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## **Organizational Development: Dynamics of Changes**

**Key Words:** Organizational development, changes, dynamics, management.

**Introduction.** A key issue for organizational development is to integrate the interests and needs of individuals with the collective interest of organizations. The purpose of organization development is the joint optimization of social and technical systems, and the simultaneous development of organizational effectiveness and the quality of working life. It is based on collaboration in the change process of managers and employees facilitated by consultants. Change is emergent, less planned and programmatic. Organization development consultants prefer cooperation to conflict, self-control to institutional control, and participative leadership to autocratic management.

**Summary of Key Research Findings.** Reflecting on the assumptions of organization development and planned change, we see fundamental differences in basic values on pertaining to organization, human beings, organizational change, and learning. The differences between change practices are quite clear. Nevertheless, there are similarities as well. Both approaches see organizations as an entity, and more or less as a combination of people and resources to be optimized in a structure which is used to take decisions to achieve defined purposes. Both distinguish between organization and environment, agreed on the need for adaptation to environmental developments, distinguish between persons and organizations, focus on the organization of work processes and organizational strategy, and distinguish between change agents and employees.

There are other perspectives on organizing, changing, and learning. Luc Hoebeke gives another view of organizing when he describes how he, as a

practitioner and scientist, is confronted with loosely coupled networks of smaller or bigger groups, with lobbying and manipulation, with the creation of 'facts', with many interpretations and realities, with a plethora of voices, silences and exits. It seems there no such thing as an organization as an entity. People working together and relating to each other, create processes of organizing, relating and sense making. This perspective corresponds with the view of Leon De Caluwé and Hans Vermaak when they describe organizations as loosely coupled systems and networks of autonomous centers that interrelate which each other in performing activities and are continually searching for identity in an ambiguous world (Vermaak, Werkman, 2017).

Dian Marie Hosking gives a critical perspective on organizing, changing, and learning. She distances herself from organization theory and organization psychology that separate the organization from people as a context for individual activities, satisfactions, and inter-group relations. In her perspective the relation between person individual person and organization is seen as one of mutual creation: through their inter-actions people construct an organization as a social reality, which in turn reflects back and influences interactions (Watters, 2016). Language plays a key role in constructing these social realities. To understand processes of organizing and changing attention is given to multiple, local-historical and social realities that are constructed in relational processes and through interaction. These interactions are processes in which realities are constructed, actively maintained, and changed. When organizing, changing and learning are seen as interactive processes in which people construct their relationships, activities and meanings, the basic assumptions and methodologies of organizational change are constructed in new ways. This way of looking at organizing and changing might be helpful in understanding the tensions between organizational development and planned change. Perhaps it is useful to construct this perspective as a theory of continuous changing and constructing realities.

Changing becomes a continuous process of constructing and reconstructing realities. To illustrate this process of continuous changing Karl Weick and Robert

Quinn turns Lewin's three-stages change model of unfreeze-change-refreeze around in an equilibrium-seeking cycle of freeze-rebalance-unfreeze-freeze (Breaking the Code of Change, 2018). This cycle is constructed and emerges as the change process unfolds. Freezing makes patterns visible through narratives, metaphors, causal loop diagrams, cognitive maps, and schemes. Rebalancing is a process of reinterpretation, re-labeling, and re-sequencing patterns to reduce blocks and to open new possibilities for interaction and sense making. Unfreezing resumes improvisation, translation, and learning in ways that are more mindful.

Changing is a continuous activity at local levels where people interact and make sense of their own social reality. On this local level histories, narratives, practices, and multiple realities may be voiced and contribute to small small-scale changes. These small small-scale changes can be decisive if they occur at the edge of chaos or in a context of rebalancing and unfreezing. Small changes can have large consequences because of self-reinforcing feedback loops and relations in a social network. In interconnected systems small changes emerge through the diversity and interconnectedness of many micro-conversations (Watters, 2016). Micro-level changes provide a platform and a context for transformational change on a macro-level.

Continuous changing is a collaborative approach in which everyone contributes as an expert. This means that everyone is included who has an involvement in change issues enabling multiple local realities in different but equal relations. Definitely, several roles can be played in this process of interaction, and in attempts to understand how things are really going on here. In processes of interaction, to understand social realities and construct new multiple realities, organizational leaders, employees, consultants, and change agents contribute different knowledge and experiences. Organizational leaders may introduce the voice of shareholders, present their perspectives of global developments, and express their concern about continuity. Employees may express how things are really going on, explain processes of inertia, share their experiences with customers, competitors and market developments, and express their relationship with colleagues and managers.

Consultants and change agents may share their experience with changing and organizing, contribute to reframing current patterns, introduce new language, unblock improvisations, facilitate dialogues, and open up new possibilities. These ways of relating that are not based on hierarchy or expertise make space for sustaining multiple interdependent ways of organizing and changing, and give free way to multiple local realities. Continuous changing is focused on interweaving activities, interrelations, and sense making. Working with what is valued as being positive invites participants to learn how better to improvise and stimulate the exchange of experiences. Creating new possibilities strengthens a holistic vision of social reality and allows scope for intuiting, improvising, imagination, and the desire for better futures.

**Conclusion.** To understand the dynamics of organizational change and learning it is worthwhile to reflect on our own practices and thinking as scholars and practitioners in organizing, changing and learning. The construction of our own framework has momentous implications for our actions and the choices we make. In my view, the dynamics we experience in theories and practices lie not in the changing environment or changing organizations, but in the conceptual frameworks and assumptions we use ourselves in organizing, changing and learning. These assumptions lie behind the choice of frameworks, change strategies, and methods. To understand dynamics of change and learning that we experience, it is useful to examining examine the ideas and assumptions that lie behind our practices. What does it mean to opt for a specific change approach? What are the implications of this choice? The distinctions we made between planned change, organization development, and continuous changing may be helpful in understanding difficulties we experience in organizing, changing and learning, and in constructing new realities and possibilities for organizational change and learning.

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