

Making ends and means meet (editorial musings well into the second half of 2016)

Not all ends justify all means, but some ends do make some means more palatable. Cynics cheer up. Academic research means a systematic inquiry into the world around us. It means a collective negotiation of what is relevant and what should be understood if we are to behave in an effective, efficient and desirable way. Effective as in successful. Efficient as in with adequate means. Desirable as in legitimate, compatible with our values, goals and intentions. Do researchers in managerial sciences, in sciences of organization behave in a rational way, do they identify and study relevant and salient processes, which decide about the wellness of individuals and organizations, about our societies, cultures and futures? Yes and no. Yes, if we are looking for a broad overview of the systematic inquiry into the multilevel processes of change, transformation and improvement, into the emotional climates of organizing and coordinating processes, into the emergent theoretical frameworks and methodological strategies of inquiry, including the linguistic analysis of the managerial communications which accompany organizational change. No, if we are looking for the focussed analyses and lucid lists of salient determinants of a success or failure of an organizational change process. Why not? Mainly because we understand too little about power and authority, obedience and revolt, legitimacy and its questioning. There are many underlying processes, which can claim responsibility for this undermining of the effective, efficient and desirable academic research into power processes, but a few stand out.

Among them the latent neopositivism of the mainstream academic institutions (objective reality out there can be rendered in here measure for measure, tit for tat, name for fact) stands out. Another top hit among the brakes on our understanding is the powerful ideological contamination. Our way of thinking about our social worlds is tainted by the neo-liberal dream of a benevolent and partly invisible hand of the market, pushing us toward a common goal while everybody is busy pursuing a personal one. Our better understanding is also tainted by a neo-radical dream of a revolutionary reconstruction of the entire society according to an imperial, religious or extremist Weltanschauung, at the expense of all bottom-up initiatives and resistances. Among them is the aloofness and splendid isolation of the global academic elites, whose members believe that a Nobel Prize can basically be conjured only in English, near top ranking universities and by those who can stay for more than seven years on a single, narrow target (which rules Freeman Dyson but not Winston Churchill out). Meanwhile our global research community is neither inherently nor preferably a neo-positivist one, it does not play the only game in town which is decided by blind reviewers of papers for journals read only by affiliated or networked professionals, and it is (that is we are) negotiating increasingly divergent and creative bonds and links with the non-academic communities and constituencies.

Which brings me to the important question: are we relevant for the outside world? Do the other academic researchers and educated, concerned citizens care to read what we write? Do the other non-academic professionals and readers of our research

products find us relevant and to the point? And what is the point we should be making in democratic, open societies, whose future cannot be, by definition, closed down by an ideological illusion?

The world outside of the present journal – *Journal of Organizational Change Management* – is full of dramatic explosions and tragic violence amplified by the biased media keen on capturing our attention and cashing in before it wanes. No matter whether the terrorist is an item on the hit list of the Islamic State, a frustrated individual turning insane in an unpredictable switch or a madman pursuing his or her idea of a purge (of left liberal children on a Norwegian island or of mentally retarded patients in their Japanese hospital) in the privacy of his or her online weapon purchase. Social and organizational sciences, whose representatives publish in *JOCM*, add very little to our understanding of the processes, which herd individuals into terrorist mafias threatening the rest of the world. Do we have anything to say about the present deficit of representative democracy and the global re-shuffling of welfare, wellness and wealth? Let us see.

Meanwhile, the usual issue-load of business as usual. Manuel Ramón Tejeiro Koller writes about origins of an adaptive advantage concept in evolutionary explanation of organizational changes, which is a pre-requisite for any meaningful discussion of desirable, creative, innovative transformation. Feng Cailing, Xiaoyu Huang and Lihau Zhang discuss the multilevel study of transformational leadership, which might be picked up by the political scientists who are trying to understand the Brexits and the Occupy Wall Streets. Madeleine Audet and Mario Roy examine the uses of strategic communities in fostering an inter-organizational collaboration, not a small issue in networking and allying with unexpected partners in order to produce a novel solution to a problem, which is hard to tackle within a single company. Sefika Mertkan, Ilkay Gilanlioglu and Simon McGrath discuss the higher education and notice that there is a distinct thread of an evolutionary change, namely, a transition from the grand plans imposed by ministries of education to the evolving responses, which adjust original plans as the educational institutions continue and change. Sevda Helpap and Sigrid Bekmeier-Feuerhahn write on “Employees’ Emotions in Change: Advancing the Sensemaking Approach” (which cannot but cheer me up as the author of *The Management of Meaning in Organizations*). K.S. Reddy, En Xie and Yuanyuan Huang investigate the causes and consequences of late or abandoned mergers and acquisitions, while Brandon Mathews and Christopher Linski wonder about the shifting of the research paradigm following the increasing usage of the “good lives model” and “primary human goods” value framework. Another paper, the one authored by Jan Hassink, John Grin and Willem Hulsink is devoted to “Identity formation and strategy development in overlapping institutional fields. Different entry & alignment strategies of regional organizations of care farms into the health care domain”. The title does not attract with lightness, but the process analyzed in the paper merits attention – the postindustrial societies do shift their attention from farming and ecological tourism to health care and the industry for the aging population. The paper on “Identification of growth factors for small firms: evidence from hotel companies on an island” by Mehmet Ali Koseoglu, Senem Yazici and Fevzi Okumus takes us to the hospitality management and small, usually family hotels in the Turkish part of Cyprus. Last not least, Stanley Huang and Yu-Shan Chen from Taipei consider the relationship between prudent conservation of resources in balancing commitment to change and preserving a family working life balance. Ten papers, all of them fairly typical for our discipline, which looks forward to the

new allies and new networking partners, not necessarily within the traditional strongholds of paradigmatic orthodoxies within social, organizational and managerial sciences. Ends are unclear but at least we agree that values should be negotiated and upheld. Means are linked to ends in many more ways than we could foresee, but at least we agree that they should be adjustable and under continuous public attention. So be it.