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EMERGING CONCEPTUAL SCHOLARSHIP

Managerial Roles and Implications in Emergent Change

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Although there are multiple criteria one could use to gauge the value of a manuscript, two central factors applied to emerging conceptual scholarship are whether, as the reader, I was interested in the manuscript and whether I gained a new perspective. The current article meets those criteria, providing a compelling overview of the issue of change and complexity, an integration of classical theory with contemporary concerns, and a compelling framework for future scholars and practitioners to consider.

As management scholars, although we recognize leadership's role in championing organizational change, we also recognize the complex and often reactive nature of change initiatives and change agents. Of particular concern is how managers can play a role as a change agent, while at the same time being embedded within an organizational system. In "Leadership, Complex Adaptive Systems, and Equivocality: The Role of Managers in Emergent Change," Robert J. Blomme addresses the impact of complexity on organization change,

why traditional conceptualizations of leaders may be insufficient, and how contemporary leaders can use complex adaptive systems to better understand the process. The central question is how the role of managers can best be understood in the change process, since they are both embedded in the existing culture and working as agents to change the culture. To address the question, Blomme integrates the works of Karl Weick and Ralph Stacey, toward a more complex redefinition of emergent organizational change. In addition, Blomme provides six managerial implications (importance of linguistic domain, emergent change drives deliberate change, reduction of equivocality, power is located in relations, three leadership functions, and reducing equivocality by empowerment) to guide the understanding and application of successful organizational change. Though his article is more suitably viewed as conceptual than as directly applicable to a practitioner, it contains helpful ideas for practicing managers as well.

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