Editorial

The uses of disorder

The fifth issue of *JOCM* is launched into a fairly unpredictable world, in which democracy defeats political correctness, which which had previously defeated common sense in spite of reality checks. None of this is new. History can easily be seen as "one damned thing after another" and an incoherent tale "full of sound and fury" but "signifying nothing." History of socially organized, pragmatically managed and academically institutionalized scholarly and scientific research is no exception. All researchers participate in economic games of mankind, all teachers gamble in status lotteries and all academic professionals are subject to political power exercises. The question is how to make sense of the past and to gamble on acceptable futures, while at the same time behaving in a decent and feasible, fair and humane way within transparent institutions with legitimate ties to higher values.

It is easy to claim that we should be closer to Porto Alegre than to Davos in imagining the future of material infrastructure of our interactions. It is relatively simple to imagine that we follow the United Nations rather than Bilderberg or Trilateral think tanks. It becomes more difficult when we try to imagine the global solidarity of the young people demonstrating against the ACTA rules of conduct, which would have fenced off access-less masses from the green pastures of the virtual breeding grounds. It is much more difficult to redraw the inspiring vision of an open society with open research and open teaching starting with the WikiLeaks rather than Google. It is difficult to imagine the future declaration of human rights, which includes a phrase that all men and women are created equal as far as access to drinking water, genetic improvement and world wide web goes.

But even remaining within the safe compounds of the academic publishing we have to face the daily disorder of things. First of all, there is the geographical globalization with a dispersion of research centers. Our authors increasingly come from all over the world, not only from the privileged universities of the rich northwestern parts of its (basically Europe and Northern America with outposts like Australia). Our first four papers come from Tehran, Islamabad, Perambalur/Palani and Wuhan, respectively, that is from Iran, Pakistan, India and China. The fifth paper has an even more complex origins. It had been submitted by a British researcher working in an Australian University's branch in Dubai, an Austrian researcher based in a Thai university, a South Korean researcher based in one of London universities and a Canadian researcher from Ottawa with UK and New Zealand background. If following the politically correct path of diversity paid dividends, we could start accumulating. Nor is it all, the next papers have been written by researchers from California (Sacramento and Irvine), Tunisia (Sfax), Brisbane and Newcastle (in New South Wales in Australia, not in the UK) and West Lafayette (Indiana). The last paper in this issue comes from Thailand, from a researcher based in National Institute of Development Administration – International College in Bangkok.

Second of all, a tacit standardization of themes and problem domains is now a globally acknowledged reality, at least for editorial staffs. What are the abovementioned papers all about? Well, about the learning trajectories in the most

general sense, popularized by the late Max Boisot with his attempt to trace the institutional changes in partly post-communist China inside his info-space. Thus Nader Seyed Kalali and Ali Heidari write about organizational learning in their paper "How was competitive advantage sustained in management consultancies during change: the role of dynamic capabilities." Malik Faisal Azeem and Rubina Jasmine focus on online social networks, which are gaining importance in daily routines of connected employees, in their contribution entitled "HR 2.0: linking Web 2.0 and HRM functions." Varun Kumar, Ganesh Babu and Saravanan Muthusamy speak of Indian small and middle sized enterprises – SME's in a managerial sciences parlor – in their "Assessing the awareness of agile manufacturing for organizational change. Indian small manufacturing firms. An empirical investigation." Wenxing Liu, Mingze Li, Yi Han and Penchung Zhang investigated 203 employees and 80 managers of a high-tech ICT company and wrote a report "Linking empowering leadership and change oriented citizenship behavior: the role of thriving at work and autonomy orientation." Learning with a pragmatic twist, with guiding principles of citizenship and empowering leadership – clearly the fashions, fads and foibles of contemporary managerial sciences research know no bounds nor state frontiers.

Third, all these papers relate to the complex and interactive nature of the processes of learning and change. Learning does not mean that we, researchers, teach, while they, managers and consultants, follow, duly implementing our recommendations. In fact, they do pick up some hints, but certainly not entire complex theoretical schemes. Learning does take place, but not as we had imagined it in our teaching schemes. This is what Michel Rod, Sid Lowe, Astrid Kainzbauer, and Ki-Soon Hwang talk about in their "Explaining the perceived value of social practice theories for business-to-business marketing managers." This is certainly so in organizational change: we learn by concrete acts of distinguishing between "wicked mess" or "an opportunity," not by implementing grids of pre-fab theories, frames and points of theoretical view. Dale Ainsworth and Ann Feyerherm speak of "Higher order change: a transorganziational system diagnostic model" trying to account for coalitions, collaborations, networks, consortia, alliances, partnerships, associations and transorganizational systems – in other words for all those attempts to flex organizational muscles by entering complex and fluid interactive "dates" with other organizations:

> Might be fun to use their model to analyze "Brexit", but I do not suspect political scientists of ever touching journals which deal with business organizations (so much about self-reflection and learning between academic specializations).

Fourth, there is definitely a growing recognition of the new importance of the HRM in view of the forthcoming challenge – a necessity not only to work in an organization, but to be creative enough to reinvent it now and then, rather now than then. So, for instance, Amira Sghari writes on an HR issue in organizational change – "Can the staff recognition ensure planned process of organizational change?" while Derek Robert Brown, Dennis Rose and Ray Gordon reflect on "De-commoditizing change management: a call for the repositioning of change management on IT projects." The issue closes with two papers, one by Elisabeth D. Wilhoit, Patricia Gettings, Parul Malik, Lauren B. Hearit, Patrice M. Buzzanell and Brad Ludwig on "STEM faculty response to proposed workplace changes" and the one by Peerayuth Charoensukmongkol on "The role of mindfullness: an employee psychological reactions to mergers and acquisitions."

Let me close with an observation by Rod, Lowe, Kainzbauer and Hwang on the paradoxes of managerial learning from organizational researchers' teaching, because it

illustrates very well the uses of disorder in reshuffling, re-arranging and re-engineering a feasible, valid and effective teaching/learning trajectories.

"Social practice theories represented by Bourdieu, Goffman and Giddens may be useful for the academic observer to understand their world but, it appears, to managers, at present at least, insufficiently pragmatic, too abstract and 'impractical' for most of them to help them in their struggles, as everyday, adaptive bricoleurs in pragmatic action […].

Social practice theories are taken as ontic/epistemic rather than ontological/ epistemological. That is, practitioners' practical consciousness is geared towards 'being' and 'knowing' rather than theorizing about being and knowing that social practice theories appear to them as too theoretically-focussed to be of immediate practical use. They appear to favor modernist tools, such as Myers-Briggs, SWOTS, PESTS and Balanced Scorecards which chime with their essentialist predispositions and which they regard as more 'ready to hand' as opposed to the more antifoundationalist social practice theories which appear more 'present at hand'. The paradox in our paper is that our Dubai and Bangkok interlocutors seem to act in an antifoundationalist manner based in embodiment, discourse and improvisation but they speak in a manner that seems to privilege rational, modernist behavior":

> I wonder whether political scientists could not profit from asking the same question about – say – Giddens and Blair and other such couples of academic master and political disciple with an attempt to do things more flexibly but to legitimize them with quasi-logical alibis.

I wonder whether we do the same when phrasing and self-censoring our self-reflection on methodological level and paying tribute to the mainstream guardians of a neo-neo-positivist orthodoxies never asking the questions "What about Mozart?" and "What about murder?," which, as Howard S. Becker had attempted to demonstrate, might lead us toward the relevant questions about our tacit inputs into our knowledge of the world and the hidden connections of these tacit inputs with the ultimate values, even if the latter are bound to remain under permanent construction.

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