



## **SIG 14 - Conference General Track**

With our theme **Exploring the Future of Management: Facts, Fashion and Fado**, we invite you to participate in the debate about how to explore the future of management. We look forward to receiving your submissions.

### **T14\_02 - Living and working in fluid organization**

#### **Proponents:**

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#### **Short description:**

Globalization, new technology, and sociopolitical uncertainty are increasingly challenging traditional view of organizations, which has led organization studies to shift from “the iron cage to transparent liquidity” (Clegg & Baumeler, 2009: p. 1714). We suggest that fluidity will characterize much of future work. Inspired by the work of Zygmunt Bauman (2000; 2005); Clegg & Baulemer (2009)’s “liquid modernity” and Kociatkiewicz & Kostera (2014) take on “liquid organizations”, we would like to call for studies on what it entails for actors to be living and working in fluid organizations.

#### **Long description:**

Globalization, new technology, and sociopolitical uncertainty are increasingly challenging traditional methods of work management (Okhuysen & al., 2013). In particular, this topic offers to focus on the consequences of the shift from bureaucratic organizations to fluid organizations (Clegg & Baumeler, 2009) in which individuals – managers as well as the others - have to adapt to increasing flexible, but ambiguous structures, statues and processes. This development represents an opportunity for progress, both economically and socially, but also entails risks for actors – and for the performance of the organization.

We offer hereafter three potential, but non-exhaustive, directions for research:

- **Boundaries.** The rise of fluid organizations encompasses a remodeling of organizational structures and boundaries. Project-based management and inter-organizational networks and collaborations have made borders more permeable within post-bureaucratic organizations (Kellogg, Orlikowski & Yates, 2006) and more generally, in the global environment (Espinosa, Cummings, Wilson, & Pearce, 2003) This evolution influences in particular those whose role becomes mainly that of a mediator or those who give meaning in an uncertain environment (Edmondson, 2012). It also has a strong influence



on the dynamics and relations to space and time at different times of professional life, the redefinition of work spaces or boundaryless career that need to be further studied.

- Legitimacy. Fluid organizations challenge several taken-for-granted assumptions regarding what is considered to be legitimate, or not. Within the fluid organization, the logics of authority may no longer be accepted de facto. Legitimacy thus becomes built and negotiated through power games between multiple transient stakeholders; at the same time, the evolution of organizations towards more flexible and decentralized structures leads legitimacy to be built more locally according to cultures and personalities (Zander, Mockaitis & Bulter, 2012). As a result, what are the rules in fluid organizations and who defines them are questions that need to be explored.

- Identities. By developing the autonomy of individuals and by giving them more responsibility, fluidity represents a source of fulfillment but can also create pressure on individuals and thus increase psycho-social risks. The increase of flexibility, multiplicities of identities (Fitzsimmons, 2013), ambiguity, and complexity has a toll on individuals (Okhuysen & al., 2013). Consequently, we invite studies on how fluid organizations impact the individual, in terms of emotions, stability, satisfaction, burnout, etc.

Living and working in fluid organizations also includes studies such as team dynamics, swift trust, employability and precarious status, psychological contracts, entrepreneurship or other related topics.

#### **Keywords:**

Fluid organizations  
liquid modernity  
dynamic work

#### **Publication Outlet:**

Society and Business Review

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#### **AUTHORS GUIDELINES**

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