

Call for papers for Special Issue of JOCM on:

Lost in Translation?
Contradiction, Paradox & Dialectics of Organizational Change

To be edited by Carole Groleau, Christiane Demers and Yrjö Engeström.

Dialectics of change have always fascinated philosophers, scientists and politicians. Every discipline's coming of age is bound to witness an increasing number of studies exploring paradoxes, contradictions, dialectics of transformations. Organizational sciences are no exception. Researchers investigate the concepts of duality (Sanchez-Runde & Pettigrew, 2003), contradiction (Seo & Creed, 2002), paradox (Lewis, 2000) and conflict (Hargrave & Van de Ven, 2006). Making sense of organizational change, using these concepts, requires returning to different philosophical traditions and potentially accommodating them within a temporary armistice of an interparadigmatic compromise.

Paradoxes are powerful drivers of managerial rhetoric. Defined as “cognitive or socially constructed polarities” by Lewis, they may lead to an “either/or” logic of exclusion or invite “both/and” models trying to reflect multiple realities of organizational learning, interacting, belonging. Clash of “polarities” may be analyzed as “triggers” for change bringing heretofore latent forces to the “surface” of organizing processes (cf. Hatch, 1997, Robey & Holmström, 2001). Some researchers, who study tensions as “surface symptoms” of deeper ontological contradictions focus their attention on underlying social conflicts, which shape organizational change processes (Engeström 1987, Seo & Creed 2002, Groleau, Demers & Barros, 2007). These tensions, reflecting historically constructed social inconsistencies and unmanageable inequalities are often conceptualized within dialectical view of organization.

Tracing the re-emergence of a dialectical school in organizational change literature requires refocusing on (ontological) contradictions and (epistemological) paradoxes as attempts to deal with multiple realities of ongoing transformations of social world dominated by professional bureaucracies. How can we make the most of signaled contradictions and deconstructed paradoxes in understanding organizational change?

We would like to invite paper dealing with the following topics:

- Do different articulations of perceived paradoxes lead to different patterns of organizational change?
- Do different reconstructions of traceable contradictions contribute to their manageability (or unmanageability)?
- What roles do interpreters of contradictions and paradoxes play in organizational change dynamics? Are they conceptualized as drivers, consequences or resources?
- How are histories of organizational change written? How are change episodes linked to one another through paradoxes “explained” and contradictions “reconciled”?

Abstracts should be sent to Carole Groleau, Department of Communication, Montreal University (carole.groleau@umontreal.ca) before March 30, 2009. If selected, full papers should be submitted to the same guest editor before August 30, 2009. Special issue will

appear as the first or second issue of Journal of Organizational Change Management in 2010

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