Stream 15

Alternative ways of organizing – towards a new world order or conformity?

Conveners
Christian Schröder, University of Luxembourg, Luxembourg, christian.schroeder@uni.lu
Mikko Laamanen, Grenoble Ecole de Management, France, mikko.laamanen@grenoble-em.com
Christopher Land, University of Leicester, UK, chris.land@leicester.ac.uk

(see submission instructions at the end of the call)

It has become commonplace to claim that contemporary societies are marked by constant change and organizational innovation. In many areas of social life, traditional bureaucracies with their hierarchical role structures and preplanned operations appear outdated. Alternative forms of organizing, such as virtual, hybrid, partial, networked-formed, project-based or post-bureaucratic organizations, have been promoted to challenge traditional forms of organization. Whilst there have been many studies suggesting that these innovations have intensified control and domination in the workplace (Fleming, 2014), there is danger that analysts might throw the baby out with bathwater, rejecting the emancipatory and democratic potential in such organizational changes by focusing only on their negative aspects. Through their ephemeral nature and fluidity, emergent, alternative forms of organization may have the potential to engender creativity and radical innovation, serve the common good, and enhance democratic participation in organizations (Parker et al., 2014).

In contrast to most for-profit forms of network organization, social movements can be considered as prototypes of progressive alternative organizations, embodying forms of social (dis)order that challenge hegemonies. In their organizational forms, social movements struggle to balance between decided and emergent order (den Hond et al., 2015; Freeman, 1972) as tendencies on the trajectory between decentralization of networks and formality of organizations (Schröder, 2015; Sutherland, Land & Böhm, 2014). Formalization, while providing effectiveness of structure, can thwart movement ideals and goals by replacing these with a preoccupation of structure, leadership positions, and procedure (Michels, 1965), or by subordinating the lived processes of organizing to future goals and outcomes, thereby reproducing an instrumental logic of means-end organizing that has been inherited from more conventional political parties, as well as for-profit businesses.

In this stream, we want to examine and reflect on the potentials and pitfalls of 'organizing otherwise'. Papers will draw upon the experiences of social movements and other alternative organizations, as well as hybrid organizations and more commercially orientated post-bureaucracies, to analyse the tension between tendencies toward 'permanent' organizational disorder, and emergent forms of stability; between the potential for creating more emancipatory organizational forms and practices, and the incorporation of 'alternatives' into a new, hegemonic organizational imaginary that produces conformity.

We particularly welcome papers covering topics such as:

- Parallels and differences between the contemporary capitalist organisational forms in the business world, and anti-capitalist forms of organising in social movements;
- The promotion of individualism, competition, and private ownership, and the consequent erosion of social life and political participation evoked by these new organizational forms, and how these exist alongside, and in tension with, emergent forms of solidarity, for example communities of practice, brand communities, or corporate culture programmes;
- Comparisons of traditional and new alternatives, for new (and even newer) social movements compared with the old social movements, or political parties compared with the occupy movement, Black Lives Matter or social forums, or recuperated and occupied factories compared with more traditional workers' cooperatives;
- Ways of balancing a certain stage of organizational transition between fragmentation and formalization that is marked by unlearning, dissolution, decomposition but also accompanied by processes of growth, transformation, and the reformulation of old elements in new patterns (Turner 1993, p. 49).

References

den Hond, F., de Bakker, F. G. A., & Smith, N. (2015). Social movements and organizational analysis. In M. Diani & D. della Porta (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements* (pp. 291-305). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Fleming, P. (2014) *Resisting Work: The Corporatization of Life and Its Discontents*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Michels, R. (1965/1911). Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy. New York, NY: Free Press.

Parker, M., Cheney, G., Fournier, V., & Land, C. (Eds.) (2014). *The Routledge Companion to Alternative Organization*. London, UK: Routledge.

Schröder, Christian (2015): Das Weltsozialforum. Eine Institution der Globalisierungskritik zwischen Organisa-tion und Bewegung [The World Social Forum: An Institution of the Global Justice Movements between Organi-zation and Movement]. Bielefeld: Transcript.

Sutherland, N., C. Land and S. Böhm (2014) 'Anti-leaders(hip) in Social Movement Organizations: The Case of Autonomous Grassroots Groups', *Organization*, 21(6): 759-781.

Submission instructions

A submission to this research stream should be a 500-word abstract that illustrates the theoretical/empirical approach and contribution to the study of alternative organizing. The word limit is excluding references.

The deadline for submission of abstracts is January 31, 2017. Please submit the abstract by sending it to the convenors per email (christian.schroeder@uni.lu, mikko.laamanen@grenoble-em.com and chris.land@leicester.ac.uk).

The acceptance of the abstracts is communicated by February 28, 2017.