A Sociomaterial Conception of Organizational Compassion

TREO Talk Paper

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Abstract

We present a sociomaterial conception of organizational compassion. We are inspired by the emergence of the positive psychology literature in management as well as the paradigm of positive computing (http://www.positivecomputing.org/) which aims to design and use IT for human well-being (Calvo and Peters 2014). Compassion is fundamental to supporting human well-being (Tsui 2013). From an IS perspective, organizational compassion is the phenomenon where social and technological elements of an organization synergistically combine with one another such that the organizational system collectively notices, feels, makes sense of, and responds to suffering experienced by that system’s internal and external stakeholders. We leverage the notions of affordances, imbrications, routines, and human agency within the critical realist view of sociomateriality (Leonardi 2011) to develop our conception (Figure 1 & Table 1). Through our sociomaterial formulation of organizational compassion, we hope to promote dialogue about IT-enabled compassion as a compelling addition to IS scholarship.

Figure 1. Sociomaterial view of Compassion

Table 1. Salient Concepts in our Formulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compassion-related stimuli</td>
<td>Encountering personal, familial, or professional suffering within an organizational context</td>
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<td>Compassion-related routines</td>
<td>Organizational patterns of action legitimizing, propagating and coordinating compassion</td>
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<td>Organizational compassionate imperative</td>
<td>The extent to which an organization feels a need to act in a compassionate manner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sociomaterial realization of organizational</td>
<td>A process in which entangled human and material agencies yield affordances that support interdependent routines that together enact organizational compassion</td>
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<tr>
<td>compassion</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Compassion-related imbrication</td>
<td>Repetitive arrangement of human and material agencies in intersecting patterns so that they perform in an interdependent manner, explicitly aimed at facilitating the enactment of compassion</td>
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<td>Imbricative iterations</td>
<td>A continuous process of compassion-related imbrications that emerges from assemblages of technology affordances that can facilitate enacting compassion</td>
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References