



# Organization Development and Change

R. Wayne Boss, Editor

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## ODC DIVISION PROGRAM NEWS

Gretchen M. Spreitzer  
2003 Program Chair

This year we received 105 submissions — 74 papers and 31 symposia. This is a small increase over last year’s 101 submissions. But this year we received 11 more symposia than last year, so we have many more people actually on the program than before. Five of our symposia have been singled out as Showcase Sessions while another had the honor of being an All Academy Session.

I am so excited about this year’s program! We have two symposia on Appreciative Inquiry and other fascinating sessions on Positive Organizational Scholarship, Toxic Emotions at Work, Theatrics, Aesthetics, Inter-Organizational Learning, Sustainability, Collective Collaboration, Paradox, Dialectics, and many other great sessions. Just thinking about these dynamic sessions makes me want to head to Seattle right now.

We have co-sponsored many of our accepted symposia with other divisions and have excellent papers scheduled across all four presentation formats: regular paper sessions, interactive sessions, visual sessions, and shared interest sessions. In case some of you are not familiar with these different kinds of sessions, here is a short description of each:

1. Regular paper sessions are traditional paper presentations with a discussant.
2. Interactive sessions are in the spirit of more democratic exchange of ideas. IP sessions are grouped papers that are presented in a manner that encourages more discussion and interaction. At least 10% of submitted papers are in IP sessions.
3. Visual sessions are not formally presented but rather authors present a poster version of their paper. All of the ODC visual papers will be on display together in a special exhibit hall where they can discuss their papers with attendees.
4. Shared Interest Track Paper sessions were

*(See Spreitzer., page 2)*

## DEFINING ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

Chris Worley  
ODC Division Chair

The recent passing of several key OD founders provided me with an unnecessary prod to reflect on the purpose and identity of organization development. Coincidentally, several pre-conference workshops on OD competencies resulted in a hubbub of heated debate over whether they should be used to certify and regulate OD practitioners. Finally, the Board of Governor’s strategic planning process and ODC Division’s mission and vision activities in preparation for our five-year review raised important questions about the role, purpose, and identity of the ODC Division. None of the insights provided by these reflections, debates, and activities have been entirely satisfying, and I don’t see any orchestrated approach to move the field forward. While I do see a lot of activity, I worry that the academy has become a place where the increasingly sophisticated search for the irrelevant is being fine tuned to an art form.

An OD graduate student’s biggest fear is that the only question on the final exam will be, “What is OD?” For *(See Worley, page 4)*

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(From Spreitzer, page 1)

created to break down barriers between divisions by group together papers from different divisions that deal with a common topic.

Some of our very best papers are scheduled in each of these different types of sessions – none are second class citizens. In fact, two of our best paper award winners are in visual sessions and two are in interactive sessions.

Most of our sessions are scheduled to take place in the Convention Center. Here are some special division sessions to mark on your calendars:

- ✓ ODC Welcome and Continental Breakfast: Monday, 8:30 a.m. in CC: 304
- ✓ Theme Session on Positive Organizational Scholarship: Tuesday, 10:30 am in CC: 304
- ✓ ODC Distinguished Speaker Jean Bartunek. Jean is the past President of the Academy, past Division Chair of ODC, and a Professor at Boston College. The title of her talk is “How Planned Change Eventually Changes Itself.” Tuesday, 4:10 pm in CC: 2A
- ✓ ODC Business Meeting and Awards Ceremony: Tuesday, 5:30 pm in CC: 2A
- ✓ A very special ODC Social Hour at the Seattle Aquarium! This is jointly sponsored by the Organizations and Natural Environment Division and supported by the Microsoft Corporation: Tuesday, 8:30 p.m.-10:30 p.m. Space is limited so come early for a great evening!

At our ODC Business Meeting, we will also be honoring our award winners and recognizing our outstanding reviewers.

### 2003 ODC Award Winners

This year's best paper awards are:

**Best competitive paper:** “Planning on spontaneity: Lessons from jazz for a democratic theory of change,” by Frank J. Barrett (Naval Postgraduate School) and Mary Jo Hatch (U. of Virginia)

**Best Practice paper:** “Moral purpose and organizational resilience: Sandler O’Neill & Partners in the Aftermath of 9/11/2001,” by Steven F. Freeman (U. of Pennsylvania), Larry Hirschhorn (CFAR), and Marc Maltz (TRIAD Consulting Group LLC)

**Best Visual paper:** “Seattle’s experience music project: On color language and framing of organizational reality,” by Anat Lechner (New York U.) and Leslie Harrington (Principal, LH.Color)

**Best Student Paper:** “A Multilevel Analysis of Network Effects: Chinese Private Enterprises during Market Transition,” by Wubiao Zhou (Cornell U.)

### A Big Thank You

I want to give a big thanks to everyone who helped in the development of the program. I would like to thank Jacoba Lilius, a PhD student at the University of Michigan, who was my assistant through this process. She helped keep every part of the program on track. I would also like to thank Dianne Haft and Paula Kopka at the University of Michigan for their terrific administrative support. And, I would like to thank my program committee, who did an excellent job of assigning reviewers to submissions: Eric Neuman, Alison Shriberg, and Scott Sonenshein. I would also like to thank the ODC Executive Committee for their help in selecting our best papers for this year, as well as Chris Worley, our Division Chair, for his exceptional mentoring.

On behalf of the ODC Executive Committee, I express our deep appreciation to our 124 reviewers. The quality of the reviews was generally excellent and just about everyone turned in their reviews by the due date – so thank you very much. The reviewers include: John Austin, Pennsylvania State U.; Keith Bahde, Benedictine U.; Mila Baker, Pfizer; Jean Bartunek, Boston College; Cecile Betit Purnima Bhaskar-Shrinivas, Pennsylvania State U.; Wayne Boss, U. of Colorado at Boulder; Maree Boyle, U. of Queensland; Hillary Bradbury, Case Western Reserve U.; Tony Buono, Bentley College; Sherry Camden-Anders, Alliant International U.; Marilyn Carter, Benedictine U.; Arran Caza, U. of Michigan; Rupert Chisholm, Pennsylvania State U.; Allan Church, PepsiCo, Inc.; Susan Cohen, U. of Southern California; C. Keith Cox, Tirawa Consulting, Inc.; Tom Cummings, U. of Southern California; Miles Davis, Shenandoah U.; Jeannette Davy, Wright State U.; Robert Dengler, R. A. Dengler Associates; Eric Dent, U. of Maryland; Anthony DiBella, Organizational Transition, Inc.; Peter Dominick, Stevens Institute of Technology; Loretta Donovan, Columbia U.; Soeren Dressler, A. T. Kearney Management Consultants; Patricia Duffy-Atkin, U. of Calgary; Steven Dunn, U. of Wisconsin Oshkosh;

Jeanne Enders, Portland State U.; George Entwistle, Vortech, Inc.; Jennifer Evans, Dublin City U.; Ann Feyerherm, Pepperdine U.; Krista Finstad-Milion, I.C.N.; Sylvia Flatt, U. of San Francisco; Jan Flynn, Georgia College & State U.; Gordon Forward, Point Loma U.; Susan Fox-Wolfgramm, Hawaii Pacific U.; Arnold Frigeri; Suzanne Geigle, Pricewaterhouse Coopers; Nicole Gillespie, U. of Melbourne; Robert Golembiewski, U. of Georgia; Eric Goodman, Colorado Technical U.; Kathy Gurley, Fayetteville State U.; Katrin Hansen, Gelsenkirchen U.; Mary-Ann Hazen, U. of Detroit Mercy; Tom Head, Roosevelt U.; Jorge Herrera, Culture Sense International, Inc.; Amy Hietapelto, Michigan Technological U.; Andrea Hornett, Pennsylvania State U.; Quy Huy, Insead; Karen Jansen, Pennsylvania State U.; Mark Jenkins, Nottingham U.; Knut Karevold, In3; Daniel Keogh, Davatech; Janet Kiehl, Case Western Reserve U.; Lynda Kilbourne, Xavier U.; Bill Kohley, Benedictine U.; Mary Lou Kotecki, Benedictine U./ John Deere Corporation; Katherine Lawrence, U. of Michigan; Bill Leban, Devry University; Tony LeTrent-Jones; Jacoba Lilius, U. of Michigan; Jean Livingston, University Health System Consortium; Jim Ludema, Benedictine U.; Donald Maier, Benedictine U.; Geri Markley, Detroit Public Schools; Donald McCormick, U. of Redlands; Gerry McLaughlin, DePaul U.; Janann Medeiros, Universidade De Brasilia; Phil Mirvis; Aniel Mishra, Wake Forest U.; Mike Moch, Michigan State U.; Erik Monsen, U. of Colorado, Boulder; Kurt Motamedi, Pepperdine U.; Ken Murrell, U. of West Florida; Eric Neilson, Case Western Reserve U.; Eric Neuman, U. of Michigan; Phyllis Okrepkie, U. of Mary; Debra Orr-Alfeo, Lewis U.; Jennifer Palthe, Western Michigan U.; Sangeeta Parameshwar, U. of Illinois; Bill Pasmore, Mercer Delta Consulting; Earle Potter III, Eastern Michigan U.; Ron Purser, San Francisco State U.; Seung-Yoon Rhee, U. O Michigan; Peter Rivard, Boston College; Bob Roberts, Benedictine U.; Peter Robertson, U. of Southern California; Sophie Romack; Erin Ross; Ken Rossi, Hawaii Pacific U.; George Roth, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Josefa Ruiz-Mercader, Universidad De Murcia; Raymond Saner, Centre for Socio-Eco-Nomic Development; Robert Sardy, Progressive Research; Gavin Schwarz, University of New South Wales; Charles Seashore, Fielding Graduate Institute; Rami Shani, California Polytechnical U.; Deb Shearer, Lucent Technologies; Allison Shriberg, U. of Michigan; Kay Snaveley, U. of Miami, Ohio; Scott Sonenshein, U. of Michigan; Peter Sorensen, Jr., Benedictine U.; Dale Spartz, John C. Lincoln Health Network; Gretchen

Spreitzer, U. of Michigan; James Sullivan, Alliant International U.; Cathleen Swody, U. of Connecticut; Laura Taplin, Benedictine U.; Ram Tenkasi, Benedictine U.; Richard Thompson, Consulting Psychologists Press; John Ullmen, U. of California, Los Angeles; Glenn Varney, Bowling Green State U.; Robert Verner, Benedictine U.; Gail Von Gonten, McDonald's Corporation; Paul Waight, Griffith U.; John Watson, St. Bonaventure U.; Paula Weber, St. Cloud State U.; Karen Whelan-Berry, Texas Wesleyan U.; Julie Wolfram Cox, RMIT U.; Kym Wong, Benedictine U.; Richard Woodman, Texas A & M U.; Chris Worley, Pepperdine U.; Therese Yaeger, Benedictine U.; and Dale Zand, New York U.

And finally, I would like to thank my colleagues at the University of Michigan and my family for their untiring support throughout this process.

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*(From Worley, page 1)*

my part, I figured I better have my own answer to the question, and I'd like to take this opportunity to explore it.

### **Sources of Variation**

I view the debate over what OD is or isn't as being driven by three distinct camps: the traditionalists, the pragmatists, and the academics. The traditionalists, and the neo-traditionalists, believe OD was and always should be confined to issues of human process. Supporting the field's traditional humanistic values, they normatively argue for more spiritual, diverse, and organic organizations. The archetype of this camp is the National Training Laboratories (NTL). For NTL, values take on the status of objective and outcome, and there is a strong normative culture to bring spirit, passion, and human integrity into the workplace. For the traditionalist camp, OD is the way a system is changed and whether the change was in the "right" direction.

The pragmatists want to integrate the field's process competencies with content drawn from organization behavior, project management, strategy, and organization design. Practice is the focus, performance is the central value, and process is important only because it represents a strategy to achieve desired outcomes. Relevance is the watchword of the pragmatists and what works is their mantra. The archetypes of this

camp are the change management practices in large consulting firms as well as professional organizations, such as the OD Network. The primary drive in these organizations is getting OD work and applying it in organizations. For the pragmatists, OD is change management. Was the organization change successfully implemented?

A key source of variation in OD's definition is the conflict between these two camps. The traditionalists fear the pragmatists will consciously or unconsciously conspire with power elites toward ends (e.g., the concentration of wealth or environmental degradation) they would never support. The pragmatists worry that the traditionalists will promulgate OD's "touchy-feely" orientation. How, exactly, do spirituality in the work place, training, and attention to group process contribute to the success and survival of today's organizations?

Finally, the academics are generally unconcerned with the process or practice since their goal is understanding, prediction, and control. Performance and process are equally important. This camp is more distant from the subject of change than the others. It is more concerned with generalizable conclusions about how change occurs, how it is triggered, under what conditions it works well, and so on. Obviously, the archetype organization is the ODC division of the Academy. Writing papers, making presentations, and generally trying to understand why change occurs and how it relates to effectiveness are the key goals. For the academics, OD is the application of behavioral science knowledge to changing human systems.

### **Defining Organization Development**

Each of the camps argues that they have the answer to the question, "what is OD?" But they are clearly at odds with each other and I believe that to survive, OD's definition must have scope and boundary. Without boundaries, what was known as OD will be absorbed by other disciplines increasingly interested in the organization change phenomena. But to thrive, I think OD's definition must be integrative. Otherwise, the three camps will continue to be at odds and the field will remain fragmented.

Worley and Feyerherm (2003) recently proposed three criteria for OD that I'd like to develop just a bit further. First, OD activities and research must involve change. This is a most obvious and fundamental criterion, but it's also the trickiest. For example, if a senior



management team develops a new organization vision, can we say that an organization change has taken place? The answer is “no” because the vision was defined at the “organization” level but only a team’s perspective has changed. It could meet this criterion if there was some description and assessment of the extent to which the vision became known, shared, or committed to by the organization. Thus, the level of analysis at which change is taking place must be specified and it’s not fair to claim that change occurred because it happened at a lower level of analysis.

In addition to specifying the level of change, the core of this criterion is the explicit accounting of time in the description of a system’s evolution. The work must be longitudinal and far too many of our models and frameworks do not take time into account. If research and practice under the rubric of OD cannot meet the requirements of demonstrated change in a defined level over time, then I’m not sure I see the difference between OD and traditional concepts in organization behavior, human resource management, or organization theory. A lot more thinking needs to go into what we mean when we say something has changed.

Second, a set of activities can be called OD if it involves learning. That is, the change process must be conducted in such a way that the system’s knowledge and capability to manage change in the future is increased. This criterion gives a strong nod to action research and allows OD to differentiate itself from “change management.”

This is a great responsibility for those who would lead or manage an OD process, but it is the only defensible value basis for the field. Despite the traditionalists’ clarity that what distinguishes OD is “our values,” nobody seems to know or agree on those values. In the absence of consensus, change agents can, consciously or unconsciously, substitute “my values” for “our values.” And that’s a slippery ethical slope on which to base a field’s credibility. Adopting the transferring capability value as a criterion ensures that OD does “no harm” to the system and, at worst, allows the system to be more accountable for itself in the future. Thus, the change agent’s primary ethical responsibility is to build the system’s capability to change in the future.

Third, the process must involve a deliberate and conscious effort to improve the performance or effectiveness of the client system. OD’s future is best

maintained if any effort under the umbrella of OD can address the “so what” question. Here, the issue is how much of the change in effectiveness is accounted for by the content of the change (what changed?) and by the processes (how successfully was the change implemented?). This is no small research methods challenge.

## Conclusion

I believe that OD is ready to move out from the shadow of other social science disciplines. Sociology, anthropology, economics, and other disciplines each represent important foundations for OD. Processes that meet the three criteria above will help to define research and practice that are included within the boundaries of OD, and more importantly, the interventions and activities that are excluded. These criteria will not be easy to meet, but that is the field’s practical and research challenge. If it is to be taken seriously, we must commit ourselves to both rigor and relevance, to both statistical and practical significance. Most importantly, OD must demonstrate that it is more than change management, and that it can improve not only effectiveness but also the capacity of a system to change in the future.

## References

Worley, C. & Feyerherm, A. (2003). Reflections on the future of organization development. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* 39(1): 97-115.

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## OB/ODC/OMT DOCTORAL CONSORTIUM

As part of the Professional Development Workshop (pre-conference) program at the 2003 Academy of Management Meetings, we are again organizing the OB/ODC/OMT Doctoral Consortium. The Consortium will take place:

Friday, August 1, 6:00 pm to 8:00 p.m.  
Saturday, August 2, 8:00 am to 5:00 p.m.  
Sunday, August 3, 8:00 am to 5:00 p.m.

We have planned an interesting and energetic mix of presentations, discussions, and interactive sessions that are designed to launch doctoral students on their academic careers. Specific topics include Developing a High Impact Research Program, Research Trends in

Organizations, Teaching Issues, Effective Writing, and Managing Your Career. Faculty participants from ODC include Jean Bartunek, Tom Cummings, Dick Woodman, Ram Tenkasi, Hilary Bradbury, and Peter Sorensen.

We encourage schools to nominate students for the Consortium. To keep the faculty-participant ratio to an optimal size, the number of participants will be limited. This has been a very popular program, so apply early!

To apply, interested students must be nominated by their schools. No university can nominate more than two students (and each doctoral program is limited to one nomination). Universities with multiple departments seeking to send students need to coordinate their nominations. In making the decision to accept students, preference is given to those who have made the most progress toward completing their Ph.D. program. The Consortium is not open to those who have already completed their Ph.D., as it is designed for students. New faculty will find the Junior Faculty Workshop appropriate for their interests.

Applications should be sent by the university department that nominates the student and should include in the body of the email the nominee's name, address, e-mail address, phone and fax numbers, and name of affiliated school and university and a statement by department certifying nominee's completion of doctoral coursework and comprehensive exams by August 1, 2003. Two attachments to the email will be requested:

1. an attached letter from a faculty member providing a general appraisal of the nominee, including an assessment of his/her progress toward a dissertation defense, expected defense date and subject of dissertation; and
2. a one-page bio summarizing the nominee's contact information, research and teaching interests, and publications. This one-page bio will be distributed among consortium participants.

Please send nominations and supporting materials by electronic mail to: [wocasio@kellogg.northwestern.edu](mailto:wocasio@kellogg.northwestern.edu).

*See you  
in Seattle!*

## **CALL FOR PAPERS**

### **Journal of Applied Behavior Science**

The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science (JABS) welcomes manuscripts from members of the OD Division of the Academy of Management and others whose scholarship matches the journal's goals.

#### **Journal Goals**

The objectives of the journal are to: (a) present a range of conceptual frameworks that explain, predict, and illuminate the implications of action; (b) described social interventions, intervention techniques, consultation activities, emergent innovations, and educational practices; (c) include diverse methods of data collection and analysis, such as participant observation, descriptive and inferential statistics, systematic surveys, self-reflections, laboratory and field experiments, and archival records; and (d) examine the underlying values, assumptions, biases, and beliefs associated with various forms of change. In evaluating manuscripts the journal welcomes — indeed prefers — submissions that contribute to more than one of these goals.

#### **Author Friendly Reviews**

With a highly diverse editorial board, JABS practices "author friendly" reviews. Reviewers are asked to examine manuscripts in accord with their expertise and interests. Authors typically receive feedback designed to be helpful with 3-6 months of submission. Publication usually follows in less than a year after acceptance. Approximately 1 manuscript in 4 is accepted for publication. To aid the review process and increase the likelihood of having their manuscripts accepted, authors should follow carefully the Manuscript Submission Guidelines located inside the back cover of the journal.

#### **McGregor Awards**

Periodically, a JABS editorial committee selects approximately one manuscript per year to receive a McGregor Award for excellence in applied behavioral science research. Awards consist of a cash prize, a certificate, and an announcement in the Journal.

Additional questions about the journal may be directed to the Editor, Clayton P. Alderfer, at Rutgers GSAPP, 152 Frelinghuysen Road, Piscataway, NJ 08854-8085, telephone (732) 445-5233, email: [alderfer@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:alderfer@rci.rutgers.edu).

**FREE COPY —  
2003 BIBLIOGRAPHY  
OF ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT  
AND CHANGE LITERATURE**

Glenn H. Varney  
Bowling Green State University

The first Bibliography of Organization Development: Sources and Applications was published by the American Society of Training and Development (ASTD) in 1975, with Kenneth Murrell and Peter Vaill as co-editors. Since then, the Bibliography has been revised seven times. It has been edited and published by the Master of Organization Development program at Bowling Green State University since 1998. The 2003 edition is now available on the web, on CD ROM, or in hard copy.

The Bibliography is public domain material and is designed to assist students, faculty, and practitioners in researching, studying and benchmarking a comprehensive collection of ODC literature in the following broad categories: ODC as a profession; Advancement of the knowledge base of ODC; Change Strategies, Interventions, and Implementation; Organizational Culture; Change Technologies; Data Based Change; Social/Technical and System Analysis; Evaluation and Assessment; Management and Change Leadership; Organization Structure and Design; Evolving and Changing Organizations; Productivity/Performance; International ODC; Sub-fields of Study; and General Related Topics.

The electronic version of the Bibliography provides searchable access and can be found at [www.cba.bgsu.edu/mod/od\\_bibliography.html](http://www.cba.bgsu.edu/mod/od_bibliography.html).

Since 1975 the Bibliography has grown from 70 pages and 450 entries to 314 pages and 2,600 entries. In 1975 there were 900 contributing authors. That number has now grown to 2,300.

The 2003 review panel was composed of the following individuals: Terry Armstrong, Georgetown University; Max Loeffler, Parker Hannifin, Inc.; Ramakrishnan Thenkasi, Benedictine University; Wayne Boss, University of Colorado at Boulder; Kenneth Murrell, University of West Florida; and Don Warrick, University of Colorado at Colorado Springs.

We thank this group, especially Kenneth Murrell, who, in addition to his insightful reviews, provided

editorial comments for the 2003 edition. The Bibliography will be revised in 2005. Anyone interested in serving on the 2005 review panel or wishing to submit entries for the next edition, please contact: Glenn H. Varney, [gvarney@bgnet.bgsu.edu](mailto:gvarney@bgnet.bgsu.edu), (419) 352-7782.

Your comments and observations are always welcome.

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**SOME MORE FUNNY THINGS  
ON THE WAY TO THE FUTURE**

Philip H. Mirvis  
ODC Division Executive Scholar-Practitioner

When I was first introduced to the field of organization development and change, one of the important theoretical and practical challenges was how to make work more interesting. This was the late 1960s/early '70s when “blue collar blues” were rampant in factories and “white collar woes” were creeping into offices. The young, better educated, free thinking workforce simply wouldn't countenance “mind-numbing” work, concluded the influential study *Work in America*, and congressional hearings amply documented the consequences of growing alienation: low morale, shoddy performance, and increased absenteeism among other forms of escapism. On a new television show, *60 Minutes*, a young, long-haired assemblyman at the Chevy plant in Lordstown, where job cycle time had been reduced to 45 seconds and car production was being sabotaged, was asked why he repeatedly missed work on Fridays. He replied, “Mr. Wallace, I don't make enough money to skip work on Thursday, too.”

OD offered a number of alternatives to this sorry scenario: job enlargement and enrichment, notions of team assembly and socio-technical systems, and the chance to participate in work-related decisions. This promised to humanize work and to improve performance, too. And it delivered — maybe too well. Surveys find that very few people nowadays complain about a lack of interesting work. On the contrary, many feel brain-drained and overloaded, and have neither enough time nor energy left over for families or for themselves. In the downsized, 24/7, e-accessible anytime/anywhere work world, the challenge we now face is how to create balance between work and personal life.

Arlie Hoschild has come to the provocative conclusion that part of the problem is that work has become such an interesting place and prime source of personal connection, achievement, and meaning. Or, in other words, it offers satisfactions just like “home.” And yet home life, especially for working parents, is increasing hurried and harried, paced by short-cycles of repetitive activity. Or just like work used to be! Her question: Where would you rather spend your time? I wonder: as ODers should we consider how to make work a little less interesting? Or turn our attentions to enriching home life?

Such speculations about time and circumstances bring to mind a reflective essay by Warren Bennis (1970) titled, “A funny thing happened on the way to the future.” Bennis’ earlier writings such as “Beyond bureaucracy” and “Is democracy inevitable?” had stimulated my interest in ODC. And his advocacy of “humanistic-democratic” ideals had fired my aspirations. But, by the early ‘70s, Bennis, then a university vice-president, found himself mired in militant campus dissent and beset by doubts about the potential of “human warmth and love” in the face of competing concerns with “power, prestige, and profits.” The effectiveness of facilitative leadership, for example, was being undermined, to use his terms, by “black militants, drug users, draft resisters, and liberated women” who denied the legitimacy of establishment authorities, among them university VPs. And new ideas about human relations based on “small group behavior, social influence, and action research” seemed naïve in “macrosystems” marked by competition and interest group politics.

From today’s vantage, Bennis and others in OD look prescient in promising the emergence of more flexible forms of organization and myriad expressions of voice in post-industrial societies. At the same time, macrosystems — in different ways — have had unpredictable and sometimes unhappy effects on human relations. It sounds supercilious to “blame” OD for making work interesting and putting family life out of whack — even if you classify ODers as “servants of power.” Better to point to the political-economic macrosystem and the collective “us” as shareholders, consumers, voters or, if you prefer, puppets of the system. On a happier note, the macrosystem is itself reshaped in interaction with microdynamics. In the parlance of postmodernism, for instance, race, gender, and social grouping

feature in both individual and collective identity, and by general consensus, more diversity in leadership has not only been deemed legitimate, it is considered preferable.

Philosopher of science Gunther Stent makes the point that many grand ideas are “premature” — ahead of their time. Certainly the foundational ideas of OD were such but have since diffused to the mainstream. Other early gems in the field seem to have been overlooked or forgotten, only to appear in fresh formulations. Don Michael’s accounts of “learning systems,” as an example, prefigure many ideas advanced about organizational learning. In turn, Geoffrey Vicker’s description of “appreciative management” has a lot to say about appreciative inquiry. And the writings of Carl Rogers, Bob Tannenbaum, and Jack Gibb, among others, anticipate the coinage of emotional intelligence.

Pet Peeve: Seldom are these original thoughts or thinkers cited by students or young scholars of OL, AI, and EI respectively. It has been said, of course, that aging professors reference ancient tracts and out-of-print books in their papers while the new and up-and-comers cite unpublished talks and works-in-progress. All part of the game exacerbated, I would guess, by electronic data-bases that date from 1995. My hat is off to the founders and followers of these fields whose time has come. But speaking as an OF, I would wish for more head nods to their forebears.

Interestingly, Stent also finds that new ideas are seldom unique. In many fields, and in different ways, he contends the same ideas are being worked on and out. They gain status and get embraced when the time is right. Of course, that time is itself in flux, or foggy, but is understood to be “post” the unreceptive, inhospitable, prior time — as in the postindustrial or postmodern.

One such example concerns a not-so-new thing called “relational practice.” Even as early ODers were delving into group dynamics, leaders in community psychology and social work were unwrapping family systems. Why did the former move inexorably into the mainstream while the latter, largely unnoticed for years, pop-up full-blown in ODC through works by Joyce Fletcher and others? One hunch is that it was seen as “feminist scholarship” or at least gender-specific in the time before flux and fog.



Now, its time has come. I am pleased, too, that contributions to theory and practice by Peter Frost (on toxic handling) and Bill Kahn (on caregiving) are welcomed as legitimate additions to this line of inquiry.

CSR — corporate social reporting — is déjà vu all over again. When I was a grad student, Ed Lawler asked me to help prepare and publish a social audit on the quality of work life in a public US corporation. At this time social auditing was growing in Europe and the US Department of Commerce was preparing guidelines on social reporting. Then the unfunny James Kirkpatrick, a 60 Minutes commentator, dismissed CSR as a “silly do-gooder scheme.” The political-economic landscape turned with the election of Reagan, the shareholder rights movement, and the rise of cynical self-interest in American society. About the only US company that issued a social report in the era that followed was Ben & Jerry’s!

Recently I was sitting in the overflow area of a conference on social reporting by Brad Googin’s Center for Corporate Citizenship. Near to me were a couple of Carter-era proponents of social accounting and several subject matter experts I hadn’t seen since the ’70s. We smiled at each other and began to laugh. Our time had come — again.

I am currently a member of industry-academic action groups that have to do with work-family balance, corporate citizenship, sustainability, and branding. In each forum the business people aren’t sure how to address the issues at hand. And the academics have lots of ideas on what ought to be done, but very little sense of how to do it. The #1 agenda item in each forum is how to create (and sustain) organization change.

But eyes glaze over during stories on Royal Dutch Shell transformation on social performance, or with references to the family friendly policies of Sweden or France. The scale of these efforts are daunting to the practitioners who want mostly to gain allies and advance their agenda with “small wins.” Eyes brighten with references to Deb Meyerson’s work on “tempered radicals” and to “little things that make a big difference” ala The Tipping Point.

One other forum I’ve been with is the Executive Committee of the ODC Division — where, funny thing, I’m what passes for a practitioner. Now

ODC has lots of new non-US members and many doctoral students who have day-jobs but aspire to be scholarly practitioners. They, plus a new generation of academic committee members, proposed a new vision for ODC and a change in the domain statement. It caused a bit of an uproar.

One camp, including many who led the charge to add “and change” to what was formerly known as the OD division, was not pleased. For them, “old” OD is dead. But “change management” is very much alive, and remains an area for serious research and scholarship. Unstated, but understood, is that a sober mission gives ODC members more scientific status in the academy, a seat, directly or by proxy, in executive offices, and access to more interesting work and money as speakers or consultants. And, frankly, it better fits the mission of most business schools and the interests of many students and companies.

The other camp wants to re-emphasize human warmth and love, stretch the ODC domain to cover nature and sustainability, and speak to world peace and probably hunger. My bet is that this more inclusive, value-laden pitch will win out. Its time has come, again, albeit in a new way. Funny thing.

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## **A MULTILEVEL ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL TIES AND ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE: CHINESE PRIVATE ENTERPRISES DURING MARKET TRANSITION**

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2003 Best Student Paper Award

Linkages between social networks and firm performance have commanded substantial scholarly attention (see reviews in Podolny and Page, 1998; also see a book edited by DiMaggio, 2001). This body of research stresses the benefits of inter-firm ties in fostering organizational learning, enhancing legitimacy and status, increasing trust, reducing risks, etc.

(Podolny and Page, 1998). Interpersonal ties, however, are less stressed in this body of research except that such ties, especially personal relations among entrepreneurs or managers, are said to play a role in developing inter-firm ties (Uzzi, 1996).

Another body of research on social networks has an emphasis on interpersonal ties. However, this line of research mainly stresses the importance of personal ties on labor market outcomes (Granovetter, 1973, 1974; also see reviews in Lin, 1999). Only very few works in this body of research have examined the effects of interpersonal ties on firm performance (Bian, 2002; Nee and Su, 1996; Xin and Pearce, 1996). Based on the practices of developing countries such as reforming China, these works emphasize the importance of cultivating interpersonal ties between entrepreneurs or managers, especially those in weak firms, and key actors in the environment for doing businesses. However, significant as the benefits of interpersonal ties are for firms, it is also important to study the costs and constraints of using personal ties for firms. Otherwise we would observe that firms everywhere will take using interpersonal ties as a dominant strategy in doing business.

Thus, this paper first conceptualizes the potential benefits, costs and constraints of using purposive interpersonal ties in doing businesses for firms under institutional deficiencies, and then directly examines these benefits and costs in both static and dynamic ways. Following Lin (2001), I argue that the main benefit for firms of using purposive interpersonal ties in doing businesses is access to the resources, which are crucial for the survival of the firm but in the control of key actors in the environment. However, these benefits are highly conditional on the institutional environment, and to access these resources through interpersonal ties are by no means for free. The costs attached to using interpersonal ties in doing businesses range from opportunity costs to investment costs. These costs, together with improvement in institutional environment, will drive firms to reduce using interpersonal ties in doing businesses.

I examine these benefits and costs by using the National Longitudinal Survey of Chinese Private Enterprises 1995 data and a supplemental dataset on provincial characteristics in China. The Chinese private enterprises case is appropriate for this study because (1) Chinese private enterprises have

encountered severe institutional deficiencies during reform era (1978- ), which make using interpersonal ties popular among private entrepreneurs in doing businesses; and (2) there exists high provincial heterogeneity in institutional development during market transition in China, which makes it possible for examining the dynamic effects of using interpersonal ties on firm performance.

## Hypotheses

The hypotheses tested in this paper are:

Hypothesis 1. In reform-era China, a significant proportion of private firms will use purposive interpersonal ties in doing businesses.

Hypothesis 2. In the mid 1990s China, private enterprises may still be better off by using interpersonal ties in doing businesses than by relying solely on market mechanisms, and it is those firms using both interpersonal ties and market mechanisms that will do best with regard to firm performance, other things being equal.

Hypothesis 3. Other things being equal, private firms in reform-era China which use interpersonal ties in doing businesses will incur high investment costs in cultivating and maintaining social connections with those who control economic powers or have access to these economic powers, especially comparing to the firms relying solely on markets.

Hypothesis 4. In reform-era China, the degree of marketization level in a province has a negative effect on the firm performance of private enterprises using interpersonal ties. That is, the economic performance of firms using interpersonal ties will decrease as the marketization level increases, other things being equal. On the other hand, the degree of marketization level in a province will have a positive effect on the firm performance of private enterprises using formal markets. That is, the economic performance of firms using formal markets will increase as the degree of marketization level increases, other things being equal.

Hypothesis 5. In reform-era China, the importance of the private sector in a province has an inverse “U” shape effect on the firm performance of private enterprises using interpersonal ties. That is, the firm performance of private enterprises using interpersonal ties will increase as the importance of the private sector increases when the private sector is still trivial to the provincial economy; however, it will decrease as the importance of the private sector increases when the contribution of the private sector passes a threshold, other things being equal. On the other hand, the importance of the private sector in a province will have a positive “U” shape effect on the firm performance of private enterprises using formal markets. That is, the firm performance of private enterprises using formal markets will decrease as the importance of the private sector in a province increases before the latter reaches a threshold; however, it tends to increase as the importance of the private sector in a province increases after the latter passes a threshold, other things being equal.

## Results

Empirical results from fixed effect models and Hierarchical Linear Models provide strong supports to these hypotheses. Thus, we can conclude that purposively cultivating and maintaining interpersonal ties is a common, profitable, but also costly way for Chinese private firms to obtain crucial resources for businesses under severe institutional deficiencies. Though purposive interpersonal ties provide social capital for access to crucial resources for institutionally weak firms, such ties also bring about opportunity costs in information losses and investment costs in cultivating and maintaining such ties. Because of the existence of these costs, institutionally weak firms will not keep using purposive ties in doing businesses forever. As institutional environment improves, formal markets and other formal ways based on formal rules will be used more extensively by these firms based on cost-benefit calculations.

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