



## *Organization Studies*

### **Call for Papers**

### **Special Issue on Paradox, Tensions and Dualities of Innovation and Change**

#### **Guest Editors:**

Miriam Erez (Technion - Israel Institute of Technology)

Sirkka Jarvenpaa (University of Texas at Austin, USA)

Marianne Lewis (University of Cincinnati, USA)

Wendy Smith (University of Delaware, USA)

Paul Tracey (University of Cambridge, UK)

#### **Deadline for Submissions: March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

Innovation, the implementation of creative ideas, begins with the ideation phase of problem identification, idea generation and idea selection for implementation, and continues with mobilizing the idea until it successfully gets to the market. This process raises conflicting demands, contradictory practices and competing views – friction that can energize or inhibit high performance. Today, such challenges are ubiquitous to innovation and change (van Dijk, Berends, Jelinek, Romme and Weggeman, 2011). To adapt to environmental dynamics, managers seek to foster collaboration and control, support individuality and teamwork, ensure flexibility and efficiency, energize novelty and utility, enable radical and incremental innovation, and achieve profit and social responsibility. Indeed, as environments become more fast-paced, global, and competitive and internal processes become more complex, tensions become more evident and intense (Lewis, 2000).

The innovation literature has long recognized the existence of competing demands, including tensions between novelty and usefulness, idea generation and implementation, cooperation versus competition, and exploration and exploitation. In 1988, Quinn and Cameron called for researchers to move beyond oversimplified either/or notions and better explore the competing demands of innovation, entrepreneurship and change. Since then, studies of tensions, dualities, and paradoxes have grown steadily. For example, Garud, Gehman and Kumaraswamy (2011) showed that the ability to embrace multiple orientations at the same time was a core feature of effective innovation, and Smith and Lewis (2011) incorporated a range of perspectives to build a dynamic equilibrium model which explains how seemingly contradictory elements can co-exist within organizations over time. Other organizational scholarship has considered paradox with respect to culture (Johnston and Selsky, 2005), institutions (Wijen and Ansari, 2006), discourse

(Hatch and Erlich, 1993; Jarzabkowski and Silience, 2007), and authority structures (Diefenbach and Sillince, 2011). The emergence of social entrepreneurship research further highlights the tensions of managing innovative organizations that achieve both profits and social missions (DiDomenico, Tracey and Haugh, 2009).

The tension in these social-economic hybrids accentuates the need to leverage, enhance and hone existing competencies and products, as well as to experiment and create new and frame-breaking opportunities, demanding leadership that can effectively attend to competing expectations (Dacin, Dacin and Tracey, 2011; Smith and Tushman, 2005). Such tensions may be nested across levels of analysis (Andriopolous and Lewis, 2009). For instance, conformity has been found to hamper innovation at the individual level (Miron, Erez, and Naveh, 2004), yet a certain proportion of conformists may enhance team innovation (Miron-Spector, Erez and Naveh, 2011). Vergne and Durand's (2011) work on dynamic capabilities highlights three fundamental organizational paradoxes which span the managerial, organizational, and industry levels of analysis.

This *Special Issue* seeks to shine new light on the challenges and opportunities posed by organizational change and innovation. More specifically, we encourage papers that uncover the nature, dynamics, processes, cycles and management of tensions. Prior works have made major strides for more nuanced understanding of structural and relational mechanisms in ambidexterity, but raised new questions as to the dynamics and emergent processes of innovation, as well as to the roles of more behavioral and cultural mechanisms. Further, whereas ambidexterity addresses specific tensions of exploration and exploitation, we seek to explore a broader range of often interwoven tensions, dualities and paradoxes that swirl around organizational change and innovation.

In this call, we expect to receive articles that theorize and empirically explore the emergent and process nature of dualities along the different phases of the innovation process, from problem identification and idea generation to implementation, across levels of analysis, with a focus on the duality of novelty and usefulness/efficiency, or innovation and implementation. Furthermore, we invite papers that focus on the duality of performance vis-a-vis innovation, as outcome variables, examining whether they compete or complement each other. This scope seeks to encourage theoretical and empirical research that makes theoretical contributions by accommodating varied, even interwoven tensions, by investigating emergent processes, and by using an array of qualitative and/or quantitative methods that foster insights into the dynamic nature of change and innovation. We also encourage papers that are inductive by nature, and that highlight paradoxical phenomena and related coping strategies that go beyond the structural approach of ambidexterity. We encourage papers that go beyond organizations to the levels of communities and social networks, formal and informal. Finally, new methodological perspectives, including simulations, multi-level, cross-level of analyses, and longitudinal studies, that enable us to study the dynamics of paradoxes, are highly encouraged.

### ***Key Questions and Themes***

We encourage contributions that approach innovation and organizational change from varied angles – such as different phases of the process, levels of analysis, or target outcomes. Guiding research questions may be theory as well as phenomena-driven. The following issues illustrate

potential areas of interest, but offer only a starting point, as we welcome creativity in topic, lens and method.

- How is a perspective valuing tensions, dualities and paradox changing the way we approach innovation and change, including related practices, processes and outcomes?
- How might alternative or multiple perspectives contribute to richer, more contextualized understandings of innovation and change?
- How might a lens of paradox and tensions help explain the challenges and opportunities for managing both social missions along with profits?
- How might actors make sense of tensions to enable or inhibit high performance?
- How might managers leverage organizational features (e.g., strategy, structure, culture) to manage these tensions?
- How are paradoxes nested or interwoven within organizations? What are the dynamics of these tensions over time? How do these approaches differ from formal rationality or contingency approaches based on either/or decisions?
- How are theories of tensions, dualities and paradox similar and different in terms of their theoretical structure, logic, and managerial implications for innovation and change?
- How do organizational and environmental tensions associated with innovation and change vary across industries and cultures?

### **Submissions:**

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All papers will be double-blindly reviewed following the journal's normal review process and criteria. Any papers which may be accepted but will not be included in the Special Issue will be published in an ordinary issue at a later point in time.

For further information please contact any of the Guest Editors for this Special Issue:

Miriam Erez: [meretz@ie.technion.ac.il](mailto:meretz@ie.technion.ac.il)

Sirkka Jarvenpaa: [sirkka.jarvenpaa@mcombs.utexas.edu](mailto:sirkka.jarvenpaa@mcombs.utexas.edu)

Marianne Lewis: [lewimr@ucmail.uc.edu](mailto:lewimr@ucmail.uc.edu)

Wendy Smith: [smithw@udel.edu](mailto:smithw@udel.edu)

Paul Tracey: [pjt44@cam.ac.uk](mailto:pjt44@cam.ac.uk)

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