Mindful Change: A Concept for Social Sustainability at Organizational Level

Guido Becke

Abstract Economic globalization places increased competitive pressure on economic organizations. The latter more often respond to unpredictable socio-economic environments by change initiatives of permanent reorganization. However, permanent change can induce unintended and often detrimental effects in respect to organizational effectiveness, the quality of work and to social integration at organizational level. It is argued that the concept of organizational mindfulness – originally developed related to 'high-reliability organizations' – can facilitate mindful and sustainable change. In this chapter, this concept is re-conceptualized with regard to organizational change. Organizational mindfulness is viewed as an organizational capacity of action to anticipate and to constructively deal with unintended effects of permanent reorganization. Moreover, organizational mindfulness intends to uncover unnoticed innovation potentials in organizational change. Organizational mindfulness is comprised of an infrastructure of dialogue and organizational routines, and six core principles facilitating mindful change. The latter is assumed to contribute to the regeneration of economic organizations' social-resource base, thereby promoting social sustainability at organizational level.

Keywords Mindful change • Organizational mindfulness • Permanent reorganization • Social sustainability • Adaptive trust cultures • Workplace institutions

1 Introduction

Since the 1980s economic organizations of different sectors have faced increased environmental uncertainty and competition that – above all – can be attributed to processes of economic globalization. Against this background, flexibility and

G. Becke (✉)
Research Centre for Sustainability Studies (artec), University of Bremen, Enrique-Schmidt-Str. 7 (SFG), 28359 Bremen, Germany
e-mail: becke@astec.uni-bremen.de

agility have been conceived as prerequisites of economic organizations' long-term viability and competitiveness by management and business schools. Concepts of planned organizational change that promote internal and external flexibility have been regarded as appropriate means to achieve and sustain firms' competitiveness in dynamic socio-economic environments (Mayrhofer 1997). Such change concepts either focus on radical and discontinuous change or promote permanent change.

However, empirical studies in Labor Studies and Organization Studies indicate that radical and permanent reorganization more often endangers firms' social sustainability as a prerequisite of their long-term viability and innovativeness. Social sustainability at organizational level refers to the development and regeneration of social resources (e.g. social trust, reciprocity and organizational commitment) and human-related resources, such as health and knowledge (Becke 2013a). For instance, striking evidence of the erosion of social resources is given by the body of research studies in organizational psychology that focuses on the unintended erosion of 'psychological contracts' between management and employees in radical organizational change programs (cf. Rousseau 1995; Conway and Briner 2005). Moreover, recent research studies indicate that permanent reorganization by 'internal marketization' fosters an intensification of work resulting in employees' psycho-physical exhaustion (Wilde et al. 2010; Becke 2013a) and enhanced sick absence from work. The core argument of this chapter is that social sustainability in times of permanent reorganization can be fostered by 'mindful change'. This change concept refers to the concept of organizational mindfulness (Weick and Sutcliffe 2007). In the perspective of organizational change, organizational mindfulness is defined as the organizational capability to develop and directly enhance organizational awareness to unintended side effects of (permanent) reorganization and to unnoticed innovation potentials in change processes.

This chapter is structured as follows: In the second part, the management concept of internal marketization is introduced as a core driver of permanent reorganization. The third part focuses on permanent reorganization as a threat to social sustainability at company level. In this part, the concept of social sustainability is outlined with respect to the firm level. Against this background, exemplary empirical evidence of a current research project is provided showing that permanent reorganization can induce an erosion of social resources and endanger the regeneration of human-related health resources. It is argued that these unintended effects of permanent reorganization threaten social sustainability at company level. The fourth part highlights the question how social sustainability can be fostered in permanent reorganization. It is argued that social sustainability can be promoted by designing organizational change mindfully. This requires a re-conceptualization of the original concept of organizational mindfulness in respect with organizational change. The concept of mindful change is outlined encompassing six core principles. The last chapter provides an assessment of organizational mindfulness related to the tension between social sustainability and permanent reorganization. This chapter concludes with avenues of further research.

2   Internal Marketization as a Core Driver of Permanent Reorganization

Since the 1980s, economic globalization has increased confronting economic organizations with enhanced competition and environmental uncertainty (Senghaas-Knobloch 2013). The increase of economic globalization can be – to a lager extent – attributed to political decision-making processes at international, European, and national level. During the 1980s neo-liberal policy patterns emerged and have since become widely accepted. The ideological core of these patterns rests on the assumption that economic growth and high employment rates can be attained by unconstrained markets. The emergence and diffusion of neo-liberal policy patterns exposed firms of different sectors to enhanced economic competition and socio-economic uncertainty. The privatization of public enterprises, services and infrastructure has been promoted within the European Union and in many national market economies (Bieling and Deckwirth 2008). The liberalization of finance and capital markets was highly prioritized on the neo-liberal agenda (Huffschmid 2008) spreading highly speculative financial investment. It also fostered shareholder-value regimes in private sectors and at corporate level. The shareholder-value conception of the firm is based on the core idea that "the only legitimate purpose of firms is to maximize shareholder value" (Fligstein 2002, p. 148) being reflected in the share price of the firm on stock markets. These tendencies exerted enhanced competitive pressure on economic organizations.

The management concept of 'internal marketization' reflects an important variant of planned permanent change which is inspired by principal-agency theory. It rests on two basic ideas (Becke 2010): Firstly, it assumes that economic competitiveness and the survival of firms can be enhanced if they flexibly adjust to the fluctuating market demands and are capable of absorbing uncertainty induced by volatile markets. Secondly, it promotes the idea to selectively open up the internal organization of firms to market pressures in order to attain profitability and competitiveness. Therefore, the concept of internal marketization suggests the establishment of quasi-market structures within organizations. This implies that intra-organizational relations between business units are reorganized according to economic mechanisms of market transactions, thereby creating internal 'customer-supplier-relations'. Modes of internal calculation are applied to everyday transactions between business units based on economic contracts.

Cost- or profit centers and self-regulated teams are closely monitored by indirect forms of control focusing on economic performance outcomes and indicators regarding profits, efficiency, and product or service quality. Benchmarking systems provide a performance-related comparison between internal business units and between internal units and external competitors. Benchmarking systems provide a basis for management decisions on buy-outs and outsourcing, thereby posing a permanent threat to business units and their affiliated employees to be dismissed or outsourced in case of economic failure, i.e. not achieving economic goals (Colling 2005). Internal marketization is driven by quests for closer controls over costs and

performance at firm level combining the deference of economic responsibility to decentralized business units and teams with tighter centralized forms of economic control (Becke 2010).

Hence, internal marketization induces a permanent reorganization of firms that is driven by the quest for dynamic economic goal attainment exerting a continuous pressure on business units, managers and employees to increase efficiency and profitability. The management and change concept of internal marketization fundamentally deviates from planned organizational change concepts that focus on the punctuated equilibrium model of change embracing episodic and discontinuous (radical) change, as Organizational Development or Organizational Transformation. The concept of internal marketization reflects a model of planned continuous or permanent change (Brown and Eisenhardt 1997) promoting a constantly unfrozen organization (Weick and Quinn 1999). In this paper, it is argued that change concepts that overemphasize flexibility and continuity of change tend to expose firms and their social resources' base to enhanced social vulnerability.

3 Permanent Change as a Threat to Social Sustainability at Organizational Level

Firms' adaptability to volatile socio-economic environments highly depends on the commitment of their workforces and on the social 'ties that bind' (Becke 2010) at organizational level. In the economic perspective, employees are primarily conceived as 'human resources' who are to be managed to attain desired economic goals, thereby underestimating that employees are above all resourceful human beings with specific work-related interests, expectations and needs (Sisson 2007; Becke 2012). Employees' willingness to mobilize their individual resources, e.g. intellectual and tacit knowledge, emotional and social competence and motivation to work, is influenced by social recognition in the workplace. Social recognition refers to a specific quality of economic organizations as 'moral economies' (Kotthoff 2010). In this perspective, economic organizations cannot be reduced to profit maximizing entities based on economic exchange, extensively or intensively utilizing employees as 'human resources'. Instead, 'moral economies' are based on a commonly shared sense of mutuality, and on continuous reciprocal social exchange between management and employees. Economic organizations hinge on reciprocal social exchange of give and take in which social exchange builds a foundation for the development and regeneration of social resources at organizational level.

Resources denote "enabling conditions for action in the present or the future" (Moldaschl 2002, p. 56). Social resources involving social trust, organizational commitment, loyalty or reciprocity, are of vital importance for firms' innovativeness and long-term viability. Social resources enable firms to develop collective capacities of action that are required for organizational adaptability in

volatile environments. For instance, social trust is a key social resource of economic organizations. Social trust can be defined as an anticipated or delayed and risky social exchange with actors as trustors expecting reciprocal behavior by other actors as trustees (cf. Gilbert 2006, p. 125). Regular and continuous social interactions in the workplace open up social spaces in which economic exchange can be transformed into trust-based social exchange. According to Giddens (1995) and Luhmann (1989) two often interrelated variants of trust can be distinguished: interpersonal trust is generated by social practices on the basis of face-to-face encounters that are characterized by reciprocity. Systemic or organizational trust denotes trust in the reliability, effectiveness and accountability of organizations and their products, services and abstract systems, e.g. management systems. Organizational trust is of vital importance for economic organizations' social legitimacy within volatile socio-economic environments. Moreover, it is important for the intra-organizational sphere. In this regard, organizational trust refers to employees' trust in organizational viability, and to their trust in the reliability of intra-organizational decision-making rules or procedures and communication structures. Organizational trust also encompasses employees' trust in established intra-organizational institutions, e.g. works councils, and in the validity of basic norms and values reflecting specific organizational cultures. Social trust is a core social resource for organizational innovativeness. Employees will bring in their tacit knowledge in innovation processes, as long as they trust in managers or the organization that their contributions to innovation are not exploited at their expense.

The specific character of social resources at organizational level is reflected in two key aspects: First, social resources are generated in relatively continuous social interactions between different actors in the workplace, such as management, employees or works councils. Within such interactions social resources can be modified, violated, consumed or regenerated depending on the continuity, scope and quality of social exchange in specific economic organizations (Becke 2012). Second, social resources cannot be entirely mobilized and utilized for economic goals. In social interactions, actors draw on their subjectivity. Economic organizations are solely interested in mobilizing and capitalizing on aspects of human subjectivity that are compatible with economic goals. However, employees always bring in their entire subjectivity in the workplace that also entails unwanted dimensions of their subjectivity, e.g. individual obstinacy (Flecker and Hofbauer 1998). Moreover, social resources are very fragile. For instance, employees are often very sensitive to alterations of implicit contracts between management and the workforce. If employees perceive violations to such 'psychological contracts', social resources may erode (Conway and Briner 2005). Furthermore, the employment relationship at organizational level always implies a mutual interdependence between management and employees, even if power and authority are distributed unevenly (Thompson 1989). This interdependence generates at least informal power resources employees can draw on in intra-organizational interactions, thereby blocking or constraining the utilization of social resources for economic goal attainment.

In the research and development project 8iNNO permanent organizational change was analyzed with regard to four in-depth case studies from different service sectors, i.e. ICT-services, public transport, and social services. Each case-study encompassed interviews with managers, group discussions with employees, and workshops with managers and employees. Moreover, case-studies included participant observations of work-processes. In two organizations (social services and public transport), a legally established interest representation of employees existed. Whereas both of the firms of ICT-services employed between 20 and 40 employees, the workforces of the social service organization and the public transport firm encompassed 400 or 2,000 employees.

These case studies indicate detrimental unintended effects of permanent reorganization regarding the organizational base of social resources. These unintended effects are exemplarily sketched in respect to the disturbance of trust relations. Despite differences in sector affiliation, primary tasks, size and industrial relations at establishment level, six sources of trust disturbances were identified across the four case studies: First, dismissals were perceived by employees as a deterioration of trust relations; especially in small and medium-sized enterprises of ICT-services lay-offs were conceived as an even traumatic breakage of the established organizational culture resulting in an erosion of trust. Second, change communication proved to be as an Achilles heel of trust maintenance in permanent reorganization. This vulnerable spot of trust was attributed to obscure goals of reorganization, a lack of transparency regarding the process design of reorganization, and top managers' reluctance to address vague decision-making situations, thereby spreading rumors that destabilized trust relations. Third, a deterioration of trust was caused by discontinuous direct participation of employees in change initiatives. On the one hand, employees were asked to develop ideas to constructively deal with organizational change, but on the other hand, their initiative to participate was disappointed by managers who denied feedback. In this case, employees conceived disrupted participation as severe disregard. Fourth, employees often perceived an imbalance of reciprocity in reorganization processes. For instance, dismissals enhanced work intensification and psycho-social stress and questioned employees' job stability, whereas gains in favor of the workforce were comparatively scarcely visible. In some case-study firms, this perpetuated imbalance of reciprocity was perceived by employees as a violation of 'psychological contracts' at work resulting in an erosion of trust. Fifth, permanent reorganization often poses a more or less continuous threat to employees' vocational and task-related identity at work. This often goes along with a blurring of organizational roles. Especially, employees who perceived their organization as 'chronically unfrozen' experienced permanent change as a decline in their professional self-efficacy and a source of work intensification. More often, employees responded to 'chronically unfrozen' organizations by defensive routines, e.g. a withdrawal of initiative in internal projects. Finally, an erosion of trust can be attributed to the depreciation of work-related or professional norms due to efficiency measures in permanent reorganization. Such norms are often a core of employees' work-related identity. Therefore, this experienced depreciation of norms is perceived as professional disregard.

Against the background of these empirical findings, it can be concluded that permanent reorganization implies essential risks to the development and regeneration of economic organizations' social resource base. In other words, permanent reorganization can endanger the dynamic stability of organizations' social resource base that promotes organizations' social sustainability in volatile socio-economic environments. The term dynamic stability denotes a stability that cannot be equated with conservation of a specific status quo. Rather, it can be characterized as an adaptive stability taking account of changing socio-economic environments firms are embedded in. Adaptive or dynamic stability means that this social resource base can be developed, adjusted, altered or regenerated in the face of dynamic environments by social interactions between different actors at organizational level or between intra-organizational and extra-organizational actors (Becke 2007).

Social sustainability is a core dimension of the normative concept of sustainable development. In a resource-based perspective, sustainable development denotes "protecting the richness of the world's resources in such a way that their utilization does not destroy them but rather leaves equal opportunity for future generations to benefit from them as well" (Docherty et al. 2009, p. 3). This concept refers to the development and regeneration of finite ecological, economic, social and individual resources, e.g. employees' health resources (Littig and Grießler 2005). The concept of sustainable development entails three different dimensions, i.e. ecological, economic, and social sustainability, that are often interrelated in a conflictive manner (Senghaas-Knobloch 2013). Therefore, the search for sustainable development entails conflict, negotiation and compromise in specific contexts. The term social sustainability can be used in two ways: In a normative way, social sustainability is related to human dignity and human rights (ibid.), and social cohesion (Littig and Grießler 2005). In an analytical way, two lines can be discerned. First, the term can be utilized to explore the relationship between nature and society (Senghaas-Knobloch 2013). Second, it refers to the social dimension of sustainability in its own regard. In this view, social sustainability can be used to analyze the regeneration of human health resources focusing on sustainable work systems (cf. Becke 2013; Docherty et al. 2009). Moreover, it refers to the investigation of requirements and processes of dynamic stability of the social world being generated in social interactions (Becke 2008, p. 8).

In this article, social sustainability is primarily utilized in a resource-based and organizational perspective. Hence, social sustainability at organizational level is defined as the dynamic stability of organizations' social resource base in turbulent socio-economic environments. These environments are characterized by ongoing, mainly dynamic changes and a high degree of unexpected events. Two starting points can be discerned to foster social sustainability at organizational level. The first addresses the organization-environment relationship. It encompasses sustainability strategies to regenerate (external sources of) social resources which are critical to ensure resource availability, e.g. social legitimacy at societal level (cf. Müller-Christ 2001; Ehnert and Harry 2012). The second refers to sustainability strategies that intend to maintain the organizational social resource base from within. This chapter deals with the latter aspect addressing an under-explored

research question: It investigates how economic organizations operating in dynamic socio-economic environments can develop and regenerate its social resource base in permanent change. It is argued that the concept of 'organizational mindfulness' provides an answer to this research question.

4 Organizational Mindfulness – A Concept for Organizational Change?

Organizational Mindfulness (OM) can be conceived as a 'sensitizing concept' (Blumer 1954, p. 7) for analyzing and mindfully designing organizational change. However, the original concept of OM has not been applied to organizational change. Rather, this concept was developed by Kathleen Sutcliffe and Karl Weick in respect to risk and safety research. Contrary to approaches of safety engineering, Weick and Sutcliffe (2007) focus on a perspective of collective and organizational learning with regard to the anticipation of and the coping with unexpected risky events harmful to organizations and their viability. Weick and Sutcliffe had a specific type of organizations in mind conceptualizing organizational mindfulness, i.e. the so-called 'High-Reliability Organizations' (HRO) that are characterized by their "unique ability to operate high hazard-technological systems in a nearly error-free manner" (Vogus and Welbourne 2003, p. 878). Research on organizational mindfulness in HRO addressed organizations, such as fire brigades, nuclear power-generated plants, military air-plane carriers or space exploration agencies (cf. Weick and Sutcliffe 2007; Barton and Sutcliffe 2008; Weick et al. 1999). The concept of OM relates to the quality of organizations' attention in volatile and unpredictable environments (Weick and Sutcliffe 2007, p. 32). Levinthal and Rerup (2006, p. 503) summarize the characteristic conceptual traits of OM: It embraces "both a sustained high level of sensitivity to errors, unexpected events, and, more generally, to subtle cues suggested by the organization's environment or its own processes; and the capacity to engage in a flexible range of behaviors in order to respond effectively to this potentially diverse and changing set of stimuli".

HROs' continuous adaptation to dynamic and unforeseen environments is enabled by an elaborated 'mindful infrastructure' at organizational level. This mindful infrastructure is based on five key principles of mindful organizing (Weick 2003). The first three principles relate to the anticipation of harmful unexpected events, i.e. addressing "HROs' capacity to anticipate "unexpected" problems" (Weick and Sutcliffe 2007, p. 9); while the other two principles refer to the organizational capacity to contain damages evoked by unexpected and harmful events. Containment also encompasses the regeneration of organizational functioning. These five principles of organizational mindfulness are characterized as follows (Weick and Sutcliffe 2007; Weick et al. 1999):

- Preoccupation with failure: The detection of errors and near misses is conceived as a core prerequisite of high organizational reliability. Errors and near misses are regarded as a source of organizational learning.
- Reluctance to simplify interpretations: This principle takes account of different viewpoints and integrates skepticism to identify and reduce blind spots, thereby providing a more nuanced picture of unexpected events.
- Sensitivity to operations: This principle appreciates local knowledge by involving employees with their tacit knowledge of local operations to anticipate or identify (cues of) unforeseen events.
- Commitment to resilience: This key principle aims at organizational recovery and operational continuity after a severe crisis or hazardous unexpected events. However, the notion of resilience exceeds the organizational ability to recover or to absorb strain and maintain organizational functioning. Rather, from a developmental perspective, resilience can be viewed as improving the overall organizational ability to cope with future risks.
- Deference to expertise: "Fluid decision-making" (Vogus and Welbourne 2003, p. 881) lies at the heart of this principle. It enables organizations to turn decision structures upside down during periods of severe crisis or emergency, thereby drawing on employees' local expert knowledge as a coping resource in the face of harmful unforeseen events.

4.1 Organizational Mindfulness – From 'High Reliability' to Permanent Reorganization

The following section deals with the core question, whether the original concept of OM can be utilized for research in the field of organizational change, especially in respect to permanent reorganization. First, it has to be examined, whether the concept of organizational mindfulness can be applied to organizational types different from HROs. Second, the potential benefits of the concept of organizational mindfulness regarding permanent change are to be explored. Finally, the limits of the original OM-concept for the analysis and design of intended and continuous organizational change have to be analyzed. Against this background, the original OM-concept is re-conceptualized.

4.1.1 The Conceptual Extension of Organizational Mindfulness to Different Organizational Types

Although the original concept of OM is closely linked to HROs, it can be utilized in other fields of empirical organization studies (Vogus and Sutcliffe 2012; Rerup and Levinthal in this volume). Research in permanent reorganization processes bears a

striking similarity to organization studies in HROs: In both cases, dynamic and unpredictable environments challenging firms' organizational adaptability and threatening their viability are highlighted. Permanent reorganization mirrors an organizational change strategy to deal with unforeseen turbulences of dynamic environments. Hence, it can be concluded that the concept of OM can also be extended to a variety of organizational types as long as organizations are addressed that operate in unpredictable and dynamic environments (Vogus 2012).

Moreover, the original concept of OM focuses on unexpected events exposing HROs to vulnerability. As mentioned before, permanent reorganization may evoke unintended and unexpected side-effects detrimental to the organizational social resource base, the quality of work, and organizational effectiveness, thereby questioning organizational sustainability. The research question, how organizations can cope with unexpected and harmful events is shared by research related to HROs and research in organizational change.

4.1.2 Potential Benefits of the OM-Concept for Research in Organizational Change

In my view, the original concept of organizational mindfulness includes some fruitful conceptual benefits for (applied) research in (permanent) organizational change. First, Weick and Sutcliffe (2007) consistently relate the concept of mindfulness to the organizational level taking account of volatile and unpredictable environments. In this regard, mindfulness can be viewed as a basic principle of change and organizing in respect to organizations as open socio-technical systems.

Second, OM "facilitates being present in the moment" (Weick 2003, p. 78), thereby opening up intra- or inter-organizational spaces for collective reflection and learning related to current organizational change processes. The idea of being collectively present in the moment can foster an organizational awareness directed to unintended effects of reorganization processes as well as to unnoticed innovation potentials. In the age of "fast capitalism" (Grey 2010, p. 110), organizational mindfulness questions the velocity imperative of organizational change. By opening up spaces of dialogue and collective reflection in respect to ongoing organizational change, OM creates intentional time-outs, thereby partially slowing down organizational change. Such time-outs enable organizational members to anticipate or detect unintended change effects or neglected innovation potentials. Collective inquiry and dialogue as time-outs to permanent organizational change also enable to contain negative side effects on organizations' social resource base.

Third, the concept of OM highlights the importance of employees' local expertise and tacit knowledge to cope with the unexpected. In this aspect, the original concept of OM is more close to participative change approaches, as Organizational Development, than to the change concept of Organizational Transformation that

regards top management as the prime actor of reorganization. Moreover, the recognition of local knowledge provides a sound basis of collective reflection on permanent change drawing on multiple actors' perspectives to investigate, and reconsider organizational change.

Finally, the original concept of OM opens up new avenues for further research in respect to organizational change and organizational sustainability. Whereas in recent years research studies primarily focused on the negative effects of radical change or permanent reorganization on working conditions and social integration at establishment level, the concept of OM allows to analyze the prerequisites, social practices and interactions at organizational level that enable or foster adaptive organizational trust cultures in dynamic socio-economic environments (Becke 2011). In this regard, a core question is how mindful change is generated and can be sustained at organizational level. In this research perspective, the importance of institutions within and outside of the workplace can be investigated as potential facilitators or constraints of mindful organizational change.

4.1.3 Blind Spots of the Original Concept of OM

Nevertheless, the original concept of OM contains some limitations that have to be taken account of, if OM is considered as a core sensitizing concept for the analysis and the design of permanent change at organizational level (cf. Becke 2011, pp. 62–65). First, a problematic underlying assumption of this concept refers to its generalization. OM is presented by Weick and Sutcliffe (2007) as a concept that can be utilized for the entirety of HROs, thereby widely neglecting specific institutional and societal contexts HROs are embedded in. For instance, legally established institutions in the workplace make a difference for organizational mindfulness because they can shape procedures as well as contents of mindful infrastructures. For example, the institution of works councils is the mandatory and representative body of "all salaried employees … of an eligible establishment" (Müller-Jentsch 2003, p. 46) in Germany. Works councils are elected for a 4-year term by the entire workforce of establishments with at least five permanent employees (ibid.). Works councils' participation rights also refer to occupational health and safety and health promotion in the workforce. Against this background, works councils are an important actor in the intra-organizational design of a mindful infrastructure and its related procedures. Works councils can influence the agenda setting of organizational mindfulness drawing on their participation rights. For example, occupational health and safety matters regarding the entire workforce at establishment level are a cornerstone of organizational mindfulness in German HROs, e.g. German airports. Moreover, HROs' mindful infrastructures and practices of mindful organizing are shaped by institutions at the societal level, e.g. environmental law and regulation.

Second, the original concept of OM primarily focuses on enhancing organizational performance, especially in respect to organizational reliability and organizational functioning in unpredictable and threatening environments. This explicit performance-orientation contains some blind spots. On the one hand, safety cultures and trust are acknowledged as prerequisites of organizational mindfulness and organizational functioning (cf. Weick 2003; Weick and Sutcliffe 2007); on the other hand, social relations at organizational level are primarily addressed in a functionalist perspective. Sensitivity to social relations in the workplace is not reflected as a core process or a core principle of OM. Moreover, employees' perspectives are mainly conceived as a source of local knowledge to be mobilized by core processes of organizational mindfulness, as 'deference to expertise'. However, employees' willingness to proactively engage in mindful organizing depends on the "situational-relativity" of their perspectives (Mannheim 1949, p. 244). According to Mannheim (1949, p. 244) the term perspective denotes "the manner in which one views an object, what one perceives in it, and how one construes it in his thinking". The situational-relativity of perspectives means that employees' perspectives reflect their social positions (ibid.) at establishment level and their social affiliation to intra-organizational work cultures (Senghaas-Knobloch 2008; Becke 2008). These perspectives also embrace specific work-related interests, norms and expectations related to organizations as 'moral economies'. Therefore, employees' commitment to organizational mindfulness varies with the social recognition of these interests and expectations that are also crucial for employees' organizational commitment. This extended notion of perspectives exceeds functionalist views.

Third, in the functionalist perspective, organizing the variety of actors' perspectives for OM widely neglects intra-organizational conflicts (Becke 2012). For example, conflict may arise from different interests or discrepancies between actors' situational definitions and interpretations of unexpected events. Conflict may also refer to different viewpoints regarding the containment of unpredicted environmental events. Furthermore, the original concept excludes intra-organizational power relations and negotiations as enablers as well as potential barriers to OM and mindful organizing.

Fourth, in the functionalist perspective of OM, employees are primarily regarded as 'human resources' that contribute to organizational functioning by drawing on their local expertise and tacit knowledge (cf. Weick and Sutcliffe 2007; Sutcliffe and Vogus 2003). However, organizational mindfulness is hardly directed to potential unintended effects of coping with the unexpected in respect to employees' employability covering employees' motivation to work, the development of their knowledge base and competences, and the regeneration of employees' health resources. Especially, potential detrimental effects of mindful organizing on employees' health are scarcely considered. For instance, the containment of unexpected events in HROs often goes along with a high degree of psychic stress and exposes employees, as firemen, to extreme psycho-physical vulnerability in their work operations, as for example fire-fighting activities. Physical injuries, death and psychic or collective traumata may cause unintended effects on employees' coping

with the unexpected. This conceptual blind spot questions whether organizational mindfulness in respect to organizational reliability and functioning can be achieved without taking systematically care of organizational members. Although the original concept of OM refers to work-related tasks and operations, it widely disregards the quality of work as a core dimension of OM.

Finally, focusing on organizational functioning and reliability, the potentials of OM to uncover and to exploit unnoticed innovation opportunities, and to promote innovation linked to organizational change are neglected (cf. Becke 2012; Blomqvist in this volume). Moreover, organizational mindfulness can be conceived as an innovation in its own right. In this perspective, OM can be characterized as a specific social innovation (Howaldt and Schwarz 2011) introducing novel or altering existing social practices in addressing and managing the unexpected, e.g. in organizational change.

5 Promoting Social Sustainability at Organizational Level by 'Mindful Change'

In this section, the concept of OM is re-conceptualized considering the aforementioned critical objections. In this regard, OM is conceived as a prerequisite of social sustainability at organizational level as it directs organizational awareness to the development and regeneration of organizations' social resource base in continuous change.

5.1 The Re-Conceptualization of Organizational Mindfulness

In this paper, OM is re-conceptualized as organizations' capacity of action to enable and regenerate a dynamic stability of organizations' social resource base in volatile and unpredictable socio-economic environments. In this view, OM is closely linked to the perspective of social sustainability at organizational level. It is argued that OM, i.e. a mindful infrastructure and mindful change can facilitate the dynamic stability of organizations' social resource base in dynamic and unpredictable environments.

Contrary to the original concept of OM, it is assumed that OM is not solely focused on unexpected events as a source of adversity. Rather, organizational awareness can be directed to unnoticed innovation potentials, either within organizations or in their environments. Moreover, OM is regarded as a core prerequisite of organizations' innovation capacity: It promotes adaptive trust cultures that encourage employees to mobilize their local knowledge for innovation processes. Adaptive trust cultures can reduce organizations' social vulnerability in

reorganization processes and enhance or regenerate social integration at organizational level (Becke 2012).

Finally, our understanding of OM focuses on aspects that are either side-tracked or disregarded in the original concept: This especially counts for the regeneration of organizational members' health resources and organizations' social resources, involving trust or reciprocity between management and employees. By taking account of these aspects, organizational mindfulness extends its goals beyond organizational reliability and organizational functioning in turbulent and unpredictable environments (cf. Rerup and Levinthal in this volume). For instance, the social legitimacy of organizations is taken into account with respect to the organization-environment relationship. Regarding the intra-organizational level, social integration and health promotion are considered as important goals of organizational mindfulness in reorganization processes.

5.2   The Concept of 'Mindful Change'

Our conceptualization of OM was developed against the background of the aforementioned in-depth case studies. A core result of these case studies is that OM can be established in organizations of different size, primary tasks, and sectors. However, situational contexts have to be considered. In the following paragraphs, I would like to sketch the concept of 'mindful change' which is based on the re-conceptualization of OM. This concept is comprised of a mindful infrastructure focusing on organizational change and six key principles that enable mindful organizing in respect to permanent change.

This infrastructure is based on organizational routines facilitating mindful change (Levinthal and Rerup 2006). Organizational routines denote "repetitive, recognizable patterns of interdependent actions, carried out by multiple actors" (Feldman and Pentland 2003, p. 95). Routines are often equaled with organizational inertia that may foster mindlessness (Langer 1989) by enhancing repetitive patterns of social action, thereby producing inertial blind spots that may induce unintended detrimental side-effects of organizational change. However, this is not the complete picture of organizational routines. They may foster OM by "setting expectations for what should occur" (Vogus and Sutcliffe 2012, p. 730). In this view, organizational routines can be utilized to detect the emergence of unanticipated problems and side-effects of permanent reorganization or unnoticed innovation potentials. If organizational routines embody or at least facilitate dialogue and mutual learning between intra-organizational actors across teams, units and hierarchical levels, OM can be promoted.

Organizational mindfulness embraces two distinctive variants of organizational routines (Jordan et al. 2009, p. 468): The first variant, i.e. "interactive routines" (ibid.), refers to practices of reflection in work-related operations and interactions. Interactive routines enable employees and managers at team level to anticipate and to deal with unintended effects of permanent reorganization on the spot, thereby

preventing or containing its negative effects or initiating further coping measures at organizational level. In interactive routines, mutual recognition is a core requirement for addressing and inquiring unintended effects of reorganization.

The second type of organizational routines supports 'reflection-on-action' outside of work processes (Jordan et al. 2009), as e.g. multi-actors' steering committees or procedures of employee appraisals or internal audits. It is vital for mindful change that steering committees are not only comprised of top-management and line managers, but rather also embrace (representatives of) employees. If the variety of actors represents teams and organizational units that are affected by a specific change initiative or an overall change program, there is ample opportunity for collective reflection on (unnoticed) innovation potentials and unanticipated effects of reorganization. Moreover, mindful decision-making on reorganization processes can be facilitated. Especially, steering committees can be conceived as organizational key routines to design frame conditions of permanent reorganization and to re-direct change initiatives, thereby promoting a development and regeneration of organizations' social resource base. These committees can act as powerful collective mindful-change agents to decide on, to monitor, and to evaluate reorganization processes and the implementation of developed solutions that either deal with unintended effects or with uncovering unnoticed innovation potentials (cf. Behrens and Bleses in this volume).

Moreover, mindful infrastructures can contain spaces of dialogue beyond regular organizational routines. Spaces of dialogue can be conceived as participatory social spaces of collective inquiry and exchange between employees or between employees and managers, thereby facilitating collective and organizational learning in respect to mindful organizing (Behrens and Bleses in this volume). Especially, spaces of dialogue that involve multiple actors with different perspectives, as e.g. dialogue-conferences (Engelstad 1996), provide an opportunity structure for regularly taking stock of change initiatives or entire change programs and related frame conditions (Becke and Senghaas-Knobloch 2011).

This infrastructure facilitates mindful change. The term 'mindful change' reflects the specific quality of permanent reorganization processes taking account of organizational mindfulness. Mindful change embraces six principles that are directed to enhancing and regenerating the dynamic stability of organizations' social resource base in permanent reorganization:

- Developing and regenerating organizational stability anchors
- Organizing perspective diversity
- Promoting negotiation and conflict resolution
- Developing and establishing trust anchors
- Promoting sustainable work systems
- Facilitating experimental change

5.2.1 Developing and Regenerating Organizational Stability Anchors

Dynamic stability of organizations' social resource base necessitates the development and regeneration of organizational stability anchors. The latter can be defined as factors that promote a stability basis in reorganization processes. Stability anchors are required to maintain at least a minimum of stability in organizational change. These anchors facilitate comparatively stable patterns of mutual expectations between organizations on the one hand and their members and external stakeholders on the other hand. Moreover, stability anchors may support intra-organizational social integration, especially trust relations in permanent reorganization. Finally, stability anchors enable organizations to maintain basic structures, procedures and routines that are vital for organizational functioning in permanent reorganization processes.

Stability anchors can be differentiated in anchors related to the organization-environment interface and anchors that refer to the intra-organizational level. Regarding the environment-organization relationship, clear business strategies, organizational reliability, customers' trust in organizations and the social account-ability of organizations towards stakeholders promoting social legitimacy are key stability anchors (Becke 2011, 69 pp.). In respect to the intra-organizational level, social trust, social recognition, and reciprocity are fundamental stability anchors.

In our case studies, professional identities turned out to be a core stability anchor in reorganization processes. This can be illustrated by the example of the public transport company and the social services provider. In the latter case, social and care workers objected to the centralization of different, formerly decentralized houses with clients criticizing this as hospitalization of their clients. The centralization concept contradicted to their professional understanding of social and care work. Therefore, they insisted to maintain their self-regulated work autonomy as a prerequisite of social work sensitive to clients' demands and need. Their resistance to reorganization partially decreased when their work autonomy was maintained and clients approved of their new surroundings. In the case of the public transport maintenance, workers criticized efficiency measures in reorganization processes that contradicted to their professional norms and standards. Mindful organizing has to take account of stability anchors vital to organizational sustainability, e.g. by organizing dialogue processes and negotiations between management and workers on professional standards. This may include a potential adaptation of stability anchors to altered circumstances in reorganization processes.

5.2.2 Organizing Perspective Diversity

The key principle 'organizing perspective diversity' acknowledges employees with their local expertise and tacit knowledge as important promoters of reorganization processes. Organizing perspective diversity intends to create spaces of intra-organizational dialogue among employees, across hierarchical levels and intra-organizational boundaries. Our understanding of dialogue is rooted in the action

research approach (Gustavsen 1992; Behrens and Bleses in this volume). Dialogue facilitates collective inquiry and learning with regard to reorganization processes. Organizing perspective diversity on the basis of participative dialogue enables to anticipate and uncover unintended effects of permanent reorganization related to organizational effectiveness, social relations in the workplace or the quality of work. It can also create a platform for constructively coping with negative side effects of reorganization, e.g. by rebalancing reciprocity in reorganization processes. For instance, in the public transport company permanent reorganization increased work intensity due to personnel reductions and efficiency measures. In dialogue processes, maintenance workers and their local works councilors negotiated with area managers and supervisors improvements in occupational health and safety and an increase of work autonomy.

Moreover, organizing perspective diversity often proves to be a source of innovation by integrating management knowledge and employees' local knowledge. For instance, in the maintenance unit of the public transport company, a new procedure related to the fine-tuning of work processes was developed by supervisors and maintenance workers. This procedure substituted established, but problematic work practices.

5.2.3 Promoting Negotiation and Conflict Resolution

Reorganization processes are often conflictive, especially when employees perceive 'psychological contracts' as violated, and gains and burdens are perceived by employees as unevenly distributed between management and the workforce. Escalating conflicts may erode organizations' social resource base by deteriorating trust relations and endangering co-operation in the workplace. Therefore, mindful organizing encompasses the development and establishment of procedures for negotiation and conflict resolution in the workplace and at organizational level. Such procedures, e.g. the mediation of conflicts, bear potentials for a re-framing of social relations in the workplace that facilitate the regeneration of social trust (cf. Hatch 1997; Coser 1965). Such procedures of negotiation and conflict resolution facilitate a culture of integrative bargaining at organizational level. Employees' representatives, as works councils, can facilitate conflict resolution at organizational level because they are legally obliged to take account of organizational or economic interests and employees' interests (Kotthoff 1995).

5.2.4 Developing and Establishing Trust Anchors

Trust anchors intend to facilitate the development of adaptive trust cultures in organizations. The intermediary function of trust anchors relates to reconciling different actors' interests and expectations in reorganization processes. Trust anchors can contribute to the exploration of conflict resolution in the workplace. Trust anchors can fulfill their intermediary function, if they are intra-organizationally recognized and obtain required resources, e.g. time and money. Three types of trust anchors can

be distinguished: rules and procedures (e.g. participative procedure applied to organizational change initiatives), legally established institutions and their representatives (e.g. works councils), and intermediary social positions in organizational hierarchies, as middle managers. Our case studies indicated that the co-existence of two or more trust anchors facilitates adaptive trust cultures in reorganization processes. For instance, in the public transport company, the institution of works councils and an established procedure of direct employee participation turned out as important trust anchors in the reorganization of the maintenance unit.

5.2.5   Promoting Sustainable Work Systems

Permanent reorganization often goes along with negative effects on employees' and managers' psycho-physical health. The depletion of individuals' health resources can be attributed to several factors in change processes. For instance, enhanced work intensity and psychic stress are caused by personnel reductions and increased job instability (Sverke et al. 2002). Psychic stress can also be attributed to a severe and durable imbalance of efforts and rewards in permanent reorganization (Siegrist 1996). Mindful organizing has to take account of these health-related problems by promoting sustainable work systems that are adaptive to permanent reorganization (Becke 2013a). Sustainable work systems are defined as systems "where human and social resources are … regenerated through the process of work while still maintaining productivity and a competitive edge" (Docherty et al. 2002, p. 214). In the perspective of health promotion, organizational mindfulness reflects a dual orientation, first, to anticipate and to prevent detrimental health effects, and second, to enhance the salutogenetic quality of work structures and processes (Antonovsky 1997). In this respect, organizational mindfulness can unfold a health promoting infrastructure involving procedures of dialogue and organizational routines (Levinthal and Rerup 2006). Organizational routines may facilitate mindful organizing by introducing scrutiny to permanent reorganization activities, thereby enabling reflective learning sensitive to health-aspects of reorganization (Becke 2013a). Interactive routines embedded in work processes (Jordan et al. 2009, p. 468) are exemplified by regular team meetings where health-related issues are regularly addressed, thereby fostering continual self-reflection of teams in respect to permanent reorganization and its effects on working conditions. Moreover, organizational routines that support 'reflection-on-action' outside of work processes (Jordan et al. 2009) are necessitated for a mindful health promotion in continuous reorganization, as e.g. multi-actors' steering committees of reorganization, serving as a 'mindfulness radar' (Becke 2013a).

In one of our case studies in ICT-services, the top-management tried to delegitimize employees' concerns about high levels of psychic stress associated with permanent change. In a dialogue conference involving top-management, project-managers and employees, the issue of psychic stress was set on the agenda by employees, ways to reduce stress at work were explored and initiated. For instance, required time for project meetings was integrated in project calculation, thereby reducing stress at work.

5.2.6 Facilitating Experimental Change

A core problem of radical or permanent change refers to abolishing procedures and structures that are regarded as outdated, not adaptive or not appropriate to altered circumstances. These procedures and structures are often replaced by novel ones that were hardly tested before. In this case, unintended negative side effects on working conditions, co-operation or organizational functioning often occur. The idea of experimental change is related to this problem. Experimental change is organized in pilot projects involving actors across hierarchical levels and often also across departmental boundaries to develop and test solutions to a specific problem (Becke 2007, 2013). Existing procedures and structures that are perceived as inappropriate to altered circumstances are replaced after a pilot project has been successfully tested. Experimental change facilitates organizational mindfulness by enabling experimental and collective learning. Moreover, it fosters the containment of negative side effects related to pilot projects. In the case of the public transport company, maintenance workers and their supervisors developed and tested a new procedure related to the fine-tuned planning of work orders within a pilot project. The developed procedure was altered several times until it was collectively accepted. However, the pilot project indicated that best effects were to be attained by involving other maintenance units. Therefore, the pilot project opened up spaces for further innovation and co-operation across cost-center boundaries.

6 Conclusions

The concept of organizational mindfulness can be extended to organizations different from HROs. Moreover, it can be applied to permanent organizational change. In the perspective of social sustainability, organizational mindfulness can contribute to the development and regeneration of organizations' social resource base. OM enables organizational reflexivity of permanent change processes regarding unintended and unexpected side effects detrimental to organizations' social resource base and in respect to until then unnoticed innovation potentials. The establishment of dialogue, organizational routines sensitive to organizations' social-resource base, and key principles of mindful organizing provide a basis for reflective organizational learning towards organizational mindfulness.

However, our case-study results also indicate that 'mindful change' and a related mindful infrastructure are not sufficient to promote a socially sustainable development of organizations. Rather, it also takes corresponding actors' attitudes that are sensitive to mindful organizing. Otherwise, available structures, routines and procedures of OM are not utilized. This problem can – among other factors – be explained by the long shadows of change history at organizational level. Our case studies showed that negative previous experience with organizational change, as disrupted change participation, fostered detached attitudes towards mindful change.

Nevertheless, mindful change can promote novel and counterintuitive change experience that – at least in the longer run – may facilitate an attitudinal change. The interplay between actors' attitudes and mindful infrastructures provides a basis for further research on mindful change.

In my view, research in organizational mindfulness can be more deeply integrated in organization and labor studies, if OM is analyzed in a process-oriented negotiated-order perspective (Strauss 1993) placing emphasis on conflict and negotiation between intra-organizational actors or between intra-organizational and external actors. For instance, this perspective can contribute to explain why specific issues vital to organizations' social resource base are disregarded in mindful organizing. Moreover, it can promote research in the potential of negotiations in the workplace as a starting point for enhanced organizational mindfulness.

Our case studies indicated that OM related to permanent reorganization is above all facilitated in firms drawing on an organizational storage of dialogue-related experience and knowledge. In this respect, social institutions in the workplace significantly matter. In organizations with well-established works councils and a corresponding organizational culture that facilitates integrative bargaining between management and employees, dialogue-oriented mindful infrastructures are more common and socially acknowledged to intra-organizational actors. Our case-studies in firms related to ICT-services highlight specific problems that are related to workplaces without such established institutions. For instance, establishing dialogue sensitive to unintended effects of permanent reorganization remains a fragile project, if top managers primarily conceive of spaces of dialogue as a threat to their authority.

Avenues of further research are related to the relevance of social institutions in respect to organizational mindfulness. In this perspective, institutions are viewed as "distinct configurations of interests and social relations" (Swedberg 2003, p. xii). It has to be further examined, under which specific conditions the establishment of organizational mindfulness can flourish. In this regard, the influence of social institutions or different institutional settings organizations are embedded in, requires further analysis. First, it has to be examined more closely and on a broader scale how workplace institutions imprint on establishing organizational mindfulness (in permanent reorganization). Second, the institutional settings of economic organizations have to be considered more thoroughly. For instance, economic organizations operate in specific socio-economic environments that reflect different types of political economies, as liberal market economies or coordinated market economies (Hall and Soskice 2001). Despite an overall pressure of economic globalization, distinct institutional configurations remain in coordinated market economies, e.g. in respect to labor market regulation and industrial relations. Against this background, further research may deal with the interplay of different institutional settings and organizational mindfulness. Moreover, it can be explored whether institutions at international or global level can facilitate or promote organizational and political mindfulness (cf. Senghaas-Knobloch in this volume).

Finally, our research indicates that the concept of (organizational) mindfulness may enrich sustainability studies. For instance, the concept of OM can be extended to a variety of issues that are at the core of sustainability research (at organizational and inter-organizational levels), as economic organizations' depletion of natural resources or taking account of social and ecological aspects in cross-sectoral systems of provision (Chappels and Shove 2004), e.g. energy supply, mobility services or consumption.

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