



ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT ODC NEWSLETTER

Organization Development and Change Division

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CALL FOR PAPERS: ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE (ODC)

Sonja Sackmann
Program Chair

The ODC Division represents a community of scholars and practitioners who create and disseminate impactful and rigorous knowledge to enrich constructive change management and organization development. The domain of ODC includes the development of theory and innovative practice relevant to organization change. Major topics include: change processes within organizations, with or without assistance by change agents; active attempts to intervene in organized systems to improve their effectiveness, and scholarly studies of such interventions; multi- or cross-cultural dynamics of systems change in the global context; the roles of change leaders and agents; and issues surrounding self-awareness and responsibility of ODC theory and practice.

Special Instructions for Submissions to the Scholarly Program of the AoM 2013 Meeting in Orlando

The ODC division invites submission of innovative empirical or conceptual papers and symposia that develop theory and practice relevant to strategic and organizational change, development, transformation, and leadership. Topics and explorations specifically oriented to the 2013 all-Academy theme of "Capitalism in Question" are especially encouraged. (The full 2013 call for papers can be found at <http://annualmeeting.aonline.org/2013/>). This year's theme calls for attention to the underlying framing parameters of capitalism in its different forms as well as other economic systems and their related opportunities, benefits and costs for their institutions, their organizations, their members, for society and for our environment. This grand theme needs to be addressed at different levels in regard to transformation, change, development and the role of leadership. Questions that might be explored are, for example,

- To what extent can our theories about organizational change, development and leadership be

(See Sackmann, page 2)

LEADERSHIP IN A COMPLEX ADAPTIVE SYSTEM: INSIGHTS FROM POSITIVE DEVIANCE

Curt Lindberg
Billings Clinic
Marguerite Schneider
New Jersey Institute of Technology
2012 ODC Division Best Paper Award

Positive deviance is based on the observation that in most communities there are individuals and groups whose uncommon practices produce better outcomes than their peers. The PD approach focuses on discovering and disseminating these practices. PD has been used to mobilize organizations and communities around such intractable problems as childhood malnutrition and HIV/AIDS (Pascale & Sternin, 2005). The PD movement assumes, and its success suggests, that PD affects the parameters shaping the tendency toward self-organization: namely, the flow of new information; the number and quality of connections; the degree of diversity in perspectives; and power differentials (Stacey, 1996; 2007).

A notable example of the application of PD has been on efforts by hospitals to reduce infections from

(See Lindberg & Schneider, page 3)

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(From Sackmann, page 1)

applied to organizations and institutions embedded in a different economic system?

- What can we learn about organization development and change from theories developed and research conducted in other economic systems?
- To what extent and how can our theories and fundamental assumptions about organization development, change and leadership be applied to help capitalism evolve into a form that enhances its good sides while avoiding its downsides?
- How can our theories, models and frameworks be further specified, extended and developed as a result of such action research processes?
- What can we learn from different governance and leadership systems at the societal and organizational level and their influence on the shaping, development and change of societies, their respective institutions, organizations and their members?
- To what extent and how can insights gained from collaboration, community systems, and participatory approaches be applied to competitive systems?

This year's theme invites us to critically question and explore the kind of economic system(s) in which our institutions, organizations and organizational life are embedded and use our scholarship to eventually create a better world for all of us.

Please note that the "Rule of 3" applies to scholarly submissions. Therefore, no one can submit or be a part of more than three submissions to the scholarly program.

Division Awards

Awards, some with an honorarium, will be given for the best paper in the following categories:

- Best Paper Overall
- Rupe Chisolm Best Practical Theory Paper
- Best Paper based on a Dissertation
- Best Student Paper (written exclusively by students, individually or with other students, no faculty or practitioner co-authors permitted)
- Best Action Research Paper

Please refer to our website for more detail on these awards (<http://division.aomonline.org/odc>). Papers based on a dissertation, written exclusively by students (individually or with other students), or written about action research should be clearly identified as such at the time of submission (make a note on the title page and also in the accompanying email indicating the award for which you want the paper to be considered). The ODC Division also recognizes a Best Reviewer Award. All award winners are celebrated at the ODC business meeting.

(From Lindberg & Schneider, page 1)

methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA). Simple tactics including hand washing, use of gowns and gloves, and surface cleaning help prevent MRSA (Forsha & Richmond, 2007). PD recognizes that changing “simple” human habits is very difficult and engaging staff in sustained improvement is a challenge (Welsh et al., 2011).

Maine Medical Center (MMC), which serves as a community hospital in Portland, ME, and as a tertiary care center for northern New England, began its PD implementation targeted at MRSA prevention in mid-2009. The effort began with three pilot nursing units; orientation for leaders and staff from the pilot units and associated departments; and training in Discovery and Action Dialogues (DADs) (Lindberg et al., 2009). The DADs were used to surface positive deviant behaviors and barriers to their widespread application; generate new PD practices; engage an ever-wider group in the initiative; and spur action. The PD implementation led to formation of the MRSA Collaborative - the group of staff volunteers who guided the effort. Discussion sessions involving 24 employees were held at MMC in August, 2010; the sessions were led by the authors and were viewed as conversational learning, in which participants constructed meaning from their experiences (Baker, Jensen, & Kolb, 2005).

The MRSA Collaborative and Leadership: Emergent Themes

We elaborate insights related to two themes that emerged from the discussions: first, anxiety, attachment and relationships, and second, power shifts and the emergence of leadership.

Anxiety, Attachment, and Relationships

Becoming involved in a new change process was initially anxiety-producing for many members of the MRSA Collaborative. A Physician noted: “I came to it with the same skepticism others did. . . . Different from change and leadership I experienced, was trained in. . . . Doctors write orders when they want something done.” A Patient Transporter commented: “Intimidation and fear. This was all new to me. It’s one reason I’ve stayed as a patient transporter.” Participants spoke about the importance of a relationship with members of the MRSA Collaborative or of membership in the group as being vital to their participation. These relationships made it possible for members of the group to deal with the anxiety of a new, untested process and the emergent nature of the PD process, and confront powerful healthcare professionals when their infection prevention practices were unsafe.

One of the strong relationships to emerge was between a young physical therapist (Janice) and an experienced occupational therapist (Cathy). A strong, repeated concern raised was the impossibility of adhering to MMC’s policy on gowning, gloving, and hand washing when ambulating a patient with an infection outside their room. Janice said: “Policy requires we take our hands off patients; we can’t do this safely. Face dilemma; face safe patient handling or following policy. When observed, we were called on it. It’s a policy, can’t change it. . . Most of us blatantly ignored the policy, but didn’t like this.”

Janice raised the issue in a direct manner at one of the Collaborative meetings. Members of the Collaborative commended her for her courage but told her: “You’re not gonna go anywhere with this, it’s how it is.” Janice and Cathy then reached out to a “sympathetic” infection control person who was willing to come to the floor and witness the challenge of complying with the existing policy. His response was, “I get it; this is impossible to follow.” They then worked together to modify the policy. Members of the Collaborative observed this change demonstrated what was possible. It inspired others to share their concerns openly and talk about what was really happening with infection control efforts. In complexity terms, this story is an example of non-linearity: a small action having big impact, and Stacey’s observation (2007) that population-wide patterns emerge from local, everyday interactions.

Power Shifts and the Emergence of Leadership

The two senior leaders of the MRSA Collaborative extended invitations to join the effort and shared their power and responsibility with others. A Collaborative member said, "Management welcomed me with open arms. It made me feel like I am important." This demonstrates that power arises through a relationship, co-created by those in the relationship (Crozier, 1973) and illustrates that shifts in power are associated with novelty (Elias, 1998; Stacy, 2007). The development of the revised infection prevention policy and many small individual acts of Collaborative members (like reminding "powerful" physicians to gown, glove and wash their hands) suggest that shifts in power are related to change and emergence of new patterns of interactions. Leadership emerges from the interactions themselves. A front line worker in the Collaborative observed. ". . . going into the MRSA Collaborative, I am a leader. . . . Being . . . in the MRSA Collaborative has given me the power, I guess."

Yet, it is critical to note the role of organizational elites—the board, executives, and doctors—in allowing others to feel powerful and feel that their power is legitimate. Those in positions of power increasingly recognize the ability of other employees to make decisions; these employees accept the responsibility, but also accept there are limits to their empowerment (Courpasson & Dany, 2003). We note that the decisions to engage in the PD initiative and support it financially and emotionally were provided by MMC's executives and the board; they were also the ones who blessed the desired outcomes that self-organization should work towards; namely improved infection prevention practices and reduced MRSA infections. We found that non-managerial employees now have a louder and stronger voice and that management does listen to their voice. All have voice, but all voices are not equal.

Conclusion

Advances in complexity science have deepened our understanding of dynamics in systems (Holland, 1998; Kauffman, 1995; Prigogine, 1996). Complex adaptive systems tend to be path dependent and sensitive to their initial conditions; may react in a non-linear way to internal or environmental perturbations (Lorenz, 1993); and exhibit a tendency toward emergence or internally-induced change (Mathews, White, & Long, 1999). These thoughts have spurred

questions regarding the role of leadership in the process of complex adaptive systems toward self-organization (Goldstein, 1994; Stacey, 2007), with leadership being increasingly viewed as an indirect, catalytic process (Schneider & Somers, 2006) that facilitates self-organization.

At MMC, we witnessed how leadership emerges within a maze of emotions, obstacles, paradoxes, power plays, and other challenges. Those engaged in leadership grew in their awareness of self and others and in the complex issues associated with change. They subsequently inspired a significant medical center-wide drive to eliminate transmission of all antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

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**2013 ODC DIVISION PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS:
CALL FOR PROPOSALS**

David Grant
PDW Chair

PDWs are a platform for colleagues to share knowledge and expertise and foster the development of workshop participants. Coordinated by the Academy's many divisions, interest groups, and theme committees, PDW sessions are different from regular academy sessions in that they can have a longer time frame and use a more interactive and participative format. PDW sessions will be held prior to the AOM regular program from 8 a.m. on Friday, August 9, through 8 p.m. on Saturday, August 10, 2013.

This year's AoM meeting theme is "Capitalism in Question" (the full 2013 call for papers can be found at <http://annualmeeting.aomonline.org/2013/>). Recent economic and financial crises, austerity, and unemployment, and the emergence of many economic,

social, and environmental protest movements around the world invite academics and managers alike to question the kind of economic system our world should be built on. Would it be a capitalist one? If so, what kind of capitalism? If not, what are the alternatives?

As organization development and change (ODC) scholars and practitioners, the assumptions we make about the corresponding answers to these questions deeply influence our research, teaching, and service. They compel us to consider issues such as:

- In what ways might ODC question capitalism?
- Have the basic features of capitalism become taken for granted among ODC scholars?
- What role do moral and ethical values play in our judgment when we consider and practice ODC in a capitalist economic system?
- Is organization development as opposed to organization change based on a truly differing set of assumptions and values, such that it might address the "Capitalism in Question" debate differently? If so how, and in what ways does this play out in OD research and practice?
- How can and should ODC scholars and practitioners use their expertise and bodies of knowledge to intervene and influence business leaders and policy makers to build healthy economic systems? What current and possible models exist?
- What can ODC scholars and practitioners learn from organizations that are not constituted as vehicles of private wealth accumulation, but are owned by communities or governments? Moreover, what can ODC learn from the new strategies being used by social and environmental movements as they seek to challenge the existing capitalist system? How might what we learn from these organizations affect future ODC research and practice?
- How do leaders and those involved in the planning and execution of strategy, practice forms of change that either challenge or perpetuate the prevailing economic system, and to what effect?
- Capitalist development has led to information technologies that have far-reaching social and economic implications and which impact on how we think and go about work and organization. Has ODC sufficiently come to grips with these changes?

PDW proposals to the ODC division might address these or the many other issues that emanate from this year's AoM theme. They may also address issues more closely aligned with the ODC Division domain statement at <http://aom.org/content.aspx?id=237#odc>.

Space allocated to PDWs is limited, so PDW proposals that would be of interest to several divisions or interest groups are encouraged, although a PDW can only be submitted to one Division. We also encourage PDWs that create a meeting place between ODC practitioners and academics as well as between members of different divisions. (Any co-sponsors will be determined after submission.) If you are interested in submitting a proposal for a PDW session to be sponsored by the ODC Division, please visit the AOM 2013 annual meeting website, <http://annualmeeting.aomonline.org/2013/>, and refer to the section on submission information for PDWs.

Please note that the "Rule of 3" applies to PDW submissions. Therefore no one can submit or be a part of more than three PDW submissions (this is in addition to the Rule of 3 for the main scholarly program).

Proposals must include:

1. The workshop title
2. Full description of the workshop and activities
3. Time requirements of the workshop
4. Submitter (contact person) and presenter(s) information, including name, affiliation, address, phone, fax, and e-mail for each person.
5. Division or Interest Group sponsor being solicited and why
6. Suggested Division or Interest Group co-sponsors
7. How you intend to create healthy audience interaction and participation

The submission deadline is January 15, 2013, 5 p.m. EST (earlier submissions are strongly encouraged). All submissions must be sent via the AOM submissions system at <http://submissions.aomonline.org/2013/>, which will open on November 6, 2012.

If you have any questions, or have an idea for a possible proposal that you would like to discuss, please contact the ODC PDW Program Chair, David Grant, at david.grant@sydney.edu.au.

NEWS ABOUT MEMBERS

Charles Seashore (Charlie), age 80, passed away on January 20, 2013.

Anthony P. Raia (Tony), age 84, died on December 14, 2012. Tony was one of the founders of the Organization Development Division.

COMPETING PERCEPTIONS: CONTRASTING EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCES OF CHANGE IN A UK PUBLIC SECTOR AGENCY

Martin McCracken
University of Ulster

Hadyn Bennett
University of Ulster

Paula O'Kane

University of Otago

2012 ODC Division Rupert F. Chisholm

Best Theory-to-Practice Paper Award

Traditionally organisations in the United Kingdom public sector have been characterised by rigid hierarchical structures, with decision making guided by deference to authority and process maps. However, changes over the past two decades, including government funding restrictions, calls for more efficiency from service users and the need for more employee and other stakeholder consultation, have called into question the suitability of such structures (Argyriades, 2010). Although research (see, for example, Glynn and Murphy, 1996) has suggested a shift in values from public sector administration to what has been termed 'new public management', characterised by the adoption of private sector values and styles, there is evidence that in reality bureaucracy continues to be dominant in such organisations. For instance, Budd (2007) has argued that the need for economies of scale and standardisation has led to extended forms of bureaucracy rather than the actual establishment of post-bureaucratic structures.

While the literature includes much debate on the future direction of public sector bureaucracies, and indeed their fundamental roles and objectives, one fact which is beyond dispute is the need for change within the sector. This paper examines the change process undertaken by a large UK public sector revenue collection agency in order to further understanding of the reality of change within the sector. The findings

show that the 'linear rational' approach to change management adopted was ultimately unsuccessful in delivering anything beyond (modified) behaviour compliance on the part of operational level employees. The case highlights the need for change managers to take account of hierarchical and cross functional differences in values, perceptions and interpretations when planning and implementing change. Such factors are closely associated with the systemic multivariate approach to managing change, which is recommended as being particularly apposite for delivering effective change in this sector.

Rational-Linear and Systemic-Multivariate Approaches to Change

Many writers on change management have focused on what Miles (1997) terms 'rational-linear' change, a common example being Kotter's (1995) eight steps for effective change. Such an approach argues that there exists an optimum solution to the issue of introducing organisational change (Church, Burke and van Eynde, 1994) and advocates a planned, systemic process, based on rational analysis and the incremental introduction of phased, cumulative interventions. Its prescriptive approach is predicated on the assumption that organisational processes and systems are amenable to rational analysis and understanding, and can be manipulated in the same manner, and that interpretation and understanding of change will be consistent across the organisation. However, the ability of these 'rational-linear' approaches to deliver prescriptive solutions has been questioned. For example, Dawson (1996) has noted that they fail to appreciate the influence of diverse beliefs, values, power and interpretations across the organisation.

In response to these criticisms, the 'systemic-multivariate' approach, which views change management as a systemic process incorporating systems of interpretation and meaning, has been proposed (Knights and Willmott, 1995; Saka, 2003). This approach emphasises the social aspects of change, calls for the liberal exchange of knowledge, and acknowledges the heterogeneity in values, preferences and interests across the organisation. It proposes that organisational functioning reflects a complex set of interactions, interpretations and meanings, and that change management as a process should be based on the development of shared understanding across organisational groupings and the acknowledgement of differences between groups.

As discussed, public sector organisations in the UK have traditionally been structured on bureaucratic lines which, it is argued, lend themselves to the adoption of the rational-linear model for change management, with its emphasis on process control and phasing, and prescribed objective outcomes. However, it has been shown that the adoption of this rational-linear approach leaves the organisation exposed to the risk of a number of factors relating to communication, and interpretation difficulties, lack of trust and confidence in management motivations, as well as ambiguities surrounding the role of middle management, change agents and employees (McWilliam and Wood-Griffin, 2006; Balogun, 2003).

In summarising the difficulties encountered by the rational-linear model, three important (and inter-related) themes can be identified from the literature reviewed: (1) *differences in perception, interpretation and understanding*; (2) *communication and engagement issues*; and (3) *organisation structure and power issues* (in particular, the role of the middle manager in the change process). This paper investigates the role played by all three during a period of planned, linear-rational change within a large, UK public sector agency.

Research Methodology

A case study approach was adopted within a major public sector revenue collection and benefit payment agency which had been subject to recent criticism, relating primarily to its failure to meet established objectives and respond effectively and efficiently to stakeholder needs. As a result, a comprehensive programme of change was designed and implemented throughout the agency, with the objectives of changing both operating systems and ultimately transforming the culture of the organisation. Following on from the analysis of secondary data relating to both the agency and the change programme, a total of seven semi-structured focus groups were convened to explore experiences of change. These spanned both hierarchical levels and functional areas, and comprised operations level staff (two groups), team leaders/first line supervisors (one group), middle management (one group), senior management/director level (one group, two sessions—at the pre and post research stages), and the 'change programme management' team (which had been specifically convened to manage the change process). In addition, interviews were held with a trade union representative and an HRD man-

ager. Each focus group and interview transcript was analysed to identify emerging themes.

Findings

Given its pre-change characteristics of well-defined hierarchies and reliance on rules and procedures, it was unsurprising to find that the agency adopted a rational-linear approach to the change process. As such, bureaucratic principles were utilised in its efforts to create an organisation which is more flexible and efficient in meeting stakeholders' needs and delivering value. In consequence, the key finding was that the agency failed to meet the full extent of its objectives, and instead has simply succeeded in reinventing the prevailing (bureaucratic) culture, albeit one which now operates a revised set of rules and procedures.

Such a finding confirms those of DiBella (1996, 363) relating to how *(1) differences in perception, interpretation and understanding*, and, indeed, cultural differences generally, interfere with the change process, with the result that "some form of change will ensue, but it is unlikely to meet anyone's expectations or aspirations". Observed outcomes such as inter-team conflict, operations level staff instigating measures to avoid 'difficult' work, together with the commonly espoused view that senior management have little understanding of operational issues and that operations staff simply comply with change instructions, indicated differences in interpretations, values and behaviour across the organisation.

The issue of *(2) communication and engagement* relates closely to that of interpretation and understanding. The focus group discussions indicated that while the volume of communication was high, its effectiveness in terms of being tailored to receiver needs, being two-way in nature, and genuinely engaging employees or allowing them to participate in the process, was low. Thus, the opportunity to ensure and develop high levels of understanding, commonality of interpretation, and shared perceptions was not availed of—a further contributory factor in producing a poor change outcome from the perspective of the operational employee level.

The focus groups also highlighted difficulties arising from *(3) organisation structure and power issues*, and the pivotal role of middle managers in the process, as highlighted by authors such as Floyd and Wooldridge (1994). In general terms, operations level employees displayed scepticism regarding senior management's abilities and motivations; more specifically, middle

management's role in the communication process produced much criticism—for example, their inability or unwillingness to tailor information and communication to meet the needs of lower hierarchical levels, ineffectiveness at responding to issues raised, and perceived reluctance to raise issues with senior management on behalf of operations staff.

Conclusion

In summary, the picture which emerged was one in which the process had been governed and implemented in line with the prevailing, dominant hierarchical culture (Williams, 1980). Not surprisingly, therefore, the principal outcome has been a reinvention of the prevailing culture, where hierarchical and functional differences in values, beliefs, interpretations and behaviours are still readily apparent. In short, while the change process espoused commitment to addressing elements associated with the systemic-multivariate approach to change (such as engagement and participation, effective communication and employee involvement), it appears that the prevailing, dominant bureaucratic culture took control of the process as it unfolded, and remains firmly entrenched. Much evidence emerged in support of this conclusion including operations level employees describing the absence of real operational level employee participation and the prevalence of behavioural compliance.

Overall, the findings have important implications for the process of change management within the public sector. Recommendations all centre on elements of the systemic-multivariate approach, in particular that organisations must try to develop more meaningful employee participation and involvement in the change process from the outset. This will promote understanding, resolve perceptual differences and secure employee commitment to the process. Methods might include: the establishment of cross-hierarchical and cross-functional working groups which emphasise the open two-way exchange of information; and ensuring that information is communicated in a format that is directly accessible (thus, the tailoring of information is a vital requirement). This might require the provision of communication and leadership training for team leaders and middle managers before embarking on change. More general recommendations include: enhanced change reinforcement which extends through all stages of the project and incorporates the development of a reward culture; and careful plan-

ning and implementation to ensure that objectives beyond changes to operating systems are emphasised, rather than given an initial push only to be superseded by systems and process emphasis.

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FEEDBACK TO THE EDITOR

We welcome your feedback and would appreciate your comments below. Selected comments on articles in the *ODC Newsletter* may be published in the next issue, so please indicate if you prefer your comments to be withheld. Please address all correspondence to:

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1. Do you have any comments that you would like to share with the editor (comments on articles from the last issue, comments on this issue, suggestions, etc.)?

NEWS ABOUT MEMBERS

2. Is there any important information about you or a colleague that you would like to have appear in the next issue?

PUBLICATIONS

3. Please list all recent or forthcoming publications by you or a colleague. (Indicate full citation.)
