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## The Role of Emotions During Organizational Change: A Review and Research Agenda

David P. Kroon, Janina Klein and Yoeri Klok

School of Business and Economics (SBE), Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands

### ABSTRACT

This article reviews twenty-five years of research on the role of emotions during organizational change and proposes avenues for future research. Building on an analysis of articles published in the *Journal of Change Management: Reframing Leadership and Organizational Practice* (JCM) from 2000 to 2024, we trace the development of scholarship in the field and synthesize contributions. We also uncover how the research published in JCM has substantially influenced the wider field by integrating perspectives from psychology, sociology, and institutional theory, thereby advancing an interdisciplinary understanding of the role of emotions in change processes. Persistent gaps remain, however, which also provide opportunities for future research. We identify collective emotions, emotional contagion, and affective climates; the politics of affect; and the non-linear and temporal nature of emotional experiences and responses as particularly promising areas for future research. Finally, advancing our understanding of the role of emotions during organizational change requires methodological pluralism and engagement with emerging organizational contexts such as digital transformation, sustainability transitions, and global crises.

### MAD statement

Emotions make a difference in every stage of organizational change, shaping how individuals interpret, respond to, and engage with new initiatives. Over the past 25 years, research published in the *Journal of Change Management* has established emotions as a central force in change processes, showing how feelings such as fear, hope, and anger influence commitment, resistance, and withdrawal. This body of work has advanced an interdisciplinary understanding of emotions by integrating insights from psychology, sociology, and institutional theory. At the same time, it reveals important gaps, highlighting the need to explore collective emotions, emotional contagion, and affective climates, as well as the politics and evolving nature of

### KEYWORDS

Organizational change; emotions; change management; temporal dynamics; collective emotions; politics of affect; interdisciplinary perspective; methodological pluralism