

**Constructive management**  
Synchronizing relations in change

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## Abstract

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Modern organizational research has shown that due to consolidation of companies, matrix organizations, and spatial shattering, many organizations have diffused managerial structures and provide complex working environments for both managers and personnel. The study explores modern work organizations in search for constructive change management and scrutinizes managerial responsibility for psychosocial working conditions. Critical incident technique is used in the method. Two questions are developed; the descriptive reads: *What is happening to an organization during change?* The second, normative question reads: *What is required of modern organizations in order to create good conditions for management and work during change?* They are posed to capture a duality. The results are both descriptive and normative.

Three companies from the Volvo Group are followed between 2003 and 2005. The Volvo Way; a managerial policy and a strategic decision of change towards globalization, is used as a vehicle to study the change logic. Giddens' concept of Structuration is used to understand emergent complexity of change. The study shows how strategic communication of change initiates critical processes and follows the psychosocial effects of the changes in order to identify examples of constructive change management. The duality of structure is a basis for analyzing change and the dualistic features of the theory bridge a gap between two schools; an organizational tradition and a work life tradition. Psychosocial effects of change are discussed in terms of confusion and disorder and hence extend the organizational theoretical frame of reference.

Two strategic concepts of change are labeled *time*, and *discourse*. Time is used as a concept to analyze effects of the presence of varying tempus in the studied organizations. Discourse is used to represent potential underlying conflicts in the world of ideas that guides managers and personnel in their day-to-day activities.

Constructive management is formulated as a praxis which builds and recreates responsibility relations and trust within the organization. It is called *feed-forward reflection* since it is an activity which is both a pragmatic and inventive, aimed at future activities and recurrently feeding managers and personnel cognitively forward towards their common futurity. The process is thus *orienting* and *synchronizing* both managers and personnel, on and between the levels of the organization.

By drawing on Jamesian action theory and presenting feed-forward reflection and the trust-wheel of change management the work provides guidelines for forming intelligible Structuration and constructive emergence of change.

**Keywords:** Relations, duality, basic orientation, agency, time, discourse, context, psychosocial environment, responsibility, trust, constructive management, feed-forward reflection, orienting and synchronizing.