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EMOTION MANAGEMENT IN RADICAL CHANGE: A PRELIMINARY STUDY OF EARTHQUAKE POWER RESTORATION

This paper studies leaders' emotion capacity as a strategic response to unexpected radical changes, forced by a social and natural crisis. We propose that empathy is a critical strategic management tool enhancing management effectiveness. We also provide insights of the dynamics between decision making process and emotion management.

Introduction

Crisis frequently brings unexpected radical changes in organizations, e.x. NASA in the challenger explosion (Vaughan, 1996), and East European state-owned firms after the collapse of Soviet bloc (Newman & Nollen, 1998). This paper focuses on unexpected radical organizational changes in large state-owned enterprises (SOE); in particular, we study emotion management in unexpected radical changes forced by a social or natural crisis. An organization in the midst of an unexpected crisis may have to respond with radical organizational changes to re-define or readjust its mission, organizational and power structure, decision making process, and working process within a short time span. In this paper, we take an extreme case of crisis, the 2008 China Wenchuan Earthquake, which triggers unexpected radical organizational changes in a large SOE, and we explore employees' emotions when dealing with such a devastating event, and then organizational leaders' ability to manage these emotions in the decision making process toward a constructive outcome. In brief, in this paper, we explore the emotion management and decision making process at both the organizational and institutional levels to illustrate how a large SOE can strategically respond to unexpected radical changes forced by social and natural crisis. We may generalize our findings and provide guidance for SOEs to conduct radical changes in response to social crisis or natural disasters. Our general research questions are: 1) when facing radical change in times of crisis, how do leaders manage emotion (organizational level); and 2) how do new patterns of strategy emerge in times of crisis?

According to the Chinese Earthquake Administration (CEA), the 2008 Sichuan Earthquake reached a magnitude of EIGHT on the Richter scale, which caused mass destruction of infrastructure and

brought a high number of casualties in Sichuan, the fourth most populated Chinese province[1]. We choose to study a large-scale state-owned enterprise, Sichuan Electric Power Corporation (SEPC). Employees of SEPC and their family members personally experienced the effects of such a devastating natural disaster. The earthquake brought a huge psychological impact and led to strong emotional instability and affective disturbances. However, SEPC accomplished very successful radical organizational changes in response to this social and natural crisis. Employees of SEPC offered an outstanding performance to restore the power supply in the disaster area, which was regarded as critical for the Chinese army and other rescue relief teams, who were to conduct the largest ever disaster rescue campaign in history. With prompt restoration of power supply, thousands of lives were saved from the ruins and rubbles, and millions of refugees' living condition was tremendously improved in a very short delay. The power restoration campaign has been highly praised, and labelled as outstanding and rare in disaster rescue campaigns (UN ESCAP, 2008). Given the high level of emotion generated by the earthquake, we would like to study how this has been handled by SEPC managers.

In this paper, we argue that, in responding to unexpected radical changes in time of crisis, new patterns of strategy emerge as critical decision are made. We propose to focus on empathy (Confucius, 1971; Mencius, 1971) as an essential emotional concern while making and implementing decisions in the Chinese context. In Chinese classical strategic teachings and history, leaders frequently use empathy as a tool to increase followers' autonomy and motivation (Luo, 2003; Suntzu, 1963). Therefore, we propose that corporate leader's capability to use empathy in emotion management is an effective antecedent to employees' autonomy and motivation, and thus helps to achieve management effectiveness, especially in time of crisis. Furthermore, we believe that in any context, emotion management plays an essential role in the process of making and implementing decisions - in unexpected radical changes forced by a natural disaster. Using a qualitative case study research method (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003b), we address our research questions.

In fact, emotion management is a new and understudied topic in strategic management and organizational change fields. Yet, Chinese leaders practiced emotion management for thousands of years based on ancient strategic teachings as shown by such texts as the Art of War (Suntzu, 1963), Thirty-six stratagems (Anonymous author, 1991), and stories in the Three Kingdoms (Luo, 2003); and in history leaders valued emotion management skills (Huang, Law, & Wong, 2006). Therefore, we expect them to be adept and sophisticated at handling emotional situations and manage organizational members' emotion effectively. SEPC's experience in dealing with this natural crisis can be a rare and precious learning source for many SOEs or utility suppliers, especially firms in electricity industry when dealing with a crisis, such as the North America blackout, or in any disaster rescue campaign, such as Katrina, and the recent Haiti earthquake.

Emotion Management & Decision Making in Radical Changes

For far too long, emotions have been concealed behind closed doors and ignored in favour of rationality and efficiency (Hill, 2008). But studies of human emotions have always been an important foci of research in psychology, for example, see the Tomkins' work on positive affects (1962) and negative affects (1963). Studies of fundamental emotions have a history almost as long as human civilization dating back to Aristotle (2006) in the mid 4th century BC, and social theories that emerged in 18th century by philosophers and scientists in Europe (Darwin, 1965; Rousseau, 1997, 2009) .

[1] National Bureau of Statistics China (NBSC): in 2006, population of Sichuan province – 81.69 Million (China Statistical Year Book 2007)

Emotion Management

Recently, in strategic management and organizational studies, there has been a new awareness of the importance of emotions. Since Hochschild's groundbreaking work on emotion management (Hochschild, 1983), work in the sociology and psychology of emotions began to influence management and organization studies. Hochschild's study mainly focused on interactions between individuals as the context for emotion management. Emotion management is the active attempt to change, in either quality or degree, an emotion held by an individual (Hochschild, 1983). With this interactionist perspective, Hochschild (1979; 1983) asserted that society drives an individual to cognitively shape and control feelings in order to fit and achieve goals within that society. Therefore, emotion management can be considered as a type of individual instrumental action (Callahan, 2002).

Today, in the emotion management literature, we know more about how individuals manage their emotion, rather than how organizations manage their members' emotions, or how the organizational level emotion management can enhance individuals' rationality and organizational effectiveness (Simon, 1990). Most studies focus on how individual employees manage their emotions to display the firm-preferred behaviour in their work time (Hochschild, 1983; Martin, Knopoff, & Beckman, 1998; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1991), and at the individual level "the ability to manage not only one's own emotions but also those of other's to interact with the environment and changes," is defined as emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995; Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

However, research on emotion management at the organizational level has been recently growing fast (Brief & Weiss, 2002). Vince and Broussine (Vince & Broussine, 1996) introduced the organizational level into the analysis of emotion management to explore the role of emotions in the organizational change process. Huy (1999, 2002) further discussed the emotional dynamics and change dynamics in radical organizational changes, and how emotion management can contribute to achieving successful radical organizational changes. Research also shows that the dynamic emotional display of leaders can strongly affect team performance (Hill, 2008; Van Kleef et al., 2009). In fact, in the Chinese context, these emotional dynamics and emotional display skills have been often used by Chinese leaders in strategic management, especially when facing forced radical changes, social crisis or natural disasters (Luo, 2003; Suntzu, 1963).

In literature, for an individual, emotional intelligence entails being in touch with one's feelings and emotions and being able to understand them, deal with them and profit by letting them inform and work in harmony with more rationally oriented insights (Goleman, 1995; Hill, 2008). More importantly as a leader, at the individual level, emotional intelligence is defined as the subset of social intelligence that involves "the ability to manage or monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions to guide one's thinking and action" (Goleman, 1995; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). An emotionally intelligent individual is able to recognize and use his own and others' emotional states to solve problems and guide behaviour. At the organizational level, emotional dynamics (Huy, 1999) build up emotional capability, which refers to an organization's ability to acknowledge, recognize, monitor, discriminate, and attend to its members' emotions, and it is manifested in the organization's norms and routines related to feeling (Schein, 1992).

In summary, from the social interactionist perspective (Hochschild, 1979), understanding human interactions is critical when dealing with radical changes, because, on the one hand, human being can affect and be affected by radical changes in organization (Huy, 1999), and on the other hand, at the individual level, emotional intelligence facilitates individual adaptation during a radical change; at the organizational level, emotional capability increases the likelihood for organizations to successfully achieve radical changes (Huy, 1999). Therefore, if at the individual level, during a radical change, a change in the emotional states can be recognized by organization leaders, and result in emotionally

intelligent behaviour accordingly, then at the organizational level, the emotional dynamics are likely to generate organizational level emotional capability for emotion management in dealing with radical change and crisis.

Therefore, emotion management is 1) to have the capability to take responsibility for one's own emotions (Goleman, 1995; Hill, 2008), 2) to have the capability to guide others' emotions (Hochschild, 1983), and 3) to have the capability to turn emotions, positive or negative, into positive and growing opportunities (Mayer & Salovey, 1997) at the organizational level to reach management effectiveness. Thus, organizational emotion management, as the consequence of individual emotional intelligence (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2000), is defined as the capability to understand the implications of social acts on emotions and the regulation of emotion in self and others (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2000; Mayer & Cobb, 2000). Emotion management plays an important role in day to day work (Tsai, 2001), and it is critical in radical changes (Huy, 1999, 2002).

Decision Making in Radical Changes

A radical change is a qualitative alteration of an organization's rules of organizing, which is fundamental for members to interact cognitively and behaviourally with the organization and the world around them (Greenwood & Hinings, 1996; Miller & Friesen, 1984); this is typically true for radical changes brought by social and natural crises, such as, in this study, the Sichuan 2008 Earthquake.

In Sichuan, when people faced the devastating earthquake, the emotional impact was obvious and tremendous, The earthquake brought huge casualties and mass destruction. About 30 minutes after the earthquake, Sichuan Electricity Power Corporation (SEPC) had become a part of the rescue team to restore power supply immediately at any cost. Besides the emotional turbulence that managers and employees had to deal with, fundamental changes in organizational and power structure, strategy, decision making process, defined tasks, established work roles and routines, and personnel assignments, also triggered intense emotions (Bartunek, 1984) and affected behaviour (Huy, 1999, 2002). In this study, we explore the role of emotion management as a strategic response to a social and natural crisis, bringing unexpected radical change to the organization.

Decision making is critical in large-complex organizations (Vaughan, 1996), especially in dealing with crisis (Allison & Zelikow, 1999). Many critical decisions were made in SEPC during the power restoration campaign. However, in the management literature, most studies are at a macro-level dealing with policy and public management, risk management, and environmental management. They generally focus on the after-effect and negative lessons learned from a disaster (ex. Academy of Strategic Management Journal: Katrina special issue, Vol.7, 2008).

Few strategic management studies deal with strategic response and decision making during a natural disaster. In this paper, we would like to contribute to this body of literature by focusing on a case of success, especially positive lessons learned in a crisis caused by a natural disaster. According to Simon, successful management is equivalent to successful decision-making; and even if decision makers try to be rational, their rationality is always bounded (March & Simon, 1958; Simon, 1960a, b). Lindblom described disjointed incrementalism, a series of successive limited and remedial decisions (Lindblom, 1968; Lindblom & Braybrooke, 1963) as a strategy to deal with complex decisions. Crozier further pointed out that the ultimate strategic sources are internal and external uncertainty, which justifies power strategies among the actors (Crozier, 1964; Crozier & Friedberg, 1980). These arguments are particularly true in our case study. The earthquake brought tremendous emotional impact on both leaders and employees in the firm. Yet, leaders had to manage emotions to make proper decision. Research shows that emotion does influence rationality and human behaviour (Elster, 1998), and both

have a strong impact on decision-making (Carr, 2001; Mangaliso, 2001). A proper emotion management could improve the interactive dynamics that can improve cooperation, productivity and firm performance (Gladwell, 2005; Goleman, 2000; Hill, 2008). Therefore, we argue that emotions play a critical role in an organization's decision making, especially during a natural disasters (Cohn, Carley, Harrald, & Wallace, 2000). Furthermore, the earthquake brought unexpected radical changes that abruptly, if temporarily, changed the firm's mission, strategy, operation routine and structure, the decision making process, and maybe even the culture and the identity, as the firm became a part of the rescue team immediately after the earthquake. These changes triggered intense emotions (Bartunek, 1984). On the one hand, decision makers had to grasp the big picture as soon as possible. On the other hand, a series of successive remedial decisions had to be made to solve concrete problems facing the disaster. Such a chaotic and uncertain situation offered leader more legitimacy to use administrative power to make critical decisions promptly. Thus, they had to manage more effectively not only their own emotions, but also those of their employees, because if their decisions or executions had not been made properly, the consequence would have been monumental.

The Illustrative Case: SEPC in Earthquake

2008 China Wenchuan Earthquake & the Power Restoration Campaign

On the afternoon of May 12, 2008, at 14:28, an earthquake measuring EIGHT on the Richter scale hit Sichuan Province, a mountainous region in Southwest China, which is listed as the 19th deadliest earthquake in human history. It was also the deadliest earthquake to hit China since the 1976 Tangshan earthquake, killing more than 250,000 persons.

According to the news release of Chinese Earthquake Administration (CEA), eighty percent of the buildings in the epicenter area were destroyed. Over 15 million people live in the affected earthquake area, including almost 4 million in the provincial capital city of Chengdu; and the earthquake left about 4.8 million people homeless. After the earthquake, official figures stated that 69,227[2] were confirmed dead, including 68,636 in Sichuan Province, of which 158 earthquake relief workers lost their lives in landslides as they tried to restore infrastructure; and 374,176 were injured, with 18,222 still listed as missing. One rescue team reported only 2,300 survivors from Yingxiu County, about 80 km away from the provincial capital, out of a total population of about 9,000.

For SEPC, the firm lost 326 managers and employees in the earthquake, with another 320 severely hurt and hospitalized. Furthermore, 327 family members of SEPC's managers and employees lost their lives and 44 hospitalized, and left 26 orphans.

On November 21, 2008, the executive vice governor of Sichuan province, Wei Hong, confirmed more than 90,000 people in total were dead or missing in the earthquake, of which 19,065 schoolchildren. Twenty five towns were completely destroyed and had to be relocated, including Beichuan and Wenchuan, two of the most devastated cities. He stated that 200,000 temporary homes shelter had been built; and 685,000 were under reconstruction. However, 1.94 million households were still without permanent shelter. 1,300 schools had to be reconstructed. The government budget on relief and reconstruction efforts was USD 441 billion and on August 12, 2008, National Development and Reform Commission estimated to invest RMB 1000 billion (USD 147 billion) in continuous relief program and future reconstruction in the following years.

[2] Earthquake casualty and damage data are from news release of China Earthquake Administration (CEA).

However, the earthquake rescue campaign was highly praised by Chinese people and international community (UN ESCAP, 2008). Just 90 minutes after the earthquake, Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, a graduate in geo-mechanics, was present in the earthquake area to oversee the rescue work. Several hours later, the National Disaster Relief Commission initiated a "Level II emergency contingency plan", which covered the most serious class of natural disasters, and Health Ministry sent ten emergency medical rescue teams to Sichuan. Within hours, most ministers of central government arrived in Sichuan, and the central government of China literally started working in the center of the earthquake area. On the same day, China's Chengdu Military Area Commander dispatched 50,000 troops and armed police to conduct immediate disaster relief work. Later that night at 22:15, China rose to "Level I emergency contingency plan". This national emergency plan authorized unconditionally allocation of all necessary and available resources to the disaster rescue campaign.

However, due to the rough terrain and close proximity of the quake's epicenter, infrastructure and power supply were seriously damaged. Persistent heavy rain and landslides in the province badly hindered rescue efforts, in particular in the rural regions. Prime Minister ordered infrastructure, including power supply, to be restored immediately at any cost. On May 12, 2008, 15,600 troops were mobilized immediately. At 23:30 pm, 1,300 rescuers reached the epicenter, and 300 pioneer troops reached the main town of Wenchuan. On May 14, 2008, at noon, telecommunications in the major town of Wenchuan is partly restored. Francis Marcus of the International Federation of the Red Cross praised China's rescue effort as "swift and very efficient".

In the province, about 470 different types of power plants with total installed capacity of 3.3 MkW were damaged. 171 substations of 35kV or above were seriously damaged or destroyed, and 2769 transmission lines of 10kV or above were damaged and stopped functioning. 85377 electric poles fell, and more than 31,969 km transmission lines broke. Only 32 minutes after the earthquake, State Electricity Regulatory Commission (SERC) started its emergency plan to restore power supply in the earthquake area. On the same night of May 12, the president of SERC stated that the national grid was in Level I Emergency Status, in which all subsidiaries of State Grid Corporation of China (SGCC) would unconditionally support SEPC in restoring power.

Sichuan Electric Power Corporation mobilized all its available resources and employees in the power restoration tasks. Only about 18 hours after the earthquake, on May 13, at 9:00, four 220kV substations and 9 lines of 220kV were restored back to normal function. Only nine days after the earthquake, on May 21, 88.4% provincial power supply was recovered, and on May 25, 96.6% service was recovered. This outstanding performance of SEPC was critical and essential for the efficiency and effectiveness of the earthquake rescue efforts. According to the CEO of State Grid, Mr. Liu Zhengya, SEPC "offered a rare and exceptional contribution to the people of Sichuan," and SEPC was honored as a "Meritorious Unit" by the central government for its performance and contribution in the earthquake rescue campaign.

Sichuan Electricity Power Corporation (SEPC)

Sichuan Electric Power Corporation (SEPC) is a large state-owned enterprise (SOE), listed in the largest 100 firms in the Sichuan province. As an autonomous SOE in the Chinese electricity system (SGCC), which is mostly owned by the central government, the core business of SEPC covers planning, construction, operation and maintenance of power plants and the transmission network and power distribution in Sichuan Province of China.

Located in southwest China, Sichuan Province is one of the largest provinces in China, covering an area of 485,000 square kilometres and is one of the most populated provinces with more than 85

million people living in the province. Sichuan Province serves as an important hydroelectric development base in China. The theoretical reserves of its hydroelectric resources are 145GW[3]; and in fact the technically and economically exploitable reserves are 121 GW and 106 GW respectively. SEPC wants to build the province into a hydroelectric powerhouse. In 2005 the provincial power network had a total installed capacity of 15,000 MW, 65% hydro and 35% thermal.

In 2007, Sichuan Electric Power Corporation holds total assets of 58.1 billion Yuan[4]. The firm has more than 28,958 employees, assigned to 45 business units and subsidiaries, including, electricity generation plants, design institute, construction units, maintenance units, R&D, and high-education institutions. The firm's power supply and service area is about 162,000 square kilometers, 33.55% of Sichuan province; and the firm serves approximately 66.4 million people, 78.4% of the population in Sichuan Province[5], with a market share of 85.18%.

The firm sold 83.28 Billion KWh electricity in 2007[6], with a growth rate above 14%. To the end of 2005, SEPC's 35kV and above substations held a total capacity of 40.14 million kVA, with eight 500kV substations with capacity of 6 million kVA, seventy 220kV substations with capacity of 13.98 million kVA, a network of 110kV substations with capacity of 17.34 kVA, and a network of 35kV substations with capacity of 2.82 million kVA. The transmission line network of 35kV and above has been extended to over 27,664 km, with over 2985 km for the twenty-four 500kV lines, 8119 km of 220kV lines, 10537 km for 110kV lines, and 6023 km[7] for 35kV lines. Since 2002，the provincial power grid began transmission of electricity from Sichuan to the coastal regions, such as Shanghai and Zhejiang Province, through the central China power grid. The firm holds the national Electric Power Transmission Safety Record[8]. According to the province's 10th Five-Year Strategic Plan for power production, in 2010 power consumption will be 12,400 MW and the installed generating capacity will be 35,000 MW. The province will have 4,000 MW of electricity available for sale to other provinces.

In the official website of Sichuan Electric Power Corporation, it indicates that SEPC advocates "an employee-oriented" corporate culture, focus on key values of "loyalty to the firm, serving the people, and contributing to society." The firm highly appreciates employee's efforts to "Go Beyond" and "Search for Excellence", and regards these values as part of the corporate spirit. SEPC's goal is to have "a firm and stable power transmission grid, assets in good quality, fine service to client, and outstanding performance". The mission statement of the firm indicates that "a firm and stable power transmission grid provides a solid base for future economic and social development; assets in good quality demonstrate the firm's capability for future growth and development; fine service builds up and delivers a good brand image; and an outstanding performance ensures future growth and development.

Empathy as an emotion management tool

Huy (1999) conceptualized the emotional dynamics between individual and organization, in which empathy is defined as the primary individual emotional state. It occurs generally at the individual level, and brings a series of other emotional states, such as sympathy, hope and motivation (Huy, 1999).

[3] All data are from Sichuan Power Eclectric Corporation (SEPC)'s official website and non-confidential internal documents.
[4] Approximately 6.08 Billion USD (1 USD = 6.8371 RMB - Bank of China Feb 06, 2009)
[5] In 2003, the firm's power supply and service area was about 20.6% of Sichuan province, and 70% of the provincial population.
[6] SEPC sold 53.93 Billion KWh electricity in 2003.
[7] In 2003, SEPC had 26,883 km transmission lines of 35kV and above, in which consist 550kV transmission lines 2,119 km, 220 kV lines to 7,547 km, and 35 kV lines to 4,908 km.
[8] SEPC holds the national Electric Power Transmission Safety Record of 9025 days with any accident.

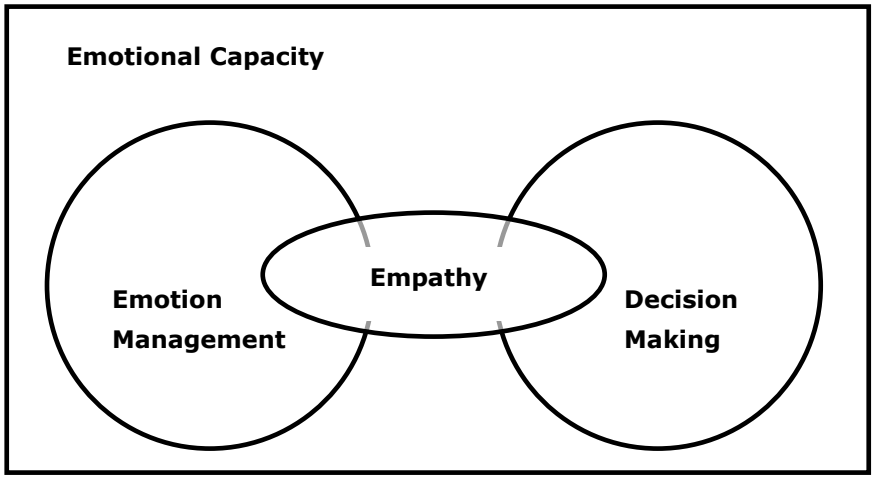
However, all individual states have an organizational impact on behaviour at the organizational level, which shapes the organization's emotional dynamics (Huy, 1999). Furthermore, recent research shows that empathy is critical in emotion management to motivate employees and create job commitment (Hobson, Kesic, Rosetti, Delunas, & Hobson, 2004). It has been argued that empathy is a critical dimension of decision making (Martin, 1993) and leadership, especially in dealing with complex tasks (Kellett, Humphrey, & Sleeth, 2002). It is interesting to note that empathy is also a critical part of the core Chinese values and behavioural norms, such as benevolence and fraternity (Fan, 2000). Confucian philosophy highlights the importance of empathy for leaders and their decision making, by arguing that leaders should remember that "what you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others (Confucius, 1971);" and "treat with the reverence due to age the elders in your own family, so that the elders in the families of others shall be similarly treated; treat with the kindness due to youth the young in your own family, so that the young in the families of others shall be similarly treated (Mencius, 1971)" Therefore, we take empathy as one of the most important foci of our inquiry of emotion management in times of crisis; and we present our conceptual framework in a diagram as follows:

Proposition 1a: Leaders, who practice empathy as a management tool more frequently, are more likely to manage their emotions and organizational members' emotions effectively in crisis triggered radical changes.

Proposition 1b: Leaders, who practice empathy as a management tool more frequently, are more likely to make critical decisions effectively in crisis triggered radical changes.

Figure 1

The empathy -- an emotional management tool



The Empathy: An Emotional Management Tool

Originally, psychologists saw empathy as an important human characteristic. Salovey and Mayer (1990) defined empathy as the ability to comprehend another's feelings and to re-experience them oneself; and they further described empathy as central to the concept of emotional intelligence. Plutchik (1987) defined empathy as a bonding process due to the sharing of emotions. Goleman and his colleague, from a social perspective, proposed that empathy is the fundamental competence of social awareness and the "*sine qua non* of all social effectiveness in working life" (Goleman, Boyatzis, &

Mckee, 2002). In their theorization, empathy creates resonance and builds a type of bond that allows leaders to be emotionally in steps with others. Furthermore, they argued that through this bond, leaders can guide the emotional response of their followers (Pescosolido, 2002). Thus, as a management tool, it is not only the ability to express emotions and the ability to read other's emotions, which helps in establish empathic bond and trust, but also a powerful indicator of leadership (Kellett et al., 2002; Kellett, Humphrey, & Sleeth, 2006), which has a direct effect (Kellett et al., 2006) on the firm's performance. Definitions of empathy in the literature have however multiplied, without much consensus among scholars (Chlopan, McCain, Carbonell, & Hagen, 1985).

Table 1:

Classic definitions of empathy

Author(s)	**Definitions of empathy**
Mead (1934) Kuhmerker (1975)	Role-taking and constituting the essence of social intelligence;
Fenichel (1945)	Identification with other person and an awareness of the feelings that accompany that identification;
Freud (1949)	The mechanism enables an individual to take up any attitude at all toward another mental life;
Dymond (1949)	Imaginative transposing of oneself into the thinking, feeling, and acting of another; consequently, structuring the world as that person does;
Kerr and Speroff (1954)	The ability to put oneself in the other person's position, establish rapport, and anticipate the others reactions, feelings and behaviours;
Hogan (1969)	The act of constructing for oneself another's mental state;
Hall (1965), Thorndike (1959)	An interpersonal process;
Mehrabian and Epstein (1972)	The ability to become emotionally aroused to the distress of another, and to take the other person's point of view;
Clark (1980)	An involuntary vicarious experience of another's emotional state;
Plutchik (1987)	A bonding process due to the sharing of emotions;
Salovey and Mayer (1990); Huy (1999)	The ability to comprehend another's feelings and to re-experience them oneself
Goleman, Boyatzis, Mckee (2002)	the fundamental competence of social awareness and the "*sine qua non* of all social effectiveness

However, empathy appears clearer to managers, who are more concerned with action and the experimental character of empathy-related actions. There is in it an element of sharing and gaining understanding through some forms of connection or a closer relationship among participants. This encourages us to propose that empathy is an intellectual or imaginative apprehension of others' emotion and condition. At the individual level, empathy represents a central attribute of emotional intelligence. It is a person's ability to understand others' feeling and re-experience them (Huy, 1999; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Empathy determines the success of social support and is a motivator for altruistic behavior (Salovey & Mayer, 1990), especially in time of crisis and radical changes. Therefore, in return, others are more likely to be empathetic as well, especially in high-context collective culture (Hofstede, 2003) such as China's.

If mutual empathy is established in an organization, then, at the organizational level, the organization will have an enhanced emotional capability. It not only enables an organization to

acknowledge, recognize, monitor, discriminate, and attend to members' emotions (Schein, 1992), but also improves the quality of an organization's efforts to identify the variety of emotions aroused during radical changes (Huy, 1999). This is useful to accept the reality of crisis and change, internalize concerns and uncertainties, and act to ensure a deep level of understanding, essential to build up trust (Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005). McAllister (1995) defined it as emotion-based trust, which is essential for cooperation and effective management (Bazerman, 1994). This trust also facilitates communication among organization members, and results in better coordination, especially under the discontinuous conditions of crisis and radical changes.

Proposition 2a: Leaders, who practice empathy more frequently, are more likely to enhance the organizational emotional capability in crisis-related radical changes.

Proposition 2b: Leaders, who practice empathy more frequently, are more likely to build stronger mutual trust among organizational members in crisis-related radical changes.

Emotion Management in Chinese Context

Emotion has been long recognized and practiced as a management tool in ancient Chinese strategic literatures such as the Art of War (Suntzu, 1963) and the Three Kingdoms (Luo, 2003). Emotion and emotional management skills are regarded as an essential part of Chinese leaders' skills. According to Chinese strategic management teaching, the Thirty Six Stratagems (Anonymous author, 1991), emotional management skills are critical for a leader to master, especially when facing crisis and radical change. In history, we find many successful cases in which Chinese leaders, such as Cao Cao and Liu Bei, used successful emotion management, especially empathy, to motivate people to proactively deal with crisis and radical changes (Luo, 2003). In this paper, we study the extreme case of crisis; we explore how emotionally intelligent leaders successfully manage emotional dynamics at the organizational level, by using empathy as an emotional management tool. Furthermore, we show the interdependent emotional dynamics between organizational level emotional capability and individual level emotional intelligence. Thus, China appears as a good field research.

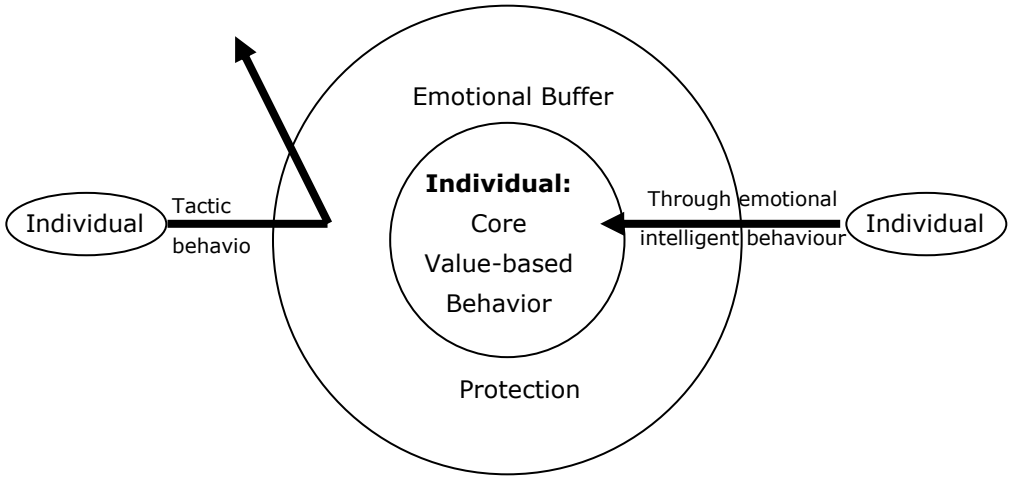
For long in history, Chinese people learned to control themselves, especially not to expose their personal feelings and emotion to others. Many China-based studies, especially practitioner-oriented papers conducted by western scholars, find that there is a paradox between Chinese core values/norms and Chinese behavioural tactics observed; many suggest that Chinese are "baffling" (Chen, 2001) and Chinese behaviour is puzzling (Graham & Lam, 2003). There is a gulf between community-based values of fairness, solidarity, respect, gentleman behaviour, and short term savage competitive tactics. History shows that Chinese are long-term oriented; behaviour is value-centric and emphasizes collective rather than individual good. People are seen as caring for community-based values (Hofstede, 2003). Buddhist and Confucian teachings advocate frankness, honesty, trustworthiness, loyalty, righteousness, and harmony-seeking and balance-keeping (Schumacher, 1967), the so-called "mid-way" thinking and behaviour (Chen, 2002). All this is belied by observed competitive behaviour.

We argue that this paradox can be solved if one goes deeper into the relationship with Chinese, crossing past an Emotional Buffer (Yan & Hafsi, 2007). Emotion is more important if one understands the underpinnings of Chinese behaviour. Chinese rationality is influenced by Confucian and Tao philosophies. Ying and Yang are part of everything and every situation. Good and bad, happy and sad, big and small, aggressive or accommodating, are inextricably joined. Therefore, even though emotion is to some extent hidden and not expressed frequently, empathy is more often used in the Chinese context to access others emotional state. The emotional buffer is to protect an individual in chaotic and disorderly

competition (Yan & Hafsi, 2007), and in times of crisis (Luo, 2003). However, through empathy, this buffer is lifted (Yan & Hafsi, 2007). We argue that if the emotional buffer is overcome, the core Chinese value based behaviour is revealed, which brings unusual coordination and cooperation with a surprising level of performance.

Figure 2:

Emotional Buffer (Yan & Hafsi, 2007)



Proposition 3a: In high context culture, leaders, who practice empathy more frequently, are more likely to penetrate the emotional buffer of organizational members and mould their behaviour, especially in crisis-related radical changes.

Proposition 3b: Leaders, who practice empathy more frequently, are more likely to enhance value-based behaviours of organizational members, and greatly improve coordination and cooperation.

Furthermore, both social psychologists and organizational scholars have gathered compelling empirical evidence that emotions spread across individuals in organizations (Barsade & Gibson, 1998; Brief & Weiss, 2002), especially in high-context collective culture (Hofstede, 2003). Therefore, the composition of various shared emotions of a group or an organization is defined as collective emotion (Barsade & Gibson, 1998; Sanchez-Burks & Huy, 2009). Studies show that, facing changes, employees can experience similar emotions, if they share similar interpretation of the change event, identity, organization culture (Schein, 1992).

However, these collective emotions can be positive or negative. Research also shows that positive collective emotions are associated with outstanding performance, while negative ones are linked to low performance, and will reduce group satisfaction and cohesion (Duffy & Shaw, 2000; Hill, 2008). As mentioned above, empathy is an important mechanism that will bring shared interpretation, experience, identity and organizational culture. Leading to better communications, mutual understanding and trust (Duffy & Shaw, 2000), among leaders and organizational members, empathy may be a very important tool to manage and ease negative emotion. A better emotional balance, especially in crises and radical changes, is associated with better performance, especially the performance of mid-range managers (Huy, 2002), which are an organization's pillars in times of radical changes and crisis. Also, empathy itself

can be used as stimuli and incentive to motivate people (Huy, 1999), to increase courage and commitment (Hobson et al., 2004), and lead to positive collective emotions.

Proposition 4a: Leaders, who practice empathy more frequently, are more likely to build collective positive emotions among organizational members in crisis-related radical changes.

Proposition 4b: Leaders, who practice empathy more frequently, are more likely to strengthen organizational members' mutual trust and commitment to the organization in crisis-related radical changes.

Research Design to Test Hypotheses

This is a preliminary study. From October to November 2009, we interviewed 5 high level managers of SEPC in Montreal, and in January, we interviewed another 5 high level managers in SEPC in Sichuan Province, China[9], and we also interviewed 12 department level managers and 7 middle level managers, all of them involved intensively in the power restoration tor disaster relief campaign, in both the headquarters and the mostly severely damaged power plants, such as the Yingxiuwan hydro plant[10] and others.

We adopted a qualitative embedded single-case study design for this study (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003a, b). The ideal-typical qualitative methods strategy is made up of three parts: 1) qualitative data, 2) a holistic design of inquiry, and 3) content or case analysis (Patton, 1990). In this study, we explore: (1) leaders' and employees' (mid-level managers') emotional trajectory during the earthquake rescue campaign, (2) the empathy between leaders and their employees (mid-level managers) to verify the level of emotional intelligence of leaders and emotional capability of the company, and (3) the critical decision making process in unexpected radical changes in times of crisis.

First, we adopt content analysis with qualitative data. We collect and study the firm's internal documents, as well as public documents, regarding changes in power restoration campaign after the earthquake. Second, we conduct semi-structured in-depth interviews with the executive management team and mid-level managers who participated in the power restoration. The interview guide is based on Patton's (1990) qualitative interview designs and data collection approach, which ensures that individuals will provide their understanding and interpretation of unexpected radical organizational changes in the firm, as forced by disaster (Patton, 1990). We ask executives and mid-level managers to identify some radical changes and critical decisions, which they think as being important and effective in dealing with the situations they were facing after the earthquake and describe how they were made; we also intend to probe how emotion was managed and its impact on both organizational members and the firm.

Emotions

To illustrate the emotional trajectory, first, we use the Larsen and Diner's emotional map (Larsen & Diener, 1992), to ask the interviewees (leaders and mid-level managers) to subjectively identify and plot their emotions into the map (first two days, the first week and the first month). We use 15 emotions suggested by Smith and Ellsworth (1985), in which 10 are fundamental emotions (happiness, sadness,

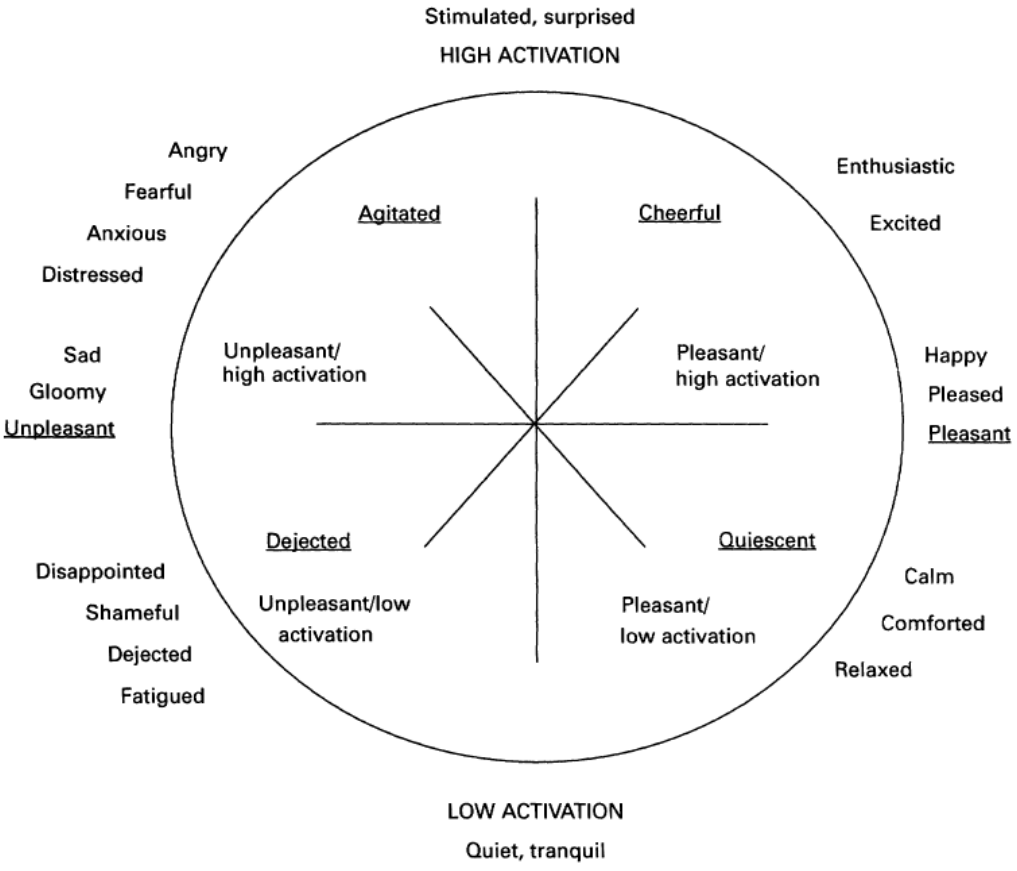
[9] However, the preliminary result presented in this paper is only based on the first 8 interviews.

[10] Yingxiuwan Hydo Plant lost almost one third of its employees, 90 out of 300.

fear, anger, interest, contempt, disgust, surprise, shame and guilt) (Ekman, Friesen, & Ellsworth, 1982; Izard, 1977; Tomkins, 1982), and another five (frustration, boredom, challenge, pride and hope) suggested by Lazarus, Kanner and Folkman (1980).

Figure 3

Lersen and Diener's Emotion Map (1992)



Empathy

Although there is a wealth of methods to measure emotions and empathy, each of them has been criticized for its validity (Chlopan et al., 1985). Therefore, in this study, we try to triangulate by briefly borrowing the Dymond's (1949, 1950) approach and Hogan empathy evaluating approaches (Hogan, 1969), as they are the two most convincing in a qualitative approach (Hogan, 1969).

By borrowing Dymond's empathy method, we ask leaders: 1) to describe what they did to manage emotions; 2) describe what they believe their mid-level managers did; and 3) describe what mid-level managers believe that their leaders did; then we ask mid-level managers: 1) to describe what they did to manage emotions; 2) describe what they believe that their leaders did; and 3) describe what leaders believe that they did. Then we borrow Hogan's approach (1969) of "empathetic man", and ask subjects to describe themselves and the other group for reason why one thinks the other is more or less empathetic when facing unexpected radical changes after the earthquake.

Decision Making

We also collect data based on semi-structured in-depth interviews about unexpected radical changes, and about activities and critical decisions that leaders and mid-level managers made in trying to restore power. We ask them to identify the most significant decisions and tasks during power restoration, and how they interacted with their employees, the government, army and people in the disaster area. We also collect data from media release and internal document from the firm as complementary and objective data. By using this method, first, we know more about the shift in emotions during the power restoration period. Then we code the interview transcripts, to identify those changes and critical decisions that leaders conducted in order to effectively manage emotions during the campaign.

Preliminary Findings, Discussion & Conclusion

We present in this paper, the preliminary findings. Emotions were vividly expressed in interviews. We realized two stages of emotion during the rescue and power restoration campaign. First, immediately after the earthquake, there was a very negative emotional stage, and then it transformed into a positive emotional stage with the pace of power restoration. In the negative emotion stage, Four emotions were identified which had the most important psychological impact: Fear, Anger, Anxiety, and Shame. More specifically, immediately after the earthquake, managers in the headquarters, felt stronger Anxiety and Shame, for not knowing how to react, because there were no means of telecommunication, while managers in plants from disaster area demonstrated more Fear and Anger toward the natural disaster.

During the rescue and power restoration campaign, emotions became positive. Managers identified four positive emotions such as enthusiasm, excitement, pride and relaxation, which later became dominant. Summarizing the interview notes, we realize that this shows a process by which emotions actually shifted: 1) Fear (to be affected by the disaster, and sadness), 2) Anger (Why here, why us/me, life is not fair!), 3) Anxiety (What should we do, how to rescue people?), 4) Shame (I want to do more) 5) Enthusiasm (to participate in rescue tasks), 6) Excitement (get a task), 7) Proud (I/we made it), and 8) Relaxation (I did my best in the rescue relief and power restoration). Empathy and trust were two key words when discussing emotion management in times of crisis. All interviewees mentioned that the importance of empathy and trust in the power restoration campaign. Only 30 minutes after the earthquake, SEPC became a part of the rescue team. The central government was in fact working in the disaster zone in the first week after the earthquake. And dozens of army divisions were on site. In this case, the original working process, organizational structure, and decision making process were all changed. In fact, "everything was changed radically."

In such a situation, on the one hand, empathy became one of essential tool in decision making process, considering not only emotions of others, but also the situation others were facing. With the help of empathy, people exchanged about their emotions and started to build trust among each other. The interview notes show that the level of mutual trust became very high. On the other hand, we noticed that after such a disaster, expressions of emotion were free and open, which was favourable to the use of empathy as a management tool. The typical example mentioned by five interviewees was the tears of the Prime Minister on the ruin and rubbles in the first night of the disaster. "Prime Minister cried, and we all did in front of the TV. I feel the pain of the others, and we were unified by these collective emotions," furthermore, "when I made decisions, I always tried my best to understand others' emotions and real situation they were facing rather than only my feelings and understanding."

However, we also noticed, that empathy may be easier to use as a management tool in radical changes forced by a natural disaster than in a normal industrial policy shift, because of the free and open expression of emotion that a disaster justifies. In January and February 2010, we intend to continue our interviews with managers in SEPC. We plan to interview more executives and mid level managers to build a more solid qualitative data base and construct our model. We also developed a survey which will help us to illustrate the emotion transformation process and the level of empathy more precisely.

Tentative contributions

This study tends to contributes to a small but growing body of literature in strategic management studying the emotion management and decision making process in a social and/or natural crisis forced by a natural disaster. In our case, this was more precisely the 2008 China Wenchuan Earthquake. For strategic management and organization scholars, the role of empathy in emotion management and decision making process has been an emerging and promising research field [e.x. Journal of Management and organization, special issue (12/2), 2006], especially for studies of conflict and crisis (Humphrey, 2006). Looking at both the institutional and organizational levels, we explore the emotion management and decision making process to develop theory.

The most important theoretical contribution of this paper is the proposed framework, in which as a critical management tool in times of crisis, empathy will reinforce the link between emotion management and decision making. We propose that it leads to management effectiveness and enhance corporate performance in times of radical change and crisis. However, we realized that further analysis of our qualitative data from SEPC's interviews may generate different and perhaps more accurate models . In this paper, we provide insights of the dynamics between the decision making process and emotional management, that is, the role of emotion in decision making and the role of decision making in establishing a firm's emotional capability (Huy, 1999), and we argued that this interactive and interdependent dynamics is particularly important when the firm is facing unexpected radical change forced by a social or natural crisis.

Another important theoretical contribution in this paper is that we provide evidence, with our SEPC case, that if guided and managed properly, certain negative emotions can also stimulate motivation and be an incentive to stimulate constructive behaviour, especially in times of major change and crisis. In fact, scholars have already proposed that natural disaster experience can be useful for studies in radical organizational change in times of crisis (Barton, 2008), and this study will offer a more insightful real case into the very small literature body, especially cases of natural disaster. Finally for practitioner, the positive lessons and experiences learned in this study are also valuable for large firms, especially firms in utility industry, especially in dealing with unexpected radical changes forced by a crisis, e.g. the North America blackout, Katrina, or the Haiti earthquake.

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