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Introduction to the Special Issue *Management of Change*

Change has been the subject of research on organizations, strategies and economies since its beginning. And rightly so, because change is an essential feature of any social system and especially of enterprises. There has been much progress in management and organization theory the last decades (contingency theory, configuration theory, decision theory, resource dependence theory, institutional economics, sociological institution theory etc.) and with that, new and interesting explanations about organizational change have been proposed. Unfortunately, these theories with few exceptions (e.g. population ecology, evolutionary organization theory, complexity theory) are not primarily focused on change processes. Thus, explaining organizational change with these theories is only some kind of a by-product. So a fresh look on the intrinsic aspects of change process would be desirable. One promising approach is to look at core mechanisms that trigger and stabilize social and economic change. The first half of this issue will address this theme.

Another important topic of change theory is the interplay of change processes on different social levels, a question which up to now has not satisfactorily been dealt with. Regrettably no paper on this subject has been submitted so here we only can mention its importance. Beside theoretical questions there are a lot of urging empirical problems resulting from far reaching change processes with regard to technology, competition, institutions and behaviors. The accelerating change and increasing complexity of organizations' environments pose new challenges for the management of organizations. Organizations have to build up resilient structures and intelligent management strategies to survive and develop. From a managerial point of view, dealing with change involves an assessment of the organization's position in the change process: is the organization initiating or adapting to the change, does the change process initially concern the environment (external) or the organization (internal) and how do internal and external changes interact? Thus, management of change is about identifying, adapting to and initiating change processes within and outside the organization and aligning structure and strategy of the organization with its environment. Managing change involves reflecting on structure and strategy of the organization and on the co-development of organization and environment. Management of change encompasses initiation of change (which mechanisms are involved in turning one state of a 'system' into another), resistance to change (what are barriers to change on an individual, organizational and environmental level, how is it possible to withstand misleading change pressures), and adaptation to change (which measures are necessary to cope with change and how can they be implemented). The second half of this issue deals with change processes in the light of some theoretical approaches and in specific decision areas of change management.

In our *Call for papers* we invited contributions to a special issue focusing on the *management of change,* thereby referring to *initiating* and *coping with* change both of the or-

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ganization's *environment* and of the *organization* itself. While the Call sought manuscripts focusing on change, many submissions dealt with change only in the margins.

The articles accepted for this special issue cover mechanisms of change, behavioural aspects of change, types of change and an in-depth case study of a strategic change process.

The introductory article by *Albert Martin, Ursula Weisenfeld, and Sigrid Bekmeier-Feuerhahn* describes mechanisms as key for triggering and directing deep-seated social change processes. One and the same mechanism might be employed in several theories but it is the focus on the *mechanism* that allows opening the 'black box' and giving causal explanations.

The following three articles each focus on one particular mechanism: *Sigrid Bekmeier-Feuerhahn* presents *Teleology* as a fundamental principle in driving behaviour and as such being key in initiating and accompanying change. *Ursula Weisenfeld* points out that *Serendipity* is a potential mechanism of change not only in the development of science but also in management areas such as technology management, strategy and organization. Finally, *Albert Martin* describes *Dialectics* as an eminent and essential force in social life and shows its role in change processes.

The 5th and 6th articles deal with resistance to change: *Claudia Peus, Dieter Frey, Marit Gerkhardt, Peter Fischer, and Eva Traut-Mattausch* investigate why and under what conditions change is met with resistance and what likely success factors are. *Gerold Behrens and Maria Neumaier* provide a theoretical framework for the explanation of individual habit change and discuss the role of motion in changing behavioral patterns.

The conceptual article of *Jürgen Deeg* takes a closer look at evolutionary and revolutionary change theories with the intention to link the two approaches. Finally, *Markus Reihlen, Sascha Albers, and Tuulia Kewitz* use a case study approach to further the understanding of internationalization as a strategic change process: Analyzing the development of the Deutsche Treuhand Gesellschaft, the authors identify three archetypes of the international organization.

Together, the papers in this issue contribute to a complex topic and provide stimuli for further research.