Organizational change is a central and almost "inevitable" theme in theories and books on business organization, on psychology of the organization, on human resources management. This is because every organizational reality, however "frozen" within the confines of an institutional definition, is primarily a social reality, populated by people and, as such, subject to constant, unavoidable and often invisible changes. However, the manner in which the change takes shape and the way in which the processes of change are recounted, studied and interpreted, can be many and varied.

The methods of change studied extensively by the "mainstream" and more established theories on change management concern, for example, the ways/forms (incremental, radical, discontinuous) in which it occurs, organizational processes and decision with which the change takes place (steps, time, actors, decisions, effects, etc..), the problems of resistance and barriers to change and management techniques to overcome them and being able to effectively reach the goals.

Moreover, the dominant managerial studies focus on the internal and external drivers that push the management to undertake change projects, and on programmed situations in which organizational change is triggered: corporate turnarounds and new strategies, technological innovations, introduction of new products-services and/or processes (ICT, automation, dematerialization of production processes, etc..), entry in new and culturally different markets, mergers & acquisitions, entry of new ownership and new management, inter-organizational relations, networks and agreements between enterprises, but also, in the world of small and medium businesses, events such as dimensional growth, generational succession or the grafting of professional management team in business, etc.

In light of the well known contributions of dominant management theory, it seems nevertheless important to highlight how this approach, which sees the change as an "objective", "impartial" and often self-centered reality, ordered and directed deterministically by management (Tsoukas and Chia, 2002; Alvesson, Wilmott, 1992), neglects or is unable to focus, if not indirectly in a superficial and often vague way, many aspects that should be considered central in this fundamental and critical steps in the organizational life.

In a "critical" perspective, but not necessarily opposed to the most common settings of study (Gray, 2007), the contributions aimed at deepening certain dimensions of organizational change analysis in a less self-centered and deterministic way, can be very stimulating for the enrichment of organizational and managerial knowledge and practice. In particular, they should help to bring out
issues and research methods useful to enrich, supplement, or undermine (if necessary) the consolidated approach, both from the standpoint of content as well as the reflexes that follow. In other words, a critical approach tends to denaturalize organizational change, suggesting that models of change are often the product of an alliance of different interest groups in an organization (Badham and Buchanan, 1999). In this perspective, the models of change are politically engaged: the generation of new models of organizational change is often a way different groups can seek to advance their interest, consolidating the status quo, in terms of power relations (Morgan and Spicer, 2009; Spicer, Alvesson and Karreman, 2009).

Power aspects also help to understand the mechanisms by which managerially ordered and determined versions of reality come into existence. As a concept, “change” has a powerful rhetorical role, particularly where it is colonized by corporate and political groups. This can include a “positioning” effect for those who claim to be agents of change, placing them in charge of the direction of events, making them judges of the efforts of others and able to unite their goals with general goals, so that wider energies and resources are channelled into their interests (Bloomfield and Danieli, 1995). Particular groups like management gurus and consultants have become specialists in organizational change and are skilled at developing persuasive narratives that play on managerial anxieties, or models that confront the uncertainties of change with promises of control and rationality (Collins, 1998; Fincham, 1999).

Change can thus be both rhetorical and real. The language of change allies with other modern organizational ideas (leadership, vision, learning, performance) that now constitute a positive and effective managerial language – and we can say it is a core purpose of Critical Management Studies to challenge this and develop alternatives (e.g. Contu and Willmott, 2003). There are also concrete processes instigated by senior groups as types of change that are more easily controlled and that perhaps pre-empt other kinds of change that may be more egalitarian and serve wider constituencies.

In this stream, we would welcome both empirical and theoretical papers that contribute to expanding critical research on organizational change by offering one or more of the following contributions:

- Participation and identity in the processes of change;
- Transparency, language, communication (internal and external) and managerial rhetoric in organizational change;
- Analysis of power and interests involved (internal and external) in the processes of change;
- Interpersonal conflicts between managers and other stakeholders involved in organizational change;
- Intentional versus involuntary processes of organizational change;
- Intercultural dialogue emerging (intra and extra-firm) in organizational change;
- Critical aspects about managerial techniques aimed to support change projects;
- Managerial fashion, mimesis and cultural isomorphism in organizational change projects;
- Critical comparison between change projects and actual results;
- The political uses of change narratives and programmes to empower managerial groups;
- Different kinds of change processes and definitions with different implications for corporate power groups versus wider organizational members.

KEY WORDS:
Change (discourse dimension and “material” dimension), power structure and politics, managerial control, technological change, participation.
SELECTED REFERENCES

SUBMISSIONS
We invite abstracts of maximum **1000 words**, on A4 paper format, single spaced, 12 point font. They should be submitted to Robin Fincham, Stirling University - robin.fin cham@stir.ac.uk and Paolo de Vita, Università degli Studi del Molise - devita@unimol.it, by **30th November 2010**.

Convenor’s biographies:

**Paolo de Vita** is Full Professor of Business Organization, Human Resource Management and Retail Organization at the University of Molise – Faculty of Economics. He taught at the University of Naples “Federico II” – Faculty of Economics. His research interests are focused on strategic and organizational analysis of industrial and service systems (railway industry, transport services, fashion business, retail) and marketing management and organization. He is a member of the Italian Academic Association of Business and Accounting “AIDEA”. At Cesit – Centro Studi e Ricerche sui Sistemi di Trasporto Collettivi - Naples (a consortium among main railway
organizations) he managed research groups and conducted studies on the strategic, competitive and organizational evolution of Italian and international railway manufacturers and carriers.

Recent references


**Robin Fincham** is Professor of Organizational Behaviour at Stirling University Management School. His research interests include studies of management consultancy and management knowledge, and more recently expert labour, knowledge work and the professions.