

English abstract

Organizational Forgetting

di *Sebastiano Bagnara, Franco Papeschi, Oronzo Parlangeli e Gabriella Pravettoni*

Organizations do remember, and forget. Alike individuals. Often, they are forced to forget. In this paper, the main characteristics of the individual and organizational forgetting will be recalled, and some strategies for organizational forgetting, developed within the distributed cognition approach, will be illustrated. Furthermore, the notion of formative context, put forward by Ciborra and Lanzara about twenty years ago, will be also reminded and discussed in relation to the dynamics of the organizational learning and forgetting.

Inter-organizational learning and biotechnologies: from networks to networking

di *Attila Bruni e Manuela Perrotta*

The interest of sociologists in biotechnologies, from the economic and organizational points of view, is prompted not so much by the 'novelty' of the product and/or its profitability as by the mechanisms of interorganizational learning and or interorganizational networks which develop within this market sector. Individual organizations are seen as stimulated to seek multiple alliances in order to gain access to different forms of knowledge, in that the skills and organizational resources necessary to stay in the market are not always available to them. In the literature, therefore, network alliances are modelled in terms of dynamic processes driven by exogenous interdependencies (which stimulate the organization to seek cooperation) and by mechanisms embedded in the network (which determine with whom alliances are forged). Networks in the biotechnological sector have been regarded as loci of innovation, stressing the hypothesis that interorganizational relations are not solely instrumental activities intended to compensate for the organization's lack of know-how, but also opportunities to access knowledge and resources which otherwise would not be available.

But this same literature has also highlighted the lack of attention on interactions among actors and organizations, which are usually taken for granted and considered only as starting points. In this paper, thus, we suggest that studying networking practices allows an understanding of how networks stabilize and legitimate themselves. The aim of the paper, hence, is twofold: offering a review of the literature on organizational net-

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works in the biotech sector, while highlighting the unexpected issues and questions that these studies pose to organizational theory. In particular, we will argue that it is necessary to shift from a structural perspective on networks and inter-organizational activities to a processual view (and so to networking), in order to catch the situatedness of the elements that come to play in the network formation and in its stabilization.

Toward a program of reinventing government in Italy
di *Federico Butera*

There are three “mission impossible” for the Italian public administration: to empty the unnecessary, to innovate, to regain prestige. In spite of good laws, citizens and enterprises are not very satisfied of the Italian public administration. Since the birth of the Italian State a great attention to the citizens rights has been developed, but not to the citizens needs as well. The main thesis of the paper is that the difficulty of bringing laws into actual change is based upon two structural weaknesses of the Italian Public Administration: design and implementation of services; managing the change process. The methodology CIGS (Structural Change Management) is presented based upon four dimensions: vision, organization’s force field, project, cooperation.

The examples are the programmes Next Step in UK and Reinventing Government in USA, based upon the idea of management of complex change processes.

The proposal of an Italian program of multiple, multilevel, multi-institutional, participative program of redesigning services supported by central government but conducted by local public management allied with Universities, service firms, . The provisional name given to that program is “Acropolis 2006”.

Medicine and norms: some forgotten issues
di *Patrick Castel*

Based on the numerous researches conducted on quality in the lucrative sectors, and on some too rare empirical works conducted in the healthcare systems, this article aims at discussing analyses which tend to see the development of norms in the healthcare sector only as a threat for physicians’ autonomy and for the uniqueness of the therapeutic relationship which physicians value. Firstly, this article reasserts the ambivalent nature of any rule, which is at one and the same time device for control and for protection and, thus, for negotiation. Secondly, it shows that it is fruitful to study the link between, on the one hand, guidelines and, on the other hand, the characteristics of medical work and of physicians’ relationships (these characteristics varying according to pathologies). On the one hand, one is then able to show evidence of different factors which impact physicians’ adherence (or rejection) to these norms. On the other hand, this approach allows underlining that the introduction of medical norms does not only impact power relationships between physicians and non-physicians but also on the relationships between physicians themselves.

The Management of change: the contribution of organizational sociology
di *Erhard Friedberg*

Is *the management of change* (MoC) in an organization really a problem any more? In the last twenty years change has ceased to be a problem and has become a perma-

ment state in the way business operates. However, appearances can be wrong. There is a problem of the MoC. Organizational change is indeed the process of bringing about and monitoring the transformation of what Philip Selznick (1998) called an organization's "operative system", i.e. the unexpected result of managerial decisions or prescriptions and of their reception by those who are the targets of the decisions or prescriptions. It is therefore simultaneously a resource and a constraint for the design and the implementation of change. The relevance of sociological intervention for MoC essentially lies in its capacity to produce interesting and challenging results of research capable of forcing actors to acknowledge the characteristics of the operative system. Sociological intervention transforms what, at the outset, may appear to be just a technical problem into the far more complex and difficult political problem of reconfiguring the operative system. This kind of knowledge is in fact the only genuinely sociological input into the process of change.

Uncertainty and the governance of organizational change

di *Anna Grandori*

Traditional approaches to the management of organizational change, both of the strategic planning type and of the experiential and incremental type, have limited power in explaining and guiding change occurring under strong uncertainty (where future appropriate actions are unknown, eventually even when the relevant future states of the world have been observed) and radically innovative change (whereby actions that are new in kind are to be discovered). Three possible new approaches to the governance of organizational change are explored in this contribution that may overcome these limitations, as they are derived from emerging models of the organization itself, suitable for conditions of uncertainty that are stronger than those envisaged in the past. They are: change by infusion of organizational practices; change by structural alternance; and change generated by stability in organizational core contracts.

Evaluating e-governance projects in India: a focus on micro-level implementation

di *Shirin Madon*

Today, a wide range of e-governance projects are being implemented in developing countries including projects aimed at reaching areas and people that had traditionally not been connected to the outside world. However, so far the evaluation of e-governance projects has been mainly concerned with measuring the provision of resources and infrastructure which has provided little assistance to policy-makers in terms of understanding changes in processes of governance and improvements in the well-being of citizens. In this chapter, we argue that many of the weaknesses of existing approaches to evaluating e-governance projects can be overcome by revisiting two important but neglected concepts in the literature – *process* and *value*. These concepts which can only be understood by focusing on the implementation of projects as they unfold at the micro-level, can help in promoting other kinds of criteria in the assessment of e-government activity which have hitherto been neglected. We draw on our current study of e-governance activity in the South Indian state of Kerala to provide the potential for critical reflection and with it learning to redefine the scope of e-governance evaluation to enable more effective policy directives.

Change Management: a Frame of Reference
di Gianfranco Rebori e Eliana Minelli

Contemporary society is subject to phenomena such as globalisation, economic and industrial decline, demographic transition, and others that drive organisations to change. Nevertheless, failure of innovation and change projects performed inside organisations in all countries is almost 70%. The causes do not seem to be so much related to the characteristics of the external forces that drive change as to internal reasons. A change management approach may support organisational players in coping with the change process in a mindful way. By change management we mean an intervention methodology based on the observation of a realistic picture of the actual situation which is being transformed. This approach requires specific pluridisciplinary professional competences integrated in a systemic perspective.

The interpretation and comprehension of the change process is helped by the use of a frame of reference that highlights the critical variables and relationships between them in order to help in identifying room for manoeuvre for a positive management of the process and bring about a more analytical interpretation, which permit the spotting up into sub-processes. According to our frame of reference, there are three sub-processes of change: the learning process, power management, and the development of resources. Although they have very different logics and courses, they are interrelated and influence one another, producing an overall outcome. As well as the three sub-processes two powerful factors work inside the organisation: inertia and change agents. Inertia is the tendency of existing structures and organisational functions to persist, even if they are inefficient and of no use for official purposes. Analysis of successful change management experiences shows the importance of the role of change agents in overcoming and winning the natural or invented forms of inertia. Finally, the change processes are rooted in and nourished by the relationships between organisations and the environment, producing forces which put pressure on the corporate structure and turn out to be driving forces for strategic and organisational change.

The failure of a Knowledge-sharing technology in an educational organization
di Immacolata Romano

This paper proposes a case study about the failure of a Knowledge-sharing technology in an educational organization. The dissatisfaction of theoretical speculation, concerning the technology, in different way constructionist or «conflationist», urges us to explore the alternative theory of the Critical Realism of Margaret Archer. Archer's (morphogenetic) elaboration of the human agent and of its faculty of reflexive mediation ("internal conversation") *vis à vis* the structural pushes (*i.e.* technology) will be drawn upon. The exploration of these conversations opens the gates of the idiosyncratic internal or mind world of the user, who is being none other than a «human being» (having its own personal and social identity, as much its reasonings as its passions, its immediate and "ultimate" concerns). The user *subjectively* evaluates the *objective* characteristics of technology, whose use and no-use is set by him/her. The result of this seminal employment to a "technological case" of realist approach is surely incomplete and leaves many open questions. However it encourages us to follow the path of listening to «internal conversations» that seem to throw a clearer and more "human" light on the «mechanism of mediation» between reflexive agency and technology.