

News / Information

Organisational Responses to Radical Environment Changes

Call for papers - 13th EGOS Colloquium

Budapest University of Economic Science, July 3-5, 1997

Both business and non-profit organisations are faced with accelerating changes in their environments. These changes can be observed in the political, social, economic, and technological environments.

The expansion and the increasing integration of the European Community modifies the conditions of competition among enterprises. Various forms of regional integration have been developed in other continents as well. Globalisation of business activities is also an emerging trend which requires adequate responses from the companies. The socio-political and economic transition in Central and Eastern Europe have created new context for firms to operate in. Transition from the centrally planned to the market environment requires new managerial approaches, organisational structures and behaviours.

Technological development results in new products, new services, and new forms of inter- and nitre-organisational co-operation. Modern industrial societies provide high living standards but at the same time contribute to the pollution of environment. There is a great need for implanting environmental considerations into the operation of business organisations. The modern state seems to be unable to solve the social problems of our age. Socially responsible corporate behaviour is called for.

The ten sub-themes of the Colloquium discuss the new environmental challenges and the possible organisational responses. The aim is to bring together, within each topic, contributions with diverse perspectives and from different national contexts. Papers may be conceptual or empirical. Cross-national studies, and papers relating or contrasting different theoretical perspectives are especially welcomed.

Keynote Speakers

Barbara Czarniawska-Joerges, Lund University, Sweden

Title: Organising in institutional quicksand

Jean-Claude Thoenig, INSEAD, France

Title: How far is a distinctive theory of organisations still needed?

Sub-Themes

	<i>Title</i>	<i>Convenor</i>
1	The Nature of Organisational Change	Richard Whitley
2	Inter-organisational Networks and Radical Environmental Change	Mark Ebers
3	Technological Innovation and Organisational Change	Roland Calori
4	Organisational Changes in Central and Eastern Europe	Miklós Dobák
5	Changes in Organisational Cultures in Parallel with Environmental Changes	Michal Federowicz
6	Responses to the Environmental Challenge in Organisation Studies	Raimo Lovio / Keijo Räsänen
7	Social Responsibility of Enterprises and Local Administrations as a Response to Unsolved Problems of Contemporary States	Silvia Gherardi
8	Social Development and Labour Relations in Firms	Ray Loveridge
9	Changing Environments and Existing Organisational Paradigms	Bengt Stymne
10	The Diffusion of Organisational Forms, Managerial Knowledge and Practice	Lars Engwall

Submission and Participation

Participation at the Colloquium is conditional upon the acceptance of a paper. Two page long abstracts of the proposed papers should be sent to the relevant sub-theme by December 15, 1996 at the very latest. Papers will be selected by convenors in two steps. First, the convenor considers whether the topic outlined in the abstract is relevant for the sub-theme by January 31, 1997. If the abstract is accepted, the whole paper is to be submitted to the convenor by March 31, 1997. Meanwhile, the accepted abstract should be sent in a Word for Windows or plain text format to the Principal Organiser by electronic mail before February 28, 1997. The final decision upon the acceptance of the paper will be made by the convenor by May 15, 1997. The convenor may propose that a paper be presented at the poster session of the group where the presentation time will be limited to ten minutes. Authors of accepted papers will be required to send copies of their complete papers to other working group members by May 31, 1997. Working groups will be limited to 25 participants. Participants are expected to attend the sessions of their working group throughout the colloquium. Multiple presentations in different groups are therefore not encouraged. Please address all inquiries about the subtheme the respective convenor.

Important deadlines

December 15, 1996	Submission of abstracts to convenors
January 31, 1997	Acceptance of abstracts
February 28, 1997	Submission of accepted abstracts in electronic form to the Principal Organiser
March 31, 1997	Submission of papers to convenors
May 15, 1997	Acceptance of papers
May 31, 1997	Circulation of accepted papers among group members

Organising Committee

Károly Balaton (principal organiser)

András Gelei, György Drótos, Gyula Bakacsi, Imre Branyiczki, Miklós Dobák, Péter Kovács, Victória Bodnár, Zoltán Buzády.

Information

All general inquiries about the Colloquium should be addressed to the Principal Organiser:

Károly Balaton
 Department of Management and Organisation
 Budapest University of Economic Science
 H-1828 Budapest 5, P.O. Box 489
 Hungary

Telephone/Facsimile: (+36-1)218-8040 or
 (+36-1)218-8076

Electronic Mail: KBALATON@ZEUS.BKE.HU or
 GKD_BALATON@PEGASUS.BKE.HU

**Second Annual CREEB Conference**

Buckinghamshire Business School's Centre for Research into East European Business held its second annual conference on 18 and 19 June 1996. The theme of the conference was „Central and Eastern Europe: Towards the New Millennium“ which encouraged a wide range of contributions. Around 70 participants attended, coming from Britain, Western and Eastern Europe, and Russia.

The main themes emerging from the conference papers related to macroeconomic developments, enterprise transformation, the evolution of

managers and management development. A key feature was the description and evolution of the practice of conducting business and management development. The conference brought together participants from 'West' and 'East' which, engendered substantial debate between 'outsiders' and 'insiders' and clear perceptual differences of analysis and interpretation manifested themselves. For example West Europeans tend to view the region as a homogeneous entity while East Europeans stress local variety and differences. Furthermore, good intentions proffered by 'outsiders' can obviously founder on insufficient knowledge of local conditions. On the other hand, 'insiders' may be so submerged within the local culture that opportunities for unexpected innovations may be missed. 'Outsiders' should clearly not arrive bearing tablets of stone; however, the empowerment of local managers, for example, can be a difficult task because of their past experiences and current expectations.

This aspect was emphasised by the British keynote speaker when relating his experience of conducting projects in Hungary. The offer of support and assistance goes hand in hand with an open recognition of one's limited knowledge of local conditions and sensitives.

There was also discussion of which countries constituted Central and Eastern Europe. For many it is a broad concept stretching from Eastern Germany to Russia. As the opening keynote speaker indicated, the New Federal States of Germany are still experiencing the legacy of communist rule which, on the positive side, facilitates their role as a bridge between West and East in Europe. Suggestions from 'Western' participants that the countries of the region had much to benefit from co-operation and the formulation of political and economic associations, were often dismissed by 'Eastern' participants who tended to highlight the strength of divisive forces such as nationalism which hampered such a process.

In general, researchers tended to focus on studies of particular issues in one country. There is clearly a need for more comparative research and for research addressing the relationship between national culture and the development of management. While research covering the whole region might be considered overly ambitious, projects in groups of countries at similar levels of post-communist development (e.g. Bulgaria, Romania and Moldova, or Slovenia, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland) could produce new insights and assist the dissemination of successful practice.

Such research would clearly need to adopt a common framework for the collection and analysis of data.

There is without doubt a need for a general overview of developments in the region and for a rigorous method of identifying the dynamics of change.

Allied to the theme of national culture, more consideration could be given to the development of organisational culture in companies in the region. There is a

need to develop an array of methodological tools to contribute to education and training. Such an endeavour would be premised on the transformation of theoretical insights into aids for managerial practice. Furthermore, this could be linked to research focusing on the relationship between successful organisations and their management. The findings of such research could make a real contribution to the development of managers in Central and Eastern Europe. The first phase of the transformation process is, at least in some countries of the region, over; now that market economies are in principle established, a new phase is under way.

Whilst some participants appreciated the mix of issue and approaches in the various sessions, other participants would have preferred a more focused structure, with streams on, for example, macroeconomic developments, privatisation, SMEs, management, and so on, as well as more academic keynote speakers. That said, many contributions aroused lively discussion among the participants. The debate throughout was amiable and constructive and was conducted in a positive spirit of collegiality.

Vince Edwards, Buckinghamshire College

Olga Strakhova, St. Petersburg University of Economics and Finance



MA in Central/East European Studies

The course

The new one year full-time programme commences in October 1996 and is open to new or recent graduates from any discipline. In order to be considered, candidates would normally be expected to have attained a good honours degree or an equivalent qualification from an overseas institution. Students will be offered a modular programme comprising core and optional subject areas:

- Core: Economics and Politics of Transition in Central/Eastern Europe and Russia.
 Sociological perspectives on Transition.
 Research methods.
- Options: Financial Investment and Trade.
 Organisation and Management.
 Issues in Societal Transformation.
 Regional issues in Central/Eastern Europe.
 Opportunity to study languages: Russian, French, or German.

Students will be expected to make an overseas visit to Eastern Europe, in order to complete research work related to that region, as part of the Dissertation requirement of the MA.

The college

The Buckinghamshire College, a college of Brunel University, was established in 1893. The Business School, where the course will be located, is at Newland Park, an attractive campus 20 miles West of London.

The Business School has recognised strength in the area of East and Central European business. It has well established active links with partner institutions in a range of East European countries and Russia. The Business School's research programme has a firm East European focus. A number of research projects relating to economic and management change in Central and Eastern Europe have been undertaken by members of staff and PhD students. The School's Centre for Research into East European Business acts as a focus for the School's research into Eastern Europe.

Fees

The fees for the programme are not yet agreed, but will be approximately £2,500-£3,000 for Home (EC) students and £4,500 for Overseas students.

Further information

The Postgraduate Courses Administrator
Buckinghamshire College, Newland Park,
Chalfont St Giles, Bucks HP8 4SF.



Ostmitteleuropa im Umbruch

Am 14. Und 15. Juni 1996 fand am Sozialwissenschaftlichen Forschungszentrum der Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg ein Workshop zum Thema „Ostmitteleuropa im Umbruch“ statt. Professor Gert Schmidt von der Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg und Ursula Mense-Petermann von der Universität Magdeburg hatten deutsche, polnische und tschechische Kollegen eingeladen, erste empirische Ergebnisse aus der industrie- und organisationssoziologischen Transformationsforschung zu präsentieren. Dabei ging es den Veranstaltern auch darum, Ergebnisse des von ihnen gemeinsam mit PD Dr. Heidenreich (Stuttgart) und Jens Hanke (Bielefeld) durchgeführten DFG-Projekts „Transformationsprozesse in Polen und Tschechien“ im Kreis osteuropäischer und deutscher Transformationsforscher einer kritischen

Diskussion zu stellen. Die Teilnahme der polnischen und tschechischen Wissenschaftler wurde durch die finanzielle Unterstützung des DFG im Rahmen des Wissenschaftlertausches ermöglicht.

In einem ersten thematischen Block unter der Überschrift „Privatisierung - Staatliche Programme und betriebliche Strategien“ wurde die soziale Konstruktion von Privatisierungsstrategien und die Kontingenz der Privatisierungsverläufe vor allem in Polen herausgearbeitet sowie kritisch nach der Bedeutung der Privatisierung für die betriebliche Restrukturierung gefragt.

Im zweiten Teil ging es um die staatlichen Liberalisierungs- und Deregulierungspolitiken sowie um betriebliche Marktpositionierungsstrategien im Übergang zur Marktwirtschaft. Deutlich wurde hier vor allem, daß die Beurteilung der Transformationsprozesse - je nachdem, ob man sie von der Makro- oder Mikroperspektive aus beobachtet - ganz unterschiedlich ausfallen kann. Vor allem am Beispiel der Tschechischen Republik - die aufgrund ihrer Stabilitätserfolge zu den marktwirtschaftlichen „Musterschülern“ gezählt wird - lassen sich auf der betrieblichen Ebene Restrukturierungsblockaden und Repolitisierungsstrategien identifizieren.

Der dritte thematische Block beschäftigte sich mit den aktuellen betrieblichen Produkt-, Organisations- und Technisierungsstrategien der Unternehmen im Transformationsprozeß. Im Vordergrund stand hier vor allem die Frage nach der Nutzbarkeit des lokalen Qualifikations- und Erfahrungspotentials für moderne Innovations-, Organisations- und Rationalisierungskonzepte.

Abschließend wurden neue Formen gesellschaftlicher und betrieblicher Sozialintegration erörtert. Betont wurde hier vor allem die relativ konfliktarme und konsensuelle Bewältigung der Umbrüche in der tschechischen Republik und es wurden deren kulturelle und institutionelle Ressourcen diskutiert.

Deckende Darstellungen und befriedigende Erklärungen der gesellschaftlichen und betrieblichen Transformationsprozesse in den Ländern Mittel- und Osteuropas konnte selbstverständlich nicht Ziel des Workshops sein. Vielmehr ging es um das Zusammentragen und die Diskussion erster empirischer Ergebnisse aus diesem „Feld“. Herausgearbeitet wurde dabei vor allem die Kontingenz und die Offenheit dieser Prozesse sowie die Bedeutung kultureller und institutioneller Hinterlassenschaften der staatssozialistischen Vergangenheit für die Transformationsverläufe. Einige der Tagungsbeiträge werden im nächsten Jahr in einem Sonderheft dieser Zeitschrift erscheinen.

Gert Schmidt, Institut für Soziologie, Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg.

Ursula Mense-Petermann, Institut für Soziologie, Otto-von-Guericke-Universität Magdeburg.

Management und Wirtschaft der Firma

Am 20./21. Mai 1996 fand unter der Schirmherrschaft des Rektors der Wirtschaftsuniversität in Prag die Konferenz „Management und Wirtschaft der Firma“ mit internationaler Beteiligung statt.

Die wissenschaftlichen Diskussionen der Konferenz waren zweigeteilt: Den ersten Teil bildeten die Verhandlungen im Plenum mit dem Ziel, vor allem die äußeren und inneren wirtschaftlichen Schlüsselbedingungen der Unternehmen zu analysieren. Die Organisatoren hatten absichtlich die Thematik so ausgerichtet, daß bekannte Vertreter der größten tschechischen Bankinstitute und bedeutender Industrieunternehmen mit ihren manchmal kontroversen Einstellungen und Erfahrungen hier auftreten konnten. Es handelt sich vor allem um Führungskräfte der Tschechischen Nationalbank, der Kommerzbank A.G. Prag, der Investitions- und Postbank A.G., der CEZ A.G., der CKD Holding A.G. Prag, der Desta A.G. Decin, der Schokoladenfabrik A.G. Prag, der SPT Telecom A.G. Prag, der Textilana A.G. Liberec und vieler anderer. Angesprochen wurden auch die zukünftigen Trends der fortschreitenden Privatisierung im Vortrag des Vorsitzenden des Fonds des Nationaleigentums.

Den zweiten, grundsätzlichen Teil der Konferenz bildeten die Verhandlungen in den sieben Arbeitsgruppen:

1. Die Firma in ihrem Umfeld
2. Das Management der Firma
3. Die Finanzwirtschaft der Firma
4. Marketing
5. Psychologie und Soziologie der Leitung
6. Personalmanagement
7. Logistik und Leitung der Produktion

In den Verhandlungen der Arbeitsgruppen traten mehr als 100 Teilnehmer aus vielen Ländern, Fachleute der Universitäten und der Unternehmenspraxis, ebenso wie die erfolgreichsten Studenten der Wirtschaftsuniversität Prag auf. Die Konferenz umfaßte ein reiches Begleit- und Fachprogramm. Es haben sich auch Buchverlage, Beratungsfirmen, Interessen- und Fachkonsortien präsentiert.

Die nächste Auflage der Konferenz findet im Mai 1997 in Prag statt.

Ivan Novy

