

5.3.2020 13:30-15:00. Jean M. Bartunek (Carroll School of Management, Boston College) and Jane McKenzie (Henley Business School, University of Reading): *How Reflexivity Aids Paradox: Fostering Both Stability and Change in a Learning Based Organization*

Abstract

Based on literature that regards stability and change as a duality (Farjoun, 2010) and Archer's (2010a; 2010b) critical realist approach to and treatment of reflexivity in the light of ongoing interactions between structure, culture and agency, we explore how organizational leaders might respond to tensions by taking actions that foster both stability and change. We study The Forum, a center for collaborative research and practitioner development created in 2000 and continuing today. Using interview, observational, and archival data, we examine the multiple tensions related to stability and change that have arisen in response to particular internal and external events as well as the sources of each of these tensions. We also study leaders' reflexivity and responses to these events, and how their responses fostered both stability and change. In particular, we explore in depth how the leaders reflected on and responded to two tensions, a) their recognition based on internal feedback that newer Forum members were not learning older knowledge that had been developed there and b) the 2008 recession and its impacts. The leaders' responses to the events included a change in governance and the development of action learning sets. These both conserved basic principles and aided The Forum's ongoing adaptation in creative ways.