There are no translations available.

Our research contributes to knowledge on strategic organizational responses by addressing a specific type of institutional complexity that has, to date, been rather neglected in scholarly inquiry: conflicting institutional demands that arise within the same institutional order. We suggest referring to such type of complexity as "intra-institutional"—as opposed to "inter-institutional." Empirically, we examine the consecutive spread of two management concepts—shareholder value and corporate social responsibility—among Austrian listed corporations around the turn of the millennium. Our work presents evidence that in institutionally complex situations, the concepts used by organizations to respond to competing demands and belief systems are interlinked and coupled through multiwave diffusion. We point to the open, chameleon-like character of some concepts that makes them particularly attractive for discursive adoption in such situations and conclude that organizations regularly respond to institutional complexity by resorting to discursive neutralization techniques and strategically producing ambiguity.

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