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**Organization & Management –
in a development perspective**

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Organization

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Management and Organizing

Management builds on principles for organizing task performance…

What makes it interesting to address the phenomenon of management development is the assumption that management has an important bearing on the performance of the organization. Management development thus involves creating the best possible conditions in the organization for identifying and managing appropriately and efficiently the objectives and tasks constituting the raison d'être of the organization. Therefore, management development is not to develop managers. Management development is developing the organizational management processes. This means that organizational management processes become the pivots and single out the critical correlation between management and organizing.

Much management literature addresses management and organizing separately. Theories and models are describing varied organizational structures and forms of organizing. Theories and models are formulated describing diverse management roles and diverse forms of management behavior. This is usually done in different books (…chapters) or in journals. Management and organizing are assumed describable and manageable, as phenomena in their own right and as in part independent of reality. In effect, management can develop its own ideas about roles and appropriate behavior, and management can develop its understanding of various solutions to the organization's needs for structure and organizing of task performance. In this light, management development often becomes a question of 'equipping' management to identify and implement appropriate organizational 'solutions'.

However, over the last years an understanding of the relation between management and organizing different from the means-end relation has emerged, which views management and organizing as mutually preconditioning.

Understanding management and organizing as mutually preconditioning has important consequences for the question of management development. Basically, it implies that management development cannot be handled as isolated activities that teach managers to manage. It also means that the application of organizational principals is not a freely accessible repertoire that any management can make use of regardless of management tradition.

When the managers of the organization form part of the managerial tasks over time, a range of frameworks and conditions for the everyday life in the organization becomes tangible. The 'ordinary' task performance reflects an implicit management model. In most cases, this management model is the result of the way in which work is organized. In the bureaucratic organization, the management model is thus closely tied to administrative procedures and the monitoring of task performance embedded in a professional hierarchy. In the knowledge-based professional organization, the management model is closely tied to the collegial, mutual coordination embedded in the development of a matrix structure. In a matrix structure, the management team is by no means free to introduce direct surveillance and detailed administrative procedures. And the management team in a professional hierarchy is by no means free to implement mutual coordination as a principle of management.

The two illustrations are, of course, coarse and caricatures. But hopefully the fundamental observation is clear. Management principles and organizing forms are not only closely bound up with each other; they appear in a mutually constituting process in which it is impossible to say which came first: the management principle or the organizing form.

Concurrently with task performance being refined and professionalized, certain conditions are developed, on the one hand, for the organizing of work (various forms of division of work, professional specialization, grouping and placing of employees, etc.). Concurrently with the task performance being refined and professionalized, a management process is developed which enables coordination and utilization of various employees' experiences and qualifications.

Concurrently with the organizing of work being formalized, the management process is standardized correspondingly. Concurrently with the management process being standardized, the organizing form is formalized correspondingly.

Viewed in a larger perspective, the process is one of 'structuration' from which management and organizing emerge as interdependencies. The organization should be understood as a self-sustaining system. The more organizing becomes formalized, the more the management process freezes. The more the management process becomes standardized, the more the organizing of the organization

freezes. It is thus quite justifiable to question the traditional understanding of management and organizing as two different issues. Over time, the organization adapts to itself. Task performance, division of work, and coordination create their own conditions for a development that at first is not reflecting changed conditions in the environment or displacements in relation to market and competitors, but rather reflects the dominant interdependencies created internally in the organization.

Therefore, management development is organizational development, which again is management development…

Context and Capacity
Management builds on knowledge

Management processes can be understood as ways of transforming information. Knowledge of local conditions, understandings of the nature of tasks, observations of collegial qualifications and available resources are examples of information being transformed in the management process. By translating observations and understandings to management principles, information becomes organizational knowledge.

In this context, information should be understood as *the lowest difference that makes a difference… and which the system can manage*. This means that the management process unfolds around the observation of phenomena and events occurring during the everyday task performance. Phenomena and events that are surprising, different or remarkable and which are manageable within the established local practice. Therefore, knowledge is closely tied to the local conditions for the management process.

The management process addresses a mixture of established, formalized situations ('grounds') and events and phenomena ('figures') requiring attention. In the everyday task performance certain types of information are given priority and become temporary 'figures' of managerial work… or the text around which the management task is currently formulated. An illustration of this could be that published statistics of recruitment problems related to small cohorts of particular years become a 'figure' in the management process, which spills over into a range of organizational issues, such as

the managing of appraisal interviews and the division of specialized tasks. When information is thus given priority and put-into-speech, other organizational issues are reduced to (back)'ground' and reflect the context that governs managerial attention and formulates the agenda. Referring to the above illustration, this may, for example, mean that quality control and action plans lose attention and organizational import for a while at the same time as appraisal interviews and task division are assigned higher status in the organization.

The management puts-into-speech various themes as figures in the organizing process. The prioritization of information reflects which issues are currently allocated attention (for practical or symbolic reasons), and makes it possible to read indirectly the impact of the organizational context (and the assumptions about correlation and local conditions which make the figures stand as surprising). Thus, 'figure and ground' not only single out the difference between phenomena in focus and phenomena subject to a bounded managerial 'blindness of aspect'.

The discussion identifies how the context contributes to constitute the actual 'text' – how 'ground' contributes to draw the outlines of the figures transformed into management information. The discussion identifies how the figures construct the contrast to the evident and naturally occurring (the 'ground') – how the text profiles a quite specific context. In other words, the problems placed on the managerial agenda reflect the current focus. In effect the importance of other organizational issues is reduced. Simultaneously the managerial agenda reflects, with its current spectrum of problems put-into-speech, the organizational conditions within which the management process takes place.

Figure and ground – text and context – are thus mutually constituting just as management and organizing are. Knowledge about the local business conditions is thus a transformation of information through which management evokes the interdependency of privileged phenomena and ordinary practice. Knowledge is thus contextual and not personalized in the single organization.

The consequence of establishing knowledge as non-personalized and linked to the organizational context is significant. It implies abandoning the dream about 'the perfect player'. Within the local organizing, framework conditions are established for the unfolding of managerial professionalism and knowledge. Each individual contributes with experiences and qualifications – but these are

unfolded legitimately and appropriately through the interdependencies characterizing the local practice. Thus, the principles for managing and organizing in the concrete organization contribute to unfold the personal resources with which the individual contributes. In other words, the context delivers the individual's capacity to play a pivotal role in performing the company's tasks. It is no contingency that the football player, who is a skillful dribbler, may not always succeed in demonstrating his technical skills after having been bought by another football team. The change from one team to another may be the change in context (local conditions for line-up and attacking system) that renders impossible the unfolding of his technical skills. Being skilled at dribbling is not an isolated personal skill, but one that the individual player unfolds in interaction with the management and the organizing principles of the club/the team.

As such organizational development is an expression of co-production – and management development an expression of co-construction: Co-production implies the assumption about future organizational situations as being created actively through the everyday relations and task-based collaboration (the concrete action-based community). Co-construction implies the assumption that future management processes emerge from the knowledge connected with putting into speech a managerial agenda (the abstract community based on symbols).

The Idea of Management
Management builds on the assumption of control

Management and organizing are attempts to develop a division of labor, which is manageable and facilitates the management of complex and multiple tasks and problems. Inherent in the management's self-knowledge is its vital role to 'control'. Thus to be professional, to 'master' is often expressing the capacity of being able to manage appropriately one's own resources and those of others in relation to expected task performance.

As management and organizing are interdependent, we can observe how different organizing forms define different principles for managing. Implicit in formal organizing forms is the idea about the 'machine metaphor'. That is, a managing principle based on linear and causal relations, such as in the professional, authority-based organizations in which the idea of management is to 'control'

contents, tasks, and solutions. In bureaucracies, for example, the idea of management is based on the roles and status of the hierarchy.

Embedded in these examples of formal organizing forms is an assumption about managing through clear rules, codes, and standards. Clarification of competencies, job descriptions, action plans, budgets, and milestones are diverse illustrations of this form of organizational rationality. This type of management is essentially based on the manager's ability to assess work processes on the basis of the necessary means-end descriptions offered by a range of 'systems' for monitoring task performance. Problems arrive before solutions; objectives before plans; questions arrive before answers and knowledge before actions… and the basis for management's ability to monitor, correct, and sanction is to create transparency.

On this backdrop ideas about management development are transformed into the construction of increasingly comprehensive, efficient, and operational 'systems' that metaphorically speaking expand the manager's sensory apparatus to capture and analyze still more complex and wide-ranging organizational information. But the multitude of accessible information is currently growing exponentially (out of proportion) compared to the possibilities of converting information into meaningful insight.

But there are other types of management principles, despite the widespread belief that the alternative to the linear and causal leads directly to anarchy and chaos. The intuitive expectation is that the alternative to linear and causal control is equivalent to no control.

An important alternative to the formal idea of management is the idea about desisting from controlling contents. An alternative management principle can thus be described as framework- and process control. Here the managerial challenge is to risk letting go of monitoring and direct influence on decisions and solutions. Instead the managerial task becomes one of creating framework conditions and to facilitate development processes, which expand the action space of employees. Here the rule of the thumb is that the more open 'contents' is, the more essential is management by framework and processes. The more management leaves analyses, assessments, and decisions to groups of employees, the more essential it becomes that it offers and maintains clear, well-structured, and authorized framework conditions for the work process.

Managing by framework and process means abandoning the ambition to control actors. Instead of regulating contents and employees, the managerial challenge becomes one of regulating framework conditions and relations. It becomes less interesting to recruit the right employee, to control the individual employee – and more important to develop organizational conditions that enable networks of colleagues to establish appropriate and efficient professional relations to the benefit of the work community. 'Communities of Practice' or concrete action-based communities are thus networks of professional relations that emerge within the clear and well-justified frameworks for task performance stipulated by management.

In keeping with the argument that management and organizing are mutually constitutive, we can observe that different management principles are not merely the outcome of different management processes, but require different organizational conditions.

Against this background, management development is about organizing pockets in the organization within which management by framework and process is practicable. Working with an alternative idea about management would provide the space of opportunities within which management processes and organizing forms can inspire one another to abandon the ambition of 'being able to control'.

Resistance to Change
Management builds on movement

Today, there is a strong focus on the management of change. Talking about management of change is nevertheless misleading. Management *is* change and the concept is thus almost tautological: management of change… change of management… management of management. Only in a bizarre world of stagnation and fixed structures does it make sense to talk about management of change. The normal everyday conditions of the organization involve constant movement. The apparent stability and consistency characterizing the organization is not owing to failure of displacement and variability, but solely reflects the myriad of non-coordinated local processes that mutually hold each other in a grip of practical relations that combined construct the organizational order.

In the same way as focus is directed towards management of change, we can observe an informed discourse on 'resistance to change'. Managers, in particular, talk about resistance. All things considered there is no other organizational resistance than natural and sensible reactions to the initiatives that management might implement. Apart from a slight conservatism (man as a self-sustaining system), which is almost a common human feature, it is quite misleading to talk about resistance to change as a phenomenon identifiable in the organization. The resistance that any active management may encounter should rather be seen as behavior induced by management's own process. When managerial initiatives are out of tune with the organizational relations and interdependencies, the planned, goal-directed and –managed process is rendered difficult. Experiencing this as resistance is a semantic trick, which shades the recognition of management development and organizational conditions as being mutually constitutive and put out of balance if one part of the relation unfolds pronounced and persistent atypical patterns.

The managerial challenge is thus not resistance to change, the organizational problem is the idea about what management can 'plan, goal-direct and control in terms of contents'.

The discussion of the conditions for organizational development seems to be subject to a pathological rationality. It leaves no room for doubt that management processes demonstrate that initiatives, the contents of which is determined centrally, create organizational resistance. At the same time, the dominant managerial rhetoric reflects that there is too little time for managing by frameworks and for easing the short deadline. Therefore, the responsible management chooses to continue to stake on initiatives the contents of which is determined centrally and with a short deadline… fully knowing that this creates resistance to change and hence increases the probability of the process failing. This attitude of 'more of the same' is pathological in the sense that it illustrates self-fuelling destructive processes, which we normally associate with complex pathological pictures, such as alcoholism. Every time an initiative fails or is contained, the pattern is repeated a bit more vigorously employing more drastic means (sanctions in a broad sense).

The unintended side-effect of repeating the same pattern is that the most significant consequence of the managerial process tending towards 'more of the same' (with increasingly stronger means) is that the organization's network of local relations and interdependencies develops still better capacities for 'managing' new management initiatives. In effect the organizing becomes a learning

organization (in reverse) which develops a repertoire for interpreting, containing or directly counteracting future management initiatives.

In view of the discussion of the need for abandoning the control of tasks and actors, the consequence is to desist from change processes the aim of which are to change actors or their understanding of work-related contents. Instead the pivot of change becomes an alternative management process, the major purpose of which is to develop the perspective and repertoire of management enabling it to implement initiatives that unfold on the premises of existing organizational conditions. Managing by framework and process thus becomes the precondition for a change process that leaves room for actors to develop new and more appropriate understandings of their organizational practice within their local, concrete action-based communities. The management cannot change the employees, but merely create opportunities, which increase the probability that groups of employees decide to think, feel, and act differently.

Against this backdrop management development becomes a serious issue. It becomes evident that only in exceptional situations is management development equivalent to 'taking a tough line' or 'controlling employees'. A recurring focus on management development serves better the objective and long-time perspective of the organization. The development of management is precisely not reserved for formal managers only, but reflects the need for providing the opportunity for the active and efficient unfolding of management processes in the everyday task performance. This is the precondition for management processes and organizing forms that match – and this is only practicable through explicit and sustained management by framework and process.

The Management Relation
Management builds on the managing of micro-processes

There is a decisive difference between management and leadership. Crudely speaking management builds on attention toward perspectives in the environment, institutional forces, macro-structures and general systems related to operations and task performance. Management is about the ability and will to mark direction, take action and providing the necessary resources in the process. In focus are decisions and results. Management singles out orientation toward micro-processes, local relations, and behavioral patterns within the network of the organization. It is about the

understanding of and the capacity to demonstrating the will to manage through others, to set the frameworks and manage processes that combine resources and create new opportunities.

It is not surprising that task performance and growth require both management and leadership.

Management is convertible into systems and standards, while leadership processes are consecutive communicative processes through which differences and contrasts are rendered visible and potentially incorporated into the organizing. Leadership is not (as opposed to management) directed toward actors, but rather toward relations among actors.

The traditional focus of the management perspective is the individual as the smallest unit in the organization. On the other hand, the smallest unit of leadership is the dyad. Because relations and processes are the focus of attention, the relation comprises at least two actors who become the smallest and simultaneously the most decisive organizational element.

Embedded in this observation is an apparent paradox. On the one hand the management process is described as the basis for creating room for the Acting Subject to organize his or her understanding of reality and actions. The argument is that man is a self-sustaining system hardly susceptible to anything but reason. On the other hand, leadership focuses on the relation between at least two acting subjects tied together by mutual trust and respect. You could say that here the argument is that the Acting Subject in itself is not an important factor in the process because it always presupposes at least one Important Other.

The paradox dissolves, however, in understanding that the interdependency developed among actors tied to one another through respect and trust precisely express a relation. The relation being the managerial fixed points opens up for a description of how the relation between the Acting Subject (AS) and the Important Other (IO) contains three fundamental processes:
The relation is the foundation for the mutual identification process through which the individual develops his or her 'reason', that is understanding of himself or herself and the surrounding world…
The relation is also the living local process accessible managerially with the ambition of making it possible for the actors to re-organize their current thoughts and repertoire of actions…

And finally the relation is an image of the free and open collegial dialogue through which not only identity and reciprocity (identification) are constituted, but also a communicative process in which ideas about the world, understandings of common organizational conditions are constructed. In other words the outlines of the Collective Third (CT).

In other words we are faced with the importance of the everyday recurrent relations among two or more colleagues in the organization who, over time, attach themselves to each other rationally and emotionally and develop interdependencies. Not only do they need one another to confirm their individual existence and 'value' – they also need one other to maintain the understanding of the organization in a broader sense, which they have jointly developed in order to understand the framework conditions for general task performance. Without this dependency, this mutual respect and trust, the individual would lose both his or her professional identity and common organizational sense, that is his or her ability to form part of, maintain and help develop organizational performance that appears legitimate, appropriate, and consequential. (In practice it is hardly as dramatic as AS typically forms part of several more or less overlapping relations of similar quality).

Not surprisingly these micro-processes are highly conservative. The individual is reluctant to let go of his or her local affiliation as the consequence of breaking off the reciprocal collegial relations equals breaking off the very context of the common sense (text) within which the individual's behavior can be understood. Only reluctantly and through conscious action does the individual leave the local network of collegial relations that both create a common negotiated understanding of the organization and a jointly confirmed presence as a professional.

Management development that fails to address the local relations is thus neither good management nor potentially developing. The management process must start from micro-processes, from the multiple versions of local interdependencies from which the organizational sturdiness and the current order emerge.

Paradoxical Management
> ***Management builds on differences and contrasts***

The notion that success and growth are closely associated with the absence of conflicts and problems is central to our culture. The description of a successful development process often begins by recounting the process as harmonious. In such situations it may prove interesting to consider whether something 'new' or different has happened at all. In other words, if organizational changes are not encountering conflicts and problems, are not triggering local or general conflicts, management should worry about this being perhaps a symbol of 'much having been changed in order to everything to remain unchanged'. The morale is not that 'it must hurt in order to be good' or that 'first we must go through a terrible ordeal'. The point is that the apparent harmony, which originates from the organization's ability to 'adapt itself to itself' means that it cannot change radically without interfering with local interdependencies – without rendering visible differences and conflicting experiences and interests.

Renewal (knowledge) is created through the smallest change (difference) which makes a difference, and which the organization (the system) can handle. This in itself reflects two layers of contrasts. The idea about 'differences' points, in part, toward contrasts and differences being in focus, and in part toward the relationship between the scale and complexity of the change and the organization's capacity for managing it as representing an important fractured surface. No matter whether or not it is within the tradition of the organization, ambitions of development involve rendering visible truces and frontiers negotiated in the past, and the novel is bound to threaten these balances developed locally. For many the known contains problems and conflicts that one has chosen either not to talk about or not to make the object of wailing and complaining rhetoric. Preserving the existing is thus not merely ignorance – but reflects local cultural traits. Despite knowledge about the imperfection of everyday life and its obvious flaws, the uncertainty involved in letting go of the known and meet the alternative may suffice to create spontaneous and emotional resistance.

Therefore, the management process creates its own paradoxes. On the one hand, management and organizing are mutually constitutive. Thus management acts as a text within the context created by the organizational frameworks (and vice versa). On the other hand, challenging the existing organizational conditions is the privilege of management. In effect, management becomes a text that wishes to change the context… a figure that steps forward from the 'ground' and creates a different background for future organizational life. The management is 'doomed' to meet employees where they are, that is to create the frameworks, which enable the local communities to

link to the process. Simultaneously, management focuses on affecting the relations that carry the interdependencies of employees and their local understandings of the organizational conditions. In other words, the management task requires the managing of conflictual roles. Management must activate and acknowledge the importance of local organizational relations – and must at the same time challenge the rationality in which these relations are rooted.

Underlying this management paradox is the fundamental idea that organizational and managerial conditions in a broad sense are describable as a spectrum of antagonisms:

Management must be able to lead the way (show the direction, be manager) simultaneously with staying in the background (create synergy, be leader).

Managerial work implies focus (selecting and delimiting relevant organizational conditions to be re-worked) and creates, at the same time, aspect blindness (reduces other conditions or aspects of other organizational conditions to being immaterial or currently unimportant).

The organizational community is the premise for understanding and spaciousness (creates a local dialogue which carries the construction of 'organization and reality'), and simultaneously becomes the foundation for self-sufficiency and delineation of frontiers (creates balances of interdependencies that refute competing understandings.

The value foundation creates potential behavior carried by consensus (develops a framework of common ideas and actions) simultaneously with becoming the foundation for the inability to act (the absence of disagreement and alternatives create organizational stagnation or rigor).

The organizational culture can be understood as the common organizational basis (the basis of common characteristics enabling the development of meaningful interpretations) and simultaneously as an expression of local organizational barriers (the characteristics obstructing the adaptation of new attitudes and ambitions).

Management development in a paradoxical perspective is thus the art of the impossible. Managing conflictual and incompatible processes seems impossible. Nevertheless, this is precisely the position from which the management development perspective draws its possibilities. It is in the very recognition of the paradoxical that managerial work let go of its superciliousness and self-sufficiency… and thus creates its own foundation for performing the role in a more dialogic and humble way.

The Image of the Manager

Management builds on identification and role models…

Management is not something you are (by means of position or particular status), but something you *take* (take on in a process).

Correspondingly, managerial right, power or authority is not something you have (a thing to 'hit' others with), but something you get (by the way in which you form relations with others).

Managerial work thus involves dual demands. On the one hand, it requires the individual to take on a behavior to which he or she has no pre-given authority. And on the other hand, the individual must enjoy the necessary accept and respect without being in a position to claim so, but which others assign to him or her according to merits. Thus it is through clear and consistent managerial behavior that the paradox dissolves. It is in the everyday processes that managerial work creates the foundation of respect and valued authority, that is the basis for being able to organize development processes that simultaneously stir the organization and challenges its self-knowledge.

Therefore, only in exceptional situations is management development about the development of managers. In most cases it is about developing the organizational frameworks and conditions for management processes in the organization. It is a game in which many can participate, regardless of their formal position and organizational charge. Like in many others situations in life development is about creating something that does not yet exist and has never been seen before (most often this only applies to things or products). Rather development can be seen as a process creating space for the unfolding of existing potentials. Therefore, the limited managerial repertoire that seems to dominate contemporary organizations should not induce the invention of a new variant of the manager role or a new wave of management trends. There are good reasons to stake on expanding the existing (as perceived or rather constructed locally) 'managerial space'.

The everyday managerial processes demonstrate a conventional wisdom, a kind of managerial reason or common sense that implicitly makes it more natural to opt for certain types of attitudes and behavior. This practiced management theory is only formulated retrospectively if arguments for

or broad legitimization of decisions are required. As most social systems are characterized by both incomplete and diffuse organizational feedback, it is not difficult to find one's managerial behavior confirmed in exceptional cases – and for want of better often non-disconfirmed. This prepares the ground for superstitious learning. That is, the explicit lack of consequences and direct feedback forces the individual to construct an interpretation of the appropriateness and effect of managerial work. Due to deficient substantial and concrete information, such interpretations are based on personal assumptions about fundamental relations, on symbolic readings of the few visible organizational movements, and on indirect information on potential effects and consequences.

Any interpretation implies a point of reference. Any reflection on a topical management process also implies an observational position. Being part of the process, the interpreter is often constructing the interpretation by using an external (to the process) 'benchmark' or rather role model. In most cases, such role models will be other actors in management processes, that is other managers with whom one identifies (for better or for worse). Precisely because of the deficient and often contingent feedback, the individual develops a personal standard for assessing the quality of his or her management process by identifying himself or herself with other managers. In effect management development becomes self-contained and reduced to 'manager development' and benchmark in comparison with random and sometimes mediocre types of managers.

The paucity of the present management material (the managers with whom one can choose to identify) unintentionally sets the framework for the type of management processes which one can imagine to take part in or initiate. Rather than attempting to deliver a broad personal potential for management, management behavior is focused as a modeling over a random and limited selection of role models that, at best, creates a mediocre preservation of the existing managerial consensus – and at worst limits the possibilities for transgressing and developing organizationally the management process.

Therefore, management development is about breaking the image of the manager. It is about dissociating oneself from comprehensive studies on what (true) managers think, say, and do. Instead, management development becomes a question of getting personally involved in an organizational learning process together with colleagues in whom one trusts and whom one respects. It is about experimenting, observing, discussing, and correcting. In the end it becomes a

question of daring to construct one's own model, throw identifications into the winds and have the courage of one's convictions and behavior. It is, with a cliché, the necessity of training oneself to 'assume character' rather than 'following in the steps of others'. What applies to human development in general also applies to management development: the only thing one can change is oneself.