Involvement as a Dilemma. Between Dialogue and Discussion in Team Based Organizations

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This article describes an ongoing action research project in a public administration department working towards a more flat structure characterized by value-based management, team organization, and involvement.

The article presents involvement as a multidimensional dilemma and describes how employees experience and cope with traditional and modern dilemmas, and how the borderline between them seems to be blurred. It also includes the AR-dilemma unfolding in the relation between the participants and us as actions researchers.

The dilemmas are discussed in relation to Human Resource Management. The history of involvement is reflected as a historical transformation of participative democracy into participative management characterized by strategic communication.

Key words: Action research, involvement, dialogue, dilemma, team-based organization

1. Purpose: Dilemmas for them and us

This article is based on an ongoing action research project in a public administration department with 60 employees: academic, office, and service employees, divided into seven teams, one manager, and one senior manager. The department is part of a faculty at a university.