, showing a lack of empathy, respect and authenticity. In saying this, I am always amazed by the potential of people to contribute their ideas, and their generativity, once they feel comfortable in using AI processes. Lastly and
importantly, from a change communication perspective, I wish to contribute to my supervisor’s recent introduction of Jungian psychology to the Public Relations discourse on ethics (Fawkes, 2015) with a focus on the Shadow.

3.5 Multiple case study methodology

I am adopting a qualitative multiple case study methodology as I wish to study in-depth how non-managerial employees feel valued within a real-world organisational change context. The literature review in Chapter 2 highlighted that feeling valued has not been studied in the context of organisational change. Furthermore, a multiple case study approach adds another perspective to current knowledge on feeling valued given that previous studies have mostly been quantitative surveys, classical grounded theory, ethnographic and symbolic interactionist studies. Through the in-depth multiple case study, the role of communication and how it enhances feeling valued will be investigated, thereby leading to proposing a framework of change communication processes for practice.

Yin states that a case study methodology is appropriate for understanding “a contemporary phenomenon (the “case”) in depth and within its real-world context” (2014, p. 16). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) define a case study as “an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system” (p. 37). The hallmarks of a case study, drawing from Yin (2014), Merriam (1998) and Creswell (2013), are that the object or unit of analysis is clearly identified and known as ‘the case’; it is bounded by time, space and activity; it is studied in context; it is an in-depth study; selecting the case is based on the purpose of the study; and multiple sources of evidence provide depth and breadth of inquiry (Harrison, Birks, Franklin & Mills, 2017).

In terms of epistemology, Merriam (1998) is considered to be constructivist (social constructionist) where knowledge and meaning are constructed socially (Harrison et al., 2017). While Yin may have positivistic leanings, in his recent publication (2014) he has expanded his case study methodology to accommodate “relativist or constructivist approaches and the presentation of multiple realities” (p. 188).

Yin (2014) outlines the process for conducting a case study which can be descriptive, explanatory or exploratory. He maintains that a case study addresses
research questions that ask ‘how’ and ‘why’, whereas ‘what’ questions are more suited to exploratory case designs (Yin, 2014).

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) consider that a literature review and the emerging theoretical framework provide a foundation that is essential for guiding the case study research design (p. 89). They believe that doing “a literature review is like participating in a dialogue with that community” (2016, p. 91). The aim is not to test the theoretical framework as in a positivist study. Furthermore, Yin recommends developing a guiding framework or theory for a multiple case design (Yin, 2014, p. 59) as it assists with analysing multiple case studies.

The multiple case study comprises three projects. One project is a literature review to provide early conceptual ideas; the second and third projects are case studies of non-managerial employees in two separate organisations. The three projects are outlined later under “Introducing the multiple case study” and cover sample selection, data collection and analysis. In writing the multiple case study, I adapt a structure from Creswell (2013, p. 209) presented in Figure 2. Firstly, the context (purpose, method), case description and analysis are presented for each of the three projects. Secondly, a cross-case analysis is conducted to discuss any similarities or differences between the three projects. Finally, assertions are presented about the meaning of feeling valued to employees and how communicating change engenders this feeling.

Figure 2. Structure for the multiple case study approach

![Diagram of the multiple case study approach]

Source: Author’s adaptation of Creswell’s template, 2013, p. 209.
3.5.1 Purposeful sampling

Purposeful sampling is selected to obtain information rich manifestations of the phenomenon (Patton, 2015, p. 46). For the first project, I followed the method of selecting and discarding literature following Torraco’s guidelines (2005). For the second and third projects, there are two levels of purposeful sampling, namely choosing the organisations and the people (Merriam & Tisdell 2016). I wrote to three organisations in the agricultural sector and two agreed to participate. They met the criteria of having experienced a range of transformational changes over the period 2012 to 2014. I supplied criteria for selecting participants on the basis they were non-managerial, a cross-section of the organisation and with different levels of service, age and gender. The specific selection process is outlined later in each of the projects.

3.5.2 Data collection methods

This section explains the data collection methods for the three projects. Yin recommends multiple sources of evidence for good case studies (2014, pp.105-106) where different sources of data support the research findings. As such, my multiple case study draws from literature (Project 1), interviews, documents and my reflective memos for the two contrasting case studies (Projects 2 and 3).

(a) Literature and texts

Literature forms the data in my first project. I have chosen an Integrative Literature Review (ILR) method (Torraco, 2005) for collecting data. Torraco describes an ILR as “a distinctive form of research that generates new knowledge about the topic reviewed” (2005, p. 356) by analysing, critiquing and synthesising literature in an integrated way to generate new frameworks and perspectives on the topic. With a new or an emerging topic, Torraco suggests the review “would benefit from a holistic conceptualization and synthesis of the literature to date” (2005, p. 357). The ILR is appropriate for an emerging topic, in this case, feeling valued. My literature review in Chapter 2 highlights that studies into conceptualising feeling valued are few and mostly recent.

In his article, “Writing Integrative Literature Reviews: Guidelines and Examples”, Torraco outlines the importance of describing the strategy for selecting the literature as it is considered to be “the data of an integrative literature review” (Torraco, 2005, p. 360). As such, the criteria for selecting, using or discarding the literature needs to be
outlined. Furthermore, an ILR requires critiquing the literature for its strengths, contributions and omissions.

For the second and third projects, I collected numerous organisational documents as background information to describe the two case study organisations and documented my reflections in memos. These sources of information are used “to corroborate and augment” evidence from interviews (Yin, 2014, p. 106).

(b) Appreciative interviews

In this section, I explain the Appreciative interview as it is a method for collecting data for the second and third projects. The Appreciative interview (Cooperrider et al., 2008) or AI conversation (Reed, 2007, p. 125) is the most common method of data collection in AI. Questions are framed in the positive around the affirmative topic and allow for a semi-structured conversational style of interviewing. The AI theoretical principles, assumptions and the Discovery process guide how questions are constructed to develop the AI Interview Protocol. Essentially, the interviewing protocol has three parts — questions about the best of the past, questions on current topics and questions about the future.

As mentioned previously, the Discovery process is the main data collection activity of AI. The affirmative topic for guiding question development for ‘Discovery’ in my research is:

“Engaging communication where employees feel valued in preparing for transformational change”

It is similar to my overall research question although phrased in the positive, as an outcome and not as a problem.

With this affirmative topic in mind, I adapted the standard AI interview questions (Cooperrider et al., 2008) for the purposes of my research. The Interview Protocol for my study appears in Appendix A. There are opening questions about the participant’s high points or peak experience at work, topic questions on communication, including leadership communication, culture and organisational change, all focused on feeling valued.
I have selected the AI interview method as I wish to understand, first-hand, employees’ organisational context, culture, leadership, communication, their emotional experiences of change and what feeling valued means to them. The interview process fosters co-construction of meaning between the participant and myself in an interactive dialogic manner. This enables me to clarify my understanding to ensure meaning is shared.

3.5.3 Data analysis method—Charmaz Constructivist Grounded Theory

In keeping with my social constructionist epistemology, I apply Charmaz’s constructivist grounded theory analytical method for my multiple case study as it is a systematic approach to qualitative inquiry that generates theory “grounded” in data (2014). As Charmaz states:

… researchers construct conceptual frameworks or theories through building inductive theoretical analyses from data and subsequently checking their theoretical interpretations. Thus, researchers’ analytic categories are directly ‘grounded’ in the data … This method involves the researcher in data analysis while collecting data. Data analysis and collection inform and shape each other in an iterative process. (2014, p. 343)

This analytic method provides a rigorous approach to achieving my research objective of designing and proposing a CCF for practice, using techniques such as coding, memo-writing, constant comparisons, theoretical sampling and saturation to develop a theory or framework. According to Charmaz, theoretical saturation is “the point at which gathering more data about a theoretical category reveals no new properties nor yields any further theoretical insights” (2014, p. 345).

Charmaz’s constructivist grounded theory takes the position that theory is not discovered; rather it is co-constructed between the researcher and interactions with participants, influenced by the researcher’s subjectivity. This approach involves (1) initial or open coding; (2) focused coding; and (3) constructing the grounded theory or framework. Charmaz prefers the use of gerunds or action verbs for codes rather than topics as they “bring the researcher into the data” and not as an observer when coding into topics (2014, pp. 120-121).

A variety of methods can be used for initial coding and Charmaz refers to Saldaña who has developed new ways of conducting initial coding (2014, pp. 114). Three affective methods for coding are used for my multiple case study—Emotion, Values and
Versus coding (Saldaña, 2016). Affect has been described as an umbrella term “encompassing a broad range of feelings that individuals experience, including feeling states, such as moods and discrete emotions, and traits” (Barsade & Gibson, 2007, p. 38). Each of the three coding methods is described here:

*Emotion coding* is simply labelling “the feelings participants may have experienced” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 124).

*Values coding* “assesses the participant’s integrated value, attitude, and belief systems at work” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 124). Saldaña defines a Value (V) as “the importance we attribute to oneself, another person, thing or idea” (2016, p. 131). Attitude (A) is defined as “the way we think and feel about ourselves, another person, thing or idea” (2016, p. 131). Belief (B) is defined as “part of a system that includes our values and attitudes, plus our personal knowledge, experiences, opinions, prejudices, morals, and other interpretive perceptions of the social world” (2016, p. 132). Beliefs also include anything a person believes to be true or a fact. Saldaña recognises that these three aspects can overlap. He states Values coding is appropriate for studies that investigate cultural values and for Appreciative Inquiry (Saldaña, 2016, p. 132). I am applying this method to the two organisational case studies as I am interested in the influence of culture on how employees feel valued, in keeping with a social constructionist perspective.

*Versus coding* “acknowledges that humans are frequently in conflict, and the codes identify which individuals, groups, or systems are struggling for power” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 124). Versus codes are expressed in binary terms as an x vs. y code (Saldaña, 2016, p. 298). Saldaña also suggests that Versus Coding may result in moiety categories phrased in versus terms (2016, p. 138). Moiety analysis is an anthropological/ethnographic approach to understanding culture (Wolcott, 2003). A moiety, which means “half” in French, “refers to a social structure comprised of two distinct subcultures, each of which has distinct norms and beliefs” and operate and interact in different ways (Brooks & Jean-Marie, 2007, pp. 757-758). Generally, there is “an asymmetrical power balance between them, a duality that manifests itself as an X vs. Y code” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 137).

*Emotion coding* is undertaken for the first project as it is appropriate with my focus on understanding feelings or emotions associated with feeling valued. *Values coding* is applied to the second project to understand the cultural influence on feeling valued.
Versus coding is used in the third project together with Values coding to unearth subcultures impacting on employees feeling valued.

The second cycle of Charmaz’s method is *focused coding*. This involves synthesising, analysing and conceptualising the initial codes and making “decisions about which initial codes make the most analytic sense to categorize your data incisively and completely” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 138). Consequently, a focused code incorporates a number of the initial codes. In my third project, I complement Values coding with Versus coding (Saldaña, 2016, p. 137) to better explain opposing values in Organisation B. This allows me to consider the moiety subculture interactions in relation to conflicting Values, Beliefs and Attitudes and how they manifest in communicating change.

The focused codes are elevated to *categories* rather than themes, through analysis and memo writing, raising the “conceptual level of the analysis from description, to a more abstract, theoretical level…Grounded theorists make their most significant theoretical categories into the concepts of their theory” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 341). These categories reflect patterns within the focused codes and are co-constructed as *analytic concepts*.

Charmaz’s approach is compatible with social constructionism as it has evolved today (Charmaz, 2014, p. 14) because it “treats research as a construction” (p. 13). While the terms ‘constructivist’ and ‘social constructionism’ can be used interchangeably or differently, Charmaz clarifies her position in emphasising that knowledge is constructed from social life, namely the “social contexts, interaction, sharing viewpoints, and interpretive understandings” (p. 14) which she maintains is different to other constructivists who take an individualistic perspective.

3.6 Conducting the research — Multiple case study

In this section, I introduce the three projects comprising the multiple case study and outline how the methods for sample selection, data collection and analysis are applied to each of the projects. While there are different data collection and coding methods, all three projects use Charmaz’s Constructivist Grounded theory analytical methods (2014).
3.6.1 Introducing the multiple case study

The multiple case study is exploratory and comprises three separate, though linked, projects namely:

Project 1 – Conceptualising feeling valued
Project 2 – Communicating new ways of working
Project 3 – Coping with a sea of change

The first project provides early conceptual ideas through an integrative literature review, not as a conceptual framework to be tested in the other two projects as would occur in a positivist study. Rather, the early framework is the beginning of the co-construction process and is augmented with findings from the two case studies (Projects 2 and 3) that follow. Each project is explored independently and synthesised to design and propose the CCF, drawing insights and findings from each of the three projects.

For the second and third projects, I have chosen two case studies of non-managerial employees in two different organisations with contrasting experiences of organisational change. I have selected these organisations because they are in the agricultural sector in Australia, are different types of organisations and culturally different, although they share the same goal of improving agricultural productivity and market access. They are chosen because at the time of reviewing literature up to 2014, I was unable to find any research studies published in English on change communication in the agricultural sector.

To preserve confidentiality, I use fictitious names for the case study organisations, namely Organisation A (Project 2) and Organisation B (Project 3). Furthermore, I provide a number as the identifier for a participant, for practical reasons. This approach in no way means that I consciously or unconsciously think of participants as numbers.

Organisation A is a farmer owned research and marketing company and Organisation B is an agricultural government department. Each case study is presented and analysed separately. This is followed with cross-case analysis and synthesis exploring differences and similarities in how the two organisations communicate change, how employees feel valued and the influence of culture on this feeling.
3.6.2 Project 1—Conceptualising feeling valued

My first project is an ILR as I aim to synthesise the main conceptualisations of feeling valued and develop early ideas or a conceptual foundation for the multiple case design. As such, I explore the research question: What does feeling valued mean to employees?

In conducting the synthesis of literature, Torraco states the importance of conceptual structuring the ILR, using a guiding theory, set of competing models or another approach (2005, p. 359). Indeed, Torraco asserts that:

Synthesis is not a data dump. It is a creative activity that produces a new model, conceptual framework, or other unique conception informed by the author’s intimate knowledge of the topic. (2005, p. 362)

In terms of the output of an ILR, four possible forms of synthesis are: (1) a research agenda; (2) a taxonomy or other conceptual classification; (3) alternative models or frameworks; and (4) a metatheory (Torraco, 2005, p. 363).

(a) Collecting data

To cast a net as wide as possible, I conducted literature searches on the topic of feeling valued in three stages from November 2014 to December 2017. I commenced the literature search online, using my university’s library platform with a multidisciplinary approach involving sociology, psychology, human resource management, business management, organisational communication, organisation development and change management. The search term ‘feeling valued’ yielded a vast array of documents, most of which were not relevant to my research. There were many articles that did not relate to employees and used the term ‘feeling valued’ as a phrase, or offered suggestions on how to make employees feel valued without defining or discussing what feeling valued meant to employees. In most instances, ‘feeling valued’ was simply a phrase used and not discussed.

In the second stage, I narrowed the search terms to ‘employees feeling valued’, ‘employees feel valued’ and ‘employees are valued’. This search yielded 120 peer-reviewed articles from ABI/Inform, ProQuest, Jstor, EBSCO, Emerald Journals, Taylor & Francis and Wiley Online Library databases.
For the third stage, I used Google Scholar with those search terms and this yielded many of the articles and publications that were identified during the second stage. Because this search was not limited to peer-reviewed journals, key practitioner, industry and consultancy publications were identified.

After reading the abstracts, only 20 papers or publications were deemed to explore or describe how employees feel valued. Based on the relevance to my topic, these publications were narrowed down to 17 by searching within these documents using the search terms described above. A search of academic online databases, namely researchgate, academia and questia in March 2016 and December 2017 did not yield any further publications. At this stage, I reached saturation, exhausting all possible avenues and sources.

My experience with searching for relevant data echoes a key scholar’s comment that there “are very few studies specifically exploring how people experience being valued” at work (Claxton, 2014, p. 190). This is not surprising given employee experience of organisational change is also under-researched (Oreg et al., 2014). The 17 publications relevant to the topic of employees ‘feeling valued’ appear in Table 4 which is akin to a table of sample of participants and their profile when conducting interviews for a study. The table displays the key studies, or research data, including topics addressed and type of study. There is an example in Appendix B which outlines information in greater detail including the strengths and weaknesses.

Initially, it was challenging to identify patterns that could assist with the conceptual structuring of the ILR and eventually, I was able to focus the ILR on four competing or different perspectives (Torraco, 2005).

(b) Analysing data

Charmaz’s constructivist grounded theory analytical methods were used for the 17 documents which were treated as the research data and included different forms of written texts (Charmaz, 2014, p. 45). Charmaz states that documents are an important source of data and that researchers “can do more with documents than just content analysis” (2014, p. 46). Each of the 17 publications was carefully read several times to identify the most appropriate method for analysis and integration, as most of the articles had different aims, research methodologies and different models. I read each article or
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Topic addressed</th>
<th>Study type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kahn, 1990</td>
<td>Personal engagement</td>
<td>Ethnographic/Grounded theory study involving 16 US/British scuba diver trainers at a camp in the West Indies and 16 members of an architectural firm in the USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joffe &amp; Glynn (2002)</td>
<td>Facilitating change and empowering employees</td>
<td>USA study with quantitative surveys of one global organisation undergoing change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White &amp; Mackenzie-Davey (2003)</td>
<td>Job satisfaction and feeling valued</td>
<td>Ethnographic study – 3 focus groups with training consultants in the UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robinson, Perryman &amp; Hayday (2004)</td>
<td>Employee engagement and identifying its drivers</td>
<td>Quantitative survey with over 10,000 employees in 14 organisations in the UK National Health Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iszatt-White (2005)</td>
<td>Role of leadership in making staff feel valued</td>
<td>Ethnographic study/ethnomethodological approach, shadowing College Principals and focus groups with staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iszatt-White (2005)</td>
<td>Leadership and feeling valued</td>
<td>Literature review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iszatt-White (2012)</td>
<td>Valuing practices and leadership</td>
<td>Two ethnographic studies, 1 in an educational trust and a Sixth Form College in the UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sommerfeldt (2012)</td>
<td>Factors influencing Police workforce motivation</td>
<td>Quantitative survey of 484 Police officers in Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fagley &amp; Adler (2012)</td>
<td>Appreciation and spiritual path to find value and meaning in the workplace</td>
<td>Conceptual based on literature review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stumpf, Tymon Jr, Favorito &amp; Smith (2013)</td>
<td>Employees and change initiatives, intrinsic rewards and feeling valued</td>
<td>USA study involving quantitative survey of 661 employees about a change program in Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reissner &amp; Pagan (2013)</td>
<td>Employee engagement and management communication</td>
<td>Qualitative case study of a UK company involving 25 individual interviews (15 managers and 10 frontline employees); and 2 group interviews with 14 senior and middle managers; 1 group interview with 4 frontline employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellemers, Sleebos, Stam &amp; de Gilder (2013)</td>
<td>Perceived respect, inclusion affecting team identity and feeling valued</td>
<td>Quantitative survey of two battalions in the Royal Netherlands Armed Forces, one sample of 298 participants and the other sample of 227 participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claxton (2014)</td>
<td>Feeling valued as a driver of employee engagement</td>
<td>Grounded theory (Glaser) involving in-depth interviews with 25 employees in a manufacturing SME in the UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rogers &amp; Ashworth (2014)</td>
<td>Respect and feeling valued</td>
<td>Conceptual based on literature review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutton, Debebe &amp; Wrzesniewski, (2016)</td>
<td>Being valued and devalued at work, a social valuing perspective</td>
<td>Grounded theory – symbolic interactionist methodology, involving 29 interviews with hospital cleaners and 2 focus groups with 8 cleaners.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
publication similar to reading an interview transcript. In keeping with Charmaz’s approach (2014), I used initial or open coding for definitions, the discussion of the research findings, quotes from participants, scholars’ conceptualisations, frameworks and industry research quantitative analysis to identify any patterns in the data through constantly comparing codes and writing memos. While there were some patterns, there were significant differences.

Initially, I had difficulty in constructing meaningful categories to capture the codes developed especially since codes were not solely about feelings or emotions. They included activities such as communication, performance appraisal, training and benefits, like pay. I decided to take a more intuitive approach (Charmaz, 2014). I reviewed the codes purely from an affective lens (Saldaña, 2016), given understanding feelings around feeling valued was fundamental to my research. I recoded the codes into feelings using emotion coding (Saldaña, 2016, p. 124). In the second cycle of coding, or focused coding (Charmaz, 2014), through constant comparisons of focused codes and analytic memo writing, I eventually co-constructed feeling/affective categories.

3.6.3 Project 2—Communicating new ways of working

My second project is a case study in which I explore 15 non-managerial employees’ experience of transformational change at Organisation A during the period 2012 to 2014. Over this period, employees had experienced two types of transformational change namely, a head office relocation which included a new way of working, and business unit or team restructures which changed people’s role and mode of working. The purpose of this case study is to understand, in a real life setting, what feeling valued means to the participants and the role of communication within the context of transformational change. As such, I investigate the following two research questions:

1) What does feeling valued mean to employees?
2) How does communication affect employees’ sense of feeling valued in preparing for transformational change?

(a) Selecting participants

In recruiting Organisation A, I had discussions with the Human Resources (HR) manager in March 2014 and outlined the purpose of my research and the criteria for
selecting potential participants. They were to be non-managerial employees from a cross-section of departments, with different levels of service, age and gender. A change manager, involved in the recent transformational initiative, proposed 20 employees who could meet the criteria for my research. On 7th April 2014, the HR manager sent an email to those employees, introducing my research, its voluntary nature and that I would be contacting them, if they were interested. Of the 20 employees, 15 voluntarily accepted my invitation to participate in this study, thereby forming a purposeful sample of information-rich (Patton, 2015, p. 268) non-managerial employees representing most of Organisation A’s functions within Australia. The sample profile of participants appears in Table 5 which outlines their location, years with Organisation A and the type of changes experienced.

Table 5. Sample profile of non-managerial employees for Organisation A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant ID</th>
<th>Interview date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Years with Organisation A</th>
<th>Type of Change experienced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>11-Apr-14</td>
<td>Head office</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>Move/ABW*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>11-Apr-14</td>
<td>Head office</td>
<td>3.5 years</td>
<td>Move/ABW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>14-Apr-14</td>
<td>Head office</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Move/ABW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>15-Apr-14</td>
<td>Head office</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Move/ABW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>15-Apr-14</td>
<td>Head office</td>
<td>2.5 years</td>
<td>Move/ABW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>16-Apr-14</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>16 years</td>
<td>Restructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>16-Apr-14</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Restructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>23-Apr-14</td>
<td>Head office</td>
<td>2.5 years</td>
<td>Move/ABW Restructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>23-Apr-14</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Restructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>24-Apr-14</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>11 years</td>
<td>Restructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>30-Apr-14</td>
<td>Head office</td>
<td>2.5 years</td>
<td>Move/ABW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>30-Apr-14</td>
<td>Head office</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Move/ABW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>02-May-14</td>
<td>Head office</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>Move/ABW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>05-May-14</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Restructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>07-May-14</td>
<td>Head office</td>
<td>2.5 years</td>
<td>Move/ABW</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *Move/ABW means the Head office move included Activity-Based Working

(b) Collecting data

My field entry took place about eight months after the head office relocation and I conducted the interviews over the period April to May 2014 (Table 5). There was a mixture of face-to-face and Skype interviews, depending on the participant’s location, given that the organisation was regionally spread. Ten interviews were conducted in small meeting rooms in the new head office premises and five regional employees were interviewed via Skype, as they were located across Australia.
The interviews were semi-structured in-depth conversations guided by the Appreciative Interview guide or protocol discussed earlier. Topics covered culture, organisational change, communication and feeling valued (Refer to Appendix A). All interviews were audio recorded and ranged from 35 to 80 minutes in length. I transcribed each of the fifteen interviews.

Corporate documents available online were used to build a profile of Organisation A, supplementing information gained from the interviews. Furthermore, my reflections, captured as memos, provided another source of data in the form of an AI Summary Sheet for each interview, highlighting the most compelling stories, positive themes, contributions to the positive core and my reflections, including Shadow reflections.

(c) Analysing data

Using Values coding (Saldaña, 2016), each transcript was coded for Values (V), Beliefs (B) and Attitudes (A) defined previously. I believe this coding approach to be appropriate for my study to assist with understanding culture’s influence on employees’ feelings, particularly how beliefs, values and attitudes shape the meaning of feeling valued. Saldaña recommended that Values coding was useful for exploring “cultural values and belief systems (2016, p. 132).

Initial codes, focused codes and categories were constantly compared throughout the analysis of the data. My analytic memos during this process focused on co-constructing feeling valued and how culture and communication influenced those feelings. Ultimately, analytic concepts were constructed for communicating change to engender feeling valued with underlying Values, Beliefs and Attitudes. The analysis process and findings for this project are discussed in detail in Chapter 5 with examples of analytic memos.

3.6.4 Project 3—Coping with a sea of change

The third project is a case study of 12 non-managerial employees at Organisation B regarding their experience of transformational changes over the period 2012 to 2014. During this period, the four major changes were a major restructure, a new strategic plan, a new financial management system and a move to open plan accommodation for head office employees.
Similar to the second project, the purpose of this case study is to understand what feeling valued means to participants in a real-life setting of organisational change. Guiding the investigation are the same two research questions:

1) What does feeling valued mean to employees?
2) How does communication affect employees’ sense of feeling valued in preparing for transformational change?

(a) Selecting participants

In early February 2014, I contacted the Director of Organisation B about the possibility of participants being involved in my research. Late February 2014, the Director approved the participation of their organisation in my research after discussing it with the Senior Management team. I subsequently emailed the seven branch heads, inviting them to nominate two non-managerial people from their branch (one male, one female) who had experienced organisational changes. Fourteen people were nominated and I contacted them over the next few months to explain the purpose of my research and that it was voluntary. Twelve agreed to participate, as the purposeful sample. Table 6 presents a profile of participants including their change experience, years of service in both the division, namely Organisation B and the broader department and their location.

(b) Collecting data

I entered the field in May 2014 after having familiarised myself with a number of organisational documents available on Organisation B’s website and media articles on the changes. Interviews were conducted with participants over the period 15 May to 20 June 2014 (Table 6). Given the diverse spread of participants across the region, interviews were conducted virtually via Skype, and two face-to-face interviews at two different locations. Six participants were from head office and six were from laboratories or regional centres and included research scientists, veterinary officers, inspectors, administrative and legal officers. Interviews were audio recorded and ranged in length from 30 to 90 minutes. I transcribed each of the twelve interviews.

For consistency, I conducted the semi-structured conversational style interviews using the same Appreciative Inquiry discussion guide as used for Organisation A interviews (Appendix A). I focused on asking participants what they valued about working at Organisation B, their high points, and on culture, leadership and communication where they felt valued. Participants were asked to reflect on their
experiences of the multiple changes. I prepared an Appreciative Inquiry (AI) Interview Summary Sheet (Cooperrider et al., 2008, p. 117) for each of the 12 interviews, drawing out the participant’s most compelling story, key themes for culture, change and communication as well as my personal reflections including on the Shadow. Interviews were complemented with a collection of organisational documents and media articles.

Table 6. Sample profile of non-managerial employees for Organisation B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant ID</th>
<th>Date of interview</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Years with Division - Organisation B</th>
<th>Years in another Division</th>
<th>Type of Change experienced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>15-May-14</td>
<td>Head office</td>
<td>9 years</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Restructure Financial management system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>19-May-14</td>
<td>Head office</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>14 years</td>
<td>Restructure with role made redundant Financial management system Shared responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>19-May-14</td>
<td>Head office</td>
<td>7 months</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Shared responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>20-May-14</td>
<td>Regional office</td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Restructure Redundancies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>22-May-14</td>
<td>Head office</td>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>Financial management system Open plan office accommodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>27-May-14</td>
<td>Head office</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Restructure and in new position created</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>27-May-14</td>
<td>Regional office</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>20 years</td>
<td>Restructure with redundancies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>28-May-14</td>
<td>Head office</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>Restructure Shared responsibility Open plan office accommodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>30-May-14</td>
<td>Regional office</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>28 years</td>
<td>Restructure Financial management system Open plan office accommodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>30-May-14</td>
<td>Regional office</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>15 years</td>
<td>Restructure Financial management system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>3-Jun-14</td>
<td>Laboratory</td>
<td>20 years</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Restructure Financial management system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>20-Jun-14</td>
<td>Laboratory</td>
<td>19 years</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Restructure Financial management system</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While some participants had been in constant change for several years, particularly those who had worked in another division of the same department, this case study only considers the four major organisational changes described earlier.
(c) Analysing the data

In this project, two Saldaña (2016) affective coding methods were used—Values coding for initial coding and Versus coding for focused coding. In first cycle coding, each interview transcript for Values (V), Beliefs (B) and Attitudes (A). For focused coding, Versus Coding (Saldaña, 2016, p. 137) and subsequent moiety analysis helped with constructing the feeling valued categories. This added a layer of richness to the analysis while still being able to compare the categories co-constructed for Organisation A. Referring to it as “focused Versus Coding”, I chose this approach as it better explained the data and the “intercultural conflict and opposing norms and values systems” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 137).

3.7 Researcher position and reflexivity

According to Charmaz (2014), the researcher’s reflexivity occurs throughout the research process, not as one data source as in positivist grounded theory approaches. I aim to reflect my reflexivity through writing in first person and active voice (Patton, 2015, p. 73), in my reflective analytic memos, in co-constructing meaning with participants and texts, ensuring their voices are central to the analysis (Charmaz, 2014, p. 236). This “communicates the inquirer’s self-aware role in the inquiry” (Patton, 2015, p. 73).

Reflexivity includes discussing my values, biases and experiences and how these may shape my co-construction of meaning, how I influence the research and the research influences my understanding (Creswell, 2013, p. 300). I share my experiences as a change practitioner with nearly thirty years’ experience. On a personal level, I have experienced organisational change, redundancy and the consequent unemployment and financial pressure.

What inspires me though, is being a voice for employees. As an external consultant I am not caught up with the fear of speaking up in case it affects my job. In many change projects, employees have opened up to me as a stranger, yet they would not raise those issues with their boss. I have become the translator, voicing employee concerns and suggestions in a way that connects to the leader or manager perspective.
In my early career as a change practitioner, I was somewhat rationalist in my approach as that was expected and inculcated through the frameworks available at that time. While I was exposed to humane perspectives (Noer, 1993; Bridges, 2009), these were not easily embraced by my clients. I can remember being criticised about twenty years ago, for suggesting an empathetic approach to communicating change.

Since then, I have experienced change programs that have been inspirational, particularly those that involved employees in generating innovative ideas. In contrast, I also have experienced change programs which have created enormous stress on individuals, their families and communities.

In terms of how participants’ experiences have impacted on my role as a researcher, I view my role as an ‘insider’ both as an interpreter of the participants’ reality and as a co-constructor of the meaning of feeling valued and change communication. Given my background, I agree with Patton that ‘empathetic neutrality’ is the ideal position for the researcher as it “offers a middle ground between becoming too involved, which can cloud judgment, and remaining too distant, which can reduce understanding” (2015, p. 57). The AI protocol is biased to the positive in its questions. Nevertheless, where required, I would listen to participants’ stories, even though they could be considered to be ‘negative’. As a social constructionist, I believe this is another perspective and that negative emotional experiences are part of healthy adaptation to change.

I am conscious that I am co-constructing meaning around communicating change and feeling valued with the various scholars and their perspectives. The findings are discussed and reflected through an AI-Jungian lens dialectically in relation to the eight theoretical principles underpinning AI.

3.8 Ethics

Ethical approval was obtained from the University’s Ethics Committee. Both organisation A and B agreed to participate in my research and each participant voluntarily agreed to be involved and signed a Consent form. The Participant Information Sheet and the Consent form clearly explained the purpose of my research, methods and how data would be used and handled (Patton, 2015, p. 496). Confidentiality has been achieved through adopting fictitious names for the two
organisations, not using participants’ names and removal of any other identifiers that could lead to participant exposure. Participants engaged openly and honestly in the interview process and I noted any discussions that they expressed they wanted to remain confidential.

3.9 Research quality

The criteria of trustworthiness and authenticity are often used to assess the quality of studies from a social constructionist perspective (Patton, 2015, p. 680). I adopt similar criteria, although I prefer Charmaz’s criteria for grounded theory studies—credibility, originality, resonance and usefulness (2014, pp. 337-378). This set of criteria seems to be more applicable from a practice perspective.

Is my multiple case study credible? Credibility was achieved through having multiple sources of data including literature, interviews, organisational documents and my reflective memos, and an audit trail. Utilising contrasting case studies provided a broader range of perspectives to augment research credibility. Participants were open and frank in our conversations. Perhaps the topic of feeling valued and communicating change encouraged this candour. I was able to develop rapport quickly and participants displayed a willingness to contribute to the interviews. For some, the interviews were therapeutic and I believe they valued the opportunity to speak to someone who wanted to listen to them. In our dialogic conversation I would do a member check ‘in vivo’ by restating what I heard and obtaining their affirmation. In undertaking the data analysis, credibility was gained through constructing categories that reflected the language of participants. As I am not seeking one truth, my analysis respected the diverse range of perspectives.

Originality was obtained through a complex research design that was interdisciplinary to unearth both conscious and unconscious aspects of communicating change where employees feel valued. As such, I propose a tentative framework of change communication processes (CCF) which is a new contribution. Furthermore, from an emotional or feeling perspective, I challenge a fundamental belief in the rational approach to change readiness.
Resonance is the outcome of how readers are moved by reading the rich descriptions of participants’ emotional experience of change depending on whether it was communicated effectively or poorly. Through analytic generalisation (Yin, 2014), the findings resonate through contributing to the body of knowledge on communicating change.

Usefulness is assessed through the contribution of my research to the professional practice of communication. The framework that I propose outlines processes for communicating change where employees could feel valued. While it is based on two case studies of non-managerial employees, it is useful for generating conversations in practice on the emotional side of change to enable a more humane perspective in communicating change, rather than just the dominant informative approach. Change management is complex and I consider the tentative CCF to be an additional framework that practitioners may want to consider. The CCF could also guide future research.

3.10 Limitations

One of the key limitations of this investigation is that interviews were conducted with employees after recent organisational changes had been implemented rather than at the beginning or during a change program. Another limitation is that the study focused on emotions in conversation with participants. Other methods may have been used, e.g., participants documenting their emotions in reflective journaling and then discussing these at one or more interviews. However, this approach could add additional stress and anxiety if participants are stretched for time and suffering change fatigue. Consequently, this may impact on the quality of their data. Another limitation is the focus just on the employee perspective of feeling valued and communicating change, rather than a broader perspective including leaders, managers and change practitioners.

Finally, a well-known limitation of a multiple case study methodology is the inability to generalise findings to other contexts, situations, samples or populations, as in a positivist study. The case studies are of two culturally diverse organisations within the agricultural sector within Australia. There may be cultural differences within other industry sectors and within nations that could lead to similar or different findings from my case study research. Nevertheless, the objective of case study methodology is not to generalise findings to a population. Yin suggests findings can be generalised to theory
or the body of knowledge through analytic generalisations, to add new insights (2014, p. 68).

### 3.11 Conclusion

In this chapter, I outlined the epistemology, theoretical perspective, objective, questions and methodology for my research involving three projects for a qualitative multiple case study design. While different and similar methods are used for data collection, three affective coding methods are adopted and a consistent data analytical method is implemented, using Charmaz’s constructivist grounded theory approach (2014). This consistency of methods across the three projects enables cross-case analysis and synthesis required of a multiple case design.

In the next chapter, I present the analysis and findings of my first project, an Integrative Literature Review, to assist with conceptualising the meaning of feeling valued, as a starting point.
Chapter 4. Project 1—Conceptualising Feeling Valued

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the analysis and findings from the first project, namely an Integrative Literature Review (ILR). The aim of my investigation is to generate new knowledge on the emotional or affective side of change, specifically how employees feel valued. By synthesising the literature on feeling valued, I draw out four perspectives which are described and analysed to provide the landscape that is available in English, on the topic of feeling valued. Through affective coding and categorisation, the four perspectives are integrated to identify seven feelings associated with feeling valued. Each of the seven feelings is discussed in terms of their meaning for employees. Ultimately, my inquiry addresses the research question: What does feeling valued mean to employees?

4.2 Four perspectives of feeling valued

Scholarly research into how employees feel valued at work is a recent phenomenon, despite the long-standing management rhetoric about employees being valued assets to their organisations (Claxton, 2014; Iszatt-White, 2012). Furthermore, the expressions, ‘feeling valued’ or ‘feel valued’ in scholarly and practitioner literature have been used mostly as “a taken-for-granted phrase, the meaning of which is neither explored nor defined” (Izatt-White, 2012, p. 175).

Feeling valued has been investigated mainly in literature on employee engagement and has been measured as an item in employee engagement surveys (Robinson et. al., 2004). It could also be the result of leadership or managerial behaviour that demonstrated appreciation, recognition, consultation, being accessible to employees and providing feedback (Iszatt-White, 2005), or empowerment (Bradbury-Jones, Sambrook & Irvine, 2011) or respect (Rogers & Ashworth, 2014). Feeling valued has been associated with psychological constructs such as meaningfulness (Kahn, 1990) and perceived organisational support (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Furthermore, feeling valued has been linked to motivational theory (Stumpf et al., 2013) and to felt worth, from a social valuing perspective (Dutton, Debebe & Wrzesniewski, 2016).
In Chapter 3, I outlined the ILR method (Torraco, 2005), how the literature was collected and reviewed. A total of 17 publications were identified as being relevant for my study. Torraco (2005) suggests that it is important to conceptually structure the review to organise the literature (p. 359). As such, I structure the ILR into the four perspectives identified from literature, starting with studies on employee engagement, followed by investigating three scholarly frameworks developed from research, each using a different qualitative methodology.

4.2.1 Employee engagement and feeling valued

From the literature review, it would appear that feeling valued, as a concept, had its main genesis in scholarly research into employee engagement, with some reference to job satisfaction and perceived organisational support. There were many definitions of employee engagement and by 2009 there were at least 50 definitions, creating confusion about what was meant by engagement (Truss, Shantz, Soane, Alfeś & Delbridge, 2013). To date, there are psychological, sociological, Human Resources and consultancy-led approaches to employee engagement, with no agreed definition, nor way of assessing engagement. Schaufeli (2013), Welch (2011) and Shuck & Wollard (2009) have provided comprehensive historical accounts of the evolution of employee engagement as a concept. Notwithstanding the abundant studies on employee engagement, my main focus is on two influential findings, namely the work of (a) Kahn (1990) and (b) a major industry survey that the UK Institute of Employment Studies (IES) conducted in 2003 (Robinson et al., 2004), as they provide insights into the meaning of employees feeling valued.

(a) Kahn’s personal engagement

In the literature, William Kahn (1990) is recognised as the first scholar to conceptualise personal engagement, based on an ethnographic study of two organisations—16 US/British scuba diver trainers at a camp in the West Indies and 16 members of an architectural firm in the USA. Kahn defined personal engagement as “the simultaneous employment and expression of a person’s ‘preferred self’ in task behaviors that promote connections to work and to others, personal presence (physical, cognitive, and emotional), and active, full role performances” (1990, p. 700). Many scholars have considered that Kahn’s view of engagement provided a sound conceptual basis for researching employee engagement (Rich, LePine & Crawford, 2010, p. 631).
Kahn identified three psychological conditions that were necessary for personal engagement, namely meaningfulness, safety and availability (1990, p. 703). He explained psychological meaningfulness as:

… a feeling that one is receiving a return on investments of one’s self in a currency of physical, cognitive, or emotional energy. People experienced such meaningfulness when they felt worthwhile, useful, and valuable – as though they made a difference and were not taken for granted (1990, pp. 703-704).

He described psychological safety as:

… feeling able to show and employ one’s self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career (1990, p. 708).

Finally, psychological availability was defined as:

… the sense of having the physical, emotional, or physical resources to personally engage at a particular moment (1990, p. 714).

While Kahn did not define feeling valued, meaningfulness was the psychological condition that appeared to be most closely associated with feeling valued, in that people experienced meaningfulness when “they felt worthwhile, useful, and valuable” (1990, p. 704).

May, Gilson & Harter (2004) later tested Kahn’s qualitative conceptualisation of engagement in relation to these three psychological conditions. Their research, based on a survey with 213 employees from an insurance company, revealed that the three psychological conditions of meaningfulness, safety and availability were positively related to engagement. Of these, meaningfulness had the strongest relationship with engagement (2004, p. 30).

While Kahn’s study does have strengths such as different methods, different organisations and linking to theoretical constructs, the study does not include the meaning of personal engagement when employees experience organisational changes, which is the context of my study.

(b) IES 2003 Employee Engagement Survey

As there was little academic research and limited empirical evidence in early 2000, the UK IES embarked on developing and conducting an original piece of research to define and measure employee engagement (Robinson et al., 2004; Truss et al., 2013).
While there were various definitions of employee engagement available at that time, the IES provided the following definition:

Engagement is a positive attitude held by the employee towards the organisation and its values. An engaged employee is aware of the business context, and works with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organisation. The organisation must work to nurture, maintain and grow engagement, which requires a two-way relationship between employer and employee (2004, p. 9).

The IES developed and tested 12 attitude statements and conducted a survey during 2003 with over 10,000 employees in 14 organisations in the UK National Health Service (Robinson et al., 2004). Through regression analysis, “feeling valued and involved” was identified as the strongest driver of employee engagement (2004, p. 21). It accounted for over 34 per cent of the variation in engagement scores, indicating that it was a “very powerful predictor of engagement” (2004, p. 66). Visually, IES represented the statements underpinning feeling valued and involved as shown in Figure 3 (2004, p. 22).

Figure 3. IES engagement model and feeling valued and involved

The term ‘feeling valued and involved’ described employees being included in decision-making, able to voice ideas, being listened to, having opportunities to doing their jobs better, good suggestions being acted upon, senior managers valuing employee contributions, and employer concern for employees’ health and well-being.

Through correlation analysis, the researchers identified the drivers of ‘feeling valued and involved’ with the top ones being training, development and career, immediate
management, performance and appraisal, communication, equal opportunities and fair treatment, and pay and benefits (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Drivers of feeling valued and involved

While there were questions in the survey on the impact of organisational change on individuals, there was no mention how change affected employee engagement or feeling valued.

4.2.2 Scholars conceptualising feeling valued

While quantitative surveys on employee engagement may include one or several questions to measure feeling valued, the literature review in Chapter 2 highlighted that there were very few qualitative studies exploring how employees feel valued at work (Claxton, 2014; Iszatt-White, 2012; White & Mackenzie-Davey, 2003). My literature search, based on publications in the English language, revealed that there were only three scholarly frameworks conceptualising what feeling valued meant within the context of work, with the first study published in 2003. The three frameworks from qualitative studies were developed by (a) Iszatt-White (formerly White as in White & Mackenzie-Davey, 2003), (b) Claxton (2014) and (c) Dutton et al., (2016). Other scholars have used the term feeling valued as an outcome of certain activities being undertaken in the organisation. For example, Reissner and Pagan (2013) identified how certain management communication activities led to employees feeling valued without
defining what feeling valued meant. Each of the three scholarly frameworks is named by their author for convenience, and is described below.

(a) Three clusters of feeling valued—Izsatt-White

The first qualitative study on feeling valued was the ethnographic research conducted at an educational charitable trust in the UK involving three sample groups, namely corporate training consultants and associate training consultants at the trust and, for contrast, training consultants at a commercial organisation. White and Mackenzie-Davey conducted the study in 2002 and were specifically interested in understanding “What makes employees feel valued by their employer?” (2003, p. 228). They defined feeling valued as:

> A positive affective response arising from confirmation, within a congruent set of criteria, of an individual’s possession of the qualities on which worth or desirability depends (2003, p. 228).

Their research identified three clusters from the themes that emerged from the three focus groups, namely ‘fairness’, ‘environment’ and ‘inclusion’ as illustrated in Figure 5. For each of the three clusters, there were a number of associated factors. Inclusion related to the organisation’s efforts to make employees feel part of the organisation (2003, p. 229) through communication, giving employees’ a voice, employees being involved and participating and having shared values. Fairness themes included procedural justice, distributive justice, transparency and consistency related to employees’ “perceptions of justice in relation to organizational processes” (2003, p. 228). The Environment cluster comprised the context in which individuals worked and contained “a wide range of differing aspects” (2003, p. 229) with the common theme that they were “something the organization does or gives to the employee” (2003, p.229). It included pay, organisational support, inspirational leadership, recognition, trust, feedback, organisational reputation and personal development.

While the Fairness and Inclusion clusters were important to a specific sample group, the Environment cluster was important to all three groups, leading the researchers to “propose the hypothesis that the environment cluster is the true domain of feeling valued” (White & Mackenzie-Davey, 2003, p. 233).
Given this was a qualitative study, finding the ‘truth’ about feeling valued would be more appropriate for a positivist study. Perhaps the researchers could have just mentioned the relevance of the Environment cluster to all three groups without pinpointing that because of this finding, it must be the “true domain of feeling valued” (p. 233). After all, this finding was based on the researchers’ interpretation of one qualitative study in the education sector. Perhaps, feeling valued may be interpreted differently in other industry sectors and cultures and with a different emphasis of the three clusters.

Following the initial study in 2002, Iszatt-White (2005) investigated the role of leadership in contributing to staff feeling valued in an ethnographic study of college principals, senior managers and college staff in the further education sector. Her focus was on understanding “to what extent staff felt valued by practices designed to achieve that end” (2005, p. 2). Iszatt-White introduced the concept of “valuing practices”, defining these as “behaviours intended to express value for or show appreciation of the work of staff – are inherently communicative and, by their nature, embedded in the day-to-day work of leadership” (2005, p. 2). From her findings, feeling valued to employees meant “the personal touch”, being “known as individuals and valued individually for what they do” i.e., “the kind of interaction in which the leader demonstrates genuine knowledge of and concern for the person in front of them” (2005, p. 4); a developmental approach with opportunities to improve; “recognition of the difficulties of their job, or
their personal commitment in dealing with them” (2005 p. 4), and being consulted on issues of importance to them.

It is interesting to note that recognition of the difficulties of their job and being consulted were revealed through their absence which made employees feel devalued or undervalued (2005, p. 4). Being trusted was identified as an important component of feeling valued and highlighted through a culture that created distrust i.e., an “audit culture” (2005, p. 5) where individuals felt they were “being constantly checked up on” rather than “being consulted on issues related to one’s job, having delegated responsibility for one’s area of expertise, or sometimes just being left to get on with it” (2005, p. 5). A support staff in the study summarised this by saying, “I feel valued when I’m trusted” (2005, p. 5).

Following this study, Iszatt-White (2012) examined employee expectations of feeling valued impacted by management rhetoric, using the two previous research studies outlined above. Other constructs that could be related to feeling valued were reviewed such as job satisfaction, organisational commitment, positive organisational support, Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) and psychological contract. Iszatt-White concluded that these constructs were not “concerned with an intrinsic, emotional response by an individual, to some act or behaviour they experience from their employer as personified by those they consider as their leaders” (2012, p. 177). As a result of reviewing these studies, Iszatt-White (2012) positioned feeling valued in the affective or emotional domain, where leaders had an important role in influencing employees’ sense of feeling valued. Iszatt-White refined the original definition of feeling valued to:

… an intrinsic, emotional response by an individual, to some act or behaviour they experience from their employer as personified by those they consider as their leaders. It required a congruent set of criteria of what skills, behaviours, etc., are to be valued, and is occasioned by receipt of individual recognition of the specific skills being exercised. (2012, p. 177)

Izatt-White’s three clusters of feeling valued perspective was the first qualitative attempt at unpacking what feeling valued meant to employees, based on research in the educational sector in the UK. The studies examined what made employees feel valued at work within the context of job satisfaction and provided rich insight into the day-to-day meaning of how leaders exercised valuing practices that engendered employees feeling valued. Nevertheless, the refined definition of feeling valued appears to be narrowly
anchored in the Environment cluster with the focus on leadership and recognition of employee skills, rather than a broader perspective of the earlier definition and appreciating the Inclusion and Fairness clusters. The refined definition also assumes that leaders are the sole source of how employees feel valued, whereas the original definition does not have this limitation. There is no sense of how colleagues, peers, the team and customers may influence employees’ sense of feeling valued. Leaders may not always be the source of employees feeling valued and may also contribute to employees feeling devalued. Finally, Iszatt-White’s focus is mostly on individuals and not in detail on the role of culture, power relationships or how organisational change impacts on employees’ sense of feeling valued.

(b) Three cogs of being valued—Claxton

Claxton (2014) proposed the second scholarly framework conceptualising how employees feel valued at work. Her particular focus was on understanding “how employees deduce that they are valued by their organisation; what information tells them that they are valued; and how they come to a ‘knowing’ that they are valued” (Claxton, 2014, p. 188). Claxton conducted a qualitative study of a small-medium enterprise (a catering company in the UK) using a classical Glaserian grounded theory approach. Her study was based on semi-structured interviews with a purposeful sample of 15 employees and then another 10 in-depth interviews through theoretical sampling. She was interested in employee engagement and its link to feeling valued that the IES research had identified (Robinson et al., 2004) and discussed earlier in this Chapter. Unlike Iszatt-White (2012) who defined feeling valued as “an intrinsic, emotional response” (p. 177), Claxton defined feeling valued as:

… a common way to express a perception, an understanding and it does not necessarily relate to an emotion as such. The term ‘feeling valued’ is used to mean a knowing, a believing that one is valued” (2014, p. 190).

From her research, Claxton conceptualised three interrelated dimensions underpinning feeling valued and developed the “three cogs of being valued” (Figure 6), namely, “authentic-pride enablement”; “altruistically-orientated shared-purpose”; and “servant-leadership” (2014, p. 194). In addition to the three cogs, Claxton found that trust was a common thread in relation to employees being trusted to do quality work.
Figure 6. Claxton’s three cogs of being valued

Source: Claxton (2014, p. 196)

**Authentic-pride enablement.** Pride was identified as a key element of feeling valued, “a strong emotion which acted as a driver, a motivator” (2014, p. 194). Five factors associated with pride were identity, output, personal interactions, culture/ethos and working practices. There was also a present and future aspect to pride (2014, p. 195). Claxton summarised it as:

… a genuine positive feeling and perception of having acted in an authentic manner to bring about laudable results either in outcome, process or interaction that was beneficial not only to self but also to others. The finding from this study is that people will feel valued when pride is defined by the employee and that current pride and aspirational pride is honoured and enabled by the organisation. (2014, p. 195)

**Altruistically-orientated shared-purpose.** In conceptualising “altruistically-orientated shared purpose,” Claxton drew numerous examples from the data to highlight acts of unselfishness and employees valuing others which was “more than respect” (2014, p. 296). She interpreted this behaviour to be indicative of altruism, also highlighted through “mutual sacrificing” (2014, p. 296) with examples of people taking pay cuts, giving up hours to save people from being made redundant etc. Claxton linked altruism to shared purpose relating to “working together as a team” and “we are like family”, indicating a sense of belonging (2014, p. 296).
**Servant-leadership.** Claxton’s research indicated that employees felt valued when “leadership was seen as supportive and highly approachable, valuing individuals for who they were and involving them in idea development and decision-making” (2014, p. 197). Listening was important. Claxton also discussed stories of grace where individuals were given “chances of redemption” and supported in times of need (2014, p. 198). She described these leadership behaviours as “servant-leadership” after reviewing literature on this topic and referred to the Holy Bible and to Greenleaf who coined the term “servant-leader” (Claxton, 2014, p. 198).

Overall, I found it difficult to arrive at an understanding of whether Claxton meant ‘feeling valued’ or ‘being valued’ as throughout the article there were many references to ‘feeling valued’. Yet, the central feature in her proposed three cogs model (Figure 6) is being valued i.e., “a perception or understanding rather than an emotion” (2014, p. 190). Claxton (2014) identified some key emotions in her study, namely pride and trust. I can only assume there was no difference between the two expressions of ‘being valued’ or ‘feeling valued’ as the author used these phrases interchangeably. Unlike Iszatt-White (2012), Claxton (2014) goes beyond leadership and suggests that the team and colleagues may influence an individual’s sense of feeling value. Nevertheless, there was little discussion on the role of communication on feeling valued, and the context of the study was not organisational change.

(c) **Social Valuing framework—Dutton et al., 2016**

Dutton et. al., (2016) developed a Social Valuing framework in 2012 based on how daily interactions at work led to individuals feeling valued or devalued, using the lens of symbolic interactionism. They conducted their study with hospital cleaners, analysing their stories using a grounded theory method to understand “how individuals derive a sense of worth on the job” (2016, p. 3). They conducted two focus groups with eight cleaners followed by interviews with 29 cleaners, randomly selected. The research revealed the many ways employees can sense feeling valued through valuing and devaluing acts of others (2016 p. 34), as portrayed in the framework of Social Valuing Processes at work (Figure 7).
This framework proposes that “employees actively interpret the meaning of how others treat them at work to gauge a sense of worth. Felt worth describes individuals’ sense of importance accorded to them by others” (2016, p. 3). Cleaners felt valued when their interactions with patients, visitors, nurses and doctors made them feel they were a member of the hospital group or team, they were recognised, had feedback and the actions of others made their jobs easier (2016 p. 26). Devaluing interactions involved not recognising a cleaner’s presence, communicating disgust and distrust of the cleaner, making the cleaner’s job more difficult and communicating negative information to the cleaner. The authors proposed that these valuing or devaluing acts created a sense of felt worth (2016 p. 35). When cleaners felt others regarded them as important, they experienced “positive feelings such as pleasantness, appreciation, and gratitude” (2016 p. 35). When they were treated as unimportant, the cleaners felt hurt, anger, frustration and sadness.
The Social Valuing framework looks beyond leadership, team and colleagues in the previous two frameworks, to suggest that daily interactions at work with a broad category of “others” (in this case, doctors, nurses, patients, visitors) could affect how individuals feel valued. Furthermore, findings were provided on both valuing and devaluing interactions for both emotions/feelings and cognitions. Because of this individual interaction focus, there was no discussion of how organisational communication or culture impacted on feeling valued and whether the participants were experiencing organisational change.

### 4.3 Integrating the four perspectives of feeling valued

In this section, I outline the ILR process I used to integrate the four identified perspectives of feeling valued, how I co-constructed the meaning of feeling valued and then propose some early conceptual ideas. Initially, I examine the four perspectives for their similarities and differences.

#### 4.3.1 Similarities and differences

In reviewing the four perspectives, even at a cursory glance, one can quickly pick up some similarities and differences. Feeling valued is an implied psychological condition when employees are engaged in meaningful activity, feeling worthwhile and making a difference (Kahn, 1990); there are certain attitudes identified as being associated with feeling valued that engage employees (Robinson et al., 2004); feeling valued is considered to be an intrinsic emotional response (Iszatt-White, 2012) or a perception of employees knowing when they are being valued (Claxton, 2014); and emotions and cognitions have been identified as being linked with feeling valued and devalued (Dutton et al., 2016).

While each perspective has a different focus, there are similarities between some of their findings and these are captured in Table 7. Trust, employees having a voice and contributing to decisions, being informed, transparency, inspirational leadership, feeling supported, doing something meaningful, caring about people’s well-being, feeling accepted, being treated fairly, personal development and growth, performance feedback and recognition were mentioned in most of the perspectives. Pay and benefits was mentioned only in the IES study and Iszatt-White framework and the latter appeared to
Table 7. Similar and different perspectives of the meaning of feeling valued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspective</th>
<th>Engagement studies</th>
<th>Three-clusters of feeling valued</th>
<th>Three cogs of being valued</th>
<th>Social Valuing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Kahn</td>
<td>IES*</td>
<td>Iszatt-White*</td>
<td>Claxton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial codes</td>
<td>Psychological condition</td>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>Emotional response</td>
<td>Perception</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Similarities &amp; differences:</th>
<th>Psychological condition</th>
<th>Attitudes</th>
<th>Emotional response</th>
<th>Perception</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnographic studies</td>
<td>Ethnographic studies</td>
<td>Quantitative survey</td>
<td>Ethnographic studies</td>
<td>Classical Grounded Theory</td>
<td>Symbolic interactionism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling trusted/empowered/distrust</th>
<th>Kahn</th>
<th>IES*</th>
<th>Iszatt-White*</th>
<th>Claxton</th>
<th>Dutton et al.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having a voice/being listened to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing/participating/involved in decisions/transparency/fair decisions</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being treated fairly/mutual valuing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Being rewarded fairly/pay and benefits/transparency</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Encouraging personal development and growth</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving feedback</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving recognition, appreciation, respect</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being informed/communication/transparency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Having inspirational leaders/immediate management/trusted leaders</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling supported/mutual support/mutual job security/mutual sacrificing/altruism</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing something meaningful/pride in quality of work</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring about employees’ well-being/grace/chance for redemption</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belonging, feeling accepted/feeling important/shared purpose/being part of a team/culture/shared values/building a community</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation reputation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistency in decisions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: ^ Robinson et al., 2004 *Includes White & Mackenzie-Davey, 2003
be the only one to identify organisational reputation and consistency in decisions as being important to employees feeling valued.

From a social constructionist view, all these perspectives of the meaning of feeling valued are respected; there is not one perspective that is privileged over the other. The aim is not to reduce the meaning of feeling valued to a simple definition, rather to embrace the similarities and differences.

4.3.2 An integrative perspective of feeling valued

On first reading of the four perspectives, I was optimistic that I would be able to integrate them despite the different methodologies, samples and language. My initial coding attempt resulted in a jumbled array of codes that made some sense, as displayed in Table 7, although not ‘feeling’ specific in all cases. While some studies identified feelings (e.g., belonging, appreciation, trust, grateful), other studies used labels (e.g., communication, pay, organisational reputation, fair decisions), or they had a mixture of both. At this point of the analysis of trying to make sense of the different codes, I realised that I need to focus the codes and co-construct the categories (Charmaz, 2014) with an affective lens using Emotion coding (Saldaña, 2016, p. 124), given my focus on understanding feeling valued. Affect can be thought of as an overarching term covering “a broad range of feelings that individuals experience, including feeling states, such as moods and discrete emotions, and traits, such as trait positive and negative affectivity” (Barsade & Gibson, 2007, p. 38). I am more interested in feelings in the sense of an emotional experience rather than discrete emotions as literature suggests this approach is important for constructing meaning of the change process (Kiefer, 2002, p. 58). Once I took this position, patterns emerged and I was able to co-construct seven feeling categories from the initial codes and focused codes (Charmaz, 2014). I have written the seven feeling categories as gerunds, in keeping with Charmaz’s approach of using action verbs to describe codes and categories (2014, pp. 120-121). The seven co-constructed feeling categories for feeling valued at work are belonging, contributing, supporting, trusting, respecting, appreciating and meaning. Each category is discussed separately and Table 8 summarises the key meanings of each feeling and the multiple perspectives contributing to that meaning. The feelings may not fit neatly into these descriptions and there may be some overlapping; hence they are not mutually exclusive.
They are not outlined in any specific order or priority. They are simply my co-constructions of the literature of what feeling valued may mean to employees.

The meaning of each of the seven feelings is discussed in relation to the four perspectives of feeling valued.

(a) Belonging

Based on the scholarly frameworks investigated, employees feel valued when they feel they belong, meaning they feel part of the team or group (Claxton, 2014; Dutton et al., 2016), or part of the organisation and are aligned to the organisation’s purpose and values (Claxton, 2014; Dutton et al., 2016; Iszatt-White 2012), or are kept informed (Iszatt-White, 2012), are socially accepted and not taken for granted (Dutton et al., 2016; Kahn, 1990). White & Mackenzie-Davey (2003) referred to inspirational leadership and leaders’ valuing practices (Iszatt-White, 2005) as enabling employees to feel valued as they provided a sense of belonging. White and Mackenzie-Davey (2003) do not define inspirational leadership except for providing transparency in the employee’s role in the organisation.

(b) Contributing

Employees feel they are valued when they are able to contribute both now and in the future, through voicing their ideas and opinions (Robinson et al., 2004; White & Mackenzie-Davey, 2003, Claxton, 2014), or when are they involved in decisions (Robinson et al., 2004; Iszatt-White 2012; Claxton, 2014), or able to give to others and make a difference (Kahn, 1990). By contributing, employees feel proud through quality work, achievements, their abilities, teamwork, trustworthiness and innovation (Claxton, 2014, pp. 194-195). Dutton et al., identified cleaners had pride in doing vital work (2016). Pride emerged as a strong emotion in Claxton’s research in influencing employees’ sense of feeling valued (2014, p. 194). Claxton summarised pride as:

… a genuine positive feeling and perception of having acted in an authentic manner to bring about laudable results either in outcome, process or interaction that was beneficial not only to self but also to others. (p.195)
Table 8. Coding, categories for meaning of feeling valued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial codes and perspective</th>
<th>What it means for employees – focused coding</th>
<th>Feeling Valued Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feeling part of the team, family, culture; building a community; having shared purpose (Claxton)</td>
<td>Feeling part of the team, having shared values, purpose</td>
<td>Belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling socially included and accepted; being treated as important, member of team, group (Dutton et al.)</td>
<td>Feeling able to contribute both now and in the future</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating, being informed, having shared values, inspirational leadership (Izszatt-White)</td>
<td>Feeling supported, secure and developing personally</td>
<td>Supporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling not taken for granted (Kahn)</td>
<td>Feeling trusted, empowered and accountable</td>
<td>Trusting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling listened to, having a voice (IES, Izszatt-White; Claxton)</td>
<td>Feeling respected and rewarded fairly</td>
<td>Respecting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being proud, able to contribute, valuing ideas (Claxton)</td>
<td>Feeling appreciated, having feedback, gratitude and recognition</td>
<td>Appreciating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling involved in decisions, fair decisions (IES; Izszatt-White; Claxton)</td>
<td>Feeling of doing something worthwhile at work</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling able to give to others, making a difference (Kahn)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring about employees’ well-being; caring for each other (Claxton; IES)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual job security, mutual support (Claxton)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging personal development and growth (IES; Izszatt-White; Claxton)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Having grace, redemption, mutual sacrificing, altruism (Claxton)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feeling able to receive from others (Kahn)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Trusting, feeling trusted, mutual accountability (Claxton)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Trusting leaders (Claxton)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Feeling empowered when trusted (White &amp; Mackenzie-Davey; Izszatt-White)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Feeling distrusted (Dutton et al.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being transparent in communication (Izszatt-White)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Feeling respected from others (Dutton et al.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Being treated fairly, consistently; having distributive justice, procedural justice, transparent with how people are rewarded (Izszatt-White)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Having fair pay and benefits (IES; Izszatt-White)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experiencing pleasure, gratitude, appreciation, positive or negative feedback (Dutton et al.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Receiving recognition (Izszatt-White)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Having performance feedback (IES; Izszatt-White)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling pride with recognition (Claxton)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiencing meaningfulness (Kahn)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
(c) Supporting

When employees feel supported, secure and able to develop personally, they feel valued (Claxton, 2014; Iszatt-White 2012; Robinson et al., 2004). Supporting also includes caring about employees’ well-being, caring for each other (Claxton, 2014; Robinson et al., 2004), having mutual job security and mutual support including redemption for mistakes (Claxton, 2014) and feeling able to receive from others (Kahn, 1990). There is reciprocity or the idea of mutual support and sacrificing underpinning Claxton’s “altruistically-orientated shared-purpose (including mutual sacrificing)” (p. 194). Examples from the Claxton’s qualitative study were (p. 193): mutual job security—“We all care that we all have jobs”; mutual sacrificing/altruism —employees sacrificing part of their pay to save their colleagues’ jobs or giving up privileges; and mutual valuing—seeing individuals as equal in value.

Organisational support for employees is considered to be an important component of the concept of feeling valued (Iszatt-White, 2012). Iszatt-White’s “Environment Cluster” included the more practical aspects of support, namely systems and resources to make an employee’s job easier (2012). Employees feel supported or that the organisation cares for them through appropriate pay and benefits (White and Mackenzie-Davey, 2003; Robinson et al., 2004), where they feel rewarded for their achievements. White and Mackenzie-Davey (2003) make the comment that where pay is perceived to be inadequate, employees feel devalued and that “personal recognition of an individual’s contribution seems to be more important to feeling valued than pay” (p. 230).

Employees feel supported and valued when their organisation invests in their personal development, growth and career advancement (White & Mackenzie-Davey, 2003; Robinson et al., 2004; Claxton, 2014). Similarly, this is the case where employees feel that their organisation or supervisor cares about their health and well-being (Robinson et al., 2004; Claxton, 2014). This would include caring for an employee who is experiencing difficulty or illness at work or within their family and the chance for redemption for poor behaviour which Claxton (2014) conceptualised as grace. In terms of support, employees feel valued when they are supporting each other, the organisation supports them, they feel secure and are developing personally.
(d) Trusting

Central to employees’ feeling they are trusted and have autonomy. Trust is at the core of employees feeling empowered as illustrated in a participant’s comment from White and Mackenzie-Davey’s research:

… a sense of being trusted to do good work, rather than being monitored, supervised… You have a lot of freedom to deliver in the way you decide you want to do it. (2003, p. 231)

Similarly, in Claxton’s study, trust was associated with doing quality work and also being trusted in personal interactions, as a team player and having trust in leaders (2014). Trust was a thread underpinning Claxton’s ‘three cogs of being valued’ model (Figure 6).

In their study of hospital cleaners, Dutton et al., (2016) discussed stories of cleaners feeling devalued and hurt when they were treated as being untrustworthy, possibly influenced by the occupational stereotype that cleaners “steal, lie, and generally cannot be trusted” (p. 19) as illustrated in these stories:

First, there was the story of Miriam who, after picking up leftovers, which was common practice, was accused and treated as a person who had stolen food from others and almost lost her job. A second story takes the issue of accusations of doing a poor job much further. A serious allegation was made against Kyle, whose involuntary delay in preparing a patient’s room was used as a basis for blaming him for a patient’s death. (2016, p. 21)

Iszatt-White (2005) raised the issue that how employees experience trust or distrust was influenced by the culture as in the case of an audit culture with a focus on monitoring, compliance, inspection and evaluation.

Based on their research, both Claxton (2014) and Izzatt-White (2005) attribute the leadership style as impacting on whether employees feel valued and empowered. Having trust in leaders is important (Claxton, 2014). The leadership style that influences employees’ sense of feeling valued is one where the leadership is “seen as supportive and highly approachable, valuing individuals for who they were and involving them in idea development and decision making … listening, valuing ideas and sharing decision making” (p. 197). Claxton suggests that a servant-leader approach best describes the leadership style from the research, namely one that is based on “vision; honesty; integrity; trust; service; modelling; pioneering; appreciation of others and empowerment” and “grace and self-sacrificing” (p. 198).
(e) Respecting

Employees feel valued when they feel respected and rewarded fairly, including being transparent in how people are rewarded (Iszatt-White, 2012). Respect is felt through different ways such as displays of fairness (Iszatt-White, 2012) and includes fair and equal treatment (Robinson et al., 2004, ISzatt-White, 2012). Dutton et al., argue that felt worth is a fundamental gauge of social inclusion and respect from others (2016). Disabling acts (e.g., others not picking up their own messes, lack of consideration of cleaners) increased the amount of time that cleaners had to spend doing their work while at the same time conveying a lack of respect for their job (Dutton et al., 2016). This story captures the lack of consideration and respect accorded to a cleaner:

Several of the patients’ visitors are not respectful of my cleaning and will often track through an area where I am mopping. I think that this indicates they don’t care about the cleaning people. I feel that this was very inconsiderate that they would go ahead and walk right through my mopping area. (p. 24)

Correspondingly, enabling acts (e.g., getting out of the way in anticipation of a cleaner’s need to work), made doing the work easier in terms of time and difficulty, while signalling respect (Dutton et al., 2016) as illustrated in this story:

I have some nurses who’ll move equipment for me instead of looking at me like, ‘Oh, he’s a housekeeper, he can move it himself.’ I feel that puts us on the same, as far as they can respect my job just as well I respect their job. (p. 31)

(f) Appreciating

Recognition of a person’s skills, a job well done or contribution, praise, feedback and gratitude all feed into an employee’s sense of feeling valued (White & Mackenzie-Davey, 2003; ISzatt-White, 2012; Claxton, 2014; Robinson et al., 2004). This is captured in an example from White & Mackenzie-Davey’s research:

… [it's] that personal recognition, that word of thanks, that comment that I've done well, that pat on the back, that doesn't take much to do but actually goes a long way to making you feel valued. (2003, p. 230)

In their study of hospital cleaners, Dutton et al., (2016) examine the impact of recognising and not recognising a cleaner’s presence on feeling valued (p. 36). Valuing practices are defined as “behaviours intended to express value for or show appreciation of the work of staff – are inherently communicative and, by their nature, embedded in the day-to-day work of leadership” (Izszatt-White, 2005). Examples from the research include leaders being accessible to employees, providing feedback including constructive criticism, acknowledging staff, recognising the difficulties of an individual’s job, consulting staff and so on. Essentially, employees “feel valued by the
‘personal touch’: they want to be known as individuals and valued individually for what they do” and collective statements like “‘You’ve all done very well’ leaves everybody feeling undervalued!” (Iszatt-White, 2005). Their findings reveal that collective appreciation leads to some people feeling devalued. In summary, employees feel valued when they are appreciated and this means receiving feedback (Robinson et al., 2004), gratitude and recognition.

(g) Meaning

Kahn states that individuals experience psychological meaningfulness when they feel valued and are able to do something worthwhile at work (1990, p. 704). The findings of his research indicate that meaningfulness is influenced by the tasks, roles that individuals perform and their work interactions (p. 704). In terms of tasks, when individuals are doing work that is “challenging, clearly delineated, varied, creative, and somewhat autonomous, they are more likely to experience psychological meaningfulness” (p. 704). Furthermore, meaningful tasks require both new and routine skills, “allowing people to experience a sense of both competence (from the routine) and growth and learning (from the new) (p. 704).

With regard to roles, the power underlying their status determines whether individuals feel valued or otherwise (p. 706). This is based on the assumption that people generally feel powerless and “search for ways to feel important and special” (p. 706). Individuals feel valued when they have influence and are treated as being needed and important, hence they fulfil a meaningful role in the organisation. In terms of identities, roles can require individuals to perform a specific identity which an individual may or may not like and may need to suppress their emotions as Hochschild (2003) encountered in her study of flight attendants. An example of this emotional labour is illustrated in the comments from a receptionist in Kahn’s study of the architectural firm and its impact on job satisfaction and the individual’s self-worth:

The role I’m required to perform, sitting up here in front and smiling and typing and being friendly … it’s all bullshit. It’s just a role, and there isn’t any satisfaction in it for me. I’m more than that, and I want to be seen as a person apart from the work I do. This eight or nine hours is a waste, damaging, I think, to my own growth and what I think about myself. (1990, p. 706)

According to the Dutton et al., Social Valuing perspective (2016), daily work interactions contribute to employees experiencing meaningfulness. Kahn states that “Meaningful interactions allowed people to feel valuable and valued. They involved
mutual appreciation, respect and positive feedback” (p. 708). Interactions could be with co-workers and customers. In Kahn’s two studies, “meaningful interactions promoted dignity, self-appreciation, and a sense of worthwhileness” (p. 707) and pride (Claxton, 2014).

4.4 Conclusion

The findings from the ILR are outlined in this chapter. From the available literature, scholarly research into how employees feel valued appears to be a recent phenomenon and the ILR is based on four perspectives of feeling valued. Through integrating these perspectives, seven feeling states or categories are co-constructed, namely belonging, contributing, supporting, trusting, respecting, appreciating and meaning, in relation to feeling valued. These seven feelings are not mutually exclusive nor is there a priority to them. They are simply seven feelings to describe what feeling valued means to employees, co-constructed from how employees talked about feeling valued in the published research, how the researchers interpreted their findings and how I interpreted and developed categories from the literature. It is important to note that the seven feeling states were identified from studies that did not have the context of organisational change. This is the focus of the next Chapter, where I present the findings for feeling valued from a real-life case study and how communication prepared employees for transformational change.
Chapter 5. Project 2—Communicating new ways of working

5.1 Introduction

In this Chapter, I present the analysis and findings of the second project. It is the first case study of a qualitative multiple case design in an organisational field setting. The purpose of this case study is to explore the meaning of feeling valued within the context of transformational change and the role of communication. I draw from the accounts of 15 non-managerial employees in Organisation A of how communication of the changes affected their sense of feeling valued. This case study addresses two research questions: (1) What does feeling valued mean to employees? (2) How does communication affect employees’ sense of feeling valued in preparing for transformational change?

5.2 Case study background

Initially, I discuss the background of the case study to provide the context for the analysis and findings. The case study is bounded by the unit of analysis (Yin, 2014, p. 33), namely 15 non-managerial employees who experienced organisational changes over the period 2012 to 2014. Two types of transformational change had occurred namely: (1) a head office move which included a new way of working, and (2) business unit or team restructures which changed people’s role and mode of working. The focus of the case study is limited to transformational changes, namely those that expect employees to change the way they think, work and behave, compared to incremental change which involves continuous improvement and adjustments (Jones et al, 2008, p. 10).

(a) Head office move

Organisation A, a farmer-owned research and marketing organisation, employed approximately 250 people in 2014. About two-thirds of the employees had a rural background through their family, industry experience or tertiary studies (Annual Report, 2013-14, p. 56). On 26 August 2013, about 150 people were relocated from one head

\[\text{References:} \]


office location to another office nearby. They moved to substantially less office space, from four levels in their previous location, to one level in their new location. The remaining employees continued to work in their rural or regional locations.

The head office relocation was a major move in that it signalled the beginning of a new way of working, namely Activity Based Working (ABW) where no person had an office or an assigned desk, not even the Managing Director (MD). There were four zones for working, namely ‘individual’, ‘collaborative’, ‘hush’ (where people whispered) and ‘silent’ zones (where no talking was allowed). In addition, the cafeteria was a central point and could be used as a working space. Around the perimeter of the floor space were numerous small meeting rooms and a series of lockers. While employees did not have a desk, they each had a locker as their home base where they could store their work, books and personal belongings. In some way, the ABW environment resembled an airport business lounge where people could sit and work wherever they liked and move around freely.

The MD announced the proposed head office move in February 2013 at an All-Staff briefing. With the actual move happening in August 2013, significant change was required within six months, not only in the physical relocation, cleaning up, packing, scanning documents, moving in, adopting new technology and going paperless, but also in employees’ mindsets to embrace a new way of working.

(b) Restructures

Over the period 2012 to 2014, there had been various business unit and team restructures which mostly affected the regional participants. Individual’s roles were redefined and in most cases required a significant change in the way employees were expected to perform and also a way of ‘giving them a go’ at a more challenging role.

5.3 Data analysis

In this case study, I adopted Values coding (Saldaña, 2016, p. 131) and Charmaz Constructivist Grounded theory (2014) to analyse the data to understand (1) the cultural context to identify the positive core or cultural strengths of feeling valued, and (2) how change was communicated in preparing employees for the organisational changes.
5.3.1 Identifying the cultural context and positive core of feeling valued

As a social constructionist, I am interested in understanding how the cultural context shapes a participant’s reality and meaning of feeling valued. Through the Appreciative interviews, I gained cultural insights by asking participants about their past peak experiences at Organisation A, what they valued about working there and specific questions about the culture, leadership and communication where they felt valued.

The interview transcripts were coded for Values (V), Beliefs (B) and Attitudes (A) as defined in Chapter 3. Through weaving the three constructs’ most “salient codes” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 134), I co-constructed the cultural positive core of feeling valued i.e., the cultural strengths that enhanced participants’ sense of feeling valued. Table 9 presents example data from my AI Interview summary sheets and Table 10 provides some examples of Values coding for the meaning of feeling valued to participants. Each participant is referred to by a number.

Table 9. Example on the cultural positive core of feeling valued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant No.</th>
<th>What three positive themes stood out in relation to CULTURE?</th>
<th>What is valued the most, contributes to the POSITIVE CORE?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>• Importance of delivering value to producers/members&lt;br&gt;• Rural background is valued&lt;br&gt;• Manager taking time to communicate something important to you</td>
<td>Delivering value to members, involved leaders, openness and transparency re change, respect from manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>• Friendly, young, welcoming culture&lt;br&gt;• Producer focus and work is valued&lt;br&gt;• Leader engenders feeling valued</td>
<td>Being excited about change, something new, interaction, collaboration and communication within the team, business units and producers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>• Feeling part of a family culture, supportive and diverse&lt;br&gt;• Open communication with leader&lt;br&gt;• Self-managed team able to make decisions</td>
<td>Being involved, contributing to decisions, accessible leaders, supportive culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>• Empowering culture&lt;br&gt;• Employees are trusted and valued&lt;br&gt;• Supportive culture</td>
<td>Being trusted, empowered, supported, given opportunities, made to feel important and valued</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10. Example of Values coding for cultural positive core of feeling valued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant No.</th>
<th>Feeling valued means ....</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1               | A: Feeling involved in what’s happening  
                     A: Feeling wanted and making a contribution  
                     B: Manager is proactive in person’s career development  
                     V: Industry experience is valued  
                     V: Company cares and values its people |
| 2               | A: Manager taking time to communicate something important to you  
                     B: Good manager, good communication  
                     V: Industry skills valued more than specialist skills |
| 3               | A: Discussing ideas with the team  
                     A: Talking to managers and interested in what I have to say  
                     A: Feeling connected to the company broader team  
                     A: Feeling empowered  
                     B: MD made us feel important  
                     V: Being able to contribute  
                     V: Viewing employees as being very important |
| 4               | A: Leader asking for our input, confidence in you, appreciates you  
                     A: Leader stretching you, giving you a chance  
                     A: Recognition of your knowledge  
                     B: Information we produce is valued  
                     V: Feedback from producers  
                     V: Others willing to help you |
| 5               | A: Positive feedback on doing a great job  
                     A: Hearing how the whole company is going and how everyone contributes  
                     B: Managers are good communicators  
                     V: Getting the job done is most important |

To understand the cultural context further, I also consulted my personal reflections, and Shadow reflections to highlight any ‘negative’ feelings. This provided additional understanding and an insight into what was not being said, rather than just focusing on the positive as in AI. Below is an example of my reflections from my interview with Participant number 15.

Excerpt from AI Interview summary sheet - Participant No. 15

My Reflections
I was pleased how the participant was very open about discussing the change and how it was managed. It reminded me of issues I had experienced and witnessed in other change programs, particularly the lack of detailed communication, pulling employees along and treating them like numbers. Change seems to create the environment for employees to not feel valued. It was good getting a view from someone on the Project team for the move. It will be interesting to compare that perspective with the others to see if they have a more positive view. I am impressed that so much was completed in such a short time, and that the internal Project Manager had no prior experience. I was surprised to learn this. Although it should not have surprised me, I had already heard so many stories from participants about how their managers ‘give them a go’ in new and challenging roles and the
participants feel their managers are supportive and have confidence and trust in them.

**Shadow Reflections**

From my perception, Organisation A generally appears to have a high trust culture allowing individuals to take on ideas, projects and get their teeth into things. However, this participant stated that the communication about the move did not engender trust as individuals were confused about the change or maybe it was 'trust me' approach as they were being pulled along. The participant felt that the culture went from valuing people to treating them like numbers, “we’ve just got to get it done, rather than really looking at people”. The participant also remarked that there were mixed messages from the leadership and the Project Team and an active rumour mill. The emotional experience was well described from loss, confusion, hesitation, frustration to loving it now, a comfortable place and feeling valued. It seems to me the Shadow was evoked probably due to inadequate communication about how ABW would affect them day-to-day and what would not change. Not knowing how things would work, led to confusion and some people felt vulnerable, anxious and angry. There is also the unquestioning trust and confidence managers have in people in giving them a go and enabling this to happen. Not only was this evident with the office move, it was also apparent in the restructures where individuals were given bigger and challenging roles that they appreciated as they enabled their own personal transformation.

My analytic memo below depicts my thinking and process around co-constructing the cultural positive core of feeling valued to set the context for my case study.

**ANALYTIC MEMO: 19 to 25 January 2016**

**Identifying the Cultural positive core of feeling valued**

I’m immersing myself in the transcripts again and revisiting the coding. I previously used *in vivo* and concepts for my first cycle coding and made sure the codes started with gerunds, wherever possible (Charmaz 2014). Because I want to understand how the cultural context shaped communication in preparing employees for change, I am reviewing the multitude of codes that emerged. I have to admit that I’m feeling rather indifferent to the initial codes in helping to identify the cultural context. I wonder how I will pull out the cultural core strengths. Fortunately, I had read about Saldaña’s Values Coding (2016), previously. Charmaz even referred to Saldaña’s new coding methods (Charmaz, 2014, p. 114). I’ve decided to recode my initial coding into Values (V), Beliefs (B) and Attitudes (A), as per Saldaña, as this coding seems appropriate to understand culture, in a different way to ethnography. It’s quite a quick process to recode the initial codes as a V, B or A, although it is a challenge sometimes to decide whether it is a B or V. I’m reassured that Saldaña mentioned that they could overlap. I’ve copied all the codes from each transcript into an Excel spreadsheet. I can now sort them into V’s, B’s or A’s. Magic is happening! Patterns and connections are beginning to become visible and I can now do
focused coding (second cycle), identifying codes that relate to culture and those for communicating change. I’m enjoying playing with the data, sorting the data in different ways and comparing the codes, going over them, back and forth and writing analytic memos. I am forming that view that Organisation A tried to live its values and beliefs in communicating in preparing employees for the relocation and ABW change, although the Shadow was evident more in stories about the restructures, as the communication approach was different.

ANALYTIC MEMO: 2 February 2016

Focused Coding and Categorising

Now for focused coding. I love this process of developing a code that subsumes a number of the initial codes (Charmaz, 2014, p. 138) and checking the initial codes against it to make sure it reflects what participants have been saying. The next step of identifying patterns in the focused codes and categorising is even more exciting. From the focused codes, I have co-constructed three categories or cultural strengths relating to feeling valued namely, ACCEPTING, SUPPORTING and CONTRIBUTING. I believe ACCEPTING reflects the participant stories of feeling accepted by the welcoming culture, giving them a sense of ‘belonging’ (V), their belief in Organisation A as a ‘friendly workplace’ (B), where people feel part of the family or team (A). SUPPORTING relates to supportive leaders and colleagues, their transparency and mutual trust (V), participants’ belief they are encouraged to get ahead, are supported with workloads and entrusted them to deliver (B) which boosts their confidence, feeling trusted and empowered to fulfil their roles (A). CONTRIBUTING encapsulates participants wanting to deliver value to members, doing something meaningful, being respected for their expertise (V), the belief that everyone contributes in some form (B), resulting in feeling satisfied, fulfilled and appreciated (A). Initially, I constructed five cultural strengths (supporting, contributing, belonging, trusting, respecting) and have conceptualised those further to the three categories. I am comfortable with those as I believe they have reached theoretical saturation (Charmaz, 2014) and capture the cultural positive core of feeling valued.

I have summarised the focused coding and categories for the cultural positive core of feeling valued in Table 11.
Table 11. Cultural positive core of feeling valued focused coding and categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focused coding</th>
<th>Feeling valued categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belonging (V) Welcoming, friendly workplace (B) Feeling part of the family, proud and loyal (A)</td>
<td>ACCEPTING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive leaders and colleagues, transparency and mutual trust (V) Being encouraged to get ahead, entrusted to deliver, flexibility (B) Feeling trusted, confident and empowered to do roles (A)</td>
<td>SUPPORTING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivering value to members, making a difference, being respected for expertise (V) Everyone contributes in some form (B) Feeling satisfied, fulfilled, appreciated, excited and passionate (A)</td>
<td>CONTRIBUTING</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3.2 Communicating in preparing for change

While understanding the cultural context and strengths provides the backdrop to co-constructing the meaning of feeling valued, the main focus of my research is on investigating how communication influences employees’ sense of feeling valued in preparing for change. I used the same data collection and analysis process for identifying the cultural positive core, for understanding the role of communication in preparing employees for change.

Values coding (Saldaña, 2016, p. 131) was adopted for coding the interview transcripts and each code was labelled either a Value (V), Belief (B) or Attitude (A). The codes from the transcripts were copied into an Excel spreadsheet and it was a lengthy process sorting the codes and constructing categories. Through several iterations of coding, recoding, categorising and constantly comparing these against each other, the categories and their properties were saturated (Charmaz, 2014). Counter views of one or two participants were examined against the categories and their properties. This further confirmed that saturation had been reached, even though negative views were expressed. For example, if the overall conclusion was that participants felt they were listened to and one participant stated they were not heard, that information still formed part of the same category, ‘Contributing to change’. The following analytic memo explains the coding process for communicating change.
ANALYTIC MEMO: 3 to 4 February 2017

Coding for communicating change

I am pondering over the recoding of communicating change codes into Values (V), Beliefs (B) and Attitudes (A). I’ve sorted separately the codes relating to the organisational changes and the codes relating to communication. This has made focused coding manageable and somewhat easy. In the process of developing the focused codes and categories for communicating change, I became aware that I had to suspend my practitioner jargon. It was so easy to lapse into ‘change management speak’ and use terms I’ve been so familiar with to describe the categories and their focused codes or properties. It was an epiphany. I realised I had been so conditioned in my many years as a change practitioner. The process of focused coding also involved focusing me on appreciating participants’ language, rather than interpreting it through a practitioner lens. I was deliberating over whether to use ‘Participating in change’ or ‘Contributing to change’ as a category. Are they the same? I decided on ‘Contributing to change’ as ‘contributing’ was a word that participants used frequently in relation to feeling valued. In change management jargon, I would have used ‘participating’, yet not one person mentioned ‘participating’ in relation to feeling valued. ‘Contributing’ seemed to denote a feeling of ‘giving’ and ‘helping’, whereas ‘Participating’ appeared to be more about taking part in the change or participating in a training course.

I constantly compared the initial codes with the focused codes to ensure they matched the sentiments expressed by participants. I am now comfortable with the descriptions of the focused codes and categories as reflecting feelings underpinning feeling valued in communicating change.

ANALYTIC MEMO: 5 March 2017

Communicating change categories

In thinking and reflecting about the focused coding for communicating change, I feel that the three categories, COMMUNICATING SUPPORTIVELY, BEING OPEN and CONTRIBUTING TO CHANGE, are the co-constructed concepts for feeling valued. COMMUNICATING SUPPORTIVELY reflects the support and encouragement participants received prior to the change (V), how the change was communicated early before decisions were made (B), making them feeling excited, positive and secure (A). BEING OPEN embodies the need for being transparent about the change (V), explaining the rationale (B) to ensure participants felt confident about the change (A). CONTRIBUTING TO CHANGE involves having a voice (V), including everyone (B) so that participants feel they are listened to in preparing for change (A). I am happy with these three analytic concepts or categories as they reflect the initial codes. I have reviewed them again to check that these categories capture the meaning from participants.
In Table 12, I outline an example of the initial coding, focused coding and feeling valued categories, co-constructed from the participant interviews.

Table 12. Example coding and feeling valued categories for communicating change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial coding</th>
<th>Focused coding</th>
<th>Feeling valued categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Values</strong> – <em>What is important?</em>&lt;br&gt;Manager supporting the change&lt;br&gt;Addressing people’s concerns or problems&lt;br&gt;Reassuring employees on the things that matter</td>
<td><strong>Encouraging us</strong></td>
<td><strong>COMMUNICATING SUPPORTIVELY</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beliefs</strong> – <em>What is held to be true?</em>&lt;br&gt;Very early communication from MD rather than just being told</td>
<td><strong>Informing us early</strong></td>
<td><strong>Positive, exciting and secure</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitudes</strong> – <em>The way we think and feel</em>&lt;br&gt;Getting the team excited about the move&lt;br&gt;Presenting change as positive</td>
<td><strong>Positive, exciting and secure</strong></td>
<td><strong>Communicating Supportively</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial coding</th>
<th>Focused coding</th>
<th>Feeling valued categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Values</strong> – <em>What is important?</em>&lt;br&gt;Having a transparent process early on&lt;br&gt;Being open about communicating change</td>
<td><strong>Being transparent</strong></td>
<td><strong>BEING OPEN</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beliefs</strong> – <em>What is held to be true</em>&lt;br&gt;People were informed about the why and what</td>
<td><strong>Explaining the rationale</strong></td>
<td><strong>BEING OPEN</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitudes</strong> – <em>The way we think and feel</em>&lt;br&gt;Feeling confident in my job&lt;br&gt;Telling the complete story, whole message gives confidence</td>
<td><strong>Feeling confident</strong></td>
<td><strong>COMMUNICATING SUPPORTIVELY</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial coding</th>
<th>Focused coding</th>
<th>Feeling valued categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Values</strong> – <em>What is important?</em>&lt;br&gt;Having no fixed decisions prior to consultation&lt;br&gt;Being able to influence decisions&lt;br&gt;Having ample time to voice any concerns</td>
<td><strong>Having a voice</strong></td>
<td><strong>CONTRIBUTING TO CHANGE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beliefs</strong> – <em>What is held to be true</em>&lt;br&gt;Every employee had the opportunity to be involved</td>
<td><strong>Including everyone</strong></td>
<td><strong>CONTRIBUTING TO CHANGE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitudes</strong> – <em>The way we think and feel</em>&lt;br&gt;Feeling listened to, trusted</td>
<td><strong>Feeling listened to</strong></td>
<td><strong>COMMUNICATING SUPPORTIVELY</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A summary of the focused coding and categories for communication and feeling valued in preparing employees for change appears in Table 13.
Table 13. Summary of feeling valued categories for communicating change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focused coding</th>
<th>Feeling Valued Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging us (V)</td>
<td>COMMUNICATING SUPPORTIVELY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informing us early (B)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling positive, excited and secure (A)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being transparent (V)</td>
<td>BEING OPEN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explaining the rationale (B)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling confident (A)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a voice (V)</td>
<td>CONTRIBUTING TO CHANGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Including everyone (B)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling listened to, trusted (A)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4 Findings

The findings from participant interviews, my analytic memos, reflections and organisational documents are presented separately for the cultural context, specifically the strengths relating to feeling valued, and communicating change. The main focus of my study is on communicating change. The cultural context is provided as a backdrop to assist with constructing meaning from participants’ perspectives of the changes that were introduced. At the end of this chapter I make some assertions about the interplay between the cultural context and the role of communication in preparing employees for change, as part of the theory building structure for this study (Yin, 2014, p. 189).

5.4.1 Cultural context and feeling valued

As outlined in my analytic memos above, I co-constructed three categories ‘Accepting’, ‘Supporting’ and ‘Contributing’ as being the cultural strengths, or positive core of feeling valued. Each cultural strength is discussed below.

(a) Accepting

A hallmark of Organisation A’s culture was its welcoming and friendly atmosphere (B). I sensed this too, as the people I interviewed were open, friendly and accepting of me. Being accepted or having a sense of belonging (V) was important to participants and made them feel valued. This participant described how she was quickly accepted into the Organisation A family (A):

Maybe within the first week, I felt like part of a family. It was just so inviting and just so welcoming and everybody really supported you and took the time to teach
you things with patience and things like that and a few months after that, I just felt really settled and quite comfortable. (13)

Participants enjoyed working with their teams, collaborating with other colleagues, farmers and producers. This reflected the espoused corporate value of “Collaboration” (Annual Report, 2012-2013, p. 5)\(^2\) which incorporated “Working as a team” and “Collaborate with stakeholders” values in the previous annual report. Some participants had made good friends at work, had lunch together and even enjoyed socialising after work or at the weekends. The regular All-Staff briefings and team meetings enhanced their sense of belonging. People felt proud working for Organisation A and were loyal to it, with loyalty going two ways (A).

(b) Supporting

Participants spoke appreciatively about their supportive leaders and colleagues (V). As my interviews progressed, I noticed how leaders and managers mentioned in the conversation gave participants new and challenging roles, soon after they joined Organisation A or their department, making them feel confident and valued (A). There was a shared belief amongst participants that Organisation A encouraged people to get ahead (B). Management was proactive in providing personal development opportunities and moved people on if they did not perform. Participants felt valued when they were encouraged to learn new things, develop new skills, undertake further education and provided assistance with their career development. One participant succinctly expressed this as: “one of the things I think I really value is their (managers’) faith in me and they’ve supported me” (7). Participants valued the support from their manager as a mentor or sounding board (V) when they did not feel confident in their work. They believed that managers would support them in the case of heavy workloads or where they felt overwhelmed, by providing additional resources (B). They also felt valued when managers supported them through flexible work arrangements and allowing people to work from home as one participant expressed:

… if you talk about what things make me feel valued … when I got a working from home arrangement there weren’t many of them and the people who had them, were long-term employees as well. By being able to get it made me feel they obviously felt that I could deliver without having a manager sitting beside me every day, and that’s how I like to see it too. It gives me the flexibility to be able to do what I need to do, as long as I’m delivering. (6)

\(^2\) Citation withheld for confidentiality reasons.
Through leadership support, particularly from their immediate manager, participants felt valued. They enjoyed open communication, a good working relationship with their manager where they were able to provide candid feedback. Mutual trust (V) was important and participants valued leaders and managers who were open and transparent in their communication (V). They believed they were entrusted to deliver and given the benefit of doubt (B), as this participant shared:

I think it makes people more trustworthy if they know people trust them to do the right thing. They’re more likely to do the right thing. They don’t want to let people down and they want to be deserving of that trust. I think it’s very nice. It always has felt here you’re given the benefit of doubt, unless you give them a reason not to … knowing that you’re trusted, it makes you feel valued. (15)

Participants felt empowered (A) to do their roles and able to influence decisions, although they recognised that decisions followed the hierarchy and the Executive made most of the major decisions.

(c) Contributing

Being able to contribute to Organisation A’s organisation’s goals and the industry gave the participants purpose and meaning (V). Delivering value to members or farmers (V) was a strong value amongst participants and in keeping with the stated corporate value “Respect where the money comes from” (Annual Report, 2013-2014, p. 2).³ They were conscious of not wasting money. Participants talked about “wanting to make a difference” to farmers, imparting wisdom and knowledge, making changes to practice on farm and improving farm profitability.

In keeping with the company’s stated corporate value of “Collaboration” (p. 2), participants said that regular interaction with farmers was important, including communication and obtaining their feedback. There was a fundamental belief that they all worked for the industry and everyone contributed in some way (B). A strong work ethic underpinned this belief and there was little time for gossip. People were conscious of doing quality work that provided value to members (V) which was in keeping with the stated corporate value “Quality” (p. 2). Participants believed that members valued the information and reports they produced. They felt they were playing an important part and doing meaningful work (A).

³ Citation withheld for confidentiality reasons.
Participants experienced an overwhelming feeling of satisfaction and fulfilment (A) from doing a job where they could contribute and make a difference to the farmers and industry. They expressed that their work was exciting (A) and Organisation A was an enjoyable place to work where the MD built excitement through monthly All-Staff briefings.

Participants contributed with passion and commitment (A). This was not surprising given that over sixty per cent had a rural background which engendered passion for the industry, their work and Organisation A. Industry experience and a rural background were highly valued and respected. People at Organisation A were described as being highly intelligent, committed, capable and passionate individuals. Despite some participants saying they were not highly paid, their passion for the industry, their contribution and appreciation of their work compensated for this.

People were viewed as being important (V) to the company and industry and appreciated (A). Leaders and managers recognised their employees and their achievements in different ways, creating new positions, providing promotions, saying ‘thank you’ and recognising them in public forms like the All-Staff briefings. Participants felt respected (A) for their contribution, their ideas and opinions and not being told how to perform their jobs.

5.4.2 Communicating in preparing for change

As outlined in the analysis above, I co-constructed three categories for feeling valued when communicating change, namely ‘Communicating supportively’, ‘Being open’ and ‘Contributing to change’. The findings for these three analytic concepts are presented below, separately for the head office move and restructures so I can compare them.

(a) Communicating supportively

Most participants stated they felt valued when their leaders and managers communicated supportively in preparing them for organisational changes. This was manifested through leaders, managers or change team representatives informing and engaging people early in the change process (B), encouraging the participants to change (V), leading to people feeling positive, excited and secure about the change.
Head office move

Most participants believed that the office move was communicated effectively, particularly the process of preparing and communicating to employees leading up to the move. This early communication (B) made them feel supported and valued. The Managing Director (MD) was the key driving force behind the change and played a key role in informing, updating and engaging people through regular All-Staff briefings. Employees were advised six months before the relocation occurred. Participants did not feel that change was imposed on them and they valued the early communication:

One of the good things was that by communicating quite early in the piece, it was on people’s radar and people could form an opinion quite softly. It wasn’t ‘here we are moving in two months’ time and we’re done’ … They were even making announcements about rental negotiations before anything had been signed … We’d be in an All-Staff briefing and he (MD) would say we’re looking at x option, x option, x option. Next All-Staff meeting, we’re about to sign the lease on this one. Very early comms, whereas most other MDs would just tell us. (2)

People were supported with case studies on how other organisations had implemented ABW successfully, constant emails and meetings. There was the belief that “there was always communication about what was happening, so no-one was ever not informed” (12). The participant who was on the Project team for the move was able to provide information on the type and frequency of emails, although believed the communication was inadequate in providing meaningful information:

There were emails and I’d say the emails went out maybe every three weeks, if that. I’d say that really in the lead up there were two big emails that sort of detailed what was going on. Otherwise, there were other emails saying ‘make sure you do this’, ‘make sure you do that’, but not really explaining this is what’s going on, how we’re doing things, not enough information … I believe … you should almost give people too much information. Have them say, ‘I don’t need this much’ because the people who do need that much, they’ve got it then and other people, they can skim if they like. (15)

She had formed her view from informal feedback and rumours about people feeling uncertain and provided the example of the confusion over what ‘going paperless’ meant:

I had a lot of people coming and saying they didn’t know what was going on and that uncertainty makes people very unhappy. I think there was a spell of three months leading up to the move and probably a good two months after the move where people were unhappy due to the uncertainty … They were being told to pack stuff and scan stuff and all that sort of stuff, but the rumour mill was crazy. I was part of the Project team and I didn’t know half the things that were going on … There was a lot of talk of it being a paperless office. Then we’d say it’s not a paperless office and then we had members of the Executive team enforcing that message, telling their teams it’s a paperless office, no paper whatsoever. That wasn’t the way it was going to be ever. It was minimise paper because of
the way of things and we weren’t aiming for paperless, so we had a lot of people who didn’t adjust to that change well because they thought it would change everything about the way they worked. (15)

It was interesting that only this participant thought there was not enough communication. Other participants believed there was abundant early communication to prepare them, as this participant stated:

It wasn’t a textbook internal comms campaign by any stretch, but they took the approach of over communicating rather than under communicating and I think that made the difference to how it was generally received … To actually have the Managing Director and a working team of relatively senior people talking about relatively trivial things, did make a difference to people’s perceptions of the move, in what could have been a bit of disaster. (2)

Encouragement (V) was an important value for most participants. Knowing that the Managing Director (MD) and General Managers would not have an office was encouraging to participants as this was modelling the change:

He (MD) absolutely modelled it. He was an MD without the MD attitude. The office move came down to his approach to it … he was the one pushing it. (2)

The process adopted to engage employees was encouraging for participants. Departmental representatives on the Project team played a pivotal role in preparing their team for the move, talking to their team members, informing them about the move, getting their feedback and making them feel comfortable about the move. They involved their team in developing action lists of activities that needed to be completed. They were the ‘go to people’ if anyone had any questions. Workshops were conducted months’ ahead of the move about going from sitting at an assigned desk to a ‘hot desk’ and how the new technology would work. Participants talked about the numerous meetings they had with their departmental or team representatives, the workshops on the change and having ample time to consult HR about their thoughts and concerns about the new way of working. This was complemented with constant emails and regular All-Staff briefings. Meetings were even offered to people on maternity leave.

Support was widespread and participants were reassured on the things that mattered, including the security of their job for one participant. The extensive support made the transition easy and this participant remarked on the extent to which people’s concerns were addressed to ensure they were comfortable:

We were even asked if we wanted a pencil case and a cup. Little things like that. So they really went to the minutest detail to make sure we were comfortable. We had a big orientation on the first day and we were shown all the facilities. (1)
A further example of the extent to which people’s needs were accommodated was the story about two people who were claustrophobic:

They had a problem with having to come up in the lift. This building only had fire escapes and didn’t allow people to use them. So there was a lot of talk about that, and consideration of how they could help people overcome that, and I thought that was really good. (1)

Participants found it encouraging that the move was supported with modern technology with collaborative working tools and video conferencing that was like going from “snail to rabbit” (4).

Positivity and excitement were generated through the MD at All-Staff briefings. In galvanising support for the move and ABW, departmental representatives had the role to generate excitement (A) and present the move in a positive (A) way as explained:

… I was there with my team to help communicate with them about what was happening and helping them get excited about the move … promote it, positive yeah. … It was crazy, there was just so much stuff and so I was in charge of cleaning, moving out all the storerooms and everything for our team, so it was kind of a good history lesson … It was fun. I enjoyed it … It was interesting in getting feedback from all different people and different ideas because it was quite a daunting experience going from where you’ve been sitting, for a lot of people, for more than 3 years plus, to having no desk, nothing and you just have a locker and you have to move to wherever you want. So it was interesting to see how everyone took that. It surprises you that some people you think would be excited, were excited. Yeah it was good. (5)

Participants expressed that the support and encouragement they received made them feel valued and excited about the change. With one work team, as there was a possibility that it could move interstate, the team representatives and managers also had the role to make employees feel secure (A) about their job:

… it was communicated to us that you need to talk to people in your team and get their feedback and help them to get to the secure level … We used to congregate and I tried to chat to them about whatever we can do to make them feel that it should be good for us, rather than adding any negative things. (11)

Counter to the positive feelings several participants experienced, the participant on the Project team for the move expressed that there were mixed emotions of anxiety and excitement with those who were disenchanted, feeling lost and uncertain:

If you spoke to people who were disenchanted by the whole process what they would say is ‘they didn’t know what was going on’ It made them feel uncertain. It made them feel they weren’t part of it. It’s all the emotional things and that’s where the problem came back. It’s not because they were upset because they didn’t get an email. They were upset that the lack of emails and lack of
communication led them to feel lost… And as I said, the rumour mill at that time was just rampant. (15)

It would appear that only a minority of employees were anxious about the move and ABW. Only one participant was not excited about ABW and was older than the other participants:

The move to new premises was well timed and was a good thing and I think the facilities are really admirable … What I dislike intensely is the activity based work organisation… the fact that you’ve got to go and hunt for a workplace every morning and clear up your desk completely every evening, intensely time wasting and at times very frustrating… I just do not see the advantages of not having an assigned desk. (9)

**Restructures**

The communication around the restructures was in stark contrast with the early supportive communication of the move and ABW. One participant contrasted the communication of the office move with the under communication in organisational restructures:

Start early with the communication of the change to allow it to have a feedback and feedforward mechanism i.e., management says to us ‘we’re going to restructure and we’re going to have you do this’ … rather than it being basically all over and the decision’s being made and everyone gets told about it. I think it would allow people to come along with the change … Now in the example of the office move, that was pretty good. (10)

Other participants mentioned the lack of early communication regarding their restructure and in one case, the participant found out about the substantial change to his role after his colleagues had been informed:

This was discussed briefly between myself and some management and then I had three days’ annual leave. The others were given a 10 minute notice that there was going to be a phone hookup… so they all called in … They actually announced there were going to be changes, what those changes were and I hadn’t even been informed. I hadn’t been sent an email or anything like that. I know I was on annual leave but essentially they had told my co-workers what I was going to be doing for a job, before I actually knew myself. (14)

In another case, the participant recounted how her business unit restructure was ‘announced’ through the grapevine:

I thought it was very interesting in how it happened. Basically it was put out there and this was through the grapevine and I don’t think it was formally stated in a team meeting or through an email. Word got around and I suspect it came out informally rather than formally, that our business unit was going to have a restructure. And at the time people were losing jobs left and centre, and business units were being restructured and all sorts of stuff was going on. You get to work one day and that person’s gone and this person’s in that role and there was
all sorts of stuff going on. So we heard that our business unit was going to undergo a restructure … It was all under wraps and if anyone knew, no-one was saying anything about what this restructure would look like. I was in fear of losing my job. (7)

Similar to the head office move, participants who had experienced restructures were excited (A) at going into bigger and challenging roles, once they were informed and with the support and confidence of their managers. They felt valued as their skills and competencies were recognised and one participant was excited in the interview when speaking about the feedback she had received from the MD:

… I felt like I was walking on 12 feet of air at the night of (MD’s) farewell when he told me that he wasn’t really happy with me taking on such a large portfolio so early in my career, and then he sat back and watched me deliver on a quite a big chunk of work. He was really impressed with what I’d done … Why did he have to wait until the day he resigned, to tell me? I didn’t think he knew who I was. (7)

(b) Being open

Participants felt valued through the way information was shared transparently about the move and ABW and explaining the reasons for change. This openness gave them confidence with the change. The same openness did not apply to the restructures.

**Head office move**

Being open and transparent about the move and ABW (V) was important to participants. They wanted to know “Why are we doing it?” “What is the justification?” “What are the benefits?” “What’s it going to look like?” and “Can we see a plan?” One participant expressed that it was important to be open without any ‘spin’:

Making it relevant for me and my situation, and in organisational change, be it moving the office or a restructure or something, it’s understanding this is what we’re doing, this is why we’re doing it and not just putting a spin on like you’ll have new IT and office chairs but recognising you may not have a book case anymore. (10)

The rationale (B) for the move was two-fold: firstly, the new location would use workspace more efficiently given that approximately 45 out of 150 people, or nearly one-third, would be travelling and in the field at any one time. Consequently, offices at the old location were empty for significant periods of time, thereby incurring costs that could be saved. The ABW environment would make better use of member funds and participants valued this benefit. The change was not seen as a cost cutting exercise *per se*. It was more about using floorspace cost-effectively. Not everyone had laptops previously and with ABW, everyone would receive new laptops with supporting
collaborative working technologies. Symbolically, this communicated that all employees were valued by giving them smart tools, rather than just the privileged having the new technology. Secondly, ABW was seen as a way of breaking down Organisation A’s silo culture to improve productivity and achieve better outcomes for members. ABW would enable a collaborative working environment where people developed relationships with others from different departments through sitting next to them. Hence, people would be more likely to ‘bump’ into each other and start a conversation in this new working environment. The vestiges of hierarchy would be lessened as the MD and General Managers would not have their offices as symbols of status and power. It would be a work environment that assumed trust, as managers and team leaders would be dispersed throughout the floor and would not be able to easily monitor their people or team.

Most participants felt confident (A) and well-prepared for the move. One participant remarked that only some individuals found ABW threatening, while the majority were looking forward to moving to the new accommodation, away from the old and tired facilities and technology:

Only some individuals found it threatening. About a month or two out before the move, there was a critical mass of people who were saying ‘we’re getting out of this place’. (2)

The participant on the Project team (15) had a different perspective and estimated that about 50 per cent of people were hesitant prior to the move. There were concerns about practical issues like telephones, as people would have headsets and their laptop acted as the telephone (similar to Skype), rather than having the usual telephone on their desk. Initially, there were various concerns, as this participant highlighted:

As soon as it was announced, more negative came across than positive. It was ‘are there going to be enough toilets?’ ‘Where are the printers going to be?’ ‘Are there going to be phones at the desk?’ ‘How are the phones going to work?’ (13)

This participant had recently joined the company and was open to change as she had been working in the old office only for a few months. She believed it may have bothered older employees who had been with the company for 20 years or more and were set in their ways. In terms of her attitude, she expressed “I didn’t feel it was a tough move for me. It was a new beginning” (13).
The only participant (9) who did not support ABW, spoke about people being inherently distrustful as the change was not presented as an improvement and may have seemed “to be change for the sake of change”:

If change is foreseen, it needs to be presented as an improvement. You need to rationalise it, you need to be able to say to people look, this apparently is not working well and we propose to change in order to improve this. Whereas the change to Activity Based Working was not couched in those terms for us and that’s why I think it’s not been a rip roaring success, certainly in my opinion. (9)

While jobs were secure, the participant on the Project team believed that how ABW would work on a day-to-day basis, was not communicated adequately and that people were pulled along:

Yes, their jobs were certain but it was not knowing what the day-to-day would be like … it wasn’t communicated. I think we could have done a much better job with that. If we had, more people would have felt involved in the journey instead of being pulled along unwillingly. (15)

**Restructures**

Unlike the head office move and ABW, the communication in preparing employees for the business and team restructures was not transparent (V) and did not explain the rationale upfront (B). Once the rationale for the change in role was explained, when being informed about the change, participants felt confident and valued (A). It seems that the restructures were predetermined. There were no preliminary discussions to allow people to know what was negotiable and to look at some of the practical aspects, namely the impact on individuals of moving locations or interstate (10). The changes were imposed and people were simply advised or told that the change would happen. Only when participants prompted their manager, did they receive an explanation:

… Two years ago there was a restructure and you’re called in and told there’s been a change and you’re doing such and such … the question is where did the change come from? Was it needed? … Talking to the General Manager, the change was about keeping me fresh and I said, happy with that, but I’d like to understand the rationale. Was this due to poor performance? … There was absolutely no explanation of the change. I was just taken off the job as were people in other areas, but this particular change was quite a high profile. The upshot of it was, ‘no, no, no, we want you to do what you did in (that) area and do it in (another) area’. At that stage, my feeling of value went up a lot … because there’s trust and confidence in me as a person and what I can do and deliver. It’s almost like indirect praise because they’re saying ‘go on and do it’. (10)

In another situation, team changes were communicated although they were not implemented, without any reasons explaining why the changes did not go ahead. This
led to much speculation about the reasons for this change and this person did not feel valued because of the inconsistent communication:

> It was a structural team change. It was communicated and it never happened … and there was no communication of why it didn’t happen. So naturally you have people speculating, as we have a number of women on maternity leave… If it was communicated to everyone in one go and it was followed through, then there wouldn’t be anything to speculate about. (8)

Nevertheless, once each of the five participants who had experienced a restructure knew about their new challenging role, they appreciated that their managers had confidence and faith in them as this participant expressed:

> We had a significant restructure in our business unit… I was asked to take on a new role. I think when I started to understand the breadth and depth of it, having to get my head around it and the support I got from within the company about their trust in me, they believed I could do this quite massive job and they were there supporting me as well… They had faith in me that was what I was trying to say to deliver effectively a very massive task. I think they had the confidence that I could deliver on it. I sort of knew I could, but it was really nice and where I didn’t know things or where I was stumbling over things, there was always support for me to go and ask questions to get help. (7)

(c) **Contributing to change**

Participants felt valued through having a voice (V) in influencing decisions about the move, being included through different communication mechanisms (B), resulting in participants feeling listened to in the change (A). As the business restructures were imposed, participants did not have the opportunity to influence decisions or feel heard.

**Head office move**

Having a voice (V) was very important to participants. Team representatives for the office move worked with their team to get their input on the move. Participants even had the chance to visit the new office before the move. This process gave them the feeling that decision-making was open and they could influence it.

> …we could discuss in an open forum what our concerns were with the new building and everything that we noted was addressed. So everyone has been part of this office move. (1)

Only one participant believed his team’s arguments for retaining assigned desks were ignored, remarking that it was “an unpleasant experience” and he felt “completely unvalued”:

> We were briefed at one stage by senior management who told us that this was a consultation process … We were not consulted. We were told on more than one occasion how things were going to be. Within our department … there were
several people who raised their rational argument against not having assigned
desks for people and we were just flatly ignored. It was just brushed aside … I
think in their mind consultation consisted of them telling us how things were
going to be. (9)

Nevertheless, there was a belief amongst participants that there were opportunities for
including everyone in contributing their ideas and suggestions for the office move and
ABW (B). There were various mechanisms from All-Staff briefings, team meetings,
workshops, speaking to their manager, departmental representative or HR. This
involvement made them feel valued. The participant who was on the Project team had
another perspective where she believed people were just treated like numbers as it was
the most practical way to do so in preparing for the move:

I think the process of the move was probably the most that I’ve ever felt that
employees here are numbers because we did have to deal with them as numbers.
We have these many people, we have these many seats, this percentage of
retention after the move, so it did feel very much like people were numbers. I
think I was surprised how disheartening that was, though you’re one of the
people involved in it all. When you start looking at people as numbers, you
really stop feeling as though you’re a valued employee. (15)

Overall, participants had the attitude that they were listened to (A), could go to their
team representative, HR or the Project team and were able to contribute to decisions.
Different participants expressed this common view:

You definitely felt you were heard. You were part of, you contributed to some of
the decisions and it wasn’t just high level management making all the decisions.
You were able to contribute and put your input into it, so you did get heard …it
does make you feel valued. (12)

During the office move process, the company communicated the changes
beforehand and asked for feedback and suggestions which made employees feel
like their opinions and concerns were being addressed. As a result, the new
office environment has been a smooth and positive experience as everyone had
the opportunity to be part of it. (1)

There wasn’t any one time where I felt they didn’t want to listen to what I
wanted to say … If I wanted to say something, they didn’t say ‘we’ve already
decided that’. (4)

Restructures

All restructures were imposed on participants without any prior consultation.
Participants expressed how they did not feel valued through this process as they had no
opportunity to contribute to the restructure and scoping of their new role. Once they
were able to discuss the changes in their role with their manager and the reasons why
they were given the role, as outlined previously, their sense of feeling valued increased. One participant suggested an ideal process would be to:

… communicate early, inform, present the whole message, pros, cons, positives, negatives, what’s negotiable, what’s not negotiable and seeking that feedback/feedforward in the communication process which could provide to the change makers alternatives, other ideas, things that may not have been captured in the consultant’s report for the change. (10)

5.5 Conclusion

In understanding how change was communicated at Organisation A and its impact on participants’ sense of feeling valued, I initially explored the cultural context to identify the cultural strengths or positive core. This provided the background to appreciate how change was introduced and shaped participants’ meaning of feeling valued. I co-constructed three cultural strengths based on Values, Beliefs and Attitudes, namely ‘Accepting’, ‘Supporting’ and ‘Contributing’ that influenced participants’ sense of feeling valued. In terms of communicating and feeling valued in preparing for change, I co-constructed three concepts, namely: leaders, managers and the change team ‘Communicating supportively’ and ‘Being open’, and employees ‘Contributing to change’. There seems to be a connection between the cultural strengths and how participants were prepared for change for the office move, though the opposite would appear to be the case in communicating the business restructures. Once the participants were informed about the change in their role, the cultural strengths manifested themselves. This leads to questioning whether restructures could be more open to improve employees’ sense of feeling valued and lessen unnecessary anxiety about their job security.

As part of the theory building structure for my thesis, the co-constructed concepts are displayed in the following two figures, where Figure 8 summarises the concepts for feeling valued in communicating and preparing for change, while Figure 9 visually depicts the three cultural strengths and the three concepts for feeling valued. These concepts suggest the processes for communicating change where employees feel valued.

My assertion is that the office move was communicated to participants in a way that reflected the cultural strengths i.e., ‘Supporting’ was evident in ‘Communicating
supportively’; ‘Contributing to change’ reflected the strong cultural strength of ‘Contributing’ and ‘Accepting’ underpinned ‘Being open’.

Figure 8. Co-constructed concepts for communicating change and feeling valued

![Diagram showing the relationship between communicating in preparing for change, feeling valued, and cultural strengths.](image)

Note: V = Value; B = Belief and A = Attitude.

Figure 9. Co-constructed concepts and cultural strengths for communicating change

![Diagram showing the relationship between cultural strengths (Accepting, Supporting, Contributing) and feeling valued.](image)

Note: The cultural strengths are ‘Accepting’, ‘Supporting’ and ‘Contributing’. The three feeling valued concepts in communicating change are ‘Communicating supportively’, ‘Being open’ and ‘Contributing to change’.
I also assert that the three cultural strengths were evident after participants were informed about the change in their role from the restructure, rather than before. Leaders and managers being open about restructures and the impact on individuals could enhance employees’ sense of feeling valued.

In Chapter 4, seven aspects of feeling valued were co-constructed from literature although not within an organisational change context. In this case study, three analytic concepts were co-constructed for feeling valued perhaps indicating that of the seven feelings, three are important for employees experiencing transformational change. In the next Chapter, I continue my theory building structure for the meaning of feeling valued in communicating change to employees.
Chapter 6. Project 3—Coping with a sea of change

6.1 Introduction

In this Chapter, I present the analysis and findings from my second case study in an organisational field setting. The case study centres on interviews with 12 non-managerial employees in Organisation B about their experience of multiple organisational changes over 2012 to 2014. Early into the interviewing, I was faced with a dilemma: do I continue with this organisation or look for a more suitable one? While Organisation B had ample organisational changes, it became apparent that there had been limited communication in preparing employees for change. As this was a key focus for my doctorate, I was contemplating whether I would need to look for another organisation. Fortuitously, I felt encouraged to continue when one participant said: “I think the work you’re doing is vitally important and if you can bring about more effective change that dissipates anxiety, fear and depression to even one person, your doctorate will be worthwhile”. This was a decisive moment for me. It reminded me of my purpose in undertaking my doctorate to improve how change is communicated so employees feel valued, and my passion throughout my working life of enabling employees to have their voice heard. Any doubt I had in wanting to undertake my research with this organisation had dissipated.

To allow comparisons with the Organisation A case study in Chapter 5, a similar research approach was used to construct knowledge and meaning of feeling valued in communicating and preparing for change. Likewise, the case study addressed the same research questions: (1) What does feeling valued mean to employees? (2) How does communication affect employees’ sense of feeling valued in preparing for transformational change?

6.2 Case Study background

Before discussing the analysis and findings, I wish to provide the background to the case study to assist with understanding the context for the investigation. Organisation B is a division within an agricultural government department that is part of a larger cluster
department in Australia. In 2014, Organisation B employed about 400 people in its head office, laboratories and regional centres and had offices in 40 locations.

The case study is based on the accounts of 12 non-managerial employees, the unit of analysis, regarding their organisational change experience in Organisation B, and on relevant organisational documents and media coverage. It is bounded by four major organisational changes that occurred during 2012 to 2014, namely (1) a restructure to modernise the organisation and create a separate organisation; (2) the introduction of a new financial management system which required recording information in a new way; (3) a new strategic plan and (4) an accommodation change requiring head office employees to work in an open plan environment. While some participants had been in constant change for several years, particularly those who had worked in another division of the same department, this case study only considers these four major changes.

In terms of sequencing, the major departmental restructure was announced in November 2012 and the new financial management system from the cluster department went live in December 2012. While the latter was occurring, the restructure went through a lengthy period of implementation over 2013. In addition, head office participants were affected by the accommodation move to open plan towards the latter part of 2013. Even though the strategic plan had been launched in May 2013, the focus had been on consulting with external stakeholders and it was still early days for engaging employees. Nevertheless, with all the changes happening over this period, employees were ‘coping with a sea of change’ while also being expected to perform their usual day-to-day activities. These changes were significant and transformational in that they required employees to change the way they would need to think, work and behave.

Participants were asked to reflect on their experiences of the multiple changes and I was pleased with the open and frank conversations I was able to have with them. Perhaps the topic of feeling valued and communicating change encouraged this candour. Notwithstanding their willingness and eagerness, it became apparent that I was interviewing mostly survivors of a significant number of organisational changes. Even with the restructure in November 2012, there had been a lengthy period of job uncertainty. One participant had her job confirmed in May 2013 or 18 months after the restructure was announced. Two participants had recently joined the organisation. Some
participants could not recollect a ‘high point’ where they felt valued. Nevertheless, through the Appreciative interviews I was still able to draw out participant preferences for communicating change where they felt valued.

6.3 Data analysis

To allow cross-case analysis and synthesis, similar methods of data analysis were used for both Organisations A and B, underpinned by Charmaz’s constructivist grounded theory analytical approach (2014). As with the Organisation A case study, data analysis centred on understanding (1) the cultural context to identify the positive core or cultural strengths of feeling valued, and (2) how change was communicated in preparing employees. Below is my analytic memo explaining the process for first cycle coding.

ANALYTIC MEMO: 11 July 2017

First cycle coding – Values Coding

I’m just finishing first cycle coding of the transcripts into Values (V), Beliefs (B) and Attitudes (A) and it’s fairly straightforward as I had used this method for Organisation A. Nonetheless, I have a challenge on my hands. There are so many ‘negative’ codes reflecting participants’ reaction to how the changes were introduced or, should I say, imposed. I found some of the interviews emotionally challenging and felt somewhat powerless and frustrated that participants had this experience, especially as they were so committed to making a difference for their clients and the community. These interviews triggered memories of change programs that I had been involved in rescuing and they were good lessons in how not to introduce organisational changes.

As I’m using Appreciative Inquiry where I need to focus on the strengths, how do I deal with the ‘negative’ codes? Do I just ignore them? Perhaps there is a way of handling them in a positive and constructive way? Is it just a matter of appreciating the Shadow which, from Jung’s perspective (1938/1958), is not negative but important in the process of consolidating your strengths. Back to Saldaña’s book on coding methods (2016) to see how I handle these ‘negative’ codes. Versus Coding, another affective method, seems to be the best step going forward for second cycle coding as it acknowledges the opposing issues and concepts, stated in versus terms.

Furthermore, I have adopted Saldaña’s approach to moieties which involved identifying “the primary stakeholders, how each side perceives and acts towards the conflict, and
the central issue at stake” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 138). As I started second cycle coding, the conflicting values, beliefs and attitude became more apparent and through Versus Coding, I was able to draw out the cultural tensions and conflict between the subcultures, triggered by the four major organisational changes.

Through moiety analysis, two subcultures were co-constructed, a ‘Service-Giving’ subculture and a ‘Political-Power’ subculture. The participants I interviewed were non-managerial employees and were part of the Service-Giving subculture, which could also include managers. The ‘Service-Giving’ subculture was focused on delivering a service to farmers and the community or assisting Organisation B in its business. The ‘Political-Power’ subculture was constructed from what it meant to participants, in terms of values, behaviours and attitudes—those managers, particularly senior managers, who used power and authority to achieve an outcome, focus upwards to please the Minister, outwards to please industry leaders or the public. Participants used the words ‘Political’ and ‘Service’. One participant believed a key motivator was senior managers being on contracts and this made them more likely to be ‘compliant’ and political. As Organisation B was a division within a government department, which itself was part of a larger cluster department, the political subculture would extend to senior managers in those departments, given the hierarchical nature of the organisations.

I initially considered the description of ‘managerial’ and ‘non-managerial’ subcultures for the moieties. Given that not all managers were perceived to be ‘political’, I believe the ‘Service-Giving’ and ‘Political-Power’ descriptions related better to the asymmetrical power relationship, leading to two distinct moiety subcultures comprising a whole.

6.3.1 Identifying the cultural positive core of feeling valued

From the strengths of the ‘Service-Giving’ subculture, I co-constructed the cultural positive core of feeling valued. My analytic memo explains the moiety analysis.
ANALYTIC MEMO: 3 August 2017

Second cycle coding – Versus Coding, Conflict and Moiety subcultures

The patterns are now becoming clearer as I’m using Versus Coding for second cycle or focused coding. Versus Coding has brought out the inherent conflicting Values, Beliefs and Attitudes in Organisation B, as perceived by the participants. The conflict was due to introducing multiple organisational changes without properly preparing or engaging employees in the change. The changes were introduced as a fait accompli or a ‘done deal’, predetermined and communicated with ‘instructions’ rather than ‘participation’. Once I developed the moiety SERVICE-GIVING and POLITICAL-POWER subcultures from the Versus codes as Saldaña (2016) recommends, it was like the ‘blinding glimpse of the obvious!’ Yet, it wasn’t so obvious initially and it now makes sense given the participants work in a political context. Through moiety analysis I am now able to clearly articulate the conflicting Values, Beliefs and Attitudes in two subcultures that co-exist in the one organisation. While the SERVICE-GIVING subculture has mostly strengths, I’m not suggesting the POLITICAL-POWER subculture is the dark Shadow, although I found the moiety concept useful in drawing it out. The Shadow exists in both the SERVICE-GIVING and the POLITICAL-POWER subcultures although may be more evident in the latter. Furthermore, I’m not suggesting the moieties are fixed subcultures. They allow for fluidity at the individual level e.g., a person in the SERVICE-GIVING subculture can still become part of the POLITICAL-POWER subculture and vice versa. That person may decide to get ahead and need to become ‘political’ and play the game. Similarly, someone who has been political may decide ‘enough is enough’ and want to do something more meaningful.

Overall, I found the moiety analysis helpful in revealing the positive gems in the culture and shining a light on what would be considered as ‘negative’, in the interviews. It was useful for identifying subcultures of power in Organisation B and the external influences beyond the division to incorporate its own department, the cluster department and the Minister.

In Table 14, I outline an example of the Versus coding for the two subcultures, their moieties and supporting Values, Beliefs and Attitudes, and ultimately the feeling valued categories. While it was a complex and lengthy process, constantly comparing the codes to establish the versus properties, it was immensely rewarding finally to see the outcome. Having transposed the initial codes from the transcripts to Excel, I was able to ‘play’ with the data, sorting and resorting it, moving it around, comparing and cross-comparing the moieties and their Values, Beliefs and Attitudes, until I could finally construct categories.
Table 14. Example Versus coding, moiety subcultures and feeling valued categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coding method</th>
<th>Focused Versus coding and Moiety subcultures</th>
<th>Feeling Valued categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SERVICE-GIVING subculture vs. POLITICAL-POWER subculture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing something meaningful vs. Being politically driven</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values – What is important?</td>
<td></td>
<td>CONTRIBUITING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working towards an important goal/delivering a service to the community/making a difference</td>
<td>Supporting government rather than community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being respected for expertise</td>
<td>Focusing upwards on Minister, industry leaders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs – What is held to be true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committed people</td>
<td>Subservient to political interference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open, honest and work with integrity</td>
<td>Being risk averse; ‘arse’ covering/don’t offend anyone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes – The way we think and feel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling fulfilled</td>
<td>Doing meaningless work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passionate</td>
<td>Lost what I enjoyed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanting to come to work</td>
<td>Demotivating</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exciting, rewarding, satisfying</td>
<td>Frustrating</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting vs. Separating</td>
<td></td>
<td>BELONGING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values – What is important?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive leaders and colleagues/acknowledging your contribution</td>
<td>Employees are a number, disposable and replaceable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborating/being part of a team</td>
<td>Forced redundancies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating regularly, openly</td>
<td>Positive spin to communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs – What is held to be true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People work well with each other</td>
<td>Operate in silos/barriers/ ‘In’ group and ‘Out’ group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect opinions, even if disagree</td>
<td>Not caring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close knit culture in regions</td>
<td>If job goes, they cut you loose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes – The way we think and feel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling part of a family</td>
<td>Feeling of isolation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling connected with team</td>
<td>Feel like a shag on a rock</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiastic vs. Controlling</td>
<td></td>
<td>EMPOWERING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values – What is important?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having autonomy/entrusted to do role</td>
<td>Rule driven culture, not much flexibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having direct responsibility</td>
<td>Rules and changes are politically driven</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs – What is held to be true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left alone</td>
<td>Have to fit into the system</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not micromanaged</td>
<td>Bureaucratic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyone feels equal and what they say is important</td>
<td>Decisions made at higher level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes – The way we think and feel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling trusted</td>
<td>Feeling sad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling confident</td>
<td>Feeling drained</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling empowered</td>
<td>Depressed morale, anxiety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I constructed the moieties as (1) *Doing something meaningful vs. Being politically driven*; (2) *Supporting vs. Separating*; and (3) *Entrusting vs. Controlling*. Ultimately, from this moiety analysis and re-reading the properties of each moiety, I constructed the categories of CONTRIBUTING, BELONGING and EMPOWERING as being the cultural core of feeling valued, supported by their respective moiety. A high level summary of the moiety subcultures with Versus coding appears in Table 15.

Table 15. Summary of moiety subcultures and feeling valued categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SERVICE-GIVING subculture</th>
<th>vs.</th>
<th>POLITICAL-POWER subculture</th>
<th>Feeling Valued Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doing something meaningful</td>
<td>vs.</td>
<td>Being politically driven</td>
<td>CONTRIBUTING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting</td>
<td>vs.</td>
<td>Separating</td>
<td>BELONGING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrusting</td>
<td>vs.</td>
<td>Controlling</td>
<td>EMPOWERING</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3.2 Communicating change and moiety analysis

I repeated the analytical process described above, although for participants’ *preferences* for communicating change where they felt valued, based on their expressed ‘three wishes’ during the Appreciative interviews, versus their experience of how change was actually communicated.

Table 16 presents example data for the Versus coding and moiety analysis, leading to co-constructing the feeling valued categories. Two moieties were co-constructed from the Versus codes— (1) *Communicating honestly vs. Controlling information* and (2) *Having a voice vs. Forcing a done deal*. In reviewing the properties of each moiety, I categorised the former as BEING OPEN and the latter as CONTRIBUTING as displayed in Table 16. In Table 17, a high level summary is provided of the moieties and categories.
Table 16. Communicating change - example Versus coding, moiety subcultures and feeling valued categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coding method</th>
<th>Focused Versus coding and Moiety subcultures</th>
<th>Feeling Valued Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SERVICE-GIVING subculture vs. POLITICAL-POWER subculture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communicating honestly vs. Controlling information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values – What is important?</td>
<td>Communicating honestly, upfront and not political vs. Driven from the top (outside of division)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Explain changes, openly and honestly vs. Withholding information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being transparent, even if job cuts vs. Putting a positive spin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs – What is held to be true</td>
<td>Keeping us informed vs. Maintaining secrecy to prevent adverse reaction</td>
<td>BEING OPEN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Change will happen more easily with honest messages about reasons vs. Being political about reasons for restructure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Everyone getting the same messages vs. Relying on rumours, grapevine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes – The way we think and feel</td>
<td>Reducing fear and anxiety vs. Creating tension</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feeling valued with honest, upfront, open communication vs. Feeling threatened, uneasy, uncertain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a voice vs. Forcing a done deal</td>
<td>Consulting all levels about change vs. Pre-determining change</td>
<td>CONTRIBUTING TO CHANGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values – What is important?</td>
<td>Providing input into decisions vs. Deciding change higher up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs – What is held to be true</td>
<td>Communicating face-to-face with groups of people vs. Instructing change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes – The way we think and feel</td>
<td>Having two-way communication vs. One way communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feeling listened to vs. Feeling like a number</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caring about what we think, feeling trusted vs. Feeling frustration, anger, resentment and undervalued</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17. Communicating change - summary focused coding, moieties and feeling valued categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SERVICE-GIVING subculture vs. POLITICAL-POWER subculture</th>
<th>Feeling Valued Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communicating honestly vs. Controlling information</td>
<td>BEING OPEN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a voice vs. Forcing a done deal</td>
<td>CONTRIBUTING TO CHANGE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.4 Findings

In this section, the results from the moiety analysis are presented for the cultural positive core of feeling valued and for communicating change.

6.4.1 Cultural context and the positive core of feeling valued

As discussed, moiety analysis revealed two distinct subcultures in Organisation B regarding feeling valued — SERVICE-GIVING and POLITICAL-POWER — based on opposing Values (V), Beliefs (B) and Attitudes (A). Three feeling valued categories were co-constructed and these are presented in terms of their underlying moieties as summarised in Table 15.

(a) CONTRIBUTING—*Doing something meaningful vs. Being politically driven*

Participants, as part of the ‘Service-Giving’ subculture, felt valued through doing work that was meaningful to them and where they were able to contribute and make a difference (V). In particular, they felt they were contributing to organisational goals and doing work that provided benefits to the industry, both state-wide and nationally. They helped farmers with their issues, delivered services to the community and protected the environment. It was during an emergency, whether a disease outbreak or a natural disaster, that participants who were able to contribute, felt the most valued as expressed in this comment:

In the last 12 months, I’ve responded to emergency animal diseases, Avian Influenza, a plant pest … and to be involved in those and feel that you’re contributing to restoring Australia’s trade with a number of other countries, it’s very rewarding from that respect. (10)

Most participants valued being able to provide a public service (V), were passionate about their work which they found fulfilling, exciting and rewarding (A). They appreciated the feedback they received from farmers and the recognition of their technical expertise (V) which confirmed they were doing something worthwhile. With longer term projects, participants worked for a delayed benefit and job satisfaction (A). Participants enjoyed working for the organisation and believed that, at their level, they had a good culture with people taking their work seriously. They were committed, open, honest and worked with integrity (B). This feeling of doing something important was best captured by the following participants’ comments:

I’m passionate and I want to spread the good news to others, educate and help them … It just means my life hasn’t been wasted, that I’ve actually made an
impact in my field ... that means my work has had a national impact and saving farmers huge amounts of money … So incredible job satisfaction with some of the wins I’ve had. (4)

… that positive feeling about coming to work. I value that fact that I have a role in something potentially positive and is going to be beneficial for (the) plant industry. I feel I’m doing something useful. (8)

We provide a public good. The things we are doing benefit the public, the farmers, pet and animal owners, particularly now in a time when they need information and no one else is doing this service. (2)

I love problem solving, particularly in this industry, trying to make a difference to support animal health which then directly supports productivity and the community and that’s what the public service is about, or that’s what a lot of us think that the public service is about, supporting the community. (11)

In contrast to the ‘Service-Giving’ subculture, or the antithesis, were the values, beliefs and attitudes of stakeholders who comprised the ‘Political-Power’ subculture, socially constructed as the other. Participants believed the political stakeholders were focused on supporting the government and pleasing the Minister and industry leaders, rather than assisting the farmers and the community (V). This led to participants doing work that was political and left them not feeling valued. They believed these stakeholders were out of touch with grassroots (B) and the head office was perceived to be a more political environment than regional centres and the laboratories (B), as evident in these comments:

   Head Office has been renowned for not understanding what is happening on the ground and in regional areas. They are out of touch with the client base. (2)

   At the local level … we feel we’re valued and it’s quite important what we do. If you go right up to the Minister, it might be a different story. It’s very much we have to just feed what the Minister wants, but I think they’re not necessarily in touch with everything that happens at grassroots and I know it’s our responsibility. …In our direct line, we all think what we do is important and contribute, and that is valued. (3)

   No one tells politicians ‘No’. Politicians don’t think through the implications. We might do it on a political basis but not for a longer-term gain. (2)

One participant (9) described the Head Office environment as being reactive, risk averse and engaged in “arse” covering activities (B). This was manifested through activities such as documenting everything, undertaking risk assessments and the attitude of not wanting to offend anyone to keep politicians happy, as voiced in these comments:

   There is an increasing dependency on prescriptive “arse” covering, trying to cover all risks. Everything’s got to be documented, risk assessed and what that
means is that everything just grinds down and takes a lot longer to do because people want to have a nil risk. In terms of risk, I’m talking about political risk. We don’t want to offend anybody, so we’ve got to consult with every group and if somebody doesn’t like it, we always listen to every aspect of it and if they go to politicians, we may then revise decisions. Every time you do this, where you have a culture where you don’t want to offend anybody, you just want to keep everybody happy including the politicians, you spend a lot of resources. This means time doing sort of stuff that’s very reactive, justifying what you do, or trying to pre-empt what you might want to do. So it’s not an environment that is very motivating … The feeling is all about having your bum covered … It just takes so much energy and time doing that sort of stuff. (9)

Consequently, the participants, in interacting with the ‘Political-Power’ subculture, were engaged in activities that they believed to be meaningless, time-consuming, demotivating, draining and this led them to not feeling valued (A). Some participants mentioned that they had consciously decided to not move to head office to improve their career options, to avoid the head office environment and the ‘Political-Power’ subculture. Another participant spoke about those who did move to head office to progress their careers and had to ‘play the game’, even sacrificing work that they were passionate about:

The public service is very much about taking your opportunities, identifying key relationships and very much political influences. You make strategic moves like do something that’s not particularly your passion, but do it for something on your CV to position yourself so when the next opportunity comes, you’re there. … If you want to get somewhere, you’re meant to move to head office. (9)

Another participant wanted communication to be less ‘political’ from senior managers with greater openness and honesty rather than putting a ‘positive’ spin on messages, particularly those relating to a restructure:

As long as communication is honest and upfront and not clouded by the political. We get two messages and they don’t want to tell you. More honesty and openness. (2)

Participants have learnt to cope with interacting with the ‘Political-Power’ subculture (B) and the number of changes that were introduced in the previous two years (10). Except for the two participants fairly new to the organisation, the other participants were survivors as reflected in this comment:

We’re fairly knocked around, just coping. It’s not very motivating and I think it’s probably throughout the organisation and you don’t need to be an Einstein to know that you just don’t bring in constant changes with poor communication of what’s involved and what the vision is. (4)
(b) BELONGING—Supporting vs. Separating

Participants in the ‘Service-Giving’ subculture felt valued through feeling supported (A) which engendered their sense of belonging to their immediate team or function (V), rather than to the wider organisation or hierarchy. They valued their supportive leaders and colleagues (V), working relationships (V) and helping each other in contributing to a positive goal (V). This made them feel connected with their team (A) and these sentiments were evident in the following comments:

I probably value as a fact that generally, as a group, we are all working towards the same goal so it’s nice to feel part of a team that is doing something positive and the general work group environment that I work in, I feel is generally a pretty supportive work environment. (8)

Overall, the culture of the workplace is supportive, it is very generous. Once you get the opportunity to work with a number of people they are very accommodating. If you are busy at certain points of time, they will manage your workload so they’re not driving you into the ground. Overall, it’s a very nice and rewarding place to work in. (10).

The strong parts of the culture are driven from people’s willingness to work together and build on each other’s skills but that again is very self-directed, that’s almost entirely not directed by management. (11)

We spend seven to eight hours at work and you have to make sure you are working with nice people who are valued and who are open and honest with you. I value my job because it is interesting, it is exciting and I feel valued plus my job is reasonably stable and well paid. The people are pleasant, very professional, very honest and open. (5)

Many participants enjoyed regular communication in their team and this depended mostly on their immediate manager or supervisor (B). Some participants believed that while their managers were good technical leaders, they were not good people leaders or communicators (B). Most agreed that communication from the broader division and organisation was irregular and not very effective (B):

Communication within the division and across the department is appallingly bad. I find out things from the printer by looking through the printed documents. It is really hard to find out what is going on. (2)

Generally, people worked well with each other and respected each other’s opinions even if they disagreed (B):

I think people generally work with each other quite well and are open to the fact that even if you disagree with someone, you give them the respect of their opinions, or whatever, and just try to get over it to work with each other. I think too within the organisation there seems to be a bit of leadership coming from the top as well in terms of ensuring that is the type of workplace that we work in and doing things to help people in regard to that sort of things. (8)
One participant spoke about the mutual caring and support within their team:

You feel people care about you. You feel it is a second family. You support them and they support you. In (our) branch we care about each other. People are nice to me and I am nice to them. (5)

It was during emergencies, when there were disease outbreaks or natural disasters that the organisation was seen to operate at its best and individuals collaborated across the organisation, not just within their team. The number of people working in an emergency could range from about ten people to hundreds, depending on the nature and size of the response required. People knew what to do, pulled together and supported each other as explained in the following comments:

It’s exciting because most of the people involved tend to be fairly passionate about that work and generally while you’re there during a response, it’s very focused and is very good bonding. (7)

I’ve had opportunities to work in a number of outbreaks … Under an emergency, you tend to force your co-operative nature because you are all under such a high workload … By the time you get involved in an outbreak, you’re asked to do something very explicitly and in very critical timeframes but you know your role, you stick to your role and you’re supported in that role. (10)

It was exciting because it changed your everyday duties, I suppose, to being constantly busy. You were staying back at night, you were getting in at 7 o’clock or 6 o’clock in the morning, and to get to the end of the day, you were tired but you knew you were working towards a cause for the public interest. (12)

In contrast to this supportive ‘Service-Giving’ subculture was the ‘Political-Power’ subculture which gave participants a feeling of ‘separating’ rather than belonging, as employees were viewed as being ‘disposable’ or a number and replaceable (V). Consequently, while participants felt valued for their technical skills, the ‘Political-Power’ subculture undermined their feeling valued particularly during restructures where there were forced redundancies. The word ‘forced’ signified strongly that the affected positions no longer belonged, leaving individuals to feel discarded and excluded. In these comments, participants expressed the feeling of separation, or not belonging:

Disposable, I think is the organisational feeling. There are individuals who care about other people and care about things, but as a value across the organisation you feel you’re there to do a job, and if that is no longer needed to be done, there are no qualms about cutting you loose. (9)

I think in that part we’re just a number, we’re just another person and usually if they want to cost cut they’ll just wipe out an area without any understanding of what that area does, and I just accept that’s life being in the public service. (3)
When I first started, my supervisor said just remember you’re only a number, in a sense do as much work in the timeframe you’ve got at a sensible pace. Don’t bust yourself and work late hours. If you can’t do it, speak to someone about it because really you are only a number and you can be replaced … I was sort of taken aback by it but it did make sense. It is true. No one is irreplaceable. (1)

One participant spoke about how quite a number of employees were still employed as temporaries and had been for the past 20 to 30 years. This approach of dispensing with employees when convenient and for cost cutting, led to employees having the attitude of not wanting to put in extra effort ‘because they can sack you tomorrow’ (2), lacking loyalty, feeling isolated and not valued (A):

When you treat people as numbers and not faces, you can’t demand loyalty unless you are loyal to them. People are working as casual for 20 to 30 years. (4)

A lot of us out here are feeling much like a shag on a rock at the moment. (11)

Before the redundancies, I enjoyed working for the department, the teamwork, supportive culture and what I was doing and I have lost that … Teamwork was most appreciated and information sharing and being self-directive. There was a lot of dedication amongst staff and this was not acknowledged. In the redundancies, they didn’t value what we were doing. (2)

There are politics for instance. We lost a staff member last year to forced redundancy and that person is no longer with us, but a very good employee … very involved and did a lot more than people understood and recognised. When that person left, the person leading that project got a little political and said if we haven’t got that person any more, that job can’t be done. He dug his heels in instead of looking outside the square, this person’s gone, we still need this job done, how do we do it? Instead of just putting up hands and saying nah we’re not doing it now because that person’s not here. I think that’s a bit childish and a bit political. (1)

Finally, the ‘Political-Power’ subculture was also manifested through managers gathering loyal followers, described as the small ‘in’ group, who would support them, whereas the larger ‘out’ group would not be supportive:

There’s a strong feeling of ‘ins’ and ‘outs’. There’s an in-group and there’s an out-group … There are some managers here who have a strong sense of building up people around them who seem to be supportive of their version of events and if you’re not supportive, then you’re on the out. (11)

(c) EMPOWERING—Entrusting vs. Controlling

Participants felt valued when they were entrusted to do their job, were able to be self-directed and had direct responsibility, autonomy and flexibility (V). The strongest signal to a number of participants that they were trusted was when they were left alone
and not micromanaged (B). Consequently, they felt empowered, confident and trusted (A).

If management is leaving me alone, if industry is not contacting me every day, therefore I must be doing ok … I’m very much of the opinion that if you give people a very clear idea about what they need to do and have it acknowledged that they do understand, then you just get out of their road and allow them to do it, basically support them to do it and my manager is quite good at that. (10)

We’ve all got our own areas of responsibility and you’re pretty much on your own. (9)

We’re not micromanaged, but there’ve been periods when we’ve kinda been barely managed. (11)

Having direct responsibility of seeing a task from beginning to the end … It was something we could organise and we had a fair bit of flexibility in how to organise it … and we had some autonomy to do something. (3)

The team has a prominent role … and the task ahead has considerable high priority and we are empowered to do it. We have the right resources. (6)

While most participants felt empowered to do their role or project, there were other decisions they did not control particularly those that were rule driven, bureaucratic and hierarchical where decisions were made at a higher level as part of the ‘Political-Power’ subculture. Examples were when the Minister became involved in decisions or when decisions were imposed in relation to organisational changes. The ‘Political-Power’ subculture was controlling (V) and individuals were required to comply and fit into the system and adopt the changes (B). With imposed organisational changes, this led to an environment with depressed morale, anxious and sad survivors as evident in the following comments: (A)

Overall, morale has been quite depressed over the last six months or so. About 25 people left with redundancies last year and a lot of those were forced redundancies. It had huge impacts. Then there were a lot of people who had jobs, but weren’t 100% sure because they had to reapply for their position. For me personally, some of the people that left were staff I had worked with previously. When the lab closed, half a dozen people lost their jobs there and we were a very close unit. That was quite distressing. (7)

I’ve had permanent tenure up to now, although last year we lost a heap of our permanent staff with forced redundancies. Forced redundancies are pretty sad. (4)

Some participants recognised that even their managers did not have control over decisions relating to organisational change (B):
I think change is forced upon them … The Director and Manager came up from (Head office) to interview people that day and told them who was getting forced redundancies. We had no discretion whatsoever with what happened there. (4)

Furthermore, there was a belief that their department was an easy target for budget savings or cost cutting (B):

… the government’s four untouchable departments are Health, Education, Policing and Transport. There’s no way in the world they can cut money in Health or Education… those four departments make up 80% of the government and they’re untouchable with funding … hence we get a 10% hit so they can maintain their bottom line. So I think change is politically forced on our department for those reasons. (4)

One participant, whose position was made redundant, felt disheartened by not being able to continue working on a project that would benefit farmers (2). In previous restructures, redundancies were voluntary. While senior management referred to voluntary redundancies in the restructure, participants and the media spoke about these as being forced redundancies given positions were deleted from the organisational structure. According to a newspaper “Staff were briefed about the changes last Wednesday, but many details are still hazy, including which jobs will be made forcibly redundant”.4

To survive in this changing and uncertain environment where participants had no control over decisions about their job security, they learnt to cope and accept changes to their work role that were imposed on them while also feeling uneasy and anxious about it (A):

… There has been a lot of blood on the carpet over the past three years in the broader organisation. I’ve had to go from being on projects within units who no longer exist and try and find a way to maintain my own employment during these radical changes … My role has changed several times. I have taken over other people’s tasks. I’ve had tasks taken away from me and given to other people … There have been people who have lost their job and the knock on effects of reducing the number of staff is determining priorities of what remains and splitting those priorities amongst the remaining staff … It becomes very easy for management to say stop doing this, pick up those things and we’ll sit down in another six months and see how you’re going. And that’s part of the new reality and I’m ok with that. (10)

Other changes that were introduced during this period namely the financial management system, accommodation change at Head Office and the concept of shared responsibility were all imposed on participants. With the latter, some participants

4 Citation withheld for confidentiality reasons.
thought they were already doing it and it was seen to be an exercise in shifting costs to the industry so that government would not cover all the costs associated with emergencies. They believed while they have influence at the local level, there were decisions that even their leaders had no influence: “there seems to be plenty of decisions that happen higher than that, and they then have to say this is what we’ve been told to do, go with it” (3). These decisions can come from the cluster department or the Minister.

6.4.2 Communicating in preparing for change

It is not surprising that with such a controlling ‘Political-Power’ subculture and irregular divisional communication, that there was inadequate communication in preparing employees for the organisational changes. Change was thrust upon them from their own department, their cluster department and by ministerial direction. This would seem to be at odds with Organisation B’s espoused corporate values of Integrity and Trust. In terms of the Integrity value, how do forced redundancies and a lack of communication mirror the behaviours: “Consider people equally without prejudice or favour; Act professionally with honesty, consistency and impartiality; and Take responsibility for situations, showing leadership and courage”? Similarly, the imposed changes do not reflect the behaviours of the espoused Trust value in relation to: “Build relationships based on mutual respect; Communicate intentions clearly and invite teamwork and collaboration”. It would appear that the Political-Power subculture did not mirror these espoused values and behaviours. Yet, these values and behaviours were more evident with the Service-Giving subculture, including the additional two Values relating to Service, “Provide services fairly with a focus on customer needs” and Accountability, “Take responsibility for decisions and actions”.

Participants were very clear about their preferences for communication in preparing employees for change where they would feel valued and from the analysis, are summarised as leaders BEING OPEN and for employees, the category is CONTRIBUTING TO CHANGE. These two categories for communicating change are outlined below in terms of the ‘Service-Giving’ and ‘Political-Power’ subculture moiety analysis.
(a) BEING OPEN—*Communicating honestly vs. Controlling information*

Participants in the ‘Service-Giving’ subculture would feel valued when change is communicated honestly and upfront (V). This includes being transparent when explaining the reasons for the change and not being political, even if the changes involve job cuts (V). Participants believe that keeping everyone informed with the same honest messages would allow change to happen more easily (B). This open approach to communication would reduce fear and anxiety and enhance their sense of feeling valued (A).

In conflict with the ‘Service-Giving’ subculture’s preference for openly communicating change before it is introduced, is the ‘Political-Power’ subculture’s tactic of controlling information (V). Participants perceive this is achieved through communication that is ‘driven from the top’ including communication from their senior management, their departmental or cluster department executive management, or the Minister (V). Furthermore, this political communication style would involve withholding information, secrecy, keeping people in the dark (V), or putting a positive spin on information that might cause an adverse reaction amongst stakeholders (B). This participant emphasised the need to be open and honest about the reasons for change (V):

One thing I feel strongly about is honesty about the reasons why things occur … and not trying to dress it up in a positive when it is really a negative. If you’re open and honest about what is occurring and why things are occurring, that’s the best way as far as communicating things with groups. (8)

Participants revealed that the ‘Political-Power’ subculture’s controlling communication style created tension during times of change, causing several participants to feel threatened, uneasy and uncertain about their future (A).

The four organisational changes, namely the restructure, new strategic plan, the new financial management system and accommodation change to open plan, were imposed with little or no formal communication before the introduction (B). Prior to the announcement of the restructure, some participants heard informally that there would be a radio announcement about it (B):

We got wind at work that there would be a radio announcement… The press got the information before us and we got different information. (2)

Once the public announcement was made through the media, managers discussed the implications of the restructure with their teams (B). The restructure would involve some forced redundancies and moving some positions to a new decentralised organisation to provide services closer to farmers and the community. This would enable a quicker
response during emergencies or natural disasters. Nevertheless, affected people would need to apply for a position in the new organisation which would commence operating in January 2014, more than one year after the announcement in early November 2012. How this new organisation would work, its structure and positions were unknown at the time of the announcement. There were many unknowns and consultation with employees and the union commenced after the restructure was announced. Employees were able to access draft structures through the Intranet and discuss the implications with their manager. Nevertheless, participants believed that there were inadequate details and inconsistent messages about jobs, as revealed in the following comments:

The communication was not overly handled well. There were a lot of rumours and innuendo about what sections were going, who was going to lose their job and even now I know people in the lab are still very much uncertain about their futures … and feel quite threatened. (7)

There were different messages between divisions. … There was no information coming through. … We had no idea of what was going to happen and we sat there for three months waiting with nothing to do. … Communication was not good and it was guesstimates and rumours. (2)

The reasons for the redundancies were not clearly explained (B):

If they simply said the redundancies were because we had to save more money and become more efficient, the decisions would make sense. It was not clear. (2)

The Minister had imposed a savings target for the department. To identify savings, Organisation B was restructured to focus on priority services, improving the efficiency and effectiveness of delivering those services, deleting positions and activities that were not core and creating positions to support the core service delivery. Over 50 positions were deleted to achieve the required budget savings target. While there would have been communication at the leadership levels about the restructure before the announcement, this was not transparent to participants who relied on the grapevine, “guesstimates and rumours” (2). The communication occurred after the announcement, was high level and lacking in details.

(b) CONTRIBUTING TO CHANGE—Having a voice vs. Forcing a done deal

To enhance their sense of feeling valued, participants in the ‘Service-Giving’ subculture expressed their preference for contributing to organisational changes by having an input into decisions, with face-to-face consultation involving all levels of employees (V). They believed that having two-way communication and making it clear
what needs to be supported in the change, would increase its chances of success (B). Such an inclusive approach would lead to employees feeling listened to, trusted and managers caring about what they thought (A).

In the case of the restructure, consultation commenced directly after the announcement with affected staff being advised first of the change or deletion of their role, and the opportunity for a voluntary redundancy or applying for another position in the department. In keeping with the ‘Political-Power’ subculture’s need to control information and the change process, this approach led participants to feel that the restructure was predetermined, a ‘done deal’ or a fait accompli as this participant stated:

The Director and Manager came up from head office to interview people the day of the announcement and told them who was getting forced redundancies. We had no discretion whatsoever with what happened there. (4)

This was despite the fact that ‘draft’ restructures were released for discussion and consultation after affected staff had been advised. One participant compared this process with a previous restructure which was implemented more effectively in an inclusive manner where employees were able to influence the outcome:

Previous changes were handled well … There was a little bit of redundancies and they were voluntary. Redundancies went to people who wanted to go. They also managed the change well. They kept us informed and everyone got the same messages. There were workshops … It was inclusive … and our opinions were sought. We were able to have input into the developing structure of what we were going to do and how it would work. (2)

Participants believed that changes driven by the ‘Political-Power’ subculture were introduced with one-way communication ‘instructing’ employees to take on the change rather than ‘consulting’ with them about the proposed change (B).

Where communication involves change, if there can be consultation or representation at all levels. They say they will consult with you. It’s that whole idea that it is consultation. It’s not just one-way communication. (8)

Consequently, participants expressed they felt like a number, resentment, frustrated, angry and undervalued in a process that was introduced as a fait accompli (A).

Consulting employees after a predetermined change initiative had been introduced was not considered to be proper consultation. Participants expected employees would be consulted before introducing the change, otherwise it would be perceived as being predetermined:

They did not bother to consult. They did not inform us or consult with us although they said they did. It was a ‘token’ consult. (2)
Another change was that we now work in an open area, open plan. No-one consulted with us. Just do it. … no one cares about what you think. They change it and you have to move. …It is a huge change. … I felt low and I felt like a number. There was no discussion. … There was gossip for months and then we have the official communication months later. It takes time. If the changes are coming, why don’t we have a clear explanation and be open and honest with us.

(Re accommodation change) There’s always the communication in terms of this is what it’s going to look like, what do you think? There was communication about these are going to be the areas for your unit, but there’s scope to move people around within them. … but from my understanding and my perspective, it wasn’t something we really had too much of a say in what was going on.

When (the new financial management system) first got out, it just got thrown at them… we had no training on that and that affected all staff…The communication was terrible. You were emailed a 20 page booklet on how to use it … It’s crazy.

Recently, (the new financial management system) was introduced. It was a huge change in the organisation and nobody knows how to use it. We only had basic training after two months.

This shared responsibility thing hasn’t been discussed very much. It’s been talked about but it hasn’t been explained. Shared responsibility has a fairly self-explanatory mode but that’s not good enough to make something work. You can’t hope the people get the right message. You’ve got to tell people the right message and make it clear to them what’s expected. Now this was talked about at a meeting I was at yesterday … (11)

This participant summarised the mood of the interviews:

I feel like the last four or five years there has been nothing but change. We have just had to try and conduct our work in a sea of change… and I think I’ve developed a resentment towards a lot of our management because they’ve seen us being anti-change or negative to change, but I think it’s a well-known human characteristic that I strongly agree with, humans are not resistant to change, they just don’t like too much of it at once …or unstructured change that is not thoroughly explained. (11)

For successful change, most importantly, this participant stated that fear fostered by the ‘Political-Power’ subculture needed to be removed:

For successful change to occur, the bottom line is the fear has to be dissipated … We really need to be encouraged. If we’re informed with what’s going on, the fear is not going to be there. I think fear develops out of half-truths, innuendo and not knowing what’s going. (4)

Ideally, this participant would like leaders and managers to spend more time communicating face-to-face with groups of people and listening to them:

There are only 400 people in our organisation. It would be nice if there were more bottom up type consultation and a feeling of being listened to, especially during change. (4)
6.5 Conclusion

In understanding how change was communicated at Organisation B and its impact on participants’ sense of feeling valued, I initially explored the cultural context to identify the cultural strengths or positive core of feeling valued. This provided the background to appreciate how change was introduced and shaped participants’ meaning of feeling valued. I proposed three cultural strengths based on Values, Beliefs and Attitudes, namely ‘Contributing’, ‘Belonging’ and ‘Empowering’ that influenced participants’ sense of feeling valued generally. Each of these was described in moiety terms for the ‘Service-Giving’ and ‘Political-Power’ subcultures, with ‘Contributing’ meaning Doing something meaningful vs. Being politically driven; ‘Belonging’ meaning Supporting vs. Separating; and ‘Empowering’ meaning Entrusting vs. Controlling.

In terms of feeling valued in communicating and preparing for change, two analytic concepts were co-constructed from participants’ preferences rather than their actual experience, namely: ‘Being open’ and ‘Contributing to change’. In moiety terms, ‘Being open’ related to Communicating honestly vs. Controlling information and ‘Contributing to change’ meant Having a voice vs. Forcing a done deal.

As part of the theory building structure for my thesis, the subjective co-constructed concepts are displayed in the following two diagrams, where the first diagram (Figure 10) portrays the concepts for feeling valued in communicating and preparing for change, while the second diagram (Figure 11) visually depicts the interplay between the moiety subcultures and the concepts for feeling valued. My assertion is that the ‘Political-Power’ subculture’s need to control information led to inadequate communication in preparing employees for change. Furthermore, the changes were imposed according to the Values, Beliefs and Attitudes of the ‘Political-Power’ subculture, leaving employees to feel powerless and frustrated, yet they were willing to contribute to the changes.
Figure 10. Summary of concepts, moieties for feeling valued and communicating change

**FEELING VALUED**
Communicating in preparing for change

- **Being open**
  - **Communicating honestly vs. Controlling information**
    - V: Being transparent
    - B: Keeping us informed
    - A: Reducing fear, anxiety
  - **Having a voice vs. Forcing a done deal**
    - V: Consulting all levels
    - B: Secrecy
    - A: Feeling threatened

- **Contributing to change**
  - **Having a voice**
    - A: Feeling listened to, trusted
  - **FORCING A DONE DEAL**
    - A: Frustrating

*Note: Change team includes practitioners, HR and departmental representatives*

Figure 11. Moiety subcultures, feeling valued and communicating change

In the next chapter, I discuss the results from the Integrative Literature Review (Chapter 4) and the two case studies in Chapters 5 and 6 to construct my theory building structure for the meaning of feeling valued in communicating change to employees.
Chapter 7. Discussion of findings

7.1 Introduction

The purpose of my research is to explore the role of communication in preparing employees for transformational change where they feel valued. In this chapter I present a cross-case analysis and synthesis of the findings from the three projects forming the multiple case study (Chapters 4, 5 and 6). Similarities and differences are discussed between the Integrative Literature Review (ILR) and the two case studies of non-managerial employees, leading to a synthesis of the findings. The insights are reviewed in relation to literature and I conclude with a summary of assertions and key points from the discussion.

7.2 Constructing the meaning of feeling valued

In each of the three projects, I addressed the research question, “What does feeling valued mean to employees?” To provide early conceptual ideas for feeling valued, I conducted an ILR (Torraco, 2005) in my first project. Through this process, seven feelings were co-constructed for the meaning of feeling valued from the employee perspective, namely feelings of belonging; contributing; meaning; supporting; trusting; respecting and appreciating. These findings were based on literature on employee engagement, leadership and job satisfaction, rather than organisational change. Hence, I further explored the concept of feeling valued in two real-life case studies of non-managerial employees with contrasting experiences of transformational change.

The participants from Organisation A, a farmer-member owned organisation, mostly experienced positive change regarding the head office move and Activity-based working (ABW). However, some dissatisfaction was expressed with how business and team restructures were communicated. Nevertheless, I co-constructed three concepts forming the cultural positive core of feeling valued, namely accepting and contributing, and feeling supported together with their underlying Values (V), Beliefs (B) and Attitudes (A).
In the second real-life case study, participants in Organisation B, an agricultural government department, were mostly dissatisfied with how numerous changes were introduced without any communication beforehand, except for one initiative. Through moiety analysis (Saldaña, 2016), I co-constructed two subcultures, namely ‘Service-Giving’ and ‘Political-Power’ with the participants’ perspectives. Based on the Values, Beliefs and Attitudes for each subculture, the three concepts and moieties for the cultural positive core of feeling valued were: contributing (doing something meaningful vs. being politically driven); belonging (supporting vs. separating); and empowering (entrusting vs. controlling).

7.2.1 Similarities

In table 18, the feeling valued categories and their properties are summarised for each of the three projects. At a quick glance, it would appear that belonging/accepting, contributing, feeling supported and trusted/empowered were most common across all three projects. In further conceptualising the categories, I have included the additional ILR categories—feeling respected, appreciated and meaning—in contributing or feeling supported. The reason for the additional conceptualising was to reflect what seemed to be most important to participants during our interviews. In summary, it would seem that, regardless of whether the context is transformational change or no change at all, the core categories co-constructed for the meaning of feeling are belonging, contributing, feeling supported and empowered.

Table 18. Cross-case analysis of feeling valued categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ILR What feeling valued means to employees</th>
<th>Organisation A participants Cultural positive core of feeling valued</th>
<th>Organisation B participants Cultural positive core of feeling valued</th>
<th>Case studies of transformational change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belonging</td>
<td>Accepting</td>
<td>Belonging</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling supported</td>
<td>Feeling supported</td>
<td>(included in Belonging)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling trusted/empowered</td>
<td>(included in Feeling supported)</td>
<td>Feeling empowered</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling respected</td>
<td>(included in Contributing)</td>
<td>(included in Contributing)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling appreciated</td>
<td>(included in Contributing)</td>
<td>(included in Feeling supported)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>(included in Contributing)</td>
<td>(included in Feeling supported)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For Organisation A and Organisation B participants, many of their Values, Beliefs and Attitudes were similar and are synthesised in Table 19. Each of the feeling valued categories—belonging, contributing, feeling supported and empowered— is discussed in relation to literature and communication theory. These concepts are not mutually exclusive and are symbiotic as will emerge from the discussion.

Table 19. Synthesis of the cultural positive core of feeling valued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values (V)</th>
<th>Beliefs (B)</th>
<th>Attitudes (A)</th>
<th>Feeling Valued</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feeling accepted</td>
<td>Welcoming, friendly workplace</td>
<td>Feeling part of the team, family</td>
<td>Feeling of BELONGING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborating</td>
<td>People work well with each other</td>
<td>Proud and loyal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good working relationships</td>
<td>Good friends at work, socialising</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being informed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating regularly, openly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>doing something meaningful</td>
<td>Everyone contributes in some form</td>
<td>Feeling fulfilled, satisfied, passionate, excited,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making a difference</td>
<td>Committed people</td>
<td>appreciated, rewarded, listened to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a voice</td>
<td>Open, honest and work with integrity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being involved in decisions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being respected for expertise</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive leaders, colleagues</td>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Feeling secure</td>
<td>Feeling SUPPORTED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledging your contribution</td>
<td>Being encouraged to get ahead, develop personally</td>
<td>Caring for each other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being transparent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual trust</td>
<td>Entrusted to deliver</td>
<td>Feeling trusted, empowered to do roles</td>
<td>Feeling EMPOWERED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having autonomy</td>
<td>Not micromanaged</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrusted to do role</td>
<td>Everyone feels equal and important</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-directed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Belonging relates to a feeling of acceptance, collaborating and having good relationships with colleagues in the team and organisation; being informed and communicating regularly (V). People feel they are part of the family (A), their work environment is friendly and welcoming and they have good friends at work (B). This finding of belonging is in keeping with the key scholars in the ILR conceptualising
feeling valued (Claxton, 2014, Dutton et al., 2016; White & Mackenzie-Davey, 2003; Iszatt-White 2012). There is widespread research from various disciplines indicating the importance of a feeling of belonging. Maslow (1943) identified belongingness as a key motivator psychologically. Neuroscience research has highlighted that our brains are wired up to be social (Scarlett, 2015) and that communication is important for developing social connections at work. Belonging or relatedness (Rock 2008) are considered to be part of our unconscious (Kimbles, 2006).

Communication scholars recognise the importance of communication’s role in creating a feeling of belonging (Welch, 2011) or a community spirit within the organisation (Elving, 2005, p. 131). Such a feeling of community is considered to affect employee commitment with the organisation, trust in management and readiness for change (Elving, 2005, p. 133). In addition, Postmes, Tanis and de Wit (2001) acknowledge management communication’s role in generating a feeling of belonging and not solely the interactions with colleagues and the team (as cited in Elving, 2005, p. 132). Similarly, ‘being informed’ (White & Mackenzie-Davey, 2003), and ‘communicating regularly and openly’ in Organisation B are considered to create a feeling of belonging. Reissner and Pagan’s research further indicates that discursive communication where employees interact with managers, such as participating in team meetings, can lead to “tentative feelings of belonging” and “to feel involved and valued (2013, p. 2756).

Contribution means employees feel they are doing something worthwhile, making a difference, having a voice, being involved in decisions and respected for their expertise (V). The belief is that everyone contributes in some form, people are committed, open, honest and work with integrity (B). Through contributing, people feel listened to, fulfilled, satisfied, passionate, excited, appreciated and rewarded (A). These findings from the two organisational case studies support the findings from Kahn (1990), Claxton (2014), Iszatt-White (2012) and Robinson et al., (2004) in relation to feeling valued.

Furthermore, the notion of employees’ contributing and feeling valued adds to the research on employee voice which “is now often used interchangeably with employee involvement, participation, and engagement” (Mowbray et al., 2015, p. 385). Ruck and Welch (2012) state that employee voice relies on being well informed, having
organisational support and identifying with the organisation’s values or belonging (p. 301) and hence aligns with the core of feeling valued.

The finding of contributing supports the definition proposed for employee empowerment as “employees’ ability to voice their concerns, to influence their work in dialogue, and take independent action” (Johansson, 2015, p. 104), developed from research with leaders, not employees. Furthermore, the concept of Communicative Leadership (Johansson, Miller & Hamrin, 2014, p. 155) promotes the contributing feeling when defined as a leader “who engages employees in dialogue, actively shares and seeks feedback, practices participative decision making, and is perceived as open and involved” (p. 86).

I deliberately chose the word contributing rather than participating or involvement or engagement (Mowbray et al., 2015) as the participants used the word contributing rather than participating. The word ‘participating’ was mentioned only twice in 27 transcripts—once in relation to participating in a training course and secondly, it was about participating in drafting a legal agreement. In my interviews, I developed a distinct sense of participants’ willingness to give (Kahn, 1990), in both organisations, despite the frustrations with Organisation B’s ‘Political-Power’ subculture. From a leader, manager, scholar or practitioner perspective, while we may think and use ‘participating’ in relation to employees, from their perspective contributing is more than participating. The key concept in contributing is ‘doing something meaningful’ and ‘making a difference’, thereby adding an aspirational or altruistic layer to notions of participation, employee voice and empowerment. Claxton (2014) identified altruism in her research on feeling valued although in relation to employee sacrificing behaviours. While different to my finding, it still highlights an underlying ‘giving’ nature in employees in relation to their sense of feeling valued.

Feeling supported, the third concept of feeling valued, relates to employees having supportive leaders and colleagues who acknowledge their contributions, communicate regularly and openly (V). This support is underpinned with beliefs that employees are kept informed, have flexibility and are encouraged to get ahead and develop personally (B). With such support, employees feel secure and care for each other (A). This finding is in keeping with the scholars conceptualising feeling valued, namely Claxton, 2014; White and Mackenzie-Davey, 2003; Robinson et al., 2004 and Kahn 1990. It also adds
to the perceived organisational support (POS) studies as they relate to employees’
general belief that their organisation “values their contribution and cares about their
well-being” (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002, p. 698). Leadership communication has a
role in enabling employees to feel supported. As such, supportiveness is considered in
communicative leadership behaviours and “refers to the extent to which the manager
acts in a considerate manner toward employees, takes an interest in their wellbeing, and
facilitates their work (Johansson et al., 2014, p. 164).

Feeling empowered, the fourth concept of feeling valued, means that leaders and
managers entrust employees to do their role, they have the autonomy to do so, are self-
directed and there is mutual trust (V). To feel empowered, participants had the beliefs
that they were not micromanaged and that everyone felt equal and important (B).
Empowerment engendered feelings of trust in the participants (A). Trust between
management and employees is considered to be central also to feeling supported, and
also for feelings of belonging (Elving, 2005).

7.2.2 Differences

The moiety analysis in Organisation B study revealed some differences through the
influence of the ‘Political-Power’ subculture, bringing to the fore the tension and
obstacles to participants’ feeling valued. Rather than fostering a feeling of contributing,
‘being politically driven’ interfered with participants feeling they were ‘doing
something meaningful’. Similarly with belonging, the ‘separating’ focus of the
‘Political-Power’ subculture, treating people as numbers to be disposed, made
participants feel they were not supported or valued. The ‘controlling’ nature of the
‘Political-Power’ subculture resulted in participants not feeling trusted and empowered.

This case study highlights the adverse impact of the ‘Political-Power’ subculture on
employees’ sense of feeling valued with issues of power and control. Furthermore,
Organisation B epitomises the functionalist approach to organisations with top-down
information driven by management, directive communication (Reissner & Pagan, 2013)
or monologic communication (Jabri, 2016; Johansson & Heide, 2008; Frahm & Brown,
2005).
Conflict and power differences were more evident in Organisation B, perhaps because of the political nature of the government organisation and less positive experiences of continual change over a number of years, compared to Organisation A. These differences may have existed in Organisation A, perhaps to a lesser degree, given the generally positive work environment, the culture of trust and leaders’ and managers’ belief in their people. Furthermore, the younger age profile and non-managerial roles may have contributed to the lack of discussion in the interviews on the politics of the organisation. This may be more obvious amongst managerial and older employees. There was mention that the senior executives held the power and all participants, except the one older employee, did not seem to be impacted by this in their work. Even with the restructures, where employees were told of their new roles on the day of the announcement, the feeling of a loss of power was momentary as they felt rewarded once the new roles were explained to them.

Most of Organisation B participants had been employed for many years and had experienced many changes to the point that they felt the organisation was in continuous change and were feeling change fatigue or exhaustion. In contrast, participants in Organisation A experienced fewer major changes and most had fewer years of service. Furthermore, most participants reacted positively to how they were prepared for the one significant change compared to participants in Organisation B who were mostly critical of how a number of transformational changes were introduced poorly.

7.2.3 Assertions

From the findings of the ILR and the two case studies of non-managerial employees, I propose feeling valued to mean from individual and cultural perspectives, as feelings of belonging, contributing and feeling supported and empowered. These feelings are not mutually exclusive and can work together in a dynamic, interdependent way. For example, if employees have a feeling of belonging and feel supported or empowered, this can enhance their feeling of contributing.

Further, I propose that leadership and management communication can foster feeling valued through creating a sense of belonging, supporting and empowering employees to contribute in a meaningful way. This extends the communicative
leadership concept (Johansson, 2015), to recognise the role of leaders in creating a sense of belonging (Elving, 2005) for employees to feel valued.

Finally, from one case study, I assert that a ‘Political-Power’ subculture can undermine employees’ sense of feeling valued through requiring meaningless work for political purposes, treating employees as disposable, and managing employees in a controlling manner where employees feel threatened, frustrated and devalued.

7.3 Communicating change and feeling valued

The research question, “How does communication affect employees’ sense of feeling valued in preparing for transformational change?” was investigated only in the two real-life case studies of non-managerial employees in Organisations A and B. The findings were based on participants’ actual experiences in Organisation A, and Organisation B participants’ ideal or “three wishes” for communicating change, given the lack of communication in announcing most changes. I respond to this research question by first comparing and contrasting the two case studies, then synthesising the findings and making assertions for what this may mean for communicating and preparing employees for change.

7.3.1 Similarities

In both case studies, participants felt valued when they were contributing to change and leaders, managers and the change team were being open about the change. These concepts are summarised in Table 20 with their corresponding Values (V), Beliefs (B) and Attitudes (A).

Contribution to change means employees having a voice and being able to influence decisions with suggestions, ideas, options and alternatives (V). This concept also indicates genuine consultation, including everyone with two-way communication and having no fixed decisions prior to consultation (B).
Table 20. Similarities in communicating change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation A participants</th>
<th>Organisation B participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication experienced</strong></td>
<td><strong>Communication preferences</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contributing to change</strong></td>
<td><strong>Contributing to change</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a voice (V)</td>
<td>Having a voice (V)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Including everyone (B)</td>
<td>Two-way communication (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling listened to, trusted (A)</td>
<td>Feeling listened to, caring about what we think, trusted (A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Being open</strong></td>
<td><strong>Being open</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being transparent (V)</td>
<td>Being transparent, communicating honestly (V)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explaining the rationale (B)</td>
<td>Keeping us informed (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling confident (A)</td>
<td>Reducing fear, anxiety (A)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Organisation A, every employee had ample time and the opportunity to be involved in decisions about the office move and discuss the practical implications of the new way of working (ABW). There were All-Staff briefings and employees could speak to their departmental representative on the change team or HR. With these processes in place to encourage employee contribution, participants felt listened to, or heard, trusted and that leaders, managers and the change team cared about what they thought (A). This is in keeping with the concepts of communicative leadership and employee empowerment (Johansson, 2015; Johansson et al., 2014).

It is not surprising that employees want to contribute to change, as contributing is a core concept for feeling valued as highlighted in the earlier discussion on feeling valued. Many scholars recognise the importance of employee participation during change and empowering employees in decision-making (Lewis & Russ, 2012). Even though I am focused on feeling valued, it is also important to recognise that some employees may choose not to contribute and this does not mean they feel devalued.

In terms of being open, this means communicating honestly upfront and with transparency about the good and the bad, including job cuts (V), explaining the rationale and keeping employees informed, with everyone having the same messages (B). This informative communication (Elving, 2005) would include, ‘Why are we doing it?’ ‘What is it going to look like?’ ‘Can we see a plan?’ How do I find out if I have a job? Such open and honest communication engenders confidence, thereby reducing fear, anxiety and frustration (A). Most Organisation A participants spoke positively about the openness of the communication, even addressing practical day-to-day issues like how the telephones would work using a laptop. Communicating honestly upfront about
change was a key preference for Organisational B participants as this made them feel valued. Similarly, honesty was a key value for employees in a change case study (Langer & Thorup, 2006) and is considered to create trust (Kotter & Cohen, 2002). From the interviews with participants, honesty seemed to be the key aspect of being open.

### 7.3.2 Differences

A key difference between the two case studies is the concept of communicating supportively to enhance employees’ sense of feeling valued which appears only for Organisation A participants (Table 21). Communicating supportively means leaders, managers and the change team informing employees early of the change (B) and encouraging them (V) so that they feel positive, excited and secure (A).

Table 21. Differences in communicating change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation A participants</th>
<th>Organisation B participants ‘Political-Power’ subculture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communicating supportively</strong></td>
<td><strong>Controlling information</strong> (vs. being open)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging us (V)</td>
<td>Driven from the top, keeping people in the dark, putting a positive spin (V)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informing early (B)</td>
<td>Secrecy, being political rumours, grapevine (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling positive, excited and secure (A)</td>
<td>Creating tension, feeling threatened, uneasy and uncertain (A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Forcing a done deal</strong> (vs. contributing to change)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-determined change, instructing change (V)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-way communication (B)</td>
<td>Feeling like a number, frustrated, anger, resentment and undervalued (A)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This early communication, in the planning phase, supports Larkin and Larkin (2006) in their view on processes for successful change. In Organisation A, communication commenced six months before the office move and ABW and participants valued this early communication. Furthermore, the Managing Director, together with the change team, galvanised employee support through regular face-to-face All-Staff briefings and
facilitating discussions (Larkin & Larkin, 2006), being positive and getting everyone excited about the change. This fostered employees’ feeling of belonging. There were regular emails informing employees of how to prepare for the move and case studies of ABW were provided. Importantly, participants believed they were informed early and included, rather than being instructed. They felt encouraged through leaders modelling the change and the numerous meetings and workshops they could attend and being reassured about the things that mattered to them. Even with the restructures, participants spoke about their managers’ support and belief in their ability to take on new challenging roles. As such, the changes were personal transformations for some participants.

The finding of communicating supportively for feeling valued can be considered to be an outcome of communicative leadership discussed previously (Johansson, 2015) and the concept of ‘servant-leadership’ regarding Claxton’s findings (2014) mentioned in Chapter 4. Communicating supportively and what this means is a topic that needs further investigating.

In reviewing the findings, I am wondering why communicating supportively did not stand out strongly for Organisation B participants. From the interviews, it would appear that feeling supported depended very much on the manager or the team. It was localised and did not appear to permeate the culture as it did in Organisation A. Furthermore, participants had experienced constant change and they felt like numbers and disposable. The ‘Political-Power’ subculture, from the participants’ perspective, appeared to be focused on ‘Separating’ rather than ‘Supporting’ employees and is counter to the feeling of belonging for feeling valued. Consequently, some participants developed their own coping mechanisms to deal with all the changes and the feeling of isolation. Perhaps they had become resilient over time and learnt how to survive without being actively supported during changes, although most felt supported in their team and work environment.

In contrast to Organisation A, information in Organisation B was highly controlled rather than being open, driven from the top (V) and employees were kept in the dark (B) before the changes were introduced. Messages had a positive spin and participants believed the secrecy about the reasons for the restructure and job cuts was to prevent an adverse political reaction (B). With the lack of transparent communication, employees
relied on the rumours and the grapevine (Larkin & Larkin, 2006). Consequently, participants felt threatened, uneasy and uncertain with the tension caused through not knowing what was going to happen (A). With three of the four main changes in Organisation B, namely the restructure to modernise the organisation, the new strategic plan and the new financial management system, there was no formal communication preparing employees ahead of the changes. Instead, either rumours or media reports informed employees before they were announced. There was some communication involving employees in planning the accommodation change to open plan at head office in Organisation B.

The focus on separating rather than belonging is in keeping with the fundamental assumption of most rationalist change management approaches of top down ‘directed’ change management. Employees feel separated by not being involved. This is further compounded by the lack of information in preparing employees thereby compromising their feeling of belonging. In contrast, Appreciative Inquiry adopts communicative processes (Real, 2016) to enhance belonging (Cooperrider et al., 2008) and starts with continuity with the past, as does ‘continuing bonds’ theory (Bell & Taylor, 2011).

Instead of having a feeling of contributing to change, Organisation B participants felt that leaders and managers were forcing a done deal with little or no input from employees (V). Communication was one-way (B) and participants felt frustrated, devalued, disempowered, like a number. This led to feelings of anger, resentment and anxiety (A). This is not surprising given participants’ aspiration of giving.

7.3.3. Assertions

Of the multiple transformational changes discussed in the two case studies, only the head office move with the new way of working in Organisation A was considered to be mostly effective in communicating and preparing employees for change where they felt valued. As such, the communication was closely aligned to the cultural positive core of feeling valued—with feelings of belonging and contributing, and feeling supported discussed under the first research question. Yet, the opposite was the case with communicating changes in Organisation B which did not reflect the cultural positive core of feeling valued co-constructed from the ‘Service-Giving’ subculture, namely feelings of contributing and belonging and feeling empowered. Instead, the ‘Political-
Power’ subculture appeared to have the controlling influence in Organisation B, even though the ‘Service-Giving’ subculture mirrored the organisation’s espoused values.

From the findings of both case studies, I assert that the participants feel valued when leaders, managers and the change team are being open, communicating honestly about change, communicating supportively and participants are contributing to decisions about the change. Furthermore, they feel devalued when change is imposed without any prior communication and involvement.

7.4 Conclusions

In this chapter, I conducted a cross-case analysis of the three projects and synthesis to compare and contrast similarities and differences in concepts of feeling valued and communicating change.

From the cross-case analysis of the three projects and synthesis, feeling valued is co-constructed to mean feelings of belonging, contributing and participants feeling supported and empowered. These feelings are interdependent and can be experienced in both transformational and non-change contexts. From a cultural perspective, the Values, Attitudes and Beliefs are largely similar for these concepts across the two case studies of non-managerial employees.

In communicating change, participants feel valued when leaders, managers and the change team are being open and honest informing them early and communicating supportively, encouraging employee contribution. As such, participants experience emotions of feeling listened to, confident, positive, excited, empowered and secure.

At a subculture level, differences emerge with a ‘Political-Power’ subculture jeopardising employees’ sense of feeling value through controlling information, lack of support and forcing a predetermined change. This can create tension, uncertainty, frustration, anger, resentment and feeling devalued.

In contrast, the findings highlight the ‘Service-Giving’ subculture where participants aspire to do meaningful work and make a difference. I argued that the feeling of
contributing is much more than employees participating in decisions and having a voice. Contributing captures participants’ willingness to give.

The findings also contribute to adding an employee perspective to the concept of communicative leadership (Johansson et al., 2014) and the proposed definition of employee empowerment (Johansson 2015). Further research is required on supportive communication within the context of transformational change.

Furthermore, the findings indicate the importance of the feeling of belonging in change, not separating, and this challenges the fundamental basis of most rationalist change management approaches. In contrast, Appreciative Inquiry prepares employees for change with communicative processes (Real, 2016) that enhance belonging (Cooperrider et al., 2008).

In the next chapter, I further theorise the concepts for feeling valued and communicating change to co-construct a theoretical framework of Change Communication processes (CCF). I outline my reflections, the implications for practice and possible areas for future research.
Chapter 8. Conclusions and implications for practice

8.1 Introduction

In this final chapter, I conclude with revisiting the purpose of my research, the suitability of the research methodology for the research questions. The key findings are presented for the two research questions and I propose a tentative framework of Change Communication processes (CCF) for practice. I review this framework through an Appreciative Inquiry-Jungian Shadow theoretical perspective (Chapter 3). The main reason for doing this is to understand the CCF’s contribution to an established change management approach that values the best in people and organisations. The other reason is to highlight any potential unconscious aspects of communicating change and feeling valued.

To reiterate, my focus has been on change management or the implementation of change, rather than understanding the content of organisational change. As such, my investigation encompassed preparing employees for change or change readiness. I discuss the implications for practice and potential areas for future research. A long held belief about change management and communication is challenged. Finally, through an Appreciative reflection, I share my learning from undertaking my doctoral research.

8.2 Revisiting the aims, questions and research methodology

In this dissertation, I explored the role of communication in preparing employees for transformational change where they felt valued. As such, my study addressed two research questions:

1) What does feeling valued mean to employees?
2) How does communication affect employees’ sense of feeling valued in preparing for transformational change?

I approached the research questions from a social constructionist perspective to enable a reflexive-dialectical approach that integrated subjective and objective realities,
constructed individually and socially. Change in practice is becoming increasingly complex and the dominant rationalist and linear approaches to change management are not working successfully (Jick & Sturtevant, 2017). The current disruption in thinking about change management has opened up the space for revisiting the role of communication in change. Hence, I have applied a reflexive-dialectical approach to studying practice where communication is considered to be socially transformative (Chapter 2). To enact this position, I adopted Appreciative Inquiry (AI), juxtaposed with the Jungian Shadow as my theoretical lens. AI is appropriate as it is a form of social constructionism and utilises communicative processes (Real, 2016) that are intended to be socially transformative (Cooperrider et al., 2008). AI focuses on what is valued in people and organisations in keeping with my seeking to understand how employees feel valued in change. I incorporated the Jungian Shadow to gain an understanding of the ‘unconscious’ aspects of communicating change and feeling valued to complement a ‘conscious’ perspective from AI. In so doing, I aimed to have a more holistic insight into my research findings.

To address the research questions, I conducted an exploratory qualitative multiple case study involving three projects. I chose this methodology as I wanted to study in-depth how communication influenced non-managerial employees’ sense of feeling valued within a real-world organisational change context. The impetus was to understand the employee emotional experience of change given the literature review highlighted the limited research on this topic. In particular, I focused on ‘feeling valued’ as its conceptualisation was fairly recent and previous research indicated that such a feeling could assist with employee support for the change (Stumpf et al., 2013).

The multiple case study methodology enabled the in-depth investigation by firstly allowing an immersion in literature (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) to provide some early ideas (Chapter 4) and accommodating two real-life case studies where participants had contrasting experiences of organisational change (Chapter 5 and 6). As context is important for constructing meaning, two culturally diverse organisations were purposefully selected, namely, a research and marketing organisation owned by farmers (Organisation A), and an agricultural government department (Organisation B).

The different methods used for data collection and analysis were appropriate in addressing the research questions. The Integrative Literature Review method (Torraco, 2016).
2005), undertaken in Chapter 4, provided an innovative way to integrate various conceptualisations of feeling valued leading to a tentative framework as an output. In Chapters 5 and 6, interviews were the main form of data collection, complemented with organisational documents, my analytic memos and reflections. As I was seeking to understand employees’ emotional experience of change through concentrating on feeling valued, interviews were suitable to enable participants to talk freely about their feelings and feeling valued. In using an Appreciative Inquiry interviewing protocol with questions framed in the positive, I was able to gain trust with participants who spoke candidly about change and feeling valued.

Choosing a useful coding method for the interviews was not a straightforward exercise, rather it was an iterative process. I started with initial coding and in vivo coding. However, while this coding method was a good start, I was not satisfied with the outcome. I investigated other possible coding methods and discovered Saldaña’s various coding methods (2016). As a result, three affective coding methods were used for the three projects: Emotion coding (Chapter 4), Values coding (Chapters 5 and 6) and Versus coding with moieties (Chapter 6) (Saldaña, 2016). These methods were suitable as they enabled rich insights about feelings from the interviews. The Values and Versus coding methods were particularly helpful for gaining an understanding of the cultural context of the real-life case studies, important for a social constructionist perspective in shaping meaning (Crotty, 1998).

I adopted Charmaz’s constructivist grounded theory method (2014) for analysing the data from the three projects as ultimately, I was aiming to co-construct a framework of change communication processes, grounded in data. This consistency of analytical methods for the three projects allowed a cross-case analysis and synthesis for a multiple case design (Yin, 2014) as outlined in Chapter 7.

8.3 Key research findings

The key research findings are presented by responding to the two research questions that informed my investigation. From a social constructionist perspective, I sought to understand how the participants constructed their reality, what was perceived as real, and the consequences of this perception (Patton, 2015).
8.3.1 What does feeling valued mean to employees?

I addressed this research question in each of the three projects, through literature (ILR) (Chapter 4) and conducting Appreciative interviews with 15 non-managerial employees from Organisation A (Chapter 5) and 12 from Organisation B (Chapter 6). Organisational documents and my memos augmented the interviews and knowledge about the organisations and their espoused values.

From my conversations with participants about their peak experiences at work and how they felt valued, a key finding was that despite different cultural contexts and experiences of organisational change, including no change, the meaning of feeling valued had similar aspects. For most participants, feeling valued meant having feelings of belonging, contributing, and feeling supported and empowered by their leaders and managers.

Richer insights were gained through reviewing the underlying values, beliefs and attitudes which were mostly similar for the three concepts for Organisation A and B participants. Belonging meant feeling accepted and part of the team, having shared purpose and values, good working relationships, regular and open communication. Contributing appeared to be the heart of feeling valued. Participants spoke enthusiastically about their passion for work and how they felt fulfilled, satisfied and excited in delivering value to their stakeholders, having a voice and making a difference to their organisation and community. Work gave meaning to participants and they felt respected for their expertise. Feeling supported by their leaders and colleagues was important to participants who valued being encouraged to get ahead, developing personally and having their contribution acknowledged. In feeling empowered, participants had autonomy and felt trusted and confident in performing their roles.

Moiey analysis of Organisation B participants’ perceptions yielded another layer to the meaning of feeling valued. It revealed the underlying tension between the participants’ perceptions of their own values, beliefs and attitudes and those who they believed were in authority inside and outside their organisation. Two subcultures were identified with opposing values, beliefs and attitudes and were named the ‘Service-Giving’ and ‘Political-Power’ subcultures (‘service’ and ‘political’ were words participants used). While the concepts constructed for feeling valued discussed above
aligned with the ‘Service-Giving’ subculture, the analysis revealed that the ‘Political-Power’ subculture led participants to feel devalued. They felt they were not trusted, empowered or supported, and were treated as disposable as well as being required to do politically-driven, meaningless work. Consequently, participants felt demotivated, drained, frustrated, isolated, anxious and sad.

The concepts co-constructed from my research support literature on feeling valued (Claxton, 2014; Dutton et al., 2016; Iszatt-White, 2012; Kahn, 1990; Robinson et al., 2004; White & Mackenzie-Davey, 2003). However, I have added a different perspective to this emerging topic. As my findings were constructed with an affective lens, I have augmented literature with original insights into the values, beliefs and attitudes (feelings) underpinning the concepts for feeling valued. The ‘Political-Power’ perspective also appears to be new for literature on feeling valued.

My research has extended the understanding of communication’s important role in enhancing a sense of feeling valued. Although mentioned in previous studies on feeling valued (Claxton, 2014; Dutton et al., 2016; Robinson et al., 2004; White and Mackenzie-Davey, 2003), communication was not explored in-depth. Informative communication and communicating regularly with leaders or managers created a feeling of belonging (Elving, 2005; Reissner & Pagan, 2013; Welch, 2011; White & Mackenzie-Davey, 2003) and feeling supported. I have argued in Chapter 7 that a feeling of contributing was more than employee participation, having a voice and involvement in decision-making. The feeling of contributing appears to be socially transformative and altruistic for participants where they want to make a difference and are willing to give (Kahn, 1990). Furthermore, they want to feel supported, entrusted and empowered in doing so. Finally, my research complements the concepts of communicative leadership (Johansson et al., 2014) and employee empowerment (Johansson, 2015), although from an employee rather than a leadership perspective.

8.3.2 How does communication affect employees’ sense of feeling valued in preparing for transformational change?

This research question was investigated only in the two real-life case studies (Chapters 5 and 6). The cross-case analysis in Chapter 7 highlighted how the two case studies were contextually and culturally different and also in how they communicated transformational change. Over the period 2012-2014, Organisation A participants had
experienced one major change that was considered successful and restructures that were personally transformational, whereas Organisation B participants had endured multiple changes that they believed were poorly communicated. In both case studies, the participants’ values, beliefs and attitudes were analysed.

Through my conversations with participants in Organisation A and B about change and communication where they felt valued, this meant leaders, managers and the change team communicating honestly about the change and employees contributing to decisions. Communicating honestly meant being open and transparent about the reasons for change which enhanced participants’ confidence. I argued in Chapter 7 that an important finding was that the feeling of contributing meant more than employees participating in decisions, having a voice and feeling trusted. It captured participants’ willingness to do something meaningful.

For Organisation A participants feeling valued also included leaders, managers and the change team communicating supportively where they were informed early of the change and felt encouraged, supported, positive, excited and secure about the change. In contrast, Organisation B participants experienced a ‘Political-Power’ subculture where they felt their sense of feeling valued was jeopardised through the controlling of information, secrecy, lack of support and forcing a predetermined solution. This created tension, uncertainty, frustration, anger, resentment and feeling devalued.

In addition, unearthing the ‘Political-Power’ subculture highlighted the importance of the feeling of belonging in change, and not separating, for feeling valued. Communicating a feeling of belonging is perhaps a contentious finding in that it challenges the fundamental basis of most rationalist top down change management approaches or ‘directed change management’. In these top down models, the role of communication is to ‘unfreeze’ the organisation through creating dissatisfaction with the status quo (Lewin, 1947) or ‘letting go’ of the past (Bridges, 2009) thereby undermining employees’ sense of belonging. What are they belonging to, when the future is unknown? What does the future organisation look like? How do we belong to it? Not being privy to information, can exacerbate the lack of belonging as was the case in Organisation B.
As highlighted in addressing the first research question, communication scholars recognised the importance of creating a community spirit or belonging in change (Elving, 2005; Reissner & Pagan, 2013). Furthermore, Appreciative Inquiry prepares employees for change with communicative processes (Real, 2016) that enhance belonging (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003, p. 240). AI has a fundamental assumption of continuity with the past, thereby ensuring a sense of belonging continues. Similarly, continuity is in keeping with ‘continuing bonds’ theory (Bell & Taylor, 2011) which challenges the notion of the Change Curve of emotional reactions based on Kübler-Ross’ approach to grieving and loss (1969), which starts with a break from the past (Chapter 2).

8.4 Contribution to practice

I continue responding to both research questions by theorising the concepts discussed so far to propose a tentative framework of Change Communication processes (CCF) to prepare employees for transformational change where they feel valued. The intention is not to provide a tool in the positivist sense, rather a framework to pose questions for a dialogue with the practice community.

As a key contribution to practice, the concepts are theorised for leaders, managers and practitioners to communicate and prepare employees for change. Figure 12 visually presents the communication processes and at the core is ‘feeling valued’. I theorise the four communication processes as (a) galvanising communication, (b) communicating honestly, (c) communicating supportively and (d) empowering contribution. The four processes support how employees feel valued, through enhancing feelings of belonging, confidence, support, security, positivity, excitement, contributing, having a voice and feeling listened to, trusted and making a difference. My research suggests that these processes and feelings are not mutually exclusive. They are not steps in a process and can occur simultaneously or repetitively, depending on the situation.

Lastly, the Communication Shadow which is unconscious, is theorised from the findings and is discussed later in the Chapter. The messiness of the words going beyond the dashed circle line in Figure 12 is deliberate as I want to convey the idea that the Shadow and its contents are largely unknown. I have added the theorised Shadows of the two subcultures, ‘Political-Power’ and ‘Service-Giving’, co-constructed from
conversations with participants and my reflections on the Shadow. There could be other subcultures and Shadows, especially when augmenting with practitioner, scholar, leader and manager perspectives and other change contexts.

Figure 12. Proposed framework of change communication processes (CCF)

As I have mentioned, this is just a starting point. Ideally, I perceive the CCF as a co-constructed artefact to generate conversations of meaning about communicating change and feeling valued in preparing employees for transformational change. As defined in Chapter 1, this means change contexts that require a significant shift in employees’ behaviour, mindsets, feelings and new way of working.
8.4.1 Change communication processes, AI Principles and Shadow

In this section, I review the proposed CCF (Figure 12) through an Appreciative Inquiry-Jungian Shadow theoretical perspective as proposed in Chapter 3. AI is a change management approach that focuses on working from strengths rather than problems, valuing the best in people and organisations and is a form of social constructionism (Cooperrider et al., 2008). As such, I am curious to explore how the CCF contributes to AI and its communicative processes (Real, 2016).

The affirmative topic stated in Chapter 3: “Engaging communication where employees feel valued in preparing for transformational change” guides my review. I particularly want to explore the CCF and AI’s eight core principles that underpin its theoretical foundation, namely the Constructionist, Simultaneity, Poetic, Anticipatory, Positive, Wholeness, Enactment and Free-Choice principles outlined in Chapter 3. While I assume that AI processes are mostly conscious as individuals socially construct their realities through interviews, stories and dialogue, I also want to highlight any potential unconscious (Schein, 2010) or unexpressed (Hochschild, 2003) feelings in communicating change and feeling valued. I draw on Jung’s concept of the Shadow (1938/1958) discussed in Chapter 3, to help with understanding and constructing meaning of participants’ unconscious so-called ‘negative’ emotions and potential for supporting change in feeling valued.

Each of the feeling valued communication processes in Figure 12 is discussed, identifying the AI principle that it supports and the contribution to the body of knowledge. I also suggest possible questions for future conversations for the practice and scholarly community.

(a) Galvanising communication

Galvanising communication is about ‘warming up’ employees through creating a feeling of belonging (Elving, 2005) and connection, rather than a feeling of separation. In Organisation A, the Managing Director (MD) generated excitement about the change through All-Staff meetings to include everyone and inform staff regularly about the move (Wholeness principle). Participants valued this early discursive communication (Reissner & Pagan, 2013), an important element in garnering their support. There were regular team meetings where they were able to ask questions, provide input and share
their stories of the past, present and future (Simultaneity, Positive, Constructionist, Poetic and Enactment principles).

From a practice perspective, change is complex and rather than communicating either belonging or separation, I would question can they co-exist for feeling valued? Specifically, “How does galvanising communication address feelings of belonging and separation?” This would counter the ‘scaring’ of employees into change (Diefenbach, 2007, p. 128) in rationalist approaches by just focusing on separation from the past, and thereby creating a fertile ground for resistance, rather than readiness.

(b) Communicating honestly

Communicating honestly is in keeping with the informative (Elving, 2005) or directive role of communication in change (Reissner & Pagan, 2013), although the emphasis in the findings is on ‘honesty’. Organisation A participants felt valued and confident with honest, open and transparent communication in which the rationale for the change was explained. While Organisation B participants did not experience communication prior to most changes, they expressed their desire for open communication and being kept informed as this would reduce their fear and anxiety. This was further exacerbated by communication having a positive spin when the changes were announced.

The AI principles are silent on communicating honestly. Perhaps it is assumed that its inclusive process creates the environment for people to share information openly and honestly. In an open, trusting culture, communicating honestly may be easier than in a culture that is politically driven or ruled by fear as this would affect how much leaders and managers communicate. As a practitioner, I would question, “How honest do we need to be?” “Are there different degrees of honesty, depending on the change context?” As Organisation B’s context was highly political, “What does communicating honestly mean in a political context?” In terms of feeling valued, these are challenges for practice and the practitioner when introducing change, especially when information is withheld from the practitioner, as I have experienced in highly sensitive projects.

(c) Communicating supportively

From my conversations with Organisation A participants, communicating supportively meant leaders, managers and the change team informing employees early
about the change and encouraging them to feel positive, supported and secure. They appreciated the MD communicating about six months before the move and creating positive anticipation (*Anticipatory and Positive* principles). The leaders and managers modelling the change was encouraging to participants as was having their concerns addressed and being reassured on things that mattered to them. *Communicating supportively* signalled that the organisation cared about its employees (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

The AI principles do not specifically refer to *communicating supportively*. However, it may be implied through the *Wholeness Principle* and people feeling supported through the AI processes:

> With Appreciative Inquiry, people sense support from one another, from the organization’s management, and from the whole system. To take initiative is an adventure and a risk for many. To do so with full knowledge and support of colleagues throughout the organization creates a pathway for self-confidence, learning and innovation. (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003, p. 249)

As discussed in Chapter 7, *communicating supportively* is a topic that merits further investigation. In Organisation B, there was no formal communication prior to the announcement of all changes, except for one. As *communicating supportively* included informing employees early, from a practitioner perspective, I would ask “What does early communication mean?” This would apply to both political and non-political contexts and even for introducing AI processes.

### (d) Empowering contribution

*Empowering contribution* describes processes that enable employees to have a voice, influence decisions and dialogue about change, as was the case with Organisation A participants. It is in keeping with the proposed definition for employee empowerment (Johansson, 2015) and communicative leadership (Johansson et al., 2014) discussed in Chapter 7. I also argued that for participants, contributing had an altruistic aspect (Claxton, 2014) where they want to contribute in a meaningful way.

From an AI perspective, the *Free-Choice* principle is empowering in that it states people are more committed when they have freedom to choose how and what they want to contribute. AI adopts processes that encourage involvement. Organisation A participants contributed through questions they asked and engaging in dialogue and conversations (*Constructionist* principle) at various meetings and workshops about the
move and new way of working. They contributed to change the moment they asked questions (*Simultaneity* principle) to have their voice heard. In contrast, the controlling ‘Political-Power’ subculture denied Organisation B participants the opportunity to contribute and this generated feelings of anxiety, confusion, apprehension, frustration and feeling disempowered.

(e) Acknowledging the Communication Shadow

The findings and concepts from my research are reviewed from a Shadow lens. In so doing, I tentatively extrapolate Jung’s Shadow concept (1938/1958) to a Communication Shadow from conversations with participants in both organisations and my post-interview reflections on the Shadow. In particular, I draw from feelings and emotions that were displayed, which may have been unconscious to the participant, or talked about when sharing their stories about various organisational changes. The purpose of exploring the Shadow is to become aware of it and own it, rather than ignoring it, to release energy and potential for growth and development.

While there were glimpses of a Communication Shadow when discussing the changes with Organisation A participants, it was mostly apparent in interviews with many of the Organisation B participants who were survivors of several years of imposed organisational changes with inadequate communication. This is perhaps not surprising as generally, organisational communication was perceived to be ineffective, although mostly good at the team level, depending on the manager or leader.

Through moiety analysis, I constructed a ‘Political-Power’ subculture from which I tentatively interpret the Communication Shadow as the unconscious dominant need to control information, secrecy about change initiatives as well as aggressive language such as ‘forced’ redundancies. This signalled an underlying belief that employees could be easily separated from the organisation as they were disposable. Yet, for normal work, leaders and managers appeared to entrust their people and enabled them to do their work with little interference, and their expertise was respected. Similarly, in Organisation A, the communication processes for change suggested that managers and leaders entrusted, supported and cared for their employees.

In terms of the ‘Service-Giving’ subculture, I tentatively suggest that the Communication Shadow manifested itself through participants’ unconscious anger,
resistance, anxiety and frustration when speaking about the change initiatives. These feelings possibly erupted through reliving the experience of multiple imposed changes without communication where they felt powerless. Nevertheless, the participants appeared to be devoted to their work and willing to give to their team, organisations and stakeholders.

In reviewing the findings through the lens of the Shadow, my research supports the radical discourse on appreciating the Shadow (Fitzgerald et al., 2010). In so doing, it recognises that ‘negative’ emotions have a constructive role in transformational change, rather than being dismissed or reframed as a strict application of AI principles would require. I argue that ‘negative’ emotions are not bad as implied by AI (Cooperrider et al., 2008, p. 20) as I do not conflate ‘negative’ emotions with a problem-focus or deficit-discourse as in the case of poor customer service, poor staff retention, and so on. Rather, I support the view that ‘negative’ emotions help with constructing meaning of the change process and are part of healthy adaptation to change (Kiefer, 2002) and not destructive or dysfunctional. Communicating ‘negative’ feelings is part of the process.

Furthermore, from a social constructionist perspective, I embrace ‘negative’ emotions as another reality of what organisational change can mean to employees. I also agree with Boje (2010) who stated that in accepting the Shadow in AI, the “side shadows”, the different voices and perspectives are acknowledged. Finally, Fitzgerald et al., (2010) suggest that appreciating the Shadow is in keeping with the Wholeness and Freedom principles of AI in welcoming the whole person, and not just the positives (p. 231).

While I have only provided glimpses of the Communication Shadow, it leads to questions for practice: Would this concept help practitioners articulate ‘negative’ emotions as being constructive for change? Would it help with making the unconscious communication behaviours known? Would it help with unearthing what is not being expressed? How does communicating change enact the Shadow?

8.5 Implications for practice

Throughout this dissertation I have argued the need to focus on employees’ emotional experience of change, and in particular on feeling valued as this can improve
employees’ support for change. I have also argued for the importance of the role of communication in preparing employees for change where they feel valued.

From my research, I propose a tentative CCF that may assist leaders, managers and practitioners communicate change in a way that enhances employees’ sense of feeling valued. In reviewing the CCF from the perspective of the eight AI principles, it would appear that the CCF supports those principles. However, the CFF makes explicit processes that enhance feeling valued such as communicating ‘honestly’ and communicating ‘supportively’.

The CCF also recognises the potential role of the Communication Shadow for healthy adaptation to change, providing an alternative view to how the ‘negative’ emotions are usually considered in change management. This could suggest a role for the practitioner to unearth and raise awareness of the Communication Shadow and integrate it into planning and implementing change, particularly in contexts with strong resistance or politically-driven environments. Moiety analysis could be a useful way for practitioners to understand culture, subcultures and the Shadow, to draw out any tensions and conflicting values, beliefs and attitudes that may exist.

Finally, the proposed CCF, with its focus on communicating a sense of belonging rather than a break from the past, challenges most rationalist change management models. As such, a different perspective is suggested that may enhance feeling valued and support for change.

8.6 Future research

The tentative CCF that I propose could be used to guide future scholarly and practice research. As it is based on literature and two real-life case studies, it would be valuable to broaden the basis of knowledge with research into practitioner and leadership perspectives and other organisational contexts. My focus was on change readiness and it would be interesting to understand if the CCF processes are relevant in implementing change, and in multiple change contexts.

Other areas for research could include better understanding of communicating ‘honestly’ and communicating ‘supportively’ within an organisational change context.
and from different perspectives. The political dynamics and impact on feeling valued is another area that warrants further research.

Finally, I feel I have only touched the surface in relation to understanding the Communication Shadow. Further research would benefit from gaining deeper knowledge for change management, given communication’s importance for the success of change initiatives.

8.7 Reflections as a change practitioner

In the style of Appreciative Inquiry, I now reflect on my doctoral research, my learning and highlight areas that could be improved or done differently. I reflect on my high points and three wishes for the future of practice.

As a change practitioner, a high point was learning of the respect for a hedging style in research to allow space for others to join the conversation. I appreciate this style and purpose, although it is different to the expectations in practice. As a change practitioner, I am expected to be definite and certain, as clients would interpret my tentativeness as being unsure, lacking in confidence and could lead to not being engaged as a consultant again. The thinking would be, “does she know what she is doing?”

Having reached the end of my doctoral research, I now feel comfortable with both styles—hedging for academia and certainty for practice—and the reasons for both styles. In the course of my research, I too have started a journey of personal transformation. Nevertheless, in writing my doctorate I may have unconsciously fallen in being too certain in some phrases, as my supervisors repeatedly remind me. As in any change, it will take time and I am trying as best as I can. I feel I have moved from being an ‘unconscious incompetent’ towards a ‘conscious competent’ regarding the hedging style. I am not yet an ‘unconscious competent’ like being able to ride a bike without thinking about it. I still consciously need to think about being more hedging in my style, in both writing and presenting to academic audiences. Nevertheless, I hope that through the knowledge and learning I am gaining, I am making academic research more accessible to practice.
I enjoyed undertaking the literature review. It was another high point. I approached it with curiosity and it made me feel like Alice in Wonderland experiencing a vast array of new adventures through entering a world of rich and abundant scholarly research. Like Alice, I also had to work out what all this meant and sometimes my head would spin trying to make sense of all the different perspectives. Ordinarily, as a practitioner, I would not have read these journals, or may have partially read them, as I would have had difficulty with the language. Sometimes, I was unsure I really understood how the articles would assist practice. I have come to the understanding that much of the scholarly research focuses on the ‘why’ and ‘what’, whereas practitioners would also want to know the ‘how’ and ‘when’ for implementing initiatives.

A further high point was discovering the Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) framework which helped with providing the clarity I needed in navigating through the vast scholarly literature. It illuminated how my profession was engulfed with ‘paradigm paralysis’ with an overabundance of rationalist approaches. I realised that I too was inclined to use rationalist approaches combined with AI. Yet scholars have provided significant research on subjective and social perspectives for communicating change and these are slowly entering the discourse of the change community. Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider, et al., 2008) is still in its infancy in Australia. When working with ‘blokey’ industries I have to confess that I do not use the words of the 4-D model—Discover, Dream, Design and Destiny—as my clients may think I am not serious, or I am a psychic. Instead, I use another AI model, the SOAR framework—Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results (Cooperrider et al., 2008)—as the language would be more appealing to my clients and the employees in those industries.

Discovering ‘moiety analysis’ (Woolcott, 2003) for unearthing subcultures was especially exciting. I found this anthropological approach insightful and practical. Culture is not always addressed directly in practice, except if it is a culture change program, as popular frameworks tend to be focused on individual behavioural change. Moiety analysis can be a way to interpret data collected in the initial change readiness and stakeholder assessment, supplemented with data from Discovery interviews or user-centred design (Design Thinking) or Agile approaches mentioned in Chapter 2.

What could have I done differently? Regarding research participants, first of all, I am very grateful they opened up and spoke candidly. Perhaps for some it was
therapeutic. I wished I had spaced my interviews over a longer period and had further conversations with some of them. While the CCF that I propose is based on two case studies, I would have appreciated the opportunity to return to the two organisations and share the framework with the participants, their leaders and change practitioners. This would have allowed me to obtain their feedback, gauge their reactions and enhance it further.

For the future, my three wishes for improving the vitality of the change communication practice are; firstly, that the practice moves significantly beyond the dominant informative, transmission model for communicating change and also embrace social transformative approaches. I am not suggesting this as an ‘either/or’ as both can co-exist in practice. I feel that it is an exciting time as the change management practice is open to new ideas and approaches for dealing with complex and volatile change.

Secondly, I would like to see communication enabling compassionate change management where employees feel valued. In so doing, this could help with unlocking the unconscious potential of the Shadow and enable greater generativity and caring. It could also assist with reducing employees’ emotional labour (Hochschild, 2003). I hope my research stimulates conversation in practice and remind us that we have a head and a heart. We have been so dominated by our head, how do we also bring in our heart in change management? Can we look at a Change Communication Strategy and reflect it through our heart? i.e., how does this communication affect employees’ hearts? Leaders’ hearts? My heart?

My third wish is for greater reflexivity and insight on the part of the change practitioner into how they affect communication and likewise, how they are impacted by it. Do they communicate change in a way that is comfortable to them? If they are a natural rationalist, do they think of employees as numbers and communicate likewise? Are practitioners able to embrace employees in a humane way? How are practitioners affected by the way change is communicated? We affect so many lives and we are affected also.
APPENDIX A. Appreciative Interview Guide

Introduction
Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview for my research into employees’ experience of communication and organisational change. The interview will take about an hour. First of all, I’d like to go through the consent form with you and ask you to sign it.

Participant Background
As a start, please tell me a little about yourself – (a) your role and (b) how long you have been with this organisation.

1. **Looking at your entire experience with this organisation, select a high point when you felt most excited, most engaged, or most fulfilled about your involvement in the organisation.**
   a. What made it exciting?
   b. Who else was involved?
   c. Describe how you felt about it.

2. **Let’s talk for a moment about communication and some things you value about yourself, your work and the organisation.**
   a. What do you value about your work and the organisation?
   b. What do you value most about communication in the organisation?
   c. Describe communication where you feel valued.

3. **Describe a leader at work whose communication has had a positive influence on you.**
   a. What did that person do?
   b. How did that person interact with you?
   c. What did you do?
   d. Describe an actual experience when you felt valued or how you experience feeling valued when your manager/supervisor communicates to you.

4. **In your own words, how would you describe the culture of your workplace?** (Prompt if necessary)
   a. How are employees viewed in the organisation? Who are the heroes and the influencers? Who has the power, formal and informal? Can you tell me story of when you have experienced this?
   b. How does informal communication work in this organisation?

5. **If you are experiencing (or have experienced organisational change), how does this impact on communication and feeling valued?**
   a. What was the change you experienced?
   b. How were the changes communicated?
   c. How did the communication make you feel? Feel valued?

6. **What are your three wishes for heightening the vitality of communication in this organisation where employees feel valued in organisational change?**
   a. What would your ideal look like?
   b. Who is involved?
   c. Describe how you feel about it.

7. **Finally, are there any comments you would like to add or ask me any questions?**
### APPENDIX B. Sample of literature analysis for Chapter 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Purpose/Topic addressed</th>
<th>Research Design/Type of study</th>
<th>Sample &amp; method</th>
<th>Main Findings re ‘feeling valued’</th>
<th>Strengths and Advantages</th>
<th>Weaknesses and Limitations</th>
<th>Contribution and Implications for Feeling Valued</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White &amp; Mackenzie-Davey</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Examines what makes employees feel valued at work within the context of job satisfaction</td>
<td>Qualitative study of training consultants and associate training consultants. Contrasts UK – Educational charitable trust and a commercial organisation</td>
<td>3 focus groups – 1 corporate sample, 1 associate sample, 1 commercial sample</td>
<td>Identified 3 clusters – fairness, environment and inclusion (see Figures 1 and 2). Environment elements are the heart of ‘feeling valued’. Does include communication, and culture in terms of importance of shared values.</td>
<td>Compares and contrasts differences between the 3 sample groups. This leads to identifying which factors are more important to each group and overall to generalise to theory.</td>
<td>Research focused on a very specialised group, namely training consultants. Does not look at the context of the organisation e.g. whether going through change or not.</td>
<td>Conceptual and empirical: First study to provide a definition for ‘feeling valued’. Adds to the gap in research, and begins unpacking what ‘feeling valued’ means. Raises link to self-worth, self-esteem/confidence and to job performance as areas for further research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robinson, Perryman &amp; Hayday</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>To define employee engagement, devise a method of measuring it and establish its drivers</td>
<td>Developed engagement attitude statements and tested them in a quantitative attitude survey in 2003. Did correlations and regression analysis.</td>
<td>Over 10,000 employees in 14 organisations in the National Health Service</td>
<td>‘Feeling valued’ was the strongest driver of employee engagement and alone, accounted for 34% of variation in EE scores. Comprised involvement in decision-making, ability to voice ideas, managers listening to ideas and valuing their contributions; opportunities to develop and concern for employees’ health and well-being. Key role of line manager in fostering a sense of</td>
<td>Full range of employee groups and roles were represented. Developed an engagement model centred on ‘feeling valued and involved.’ Identifies the role of communication in ‘feeling valued’</td>
<td>Concept of ‘feeling valued’ is limited to employee engagement. How does it differ re engaging employees in organisational change? Also, it focuses on the ‘what’ drives EE and not ‘how’ this is done. For example, what are the specific aspects of communication contribute to employees’ sense of ‘feeling valued’</td>
<td>Conceptual and empirical: First quantitative study to identify role of ‘feeling valued’ in employee engagement. Developed an engagement model centred on ‘feeling valued and involved’ Note: In 2003, there was little academic research on employee engagement although a popular term. Mostly models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iszatt, White, M</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Examines the role of leadership in making staff feel valued</td>
<td>An ethnographic study in the learning and skills sector</td>
<td>Ethnomethodological approach shadowing principals in their everyday work and focus groups college staff</td>
<td>Introduces concept of 'valuing practices' namely behaviours intended to express value for or show appreciation of the work of staff. States that these are inherently involve communication, spending time with staff, being accessible, recognising their interests, constructive criticism, praise and recognition, one-to-one encounters, singling out achievements rather than general praise/recognition. For receivers, it means the personal touch, known as individuals and valued individually for what they do; developmental rather than critical approach; recognition of their difficulties, their personal commitment, being consulted. Desire to be trusted as a competent professional. Introduces 'emotional dissonance'</td>
<td>Provides rich insight into the day-to-day meaning of 'feeling valued' as Principals and college staff go about their work i.e. how leaders engage in valuing practices and how staff feel valued. Some insight into a situation of change where hot-desking was introduced. Raises the emotional aspects e.g. emotional dissonance, emotional labour</td>
<td>Focuses on learning and skills sector and descriptive. Recognises that how a person feels valued is affected by the salience of the situation, the relationship the person has with the leader, and environmental factors e.g. job security, culture and gender. Findings do not highlight differences and suggests further research in these factors.</td>
<td>Empirical – contributes to identifying leaders’ valuing practices and employees’ expectations of feeling valued, in a day-to-day sense. Highlights aspects of daily communication that leaders do and impacts on employees’ sense of feeling valued.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References


Short, E. A. (2005). Words and phrases used in written communication by eight personality types as measured by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator: A contribution to the theory. Brisbane, Australia: Queensland University of Technology.


