



Organization Development and Change

R. Wayne Boss, Editor

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CALL FOR PAPERS AND SYMPOSIA

Ram Tenkasi
Program Chair
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Dear Colleagues, Aloha!!!

Although it is the Fall of 2004, and you are probably just settling down from the hustle and bustle of New Orleans – “2005 and Honolulu,” our exciting next year’s venue for the Academy of Management Meetings will soon be upon us!! So it is never too early to start thinking about the Sun, Sand, and Surf, while also planning the details of your paper, and symposium submissions for the next year’s AOM Meetings.

The deadline for submitting papers and symposia to the ODC Division is **Monday, January 10th, 2005, 5 p.m., Eastern Standard Time** (See separate instructions below for submitting All-Academy Symposia and Art Works).

A New Vision of Management in the 21st Century, the Academy of Management’s conference theme for 2005 has as a key underlying question: “What is our vision of Management in both ‘theory’ and ‘practice’ in this new century?”— a question, that I believe, is near and dear to the core values that distinguish the Organization Development and Change Division within the Academy of Management. As one of the few divisions of the Academy that also has a “vision” in addition to a domain statement, we are not only concerned about the scholarship and practice of organization development and change that is committed to individual and organizational effectiveness, but we also strive for the fulfillment of humanity’s spirit and potential, and the creation and enhancement of an ethical and humane global community – a vision, that I believe, can help shape a new image of management for this next century. So please ensure that you fully participate in this exciting opportunity through multiple papers and symposia that help define not only the next generation of organization development theories and innovative change practices, but further enable new potentialities for management theory and practice. For additional details on the theme, including its varying

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ODC PROGRAM AT 2004 NEW ORLEANS ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT: “CREATING ACTIONABLE KNOWLEDGE” CONFERENCE

George Roth
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There were many highlights in the Organization Development and Change Division program at the 2004 Academy of Management meeting in New Orleans. The main program included 17 symposia and 69 paper sessions sponsored by ODC. It is impossible to highlight all of these sessions. I focus on two sessions with key messages for ODC members: the

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interpretations and the different ways you can contribute to it, please go to <http://meetings.aonline.org/2005>. Ken Smith, the academy program chair, provides an informative essay on the different ways that papers and symposia can address this theme.

The Venue – Honolulu! – What could be a more exciting place to creatively explore this new vision of management and what it portends? Keeping with the spirit of the venue, you are most welcome to substitute (almost an official policy, I think!!!) shorts, T-shirts, baseball or other hats, sun glasses, and sandals for business suits, and formal academic attire (such as a blue shirt and khaki trousers), even while you are presenting!!!!

Contributions: ODC colleagues can contribute to the main program by submitting; 1) Papers and Symposia to the ODC division, 2) Symposia to the All-Academy Theme Sessions, and, 3) Art Work to the Academy Arts program.

1. Paper and symposia submissions to the ODC division are most welcome. Papers can only be submitted to one division and we would like to see more of them coming to the ODC division. While symposium proposals can be submitted exclusively to the ODC division, traditionally, symposia that request sponsorship from multiple divisions stand a better chance of acceptance. The deadline for both paper and symposia submissions to the ODC division is **January 10th, 2005**, 5 pm, Eastern Standard Time.

The ODC Division requires electronic submissions. Authors should submit papers and symposia to both the academy website and also send a copy via email attachment to Ram Tenkasi, the Division Program Chair, at: odc@ben.edu by January 10th, 2005. In sending email submissions to the Program Chair, make sure that you include the SUBMISSION NUMBER acquired from the Academy's web site and ensure that there is no author information in the electronic files (See Academy guidelines on how to remove author information from electronic files; <http://meetings.aonline.org/2005>). Also, please make sure that the email submission of your paper is titled ODCPAP##### and your symposium submission is titled ODCSYM#####, (where ##### indicates the assigned AOM SUBMISSION NUMBER). Your submission will be acknowledged upon receipt by ODC. For hard copy submissions or electronic submissions via diskette for those who do

not have internet access please see the appropriate Submission Procedures on the AOM web site listed above.

2. All-Academy Symposia are symposia sessions that directly address the theme of the conference “A new vision of management for the 21st century.” They do not have to include multiple divisions, but do have to appeal broadly to the Academy and the year’s theme. If you have an idea for an All-Academy Session, please submit it directly to the All-Academy Symposia Chair, Jim Guthrie (jguthrie@ku.edu) by November 15, 2004. The submission should include a brief description of the session’s content and format, plus the participants. If you get a positive response, you have till **Jan. 17, 2005** to submit the full proposal. Symposia proposals that broadly address the theme and submitted to the ODC division as regular symposia by January 10th, 2005, may also be nominated for the all-academy symposia.

3. Art Work: The Academy arts provides members a venue for artistic expressions of visual arts (e.g. painting, drawing, photography, sculpture, etc.), poetry (e.g. verbal expressions), and performance (the fringe café) as a way of expressing management related thought. While the refereed arts exhibit encourages submissions that relate to the conference theme, it is not strictly necessary. Please contact Chris Poulson, academy arts chair (cfpoulson@csupomona.edu) for submissions. The deadline for art work submissions is **January 10th, 2005**.

Rule of Three. The Academy of Management strongly enforces a rule of three. In other words, an individual cannot be involved in more than three main program submissions or appear in any role in more than three sessions (PDWs are excluded). The rule of three applies to papers and symposia submitted to the ODC division and All-Academy symposia submissions. Art work submissions do not count for the rule of three. However, an individual is only allowed two submissions to the Academy Arts. For an elaboration of the rule of three (including exceptions), please visit <http://meetings.aomonline.org/2005>.

Division Awards. Six externally-sponsored division recognition awards, some with honorariums – (see ODC web site <http://www.aom.pace.edu/odc> for details) will be given for the best paper in the following categories. These include the Best Competitive Paper Award, Best Student Paper Award, Best Interactive Paper Award, The Rupert F. Chisholm Linking Theory-

to-Practice Paper Award, Best Paper Presented in a Visual Session, and the Best Action Research Paper Award. Papers authored by students (separately or with other students) and/or about action research should be clearly identified as such at the time of submission (please note in the title page and also the email that accompanies the paper, that the paper should be considered for the student and/or action research awards). In addition the division also has best reviewer awards. All award winners will be recognized at the ODC Business Meeting.

We also need Reviewers!!! A core value of the division is engaging and involving the member community in division activities. One of the best and easiest ways to get involved in this process is by participating in the paper and symposia reviews. We welcome and encourage our members to serve as reviewers. If you are not already registered as a reviewer, please get in touch with Ram Tenkasi through email at odc@ben.edu to indicate your interest in reviewing for the ODC division.

I look forward to receiving your submissions and seeing you in Honolulu, Hawaii, August, 2005! If you have any questions or feedback, please contact me at odc@ben.edu.

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theme session on change and development across organizations, and the distinguished speakers’ session by Dick Woodman and Bill Pasmore on their insights from editing fourteen volumes of *Research in Organizational Change and Development*. Each of these sessions had “actionable knowledge” for future organization development and change research and practice!

Theme Session: Enterprise Change and Development

“We can’t think of organizations as we have in the past; they are much more loosely organized and much more complex. A different approach to change and a new way of intervening is necessary.” These statements ended Tom Cummings’ discussant comments at the AOM 2004 ODC Theme session titled *Enterprise Change and Development*. Presentations by Andrew Pettigrew, Royston Greenwood and Bjorn Gustavsen set the stage for these conclusions. Each of these scholars lead research programs that study innovation and change across sets of organizations. Their research has fundamental implications for the future

direction, application and relevance of organization development and change research and practice. In terms of actionable knowledge, the theme of this year's AOM conference, the question is what changes the actions of organizations.

Change Themes & Processes from US, Europe, and Asia ([click here for presentation](#))

Andrew Pettigrew, Dean and Head of the School of Management, University of Bath, presented the work he and his colleagues have done on strategy, change and new organizational forms. His focus for this talk was on the “what” of these changes, and in a later talk at the Academy of Management he would be saying more about the “how” of these changes.

In their review of literature they found four themes – permeable, co-operative, agile and organizing – for new forms. Permeable related to organizational boundaries and the development of networks, webs, alliances and clusters of organizations. Co-operative characterized new managerial styles, the associated delayering and downsizing of structural and cultural features of hierarchy. Agile is the trend to more creative, learning forms of organizations and associated management practices. Organizing is a shift to a dynamic approach to thinking about the structure of firms. It is a linguistic turn on organizational concepts, shifting to a verb from a noun; derived from management's awareness and attention to organizing as a process rather than an organization as a structure.

This research on innovating firms initially examined exemplar cases and then extended findings through surveys in the US, Europe and Asia. Two books, *The Innovating Organisation* (2000) and *Innovative Forms of Organizing* (2003) report the details of what was learned by this interdisciplinary, multi-national research team. Their key questions examined the extensiveness of new forms, their performance effects, and what managerial processes were involved. The survey research addressed progress and performance questions; the case studies examined process questions. The research found “overwhelming” support of common directions for organizational change for US, European and Asian firms. The new organizational forms are supplementing, and not supplanting, existing forms in all three regions. There were different starting points, and differences in such factors as hierarchical levels, project formation, decentralization, and alliance formation, as well as in variations in the rates of change. In all cases there were more boundary and process changes than

organizational structural changes. These organizational changes included dualities that embraced seemingly contradictory positions: hierarchies and network forms, greater upward accountability and greater horizontal dispersion, more empowerment and more control, centralizing strategy and decentralizing operations, and standardizing and customizing.

The themes for these changes in firms were not independent of one another but interrelated. Organizations that were successful, in terms of their performance, in adopting new practices changed in systemic and related ways. Changes in only a few of the system elements at a time did not achieve all the benefits that are available from fully coordinated moves; or, partial moves drove down performance. High performance firms, defined as those in the upper quartile of return on capital employed, correlated strongly and positively with organizations that made systemic changes across organizational structure, processes and boundaries. Organizations that made changes in two or fewer of these organizational change dimensions correlated negatively with firm performance. This research provides strong evidence that performance effects from organizational changes require whole system thinking and action, or making changes in many practices together.

The process of making these changes in many practices has two major issues – transition and complementarities. Transition issues come about because of an expected “J curve” in performance over time: the transition to a new organizational form will result in lower performance for a period of time before there is better performance. That lower performance comes about as new practices are installed but have not yet taken hold. The implication of worse-before-better performance is that organizations require strong leaders to survive the transition process. Complementarities issues are based on the “trap” of when an incomplete set of practices are put in place, because, for example, of a lack of whole system thinking and action, or of an inability to implement the set of changes. The performance benefits of any change are dependent upon other complementary changes; there is a complex, multiple interaction relationship among the practices that make up a coherent business model. Changing a few of the system elements at a time to optimal values is not at all close to achieving the benefits available through a fully coordinated move. The implications for organizations and their leaders is clear – be certain that you think about change as a whole set of practices and ensure

that there is adequate support to stay the course through difficult times—for an impartial implementation is likely to leave you and your organization worse off than your starting point.

Contextualizing Change ([click here for presentation](#))

Royston Greenwood, with colleague Bob Hinings, both from the School of Business at the University of Alberta, has been studying strategic change for over a decade. Their studies have focused on municipal government and professional service firms. In those studies they have noted the importance of biography—understanding the life history of firms. Their work has drawn upon contingency, strategic choice, politics of decision-making, and structuration theory. Their model builds upon institutional factors to examine changes in organizations, sets of organizations and industries.

The key point for looking at organizational change is that you need to look beyond the organization to understand change. Every organization is set in a context, and this context enables certain kinds of changes. It is important to look at the boundaries of the organization, and how it is evolving relative to its institutional framework. The accounting industry illustrated these changes. Accounting firms were under pressure from their clients as new technology and their business scope changed. Clients wanted additional services and a broader, global reach from accountants. The auditors brought consulting services to their clients, and the consultants became very successful, particularly by billable hour metrics, in working with clients. Their success contributed to pressure for change in the accounting firms, and, to innovate, the firms took on new organizational forms. They went from a partnership style to a corporate style of organization. This form of governance, and reach across many national accounting standards, required more formalized reporting requirements within firms. At the same time, there were clashes between auditors and consultants. Auditors are conservative and regulation driven; consultants are creative and market driven. There was a contestation of these values that precipitated a shift in values as the accounting organizations took on these new forms and practices to become audit and consulting firms.

To understand these changes requires examining where new ideas come from and how they are theorized, diffused and adopted in organizations. Change is a co-evolutionary process set within enabling contexts, where there is innovation at the periphery, pressures toward isomorphism, and challenges between insurgents

and incumbents. The organizational forms that result are bricolages with bits and pieces not unlike existing firms reassembled together. Organizational change is not best thought of from the perspective of what happens within a firm, it requires examining the boundaries of an organization, its institutional framework, and changes that are legitimated, prescribed and enabled by its institutional context.

From Networks to Regions: Going Up a Level of Analysis ([click here for presentation](#))

Bjørn Gustavsen, from the Work Research Institute in Norway, presented research that he and his colleagues have done using the region as a framework for development. Bjørn acknowledged the contributions to these efforts of our former colleague, Rupe Chisholm, in his work and writing about developing networked organizations. The effort in Norway utilizes action research applied to the region as a unit of change and development. Bjørn described how efforts have progressed in Norway that has taken them from action research in job design to developing learning regions. Their work has been actionable as they made the changes they proposed while they studied the development of regions.

The focus on the region developed from socio-technical, participative design and action research projects among universities, government and companies. This led to working with networks of organizations. Networks involved different and multiple levels of analysis; regions as a level of analysis developed from looking at networks at a higher level. Regions have proven to be a useful level to work at because they connect individuals with “mass,” are linked to the existence of historical relationships of mutual understanding and trust and democratic institutions, and through partnerships allow for hands-on governance. The efforts in working with regions have been toward improving the innovation potential of that region. People make improvements by developing shared meanings across organizations, finding capabilities for differentiating themselves and their contributions, working with multiple perspectives, and constructing new, hybrid innovations in organizational forms for drawing from their shared capabilities. The development of hybrid organizational innovations provides examples for other new forms to develop yet new hybrid forms.

In their efforts in Norway, their work has progressed by working on practical projects, these projects then informing a general pool of knowledge. What they learned was that this was difficult to do in regions with

individual projects. Instead they have established clusters of projects, where they have organized the clusters by region. Each cluster of practical projects has a knowledge development resource, or research institution, that developed the general knowledge. The research institutions link together as a development coalition, supporting the development and use of general knowledge from project clusters. The concept of a development coalition links project, network, and partnership levels within regions. The whole of Norway, and the linkages among research organizations, is a regional organization of development coalitions.

Why Enterprise Change?

Tom Cummings, from the University of Southern California, started his discussant comments by noting that organization development and change across organization boundaries is a radically different animal from organization development and change within organizations. We are seeing more and more cross enterprise change for a variety of reasons. Most of our societal problems come as multi-organization problems—they cannot be solved by single organizations. We have greater reliance on government and public sector organizations, which are multi-organization systems. The public sector is far beyond corporations in knowing how to do multi-organization problem solving and alliance formation. The public sector has long supported such efforts as community organizing, community development, and regional networks. The environment, and organizations themselves, have become much more complicated. Organizations form strategic alliances, networks or communities in addressing broader issues. The boundaries of the firm have gotten more permeable, and it becomes hard to define what is a firm or what is a multi-organizational or trans-organizational system.

As you move out across, in strategic alliances, networks, and enterprises, these entities tend to be under-organized, loosely coupled, and poly-centric. Organization change and development has looked at single organizations, which are over-organized, tightly coupled and hierarchical. The current knowledge for change and development is inappropriate once you look across organizations or enterprises with these new characteristics.

You can not bootstrap the current knowledge about organizations upward into enterprises. You need a new theory of change that deals with cross boundary relationships. Most of the change models that exist assume that you move into a tightly organized structure,

and loosen it up to initiate change: entry, diagnosis, loosening up and change. Another whole set of questions becomes important in enterprises. What do you do when you are unaware that you should be in strategic alliances? How do you promote change in these settings? We need an entirely different form of change.

This change might start with identification. What are the relevant organizations to your firm? Often firms do not know that they need to be closely linked, how to become closely linked, or even realize the advantages of being networked. Much of their reorganization effort has been to maintain autonomy and control. In many settings it has been against the law to form strategic alliances. There are institutional pressures that keep organizations apart. Once you bring organizations into loose coupling, then you develop their performance. This approach is the opposite of current organization change – it suggests a completely different set of practices.

Change in a Political Context

Power and politics within and across organizations become critical. Organization development has historically ignored power and politics; it has assumed with its values that people will want to collaborate and get along. Who rules in a transorganizational system? Who sets the boundaries? If you are going to do change, change agents have to deal with power issues. How do you make changes happen in the neutrality of that system without you yourself having a value stance relative to one of the powers? People who do these things, like Rupe Chisholm, have been very careful about being neutral and not siding with any single organization. Change agents in these kinds of networks, when organizations are not organized, have to be directive. Directiveness goes against organization development values of being collaborative. How can you be collaborative if you have an unorganized, loosely-coupled, poly-centric system? You would have a mess! Often you need to bring organization and direction, and that requires a set of skills and practices that many change agents are unprepared for. Andy, Royston, and Bjørn described organizations that have moved to far more complex forms, taking on features of a transorganizational system. Do not look at them as single organizations, but as transorganizations in network terms. We heard a strong argument today for why we can no longer think of organizations, and their change and development, as we have in the past.

Further insights from the panel came from audience questions. Andrew Pettigrew summarized that the problem is in making mutually reinforcing changes in

sets to drive up performance; but without making them all, you will likely drive performance down. How to do it? You have to enter the world of executives. It requires engaging executives in their assumptions about behaviors, and having a relationship with them that generates knowledge about these change. It is not easy, as Royston Greenwood's reflected: "I would hate to be an organizational development consultant trying to advise a firm that wanted to change their organization form. The challenge is massive. From the literature, we know that it is difficult and most firms fail. But, what we say to managers is change can be done, it needs to be done, and here is how you do it."

Distinguished Speakers: Research in Organizational Change and Development in Perspective — Learning from our Colleagues

The distinguished speakers for ODC were Richard Woodman, Texas A&M University, and William Pasmore, MercerDelta Consulting. Dick and Bill have contributed to our field with their own research and in their editing of 14 *Research in Organizational Change and Development* volumes. Their combined academic and practice experience gives them a unique vantage point from which to reflect on the field of organization development and change – past, present and future!

In their presentation, Dick Woodman reviewed the articles and trends for the research that has been published in *Research in Organizational Change and Development*. In the 14 nearly annual volumes from 1987 to 2003, there have been 116 chapters or articles by 217 authors. In looking at the chapters in terms of categories, 24, the largest number, addressed issues of change or OD theory. The second largest category, with 14 chapters, was organizational transformation. Topics that have increased in recent years include organizational transformation, intervention methods, empowerment and involvement, OD practitioners and team interventions. Organizational culture, evaluation and new organizing forms have trended down recently.

One way to look at these chapters is to ask how they do in meeting the criteria proposed for studying changes in future research by Pettigrew, Woodman and Cameron in the 2001 *Academy of Management Journal* special edition. They gave the works that they published the highest grades in receptivity/sequencing/pacing and time/history/process. Lower grades, meaning that the works could be better, were in linking process to outcomes, international comparison and linking scholarship to practice criteria.

Bill Pasmore described research that they would like to encourage, and publish, in future volumes ([click here for presentation](#)). More frame breaking research would benefit the field. Major themes for future research included culture change, managing adoption of practices, measuring change, not knowing, the relationship of sharing to change, overcoming mediocrity, diversity, and enhancing innovation and creativity.

There were many more specific comments and suggestions than can be told in this short newsletter article. Richard Woodman and Bill Pasmore have written an article that appears in this newsletter with these details. Their direction, in keeping with the theme of New Orleans' conference on "creating actionable knowledge," can guide ODC members in their research and writing.

References

- Pettigrew, A. M., Woodman, R. W., & Cameron, K. 2001. Studying Organizational Change and Development: Challenges for Future Research. *Academy of Management Journal*, 44(4): 697–713.
- Pettigrew, A. M., Whittington, R., Melin, L., Sanchez-Runde, C., Van den Bosch, F., Ruigrok, W., & Numagami, T. 2003. *Innovative Forms of Organizing: International Perspectives*. London: Sage.
- Pettigrew, A. M. 2003. Strategy as Process, Power and Change, in S. Cummings and D.C. Wilson (Eds.), *Images of Strategy*: 301–330. Oxford: Blackwell.

NEWS ABOUT MEMBERS

Richard Woodman, Fouraker Professor of Business at Texas A&M University, has been appointed Editor of *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*.

Rupert F. Chisholm died suddenly of a heart attack on Sunday, April 18, 2004 at his home in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Bill Torbert recently published the following book:

Torbert, B. 2004. *Action Inquiry: The secret of timely and transforming leadership*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

Anita Sanchez and Kit Tennis recently published the following article:

Sanchez, A. L., & Tennis, C. 2004. U.S. Experience in Managing Diversity: A Consulting View. In L. Mauri & L. Visconti (Eds.), *Diversity Management e Societa Multiculturale: Teorie e Prassi*: 47–57. Milan, Italy: FrancoAngeli.

RESEARCH IN ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT: LEARNING FROM OUR COLLEAGUES

Richard W. Woodman
Texas A&M University

William A. Pasmore
Mercer Delta Consulting

At the annual meeting of the Academy of Management this past August, we were invited by the Executive Committee of the ODC Division to talk about the annual series, Research in Organizational Change and Development (ROCD), that we have edited since its first volume was published in 1987. This essay is a distillation of our remarks given in New Orleans in response to that invitation.

Research in Organizational Change and Development, 1987-2003

ROCD, currently published by Elsevier under the JAI Press label, has appeared in 14 volumes during the seventeen years of its existence. So, it is an almost-annual series, much to the occasional disgust of our publisher. During that time we have published 116 chapters written by 217 individuals from 15 countries. The series continues as Volume 15, to be published early in 2005, has recently gone to press.

Popularity of Topics in ROCD

We analyzed the 116 chapters for insights they might bring in terms of popularity of topics and trends in the appearance of these over the past 17 years. While the writing takes a variety of forms (e.g., theory development, empirical research reports, essays) all papers have two things in common: (a) they are well written and have something important to say, and (b) they deal with organizational change. Change theory or OD theory has been the most popular topic with 24 papers falling into this category. Next in popularity, with 14 papers, is the topic of organizational transformation. While the appearance of work seeking to develop new change theory has been fairly steady over the 17 years, the topic of organizational transformation is growing in popularity. Nine papers have proposed new intervention models or methods and the frequency of writing in this genre is increasing as well. Both empowerment/employee involvement and organizational culture are popular themes, each with eight papers. However, the focus on organizational culture seems to be waning, while empowerment issues and themes are increasing in frequency in our series. We have published seven

papers devoted specifically to research or evaluation methods useful for assessing organizational change although their frequency of appearance seems to be in decline. Other popular topics have included writing on the OD profession, new forms of organizing, structural change, and team/group interventions among many others. This analysis sets the stage for the suggestions that we wish to make about writing needed to advance the change and development field.

Criteria for Studying Organizational Change

In an introduction to a special issue of the Academy of Management Journal devoted to organizational change and development (published in 2001), Pettigrew, Woodman, and Cameron argued that there were six areas of the field that need greater research attention: (1) more work that includes multiple contexts and levels of analysis, (2) more focus on the role of time, history, and process in organizational change, (3) work that does a better job of linking process to outcome, (4) more international comparative research, (5) a stronger focus on receptivity to change and the sequencing or pace of change, and (6) writing that links scholarship and practice. We decided to “grade” ROCD on these criteria. Here are our conclusions:

Multiple contexts/levels of analysis: B-
Time/history/process: B+
Linking process to outcome: C-
International comparative research: C
Receptivity/sequencing/pace: A-
Linking scholarship & practice: C

Carrying the metaphor of grades a bit further, we might react differently to our grade report depending on our view of the maturity of the field. For example, if we think of the change and development arena as a freshman student, just getting started, then we might be reasonably pleased with the above report card. We’ve managed to score well enough to stay in school, perhaps to continue to receive financial support from home, and so on. However, if we consider the field as a more advanced graduate student then we are in big trouble. One more semester like this and we are out in the street.

What We Have Learned from Our Colleagues

We have learned a great deal by working with a talented and interesting group of authors over the years. Here is a brief summary:

1. The field of change and development is truly interdisciplinary. There is a wide variety of theories, perspectives, and literatures that can inform our under-

standing of organizational change phenomena and processes.

2. Some of the most useful theoretical advances come from bringing research and theory from other disciplines into the change and development arena.
3. Papers that add real value to the literature take a variety of forms. There are many ways of knowing, many ways to conduct quality research, and many ways to inform the field.
4. New people in the field often have astonishingly good ideas.
5. The science of organizational change and the practice of change management sometimes seem to exist in different worlds with a woeful lack of information exchange between these domains. However, many people operate successfully in both worlds. We need more of these people.

Papers We Would Like to See Published in ROCD

In looking back on the past volumes of ROCD, considering current issues with which leaders are struggling in organizations, and looking as best we can at future trends, we've arrived at a list of papers that we would like to see published in our series in the future. There is nothing scientific behind the list, just our own intuitive sense as editors of what the field needs and what our readers might find interesting. We invite you to consider this list, build on these ideas or add your own, and submit an article on your favorite topic for our consideration.

What Makes Culture Change Possible? This article would address a familiar but unresolved issue that is of key importance in organizational transformation, namely cultural change. We have done a reasonable job in figuring out what culture is and how to measure it, but we're still very poor at changing it intentionally and quickly. We recognize that cultures do change, especially when there is a takeover of one company by another, with the dominant culture winning out in the end. Short of this type of externally imposed intervention, however, we find ourselves hard pressed to come up with good methods for transforming cultures quickly and permanently in ways that really matter. It seems clear to us that despite all the talk, we don't really know what we are doing when it comes to culture change.

Focus and Change: Managing The Paradox. Although most leaders in organizations would agree that their organizations are not changing quickly enough,

it's not for lack of trying. Most of the large organizations we know have hundreds of change programs underway simultaneously, in everything from IT systems to business processes to talent development. In an ideal world, all of these programs would be designed and conducted in an integrated fashion, driven by the firm's strategic objectives. In reality, these efforts are usually disjointed, sub-optimized and countervailing. It would be wonderful if we could eliminate the proliferation of programs, replacing them with a single and coherent change effort directed from the top. The reality is, such an effort would fail miserably because it wouldn't take into account the myriad of details that need to be attended to in order to change the thousands of things that act against the direction of the overall change. If neither change from the top down nor a series of disjointed efforts from the bottom up are the right way to go, how might we do a better job of handling the systems reality that in order to change a system completely, we need to change all of its parts?

Creating Ethical Organizations. Although it's a trendy topic, we suspect we haven't heard the last of it. We're paying more attention to ethical breaches now and because of that, we are likely to detect them more often. As the fallout increases, leaders will begin to ask what steps can be taken to build more ethical organizations. Is it a matter of hiring more ethical people and if so, how do we identify them? Are there processes that can be put in place that detect potentially dangerous behaviors before they become a problem? What, beyond setting a good example themselves, can leaders do to enhance the level of ethical concern in their organizations? When violations occur, is there an understanding gap ("I never knew it was illegal to listen to tips from my own broker," – Martha Stewart) or do organizational pressures force people to behave in an unethical manner? How would we "assess" an organization's risk of unethical behavior, and what models or frameworks could we use to guide interventions to reduce that risk?

Beyond Weak Ties. Loyalty is decreasing in organizations as employment security has become a thing of the past. Still, organizations need people who are deeply committed to the long run if deep, significant change is to take place. How do we get people to care about their organizations, their leaders, and each other enough to find the energy needed to fuel deep change? How do we get people to take real accountability for performance, regardless of the difficulties they face in doing so? How do we develop deep social capital that allows people to work together effectively across

boundaries and support each other when times get rough? How do we create “caring” about the organization and one another without imposing beliefs and behaviors that people find offensive? How do we preserve the spirit created by great leaders when the great leaders are gone? Certainly, there is a correlation between strong ties and commitment, but the notion of social capital allows ties to take many forms, not just emotional ones. How do we create the ties that bind?

Overcoming Mediocrity. We’re amazed at the number of industries in which mediocrity has become the accepted norm – airlines, mining, government, to name a few. Why is mediocrity acceptable in these industries and what would be required to shake people from their current beliefs and behaviors in order to tackle the problem? We do know a bit about how individual companies can overcome the almost irresistible pull of the law of large numbers, but how can entire industries do it? Is the only answer to close these industries down and move them off shore? Is it an industry issue or a leadership issue or both? What’s the ecology of mediocrity?

Making Diversity Matter. Enough talk. Action please. Can anyone help?

Enhancing Innovation And Creativity: Making Good Ideas Better. Organic growth is the new holy grail for organizations. Acquisitions don’t work; further expansion is becoming limited. New growth has to come from within, but the reality is that for the most part, organizations are terrible at bringing great new ideas to market. People say that there is no shortage of new ideas out there; but apparently, a lot of them are either not very good or poorly developed. How can we help organizations be more creative, come up with better ideas not just more ideas, and get the good ones to market more effectively? People in R&D have written on these topics for years, obviously to little avail. Perhaps it’s an organizational issue. That’s where we come in. What’s getting in the way of organic growth and what can be done about it?

Summary

Space does not permit a fuller listing of the papers that we would like to see, which also include the topics of the role of relationships in change, enhancing the rapid adoption of best practices, measuring the depth of change, getting people to admit when they need help or don’t know what to do, increasing OCBs like “sharing” information, talent, and other resources without somehow being forced to by the organization acting as “parent.”

What’s been most clear to us over the last 17 years or so is that truly good, new ideas are rare. We need breakthroughs to keep our discipline on the forefront of thought and application. We hope that you will accept the challenge of bringing those ideas forth.

HOW DO SOCIAL ACCOUNTS AND PARTICIPATION DURING CHANGE AFFECT ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING

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2004 Best Overall Paper

There are many reasons why organizations choose to plan and implement change. Most often planned change is seen as a vehicle to improve or maintain performance. Performance improvement is sought in areas that reflect the values of key stakeholders and their assumptions about which are the most important drivers of the achievement of high level objectives such as financial performance. Seldom, it seems, is change conceived and implemented in order to maximize organizational learning. Although there is broad agreement that learning is crucial to the development and maintenance of competitive advantage, organizational learning has the status of a valued by product of change rather than the main focus – or a key design variable – of change efforts. Because of this secondary status, little is known about how the way firms choose to organize their change processes, affects organizational learning. In this paper, I focus on the relationship between two facets of change, the use of social accounts and participation, and organizational learning. Social accounts are the explanations decision makers give for their decisions and can be directed at external as well as internal stakeholders such as employees affected by the change (Bies, 1987; Cobb and Wooten, 1998). There is a fairly large theoretical and empirical literature indicating that social accounts have a positive effect on a number of employee attitudes and behaviours. However, no published research to date has examined its effect on organizational learning. Participation in change is the involvement of those affected by change in the conception and implementation of change. Also, participation in organizations has been a heavily researched topic for several decades. Meta studies of this literature show that participation has a positive effect on employee attitudes and behaviours. Again, however, little is

known about the relationship between participation and organizational learning, especially in change settings.

The key premise in this article is that both social accounts and participation is positively linked to organizational learning because they stimulate individual information processing and social information sharing in organizations. It is argued that social account giving in it self can be seen as a process by which change agents provide information that is picked up by message recipients. This information pick up and further processing of the information lead to learning because recipient beliefs in the content domain of the message are changed (see Cobb and Wooten, 1998 for a discussion of content domains of social accounts). It is also argued that social account recipients do not passively receive the information, but react to the messages given and transmit new information to change agents based on these reactions. This transmission leads to change agent learning and possibly to new rounds of social accounts where the original message is adapted to incoming reactions from change recipients.

Participation is seen as conducive to organizational learning because it entails information sharing among individuals with different educational, functional and experiential backgrounds. The cognitive variety among participants in the change process not only facilitates sharing of existing information, but also the generation of entirely new insights concerning organizationally relevant phenomena because of the positive link between cognitive variety and creativity. It is also argued that the positive motivational effect of participation make individuals work harder, more focused and persistent on change issues and that this motivated behaviour positively affects information sharing and the development of new insights and solutions to change problems.

But social account giving is also seen as an inferior substitute to participation. I argue that the need for social accounts is resulting from processes with low levels of participation. Thus, it was expected that the relationship between social accounts and learning is negatively moderated by participation. I also argue that due to threat-rigidity effects (Staw, Sandelands and Dutton, 1982), only positively framed social accounts, are positively related to organizational learning.

The issues above were explored using data from a population of firms (52) that are members of a regional management development and learning network established at the coastal North West region of Norway. Informants were middle managers currently working in these firms. Respondents (n = 88) provided

information on one organizational change in which they had participated, either as change agent or as change recipient. Findings show that both participation and social accounts are positively related to organizational learning, but that the effect of social accounts diminishes as participation increases. It was also found that social accounts framed as opportunities are positively linked to organizational learning. Social accounts framed as threats had no effect on organizational learning.

The findings have some implications. First, the strong link found between participation and organizational learning might provide a bridge for the elusive link between participation and performance. In spite of strong theoretical arguments in its favour, researchers have encountered difficulties in establishing this link empirically. Based on this study it seem possible that performance effects may be lagged considerably in time, they may not even be found close to the participation experience (i.e. the change) but in other areas of organizational activity and performance. For organizational knowledge to affect performance an opportunity to apply that knowledge must exist. Such opportunities might arise a long time after the learning has occurred (e.g. the next change episode) or in other parts of the organization. The study also has implications for managing change. First, it provides an additional argument for participation and social accounts for those its favour for pragmatic or ideological reasons. Even in cases where participation is not practical, learning may be facilitated if managers use social accounts. Finally, the findings indicate that caution should be made using threat frames. The use of threatening messages may be warranted for other reasons, but if organizational learning is important, motivational/cognitive effects of social accounts should be pursued using more positive message frames.

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TEAM MEMBER PROXIMITY AND TEAMWORK IN INNOVATIVE PROJECTS

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2004 Best Paper in Visual Session

Prior research on collaborative team processes in innovative projects has not adequately recognized that new product development teams regularly have members that are not co-located. The cross-functional and multi-disciplinary nature of such teams often entails that team members spend time away from the team's main location (e.g., a central project office or laboratory) such as at their functional departments' location (e.g., in a different building on the same premises or at different premises) or at the premises of a supplier or customer organization. Hence, innovation teams vary in terms of team members' proximity, i.e., the degree to which all team members are in direct vicinity over the duration of the project. The proximity of team members, however, has potentially important implications for the collaborative working of teams. In this paper, we investigate how the degree of team members' proximity affects performance-relevant team collaborative processes (Hoegl & Gemuenden, 2001).

Hypotheses

In this research, we consider as our dependent constructs the process variables specified by Hoegl and Gemuenden's (2001) concept of teamwork quality. In order to capture the complex nature of team members working together, Hoegl and Gemuenden conceptualize and empirically validate teamwork quality as a higher order construct with six facets, i.e., communication, coordination, balance of member contributions, mutual support, effort, and cohesion.

Team Member Proximity and Task-Related Team Processes. Team-internal communication is likely facilitated by the close proximity of team members (Allen, 1971). With team members in close vicinity, for instance on the same floor of a building, initiating communication requires less effort as compared to circumstances where team members are dispersed over different sites. Also, decreasing proximity decreases the possibility of spontaneous and/or informal face-to-face communication.

Innovative tasks, such as the design and development of new software, are characterized by high levels of ambiguity, uncertainty, and equivocality necessitating an ongoing coordination of task activities as pre-programming of task sequences is largely not possible (Hoegl & Gemuenden, 2001). Close proximity of team members allows for the first-hand and "real-time" observation of team members' progress at their work. Subsequently, team members are in a better position to initiate any restructuring of work sequences and contents as new information becomes available.

The teamwork quality facet of balance of member contributions, i.e., the ability of the team to utilize every members' potential to the fullest, is also likely positively related to team member proximity. Having team members in the vicinity increases the likelihood to team members being aware of each others knowledge, skills, and experiences, as team members engage in richer and frequently more informal interaction. Such awareness, in turn, enables the team to draw on the individual team members' specific strengths.

Given all of the above, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 1: Proximity of team members is positively related to communication.

Hypothesis 2: Proximity of team members is positively related to coordination.

Hypothesis 3: Proximity of team members is positively related to balance of member contributions.

Team Member Proximity and Social Team Processes. We also argue that team member proximity is positively associated with the more social aspects of the collaborative work process such as mutual support, effort, and cohesion. For instance, mutual support within the team is more likely to occur if team members are physically close to one another. For one, team members are likely to find it easier to observe situations where their assistance may be needed or beneficial. Likewise, team members may find it easier to call upon one another for providing support and guidance.

Moreover, we argue that close physical proximity of team members is also instrumental for the development of team cohesion and work norms of strong effort. If team members are in close vicinity, stronger social integration is likely as team members are more easily accessible for both task-related and also personal interaction.

Proximity is likely to create stronger social norms regarding work effort as individual contributions to the team tasks can more readily be observed and are thus

more identifiable in the team, reducing tendencies of social loafing.

Given all of the above, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 4: Proximity of team members is positively related to mutual support.

Hypothesis 5: Proximity of team members is positively related to effort.

Hypothesis 6: Proximity of team members is positively related to cohesion.

Methods

A total of 145 software development teams from four German software development laboratories participated in this research. All four laboratories had largely comparable information and communication technology resources (including email, file-sharing, online forums, chat, video conferencing, telephone, telefax, etc.) available for all project teams to utilize at their discretion.

Data were gathered through individual data collection sessions using a fully standardized questionnaire (five-point answer scale). All data collection sessions were conducted on site in dedicated rooms assuring similar conditions for every respondent. A total of 430 individual data collection sessions with members and leaders of 145 software development teams were conducted. On average, data from three members of each team were collected.

In order to ensure content validity and to avoid a possible common source bias, data from different respondents were used to measure the different variables. Teamwork quality was measured using aggregated responses from multiple team members (excluding team leaders). Proximity of team members was measured using responses from the team leaders.

Building on Keller (1986) and Pinto et al. (1993), proximity of team members was measured using four items pertaining to the share of team members working directly in the vicinity of each other, whether team members were easily reachable by foot, and whether it was problematic to call spontaneous face-to-face meetings (Cronbach's $\alpha = .80$). The teamwork quality construct was measured using between three and 10 items per teamwork quality facet with a total of 38 items for all six facets (Hoegl & Gemuenden, 2001).

Results

The results of the regression models provide support for the general thesis of our research: proximity among team members is positively associated with the quality

of teamwork among them (std. coef. = .23). Furthermore, five of the six facets of teamwork quality show the same relationship with team members' proximity. While communication, coordination, mutual support, effort, and cohesion are positively related to the proximity of team members (with std. coef. between .19 and .25), the balance of member contributions is not.

Conclusion

Departing from the assumption of complete co-location of team members, we recognize that geographic proximity is a matter of degree, rather than a dichotomous distinction between so-called co-located and virtual teams. We show a tangible impact of the degree of members' proximity on the teamwork quality construct. Our results widen the scope of Allen's (1971) work. Not only the likelihood of communication is facilitated by proximity, but also other task-related and social processes within teams are related to physical distance.

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EMPLOYEE READINESS FOR CHANGE: UTILIZING THE THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR TO INFORM CHANGE MANAGEMENT

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2004 Best Practice Oriented Paper

Readiness for change is defined as the extent to which employees hold positive views about the need for

organizational change, as well as the extent to which employees believe that such changes are likely to have positive implications for themselves and the wider organization (Armenakis, Harris, & Mossholder, 1993). In this study, it is proposed that the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) provides a useful approach for understanding the process of attitude formation during times of organizational change.

According to the TPB, intention is the most proximal determinant of behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Intentions are proposed to be a function of three independent determinants. The first is the person's attitude, conceptualized as the overall evaluation of performing the behavior of interest. The second is subjective norm, which reflects perceived social pressure to perform or not perform the behavior. The third is perceived behavioral control (PBC), which reflects the extent to which the behavior is under volitional control.

Despite general support for the TPB, there is often weak support for the role of subjective norm in predicting intentions. Terry and Hogg (1996) contend that subjective norm is an inadequate construct to capture the impact of social influence on behavior. It has been asserted that consideration of the effects of group membership on behavior, as outlined by social identity and self-categorization theories, may provide a more comprehensive explanation of the role of social influence.

A social identity theory/self-categorization theory perspective on the role of social influence in the attitude-behavior relationship differs significantly from that outlined in the TPB model. Rather than collapsing across referents, with social pressure conceived as being additive across all referents, as in the case of subjective norm, norms are conceived in a way so that they are intrinsically tied to contextually salient membership in specific social groups, and affect behavior because the group is behaviorally relevant.

Furthermore, the subjective norm construct in the TPB does not account for the strength of identification with significant others or groups, whereas a social identity theory/self-categorization theory perspective asserts that the stronger one's group identification, the stronger the influence of reference group norms on intentions. Thus, it is argued that the perception of the group norm, for strong identifiers, should predict intentions.

Studies have shown that communication and participation strategies are important for positive employee outcomes during organizational change, but the mechanisms underlying these effects remain unclear. The TPB can offer insights into why such strategies are important predictors of change readiness. It is argued that effective communication strategies and involving employees in planning and decision-making will have a positive main effect on employees' intentions to carry out change-supportive activities, and that these relationships are mediated by attitude, subjective norm, and PBC.

This study examines the TPB in the context of a building relocation for a local government organization. We hypothesized that attitude, subjective norm, and PBC would significantly predict intentions. In addition, we hypothesized that the perceived norms of a behaviorally-relevant reference group (i.e., group norm) would predict intentions, but, in line with previous findings, only for those who identify strongly with their reference group. We hypothesized that communication about the relocation would be positively related to intentions, and that this relationship would be mediated by attitude, subjective norm, and PBC. Lastly, we predicted that employee participation would strengthen intentions, with this relationship mediated by the TPB variables.

Methodology

Sample. One hundred eighty-one questionnaires were randomly distributed to employees. 151 questionnaires were returned (response rate of 84%). The sample consisted of a similar proportion of male (55%) and female (45%) respondents. Average age of employees was 40.29, ranging from 19 to 63 years.

Measures

Intentions. Employees indicated the extent to which they intended to carry out three behaviors during the next 6 months that were supportive of the relocation. Activities included (i) reading notices about the relocation, (ii) dedicating time to completing relocation tasks, and (iii) archiving or disposing of outdated files.

Attitude. Attitude toward carrying out these activities was obtained using ratings on a semantic differential format across five items (i.e., detrimental-beneficial, negative-positive, useless-useful, destructive-constructive, foolish-wise).

Subjective norm. This construct was assessed using two items (e.g., "Most people who are important to me

at work think that I should carry out activities during the next six months that support the move to new premises.”).

PBC. This variable was assessed with four items (e.g., “I have complete control over whether I carry out activities in the next six months that support the move to new premises.”).

Group norm. Participants rated their perceptions of how many of the employees in their branch they thought would carry out activities during the next six months supportive of the move to new premises.

Ingroup identification. To assess the degree to which respondents identified with their behaviorally-relevant reference group, they rated the item “How much do you identify with employees in your branch?”

Communication. Communication was measured with three items assessing the extent to which employees felt they had been provided with sufficient information about the relocation.

Participation. Three items measured the extent of employee participation in decision-making processes relating to the relocation.

Findings And Implications

A hierarchical multiple regression analysis examined the extent to which the standard TPB variables predicted intentions to carry out relocation activities. Entry of these variables at Step 1 revealed that attitude, subjective norm, and PBC were significant predictors of intentions, accounting for 26% of the variance. Employees who held positive attitudes toward performing behaviors that supported the relocation, $\hat{\alpha} = .19, p < .05$, who perceived pressure from others to complete the required activities, $\hat{\alpha} = .29, p < .001$, and who felt they were in control of performing such behaviors, $\hat{\alpha} = .16, p < .05$, were more likely to intend to carry out activities related to the relocation. Targeting employees’ personal attitudes, their perceptions of pressure from others to perform the behaviors, and elements of personal control may be useful strategies to encourage the uptake of change-supportive behaviors.

As expected, entry of group norm and ingroup identification at Step 2 did not account for a significant increment of variance in intentions. However, the interaction term at Step 3 was significant. The positive relationship between group norm and intentions was significant for high identifiers, $\hat{\alpha} = .21, t(141) = 2.69, p < .01$, but not for low identifiers, $\hat{\alpha} = -.02, t(141) = -0.27,$

NS. Change management interventions designed to foster favorable group norms and strengthen ingroup identification (i.e., feelings of belongingness with respect to a behaviorally-relevant reference group) are likely to assist in developing stronger intentions to support a change event. When activities reinforce and induce commitment to a behaviorally-relevant reference group, then it is likely that performance of desired behaviors will become normative in the work environment and be maintained over time. Thus, the use of team-based interventions may be integral to maximizing long-term change implementation success.

Additional analyses revealed that employees who perceived they had received communication about the change reported stronger intentions to support the relocation process, $r = .23, p < .01$, with this relationship mediated via subjective norm and PBC. This latter finding is consistent with other theorists who have noted that accurate and timely information about workplace events contributes to a sense of predictability, thereby enhancing personal control among employees. Similarly, employee participation in the change process predicted intentions, $r = .17, p < .05$, a relationship that was mediated via subjective norm. Overall, therefore, ensuring that employees are informed and consulted helps to create social pressure among employees to act in supportive ways of impending change.

This study demonstrated the utility of the TPB to indicate level of employee support for, or readiness to engage in, activities that support a change initiative. Several methodological limitations should be considered. Situational constraints prevented the use of a longitudinal design and, therefore, behaviors actually carried out in relation to the relocation were not measured. Future studies should overcome this short-coming to demonstrate the full capacity of the TPB to predict both intention and actual behavior of employees in relation to a change event.

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ORGANIZATIONAL DISCOURSE AS SITUATED SYMBOLIC ACTION: APPLICATION THROUGH AN OD INTERVENTION

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2004 Best Action Research Paper

In recent years, the field of organizational discourse has emerged as a new way to conceptualize organizational life (Grant, Keenoy & Osrick, 1998). This field in essence conceptualizes organizational action as interrelated with the social interplay of linguistic phenomena such as conversations, metaphors, texts, narratives, stories and so forth. As the field has advanced, several scholars have called for the development of discourse analysis approaches that not only consider what is literally said (e.g. the text) as a data source, but ones that are more contextually sensitive and holistic (Hardy, 2001; Keenoy, Osrick & Grant, 1997). In the context of such critiques, this paper presents a conceptualization of organizational discourse as situated symbolic action, aiming to address the integration of text, context and symbolic meaning. This conceptualization draws from the fields of speech act theory, rhetoric, ethnography of communication and social constructionism. We then apply this conceptualization to a meeting of senior executives deciding on a new structure and business model.

Conceptualizing Organizational Discourse as Situated Symbolic Action

Austin's (1962) development of speech act theory presents a view of discourse as action, challenging the traditional assumption of the philosophy of language that "to say something ... is always and simply to state something," and proposed the influential thesis that "to say something is to do something" (1962: 12, emphases in original). However, speech act theory essentially remains at the micro-level of interaction, without sufficient attention to context. Rhetoric is a holistic, contextually sensitive approach that can address several elements of both text and context, viewing discourse as a situated social practice. Further support for discourse as a situated practice comes from ethnographies of communication which highlight that discourse cannot be adequately understood or appropriately produced in separation from its context of use. Lastly, social constructionist approaches present

discourse as symbolic action, viewing reality as a social construction and individuals as symbol creators and consumers.

Application through an OD Intervention

The conceptualization of organizational discourse as situated symbolic action can be illustrated through analysis of a facilitated meeting of senior managers of Systech (names of organizations and individuals have been disguised), a major IT organization where a new business model was being debated for its Advanced Services Division (ASD). The methodological approach used was action research, a process of both helping organizations as well as gathering data for further scholarly reflection and potential contribution to knowledge, wherein the researcher is an active, reflective participant in whatever effort is underway.

In 2002, ASD acquired one of the consulting units of a major consulting firm, Consultco. The Systech Group President, who had recently been hired from another major consulting company, wished to use this acquisition as a way to move from the traditional ASD products-services model of client engagement to a consulting model involving principals who "owned" clients and were responsible for all aspects of client engagement, as utilized by most major consulting firms. This organizational move would entail substantial re-allocation of power, status and influence within ASD and was hotly contested between the old-timers and the newcomers. A meeting of the division's top management, facilitated by one of the authors in the role of an organization development consultant, was held to discuss the proposed new arrangement. After initial discussions of declining morale in ASD, two of the participants, Grant and Collins, engaged in a lengthy debate over the pros and cons of the proposed consulting model while everyone else remained mostly silent. At a pivotal moment in the meeting, Grant, a newcomer from Consultco and chief advocate of the "principal-led," consulting model, acknowledged that things were different in Systech and therefore some responsibilities could be shared, rather than fully led by the relevant principal. This led to a more co-operative, productive response from Collins, an oldtimer and chief defender of the existing arrangement, after which everyone engaged in creating a new model that integrated aspects of the old and new business models.

Analysis and Discussion

When we examine the Systech episode from the perspective of discourse as situated symbolic action

we can consider the three key frames of analysis; talk as action, talk as situated action, and talk as symbolic action. Each of these frames adds a further layer of meaning to create a more holistic understanding of what went on in the meeting.

At the level of talk as action, the engagement by all participants in a discussion of declining motivation and morale could be seen as an attempt at group unity and/or avoidance of the underlying conflict in the group. Both the style and substance of Grant's and Collins' remarks, in addition, could be seen as argumentative attempts to demonstrate that their positions were the right thing for the organization. This level of analysis of talk as action focuses primarily on who said what and what they seemed to be overtly intending to achieve.

In viewing talk as situated action, several frames of context are added to more fully understand the actors' intentions and their effects. For example, the meeting was mandated by the Group President to initiate a principal-led consulting business model. Grant had been the Senior Partner of the Consultco unit before it was acquired by Systech. Collins had 30 years experience at Systech and had the most to lose with a change to a principal-led model. Ultimately, then, the meeting involved a power struggle between old-timers and newcomers over the appropriate operating structure and culture of Systech.

Finally, in viewing talk as situated symbolic action, we go beyond the specific words and context to consider the discursive exchanges in more symbolic terms. For example, the initial discussion about low motivation and morale could be interpreted as unconscious projections or an indirect means of expressing the participants' own sceptical feelings. Furthermore, from a symbolic perspective, Grant and Collins can be seen as "champions" of the newcomers and the old-timers engaged in single combat over power, prestige, respect and validation, in addition to the business future of ASD, while the rest of the participants waited in silence for the outcome of the contest to be determined. After initial tests of strength, Grant's concession that, "Yes, things were different in Systech than in Consultco and maybe some responsibilities needed to be shared," becomes a pivotal moment. That comment may have simultaneously signaled willingness to compromise and an acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the established ASD culture and its managers. Following that remark, an understanding of how to share power in an integrated model was quickly reached by all participants. Thus, at a symbolic level, the participants

may have worked out through the combat of their champions their relative power positions in ASD and the framework for how to integrate or blend the old and the new.

This view of discourse as situated symbolic action is offered as an additional perspective in the emerging field of organizational discourse. We also hope that this perspective will encourage more research that combines a scholarly orientation with applied concerns. Lastly, we hope that this perspective can help organizational actors and organization development practitioners interpret organizational talk and action in a manner going beyond what is literally said, in a contextually sensitive, symbolic way, and thus improve their ability to take responsive actions and make appropriate interventions.

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BUILDING AN INTERNAL MEDIATION SYSTEM: AN ACTION RESEARCH CASE

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2004 Best Interactive Paper

This article reports on an action research project in which the goal was to implement a mediation process for employee-employee and employee-supervisor disputes in a state court system comprised of 18,000 employees represented by 15 unions. In the courthouse the very nature of the work relies on judgment as the means to resolve conflict; mediation processes rest on the assumption that conflict is best resolved outside of judgment. In the courthouse, the assumption is that an authority will decide who is wrong and make it right. Mediation involves no authority, only a process facilitator (mediator) who sets the stage for parties who seek a mutually satisfactory resolution to their issues.

The project began with a request by the state's Deputy Chief Administrative Judge who sought to establish an internal, voluntary mediation process. Her goal was to improve the work environment in the courts by offering this avenue to resolve issues that had no other avenue for resolution. In fact, the project was named the Mediation Alternative Project to emphasize that mediation was an alternative to existing internal, rights-based mechanisms for conflict resolution.

The theory on what constitutes an effective organizational conflict resolution system is laid out by the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution (SPIDR), now the Association for Conflict Resolution (ACR) in a set of guidelines published in 2000, "Designing Integrated Conflict Management Systems." The SPIDR/ACR guidelines are based on well-established theories of conflict resolution (Blake & Mouton, 1984; Ury, Brett, & Goldberg, 1998; Walton & McKersie, 2nd ed. 1991), as well as the extensive experience of some of the authors. They list the characteristics of a good system, but they do not suggest how an integrated conflict management system should be designed.

With no recipe, we fell back on our own operating theory of change. The elements of this theory are participation and learning, organizations as complex systems, and interest-based discussion – with its assumption of the legitimacy of differing viewpoints – as a means of negotiating change across systems. In my view, constructive change occurs when those who will experience the change are able to participate in its design, have an opportunity to learn and understand its meaning, and in the course of their design and implementation are able to articulate and even negotiate the political and cultural implications of the change. This meant we should engage with court employees in an action research project, developing the internal mediation program by "co-generating" knowledge (Elden & Levin, 1991) with them. In this approach, neither researcher nor the participants (co-researchers) by themselves have the understanding or expertise or to create new knowledge. Instead, they bring together the expert knowledge of the researcher (in this case, our knowledge of integrated conflict management systems and of mediation theory and practice) and the practical, local knowledge of the participants to generate actionable knowledge for change.

The design process involved 15 union and administration representatives who met over two years to develop the scope and substance of the internal mediation process.

The team members began with a good deal of skepticism. While they could identify internal conflicts that might be well-served by an internal mediation system, they could and did readily identify reasons why the mediation process might not be appropriate. We engaged their resistance with inquiry, forcing them to test the workability of such a system, given their doubts. In the end, they developed a system that agreed would provide a needed service, protect the negotiated rights of employees, and preserve the rightful responsibilities of union leaders and managers alike.

We knew, however, that the process design was only the beginning. To introduce 18,000 employees to the system, we would have to construct parallel union-administration dialogues throughout the state. We conducted workshops across the state in which we combined local administrators, union leaders, and the volunteer mediators who would serve the respective districts. We continued the action-reflection research cycle by inviting participants to test and make locally relevant adjustments to the process.

The result is a system that reflects the values and follows closely the content of SPIDR/ACR guidelines for an integrated conflict management system. The system was developed with input of outspoken union leaders and is considered by union and administration alike as a positive sign in their developing relationship. The system is to be administered jointly at the local level, with trusted contacts in each judicial district. That the mediation is voluntary and confidential is well-advertised. Written information and information shared in meetings makes it clear that retaliation for seeking more information or for following through with a mediation, even when it is with one's supervisor, will not be tolerated. Well-trained volunteer mediators stand ready across the state to mediate internal court disputes. However, in almost four years, there is very little use of the system.

Discussions with court employees suggest a fundamental error in our assumption that this was a project to design an internal mediation system. What we were attempting, instead, was a cultural change. The concept of mediation requires a significant mental shift if one's work is tied to adjudication. Furthermore, the court is a large, distressed bureaucracy. Assumptions of favoritism and potential retaliation appear to be embedded employees' understanding of their workplace. The design team assumed that such obstacles could be overcome with a good process

design. We knew better, but hoped the design could jumpstart deeper change.

We were naive to believe that even a sound labor-management process built on internal knowledge could, by itself, be appealing to employees when it so fundamentally different from their basic way of operating. If we are to support the actual use of the process, we must continue as action researchers and test the hypothesis of cultural incompatibility.

As action researchers, we are ourselves as responsible to reflect on action as we are to guide participants in such reflection. We need to examine our own reluctance to challenge the leaders in the court system on the very culture we believe blocks the adoption of mediation. What – if anything – can change the work environment? What role do judges themselves, who are the only employees for whom the mediation system is not designed, have to do with that environment? What processes other than mediation, if any, in the courthouse work environment send a message that employees are competent and capable of resolving their own issues (an assumption of mediation)? What changes if introduced might make mediation feel like a safe and/or worthwhile experiment to employees?

To find meaningful answers to such questions, we will need to involve our court co-researchers at all levels. The very asking of such questions raises risk, of course, but also opens the possibility for the sort of internal organizational risk taking that may make room for learning and change.

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MAKING SENSE OF RADICAL ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

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2004 Best Student Paper

How do organizations achieve radical change? Burke (2002) notes the exceedingly high failure rate for achieving radical change. Tsoukas and Chia (2002) state that we still do not know enough about how change is actually accomplished, nor how the micro-processes of change work (see also Pettigrew, Woodman & Cameron, 2001). Among the issues warranting further investigation are how “precipitating and enabling dynamics interact in response to pressure for change” (Greenwood & Hinings, 1996: 1044), and how new ideas become legitimated.

Based upon their study of the public accounting profession in Canada, Greenwood, Suddaby and Hinings (2002) developed a model of the stages of institutional change, noting the importance of “theorization” for the cognitive rendering of new ideas into justifiable innovations. However, “legitimation involves discourse both within and outside an organizational community” (2002: 76), suggesting stakeholders play a significant role in the process. This paper examines the role of “discourse” between an organization and its external constituents towards establishing legitimacy for radical change by combining stakeholder theory (Frooman, 1999) with institutional theory (Powell & DiMaggio, 1991), thereby extending Greenwood et al.’s (2002) model. Thus, the focus is upon the interaction between precipitating and enabling dynamics, and building legitimacy for change by acting upon stakeholder “cues.”

While the key theoretical lenses for analyzing these changes will be institutional theory and stakeholder theory, the method of analysis will involve a sensemaking/inductive approach (Weick, 1995; Eisenhardt, 1989), attempting to make sense of how key stakeholders influenced and rendered legitimate

radical change. The focus will be upon the external legitimation and theorization of change, as the prospects for negotiating legitimate change appeared limited given the precipitating conditions and multiple, competing stakeholder demands.

Case Example

To examine these interactions, case studies and historical accounts of restructuring in the Canadian federal government during the 1990s were used (Greenspon & Wilson-Smith, 1996; Savoie, 1999; Cooper & Ogata, forthcoming). Between 1993-94 and 2001-02, the Government of Canada's fiscal position shifted from a \$38 billion deficit (total spending of \$155 billion), to a surplus of \$7 billion in 2001-02, while reducing the federal debt from 67% of GDP to 47% (Department of Finance, 2003). Moreover, this turnaround was achieved without major tax increases or decimation of the social safety net (though economic growth facilitated the process).

Previous Canadian government attempts at meaningful reform represented "aborted excursions" (Greenwood & Hinings, 1988). These reforms were primarily internally motivated, designed to make the government more efficient and effective, but generated few lasting results (Savoie, 1999; Lindquist, 2000). Notwithstanding these previous failures, in this case radical change did occur. The question remains how.

The Canadian federal government provides a unique example for several reasons. First, as a government bureaucracy, it represents an unlikely candidate for radical change. Second, the multiplicity of stakeholders and constituent interests, low external dependence upon and potential for coercion by individual stakeholders, and limited economic gains from conformity, are more likely to result in an avoidance or defiance response (Oliver, 1991). Third, given the multiplicity of constituents, constituent demands, and competing visions for legitimate change, the prospects for theorizing and legitimating a single alternative model were limited. Finally, the relative power balance (Frooman, 1999) favoured the government, further reducing the incentive to change.

The Process of Change

As noted by Greenwood and Hinings (1996), institutional theory has not traditionally been considered a theory of change; rather, it seeks to explain the relative similarity of organizations. Although empirical studies of isomorphic pressures have generally adopted a singular focus (i.e. coercive), most organizations operate in an

environment of multiple competing forces (Mizruchi & Fein, 1999). To reflect the influence of these competing forces, by combining institutional theory with stakeholder theory, various isomorphic pressures may be "personified" by particular stakeholder groups (though with one form dominating). Thus, stakeholders wielding similar isomorphic pressures may be grouped accordingly to facilitate examination of their respective influence.

However, Frooman (1999) notes that stakeholders typically do not represent similar influences. Tension is thus created where stakeholders represent divergent interests. Stakeholder power will depend upon their ability to withhold critical resource flows, and ability to confer "legitimacy" to organizational actions. It is argued that although multiple stakeholder groups may have divergent interests, these interests may coalesce (sometimes serendipitously) into "alliances," and reflect complementary pressures for conformity, with the combined effect sufficient to prompt/support radical change. Also important from Frooman's work is the need for and role of "intermediaries" to exert indirect influence strategies.

Consistent with an institutional theory perspective, the role of legitimacy is critical. Organizational responses to isomorphic pressure will determine the extent to which overall societal legitimacy is secured. In terms of coercive isomorphic pressures, the government needed to demonstrate anti-mimetic behaviour from that of previous administrations. Although variations existed in the ends desired by certain stakeholders, the overall effect was complementary and reinforcing, "pushing" the government to act. Normative pressures also existed, particularly in the form of two key stakeholders, the Canadian Taxpayers Federation (CTF) who vocalized citizen concerns about high taxation, and the western Canada based Reform Party whose political platform promoted deficit elimination and tax reduction. More importantly, the CTF and Reform Party represented new interveners for public interests (both were formed in the 1990s) enabling indirect stakeholder influence strategies (Frooman, 1999). Although coercive and normative pressures together may have been sufficient to achieve deinstitutionalization, and provide options for reform (preinstitutionalization), supportive mimetic pressures enabled theorization to occur (and thereby legitimacy).

The recent reform experiences (and public support) of other governments (e.g. UK, New Zealand, Province of Alberta), combined with public frustration over the

government's inability to manage its finances, and outrage over the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax, helped define legitimate/illegitimate behavior. Although opposition existed over the "decimation" of public services, such opposition was fragmented in comparison to the proponents for change.

Equally important though were the internal dynamics. External pressures both prompted and were supported by internal government reactions, in turn seeking external stakeholder responses of acceptance and legitimation. First, change included not only budgetary reform, but also initial recognition and conceptualization of the need for reform (and the manner thereof). Second, most of these changes occurred prior to the 1994 Mexican currency crisis, and therefore cannot be attributed primarily to coercive pressure from international financial markets. Third, although parts of the bureaucracy promoted change (e.g. Department of Finance), the entire bureaucracy had to be convinced the government was serious (given previous failures). Finally, theorization of a new government model occurred as part of the Program Review process. Thus, "supports" for the previous institutional order were eroded by a combination of isomorphic pressures from various stakeholders, though the "mix" of pressures shifted over time.

Conclusion

The intent of this paper was to examine how institutional theory and stakeholder theory may combine to make sense of organizational resistance and radical change in light of societal isomorphic pressures. The example of the Canadian federal government was used to highlight such changes. The relative "transparency" of this process facilitated examination of the interplay between and convergence of isomorphic forces wielded by various stakeholders within the context of Greenwood et al.'s (2002) process model of stages of institutional change. Central to the discussion was the role of legitimacy for both deinstitutionalization of the pre-existing institutional norms, and theorizing terms of the new institutional order.

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