

## Political ecology of academic communications

The first editorial in the first issue of *Journal of Organizational Change Management* in 2017 (30.1) opens with a name of a non-existent discipline of academic inquiry, namely, a “political ecology”. The name may be unknown, but the discipline of academic inquiry is not. Most of us, practicing academic professionals in a dense network of research and teaching institutions and projects, are quite clearly aware of the environments and contexts in which we try to contribute to the growth of knowledge and to improve our understanding of ourselves and others. Two characteristics of this growing awareness of our evolving ways and means of knowledge production (and consumption) are most relevant to us. First, that knowledge production (and consumption) are processes, which cannot be reduced to a fixed and universal set of abstract formulae.  $E=mc^2$  has lost eternal shine and acquired a temporary, negotiable halo. Second, that the flow of events and sense-makings, interactions and communications, that is reality viewed as an ebb and flow of everything, evolves. This multiple stream, which would be visible only if we could reach a bat’s view from nowhere – evolves. It “eVolves” in a way which make history and biology master domains of inquiry exporting their intellectual machinery to the other specialists in reflection and redrawing the borders of inquiry every day and night. If we look into the advanced resource books of intercultural communication (cf. Holliday *et al.*, 2004), we see already the new scaffolding for studying cultural contexts – with identifying, otherizing and representing as the main new streams of self-reflection. If one looks for the artistic visions of this new political ecology of our communications (of which academic conversations are but a small part), let him or her look at the Tower of Palazzo Strozzi in Florence. The Chinese dissident Artist Ai Wei Wei nailed bright orange life-saving rafts to the top of this elegant monument to the Italian Renaissance. Rafts like these are used daily to save the lives of hundreds of thousands who cross the Mediterranean Sea migrating from the Middle East and Africa to Europe and frequently have to be rescued. Rafts displayed like this remind us that we cannot isolate ourselves in closed circuits of tourist attractions, but have to face the evolving environment of conspicuous consumption, untenable inequalities and the changing context of our knowledge production and consumption.

*JOCM* opens with Anders Kryger’s “Strategy development through interview technique from narrative therapy.” Interviewing certainly evolves far beyond the confines of a therapeutic technique and becomes an increasingly important instrument of reality checking, exactly because it allows researchers, managers, trainers or therapists to measure the dependence of interviewees on shifting contexts and their frames of reference. Rui-Ting Huang, Hsi-Sheng Sun, Chia-Hua Hsiao and Ching-Wen Wang offer insights into the most common resistance to organized change – “Minimizing counterproductive work behaviors: the role of self-determined motivation and perceived job insecurity in organizational change.” J. Ruben Boling, Donna Taylor Mayo and Marilyn M. Helms write about “Complementarity merger as a driver of change and growth in higher education” (shifting our attention from interviews and job insecurity to an evolving design of educational institutions). Susanne Kjørbeck writes on “Positioning and change in a hospital ward,” drawing our attention to the world’s second largest bureaucracy (after educational one) – namely, to the health service supersystems. Yue Zhang, Qiaozhuan Liang and Peihua Fan write about “Strategic core change, faultlines and team flux: insights from punctuated equilibrium model” (adding a behavioral flavor to the analysis of organizational environment in times of change). Jesse Campbell writes on “Red tape and transformation leadership: an organizational



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echelons perspective” – one can hardly imagine a discussion of organizational change these days without “leadership” being mentioned. Last not least, the first two papers of the intended special issue on management and the media – these first two papers from a file collected by Barbara Czarniawska and Jan Kreft are Roman Batko and Jan Kreft’s “The superfluosness of CSR in media organizations. Conclusions from public radio research in Poland” and Saleh Al Humaidan’s and Valerie Sabatier “Strategic renewal in times of environmental scarcity: the mediating role of technology in business model evolution”. Environmental scarcity is an ambiguous term, but it certainly belongs to the emerging political ecology of all communications, including the academic ones. Happy 2017, anyway!

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**Reference**

Holliday, A., Hyde, M. and Kullman, J. (2004), *Intercultural Communication. An Advanced Resource Book*, Routledge, London and New York, NY.