Call for Papers: “Studying Change Dynamics Using Qualitative Methods” Special Issue

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Guest Editors

Organizations and organizational fields continue to experience transformations of various kinds—less hierarchy, shifting logics, more teaming, less co-located interaction, innovative practices and technologies, greater reliance on network structures and process organization—all of which create the need for renewed understanding of change and its consequences for organizations and pose exciting new opportunities for research.

Given the complexity of organizational change, with its dynamic, disintegrative and situated nature (Langley & Denis, 2006), this special issue of JABS focuses on understanding organizational change through the use of qualitative research methodology. We believe that qualitative approaches to studying change provide rich and compelling insights into how and why change unfolds in organizations and its impacts at various levels.

In the past ten years, there has been renewed interest in qualitative studies of organizational change (Weick & Quinn, 1999; Pettigrew, Woodman & Cameron, 2001), perhaps partly inspired by the change theme of the 1999 Academy of Management conference. Qualitative approaches are often the most effective way to uncover the particular and situated dynamics of change which in turn provide more general insights into how underlying motors (e.g., Van de Ven & Poole, 1995), divergent interests and logics (Lounsbury, 2007; Purdy & Gray, 2009; Reay & Hinings, 2009), and a multitude of internal and external contextual factors (Pettigrew, 1990; Denis, Lamothe & Langley, 2001) influence the process by which change unfolds over time.

In this special issue we solicit empirical research that deepens our understanding of how organizations or organizational fields change to cope with the various challenges they face, whether those changes are externally driven through strategic responses to shifts in the environment, institutionally-motivated, or more internally driven. We invite submissions that examine change at one or more levels of analysis (e.g., individual, group, organization, field, global), that focus on the mechanisms, motors, or the context of such changes. Submissions should also inherently address the impact of
the change (e.g., via learning, creativity, performance, societal consequences, longterm versus interim outcomes).

We are especially interested in research examining one or more of the following themes:

- **Change Narratives and Identities:** how participants and change agents construct, share, and identify with stories of change; discursive approaches to change; shifting or recreating identities; change agents’ role in facilitating change.
- **Pace, Rhythm, and Sequencing of Change:** the dynamics of change processes; how pacing and rhythm foster or destroy momentum; competing models of change (e.g., continuous, episodic and discontinuous change); chaos and dialectic models of change; the diffusion process.
- **Human Responses to Change:** Sources of individual, group and institutional resilience; the role of passion, emotion, compassion, and energy; establishing or maintaining readiness and receptivity; overcoming resistance and inertia; managing conflicts and negotiations central to change processes.

The term “qualitative research methods” encompasses a wide array of approaches to learning about organizational phenomena. A researcher’s choice to utilize a qualitative approach should be made out of a clear resonance with the research questions being pursued. As Nelson, Treichler & Grossberg (1992: 2) note, “The choice of research methods depends on the questions that are asked and the questions depend on their context.” We welcome a plurality of qualitative methods, including, but not limited to individual or multiple case studies, action research, interpretive approaches, process analysis, appreciative inquiry, discursive and narrative methods, semiotics, deconstruction and critical analysis. Data may come from a variety of sources, including interviews, participant observation, diaries, archives, experience sampling methods, and cognitive and other types of mapping. More simply, we welcome a variety of lenses and empirical approaches to qualitative change research.

To be considered for publication, papers must be electronically submitted as an e-mail attachment (Microsoft Word files only) to Karen Jansen (kjansen@virginia.edu) by March 1, 2011. For questions about this call or the suitability of a manuscript for the special issue, please contact any of the guest editors: Barbara Gray (b9g@smeal.psu.edu), Inger Stensaker (inger.stensaker@nhh.no), or Karen Jansen (kjansen@virginia.edu). Manuscripts should be prepared according to the guidelines printed on the inside back cover of any issue of *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*. All papers that satisfy initial editorial screening will be processed using the conventional JABS double blind review process. Publication is targeted for early 2012.

**References**

Call for Papers


