On the Shoulders of Giants

Tommy Jensen; Timothy L. Wilson

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Rediscovering intellectual efforts

Why stand on the shoulders of a giant?

Tommy Jensen and Timothy L. Wilson

One answer to the above question is provided by Sir Isaac Newton: "If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants."[1] Thus, Sir Isaac was humble and wise enough to realize that new ideas do not come into being just like that; there is a past and connected to the past are certain dependencies regarding ideas. Some of the prevailing ideas today would simply not have been around if it weren't for previous ideas. Newton's ideas are today deemed as ground-breaking; an important step breaking with the pre-modern phase. However radical that might appear to us now, Newton himself paid tribute to his giants, appreciating that his work was preceded by many a scholar's work. Even though radical breaks with previous past do occur and revolutionary ideas at times seem to evolve from nowhere (cf. Kuhn, 1996), developments in science are most often an incremental, slow process. Another reason for studying the foundations of our discipline is because "[t]hose who cannot learn from the past are condemned to repeat it", a statement for which George Santayana is credited.[2] In other words, our scholarly activities should represent meaningful attempts at progress and not reinventions of the wheel.

Newton's and Santayana's wisdom might at first appear as something perfectly obvious. They are truisms; of course we should pay attention to past ideas so as to assist us in creating new ones today and to avoid the repetition of history. Furthermore, it is simply a matter of intellectual honesty to rightly refer to and understand the originators of an idea.

We could add other reasons. First, as the professionalization of social science has taken a turn towards specialization, there is a risk that the discipline of organization studies will lose sight of broader issues such as environmental degradation, global warming, social injustice, globalization that require interdisciplinary approaches. As Adler (2009: 4) states; "organization studies suffers from increasing intellectual insularity." Going back to giants, then, helps us to develop the kind of professionalization that provides us with a preferred starting point. As giants, and their seminal work, are more often than not holistic in nature, they could serve as "signifiers, allowing us to refer parsimoniously to whole world-views" and appreciate that "they encapsulate what were and remain unusually deep and compelling insights into human nature and social order" (Adler, 2009: 5).

Secondly, knowing the DNA of ideas also facilitates a critical appreciation that ideas have been generated within certain contexts and at certain times. Consequently, as ideas travel in time and space, perhaps translated into new areas of research and practice, being aware of the origins of the idea is important in order to appreciate the possible extensions or limitations of such an attempt. Phrased differently, the idea relied upon might at the outset capture a good portion of what seems to be relevant today, but might also leave out a number of important aspects of contemporary organization studies, such as gender issues, human impact on ecological systems or how the rapid development of information technology affects human decision-making. The opposite can also be true. Many ideas that we live by today would have been heavily criticized by historic giants and their societies, and quite often, we believe, rightly so. So, for us, evaluating our society by picking up on the giants and appreciating the context in which they lived offers meaningful possibilities.

Against this wisdom stands a good deal of history, e.g. modernity and ideas of progress. Simply put, we like to think that progress means that things past are inferior to things present. In other words, we tend to assume that today we are morally, politically, economically, socially, technically and scientifically superior in terms of individual development in comparison to the level of civilization of, let's say, 2,300 years ago at the time of Aristotle, 350 years ago at the time of Sir Isaac Newton, or 15 to 60 years ago at the times of the giants referenced in this volume.

An example of this presumed sense of progress is when we find ourselves confronted with student writings in which the reference list is 'brand new'. Students adapt to what they think is the appropriate thing to do and tend to read about the latest developments in journal publications. A 'best after date' seems to be set by both undergraduate and PhD students; that date is approximately 'a couple of years' but not later than the late nineties. Students acquire this notion from somewhere and established academics play a significant role in keeping it alive. Keeping the reference list fresh is a simple, yet effective, way of ensuring that the completed written product will have a good shelf life.

As this matter is subject to scrutiny, we suggest a precautionary principle: *change does not necessarily represent progress*. It may be the case that new ideas do not actually mean improvement and that older ideas can prove helpful. This reflection is not nostalgia; it is simply important to avoid becoming a-historic.

There are several reasons for combating the false idea of progress and starting to dig in the bookshelves of the past to spend time with historic giants in the field of organization studies. Being familiar with the DNA of a discipline increases the capability of understanding the development of the field in question, i.e. knowing which ideas have been used and which have been dumped is essential to an academic appreciation.

Further, there is essentially no God-given solid proof that current ideas are superior to past ideas. Ideas might run the risk of being watered down by new generations of scholars so that all that remains are concepts depleted of relevance and meaning. Friedrich Nietzsche, the "philosopher with the hammer", warned us that those standing on the shoulder of giants might cause a degradation of ideas to occur (1968). Thus, the task of taking care of the history of ideas is something that should not be taken lightly: sloppy, narrow-minded reading and use of important ideas are threats to meaningful progress.

Additionally, ideas that might be highly relevant to us today turn into an obligatory passage point that just has to be mentioned or included in the reference list but not necessarily be closely and carefully elaborated on (Latour, 1987). Charles Lindblom's "disjointed incrementalism", Herbert Simon's "bounded rationality" and James Thompson's "interdependencies" are examples that may already have been, or run the risk of being, watered down.

This list of arguments is by no means exhaustive, and others can be found in the following chapters. It is our starting point, however, and shows that previous efforts guide contemporary academic activities. In establishing their cases, we have asked each contributor to cover the following points in their chapters:

1. On what grounds has the contributor selected the giant, i.e., why is the giant relevant for the contributor?
2. The seminal contribution of the selected author, i.e. the essential key-concepts are expected to be explained by the contributor.
3. Usefulness of the author/book to the contributor in research and/or teaching.
4. The contributor's assessment of the value for a reader.
5. Any shortcomings that may have existed in the original work or have become outdated.

Background to this book

Part of our responsibility as educators is to see that our students are well grounded in the fundamentals of our field. This is why a PhD course was held at Umeå School of Business a couple of years ago.[3] In the course the students read some influential books on organization studies.[4] Based on their reading, the students were asked to discover the books' insights and apply them to their own PhD projects. Selecting which researchers and books to read is not an easy task for a teacher, neither is there room for many books within the framework of a 7.5 ETCS course.

Course books on key-readings in organization studies do, of course, exist. Given that such accounts are more or less instrumental, in our opinion they fail to arouse curiosity. We thus asked ourselves why an introductory book was not available that gave a fair account of the basic message and key concepts, outlined the relevance to contemporary organization studies and led to curiosity about the rich history of organization studies? There is clearly a need for an introductory book containing insightful and interesting reviews of influential thinkers and their books. Reading such a book at the outset of a PhD course would expose PhD students to the history of organizational studies. Also, after completing the book they would be in a better position to investigate those thinkers and ideas they found particularly interesting.

In 2009, the 20th NFF Conference (Nordiska Företagsekonomiska Föreningen) was held in Åbo, Finland. There a presentation was delivered entitled "On the Shoulder of Giants" (Wilson, 2009). Starting with quotes from Sir Isaac Newton and George Santayana, a few arguments were put forward as to why history can never be forgotten. Of course we can choose to set some parts of history aside, so as not to repeat bad practices, although that choice cannot be made without careful examination and evaluation. We should also continuously reflect on which shoulders it is best to stand. This task does not only demand careful examination and evaluation but also requires rediscovering and revaluating historical reality. Again, as disciples of science we must never become a-historical.

The presentation included a description of three recent accounts: one by Charles Lindblom on decision making, one by Thomas Kuhn on paradigm shifts and another by Paul R. Lawrence & Jay W. Lorsch on effective organizations. In each of these accounts the background to and reflection on the classic text at hand was given; the relevance for Swedish studies today, reflections and observations and lessons for managers. The main message of the presentation was basically that history still has a lot to contribute to a contemporary understanding of organizations.

These two experiences have led us to agree that "On the Shoulder of Giants" is a necessary book with a good title.

Selection of contributors and giants

A variety of scholars within the field of organization studies were asked to contribute to this volume. Statisticians might say that it is a convenience sample. Our only criterion was that we contacted people whose opinions we felt would interest the readers of this book. In doing so, we attempted to balance experience and gender. We knew some of the contributors personally and others only by reputation. The response was unbelievably positive. Almost every individual contacted agreed to supply a chapter. All the authors were given the freedom to decide on their personal favourite – their giant – about whom to write. This selection was made in advance, since we were keen to avoid duplication and didn't want the text to be too instrumental. In other words, an important instruction to the potential authors was to colour their text with personal reflections and a personal writing style. The heterogeneity among the collectors, we believe, is reflected in the variety of giants and the different emphases. The format of the different chapters also varies. In addition, readers will notice differences in what motivates and interests the contributors, their experiences and their writing styles.

In this regard, this book differs from other volumes about thinkers and texts in the organization studies field in that it does not focus on classical thinkers and texts from certain disciplines. Consequently, while a giant is considered as essential in some way or another, this evaluation is based on personal relevance to the specific writer – a relevance that does not need to be shared by the general scientific community of organization studies. Readers are likely to be interested in *who* was selected and *why* and *when* in their careers the giants were chosen. The variety present in this volume, we believe, ensures that the reader will be exposed to thinking and traditions from different disciplines, different suggestions as to how to study organizations and vastly different conclusions.

Acknowledgement

We would like to publicly thank our colleagues for their contributions. Without them, there would have been not publication. We appreciate not only their imagination and initiative but also their tolerance in dealing with us. We thank also Kristina Genell, Publisher: Business Administration, who was our champion at Studentlitteratur, gave us hands on guidance in the editing of the individual chapters, and arranged for the English editing of the contributions. Along those lines, we also cannot overlook the contributions of Titti Menden, Editor/Typesetter, who worked with us in making the manuscripts consistent and the things of beauty that make up this text. Finally, we thank the Umeå School of Business and its administrators for the continued support that has been given to our efforts.

Contents of this book

The chapters in this book are alphabetically ordered with regard to the giant's surname. In what follows, we tease out each chapter's content by providing some of the core arguments made by the contributor.

In a joint authorship, **Alf Rehn** and **Marcus Lindahl** suggest that reading *George Bataille* and *The Accursed Share* (1947) is beneficial because it directs us from the taken-for-granted notion that economic processes in general and organizational processes in particular add value to a focus on the output of waste that these different systems produce. The authors state that Bataille does more than develop a critical stance; he develops a "*transgressive one*" by showing us how to go beyond "the boundaries of knowledge". "In terms of management studies, no single movement may be more important today".

Tommy Jensen's selection for review is *Zygmunt Bauman* and *Modernity and the Holocaust* (1989) and his view that the events of the Holocaust could be seen as a "logical, yet horrific, outcome of modernity" in which bureaucracy "had an essential role in paving the way for the horrific events that took place". Three core concepts are dealt with by the author and are depicted as demoralizing processes. These demoralizing processes have devastating effects on an individual's capability and readiness to take moral responsibility. The author suggests that "[f]ollowing the insights of Bauman gears the analysis towards seeing ordinary, normal organizations as capable of producing mini-Holocausts".

Reinhart Bendix, in his *Work and Authority in Industry* (1956), emphasizes the need to focus on "organizational ideologies in detail, no matter how repetitive and simplistic they may seem at a distance." **Markus Kallifatides** imagines himself speaking to that author. When pursuing such an interest, Bendix is a most valuable intellectual assistant as he shows how to analyze "ideology as though it was not self-evident, or self-explanatory." The author uses case studies of America, Russia as well as the DDR (former East Germany) to show the global repertoire of "managerial identity types". This journey also reveals the value of Bendix's empirical work.

Marta B. Calás and Linda Smircich and *Voicing Seduction to Silence Leadership* (1991) were selected as the focus of **Ulla Eriksson-Zetterquist's** chapter. The author states that "whenever there is an opportunity I now use Calás and Smircich as a foundation to question leadership." The author shows how deconstructions of leadership contribute to our understanding of how leadership theories are based on implicit assumptions of sexuality and seduction, and that contrasts between leadership and seduction "make the hierarchical order clear, as lead is good and seduce is bad."

Rolf A. Lundin regards *Richard M. Cyert's and James G. March's A Behavioral Theory of the Firm* (1963) as a book that not only transformed his life but one in which "the love affair is still is continuing" and "is now deeper than ever". The author indicates that he gained inspiration by comparing what had been said about 'firms' with his own data and thoughts about temporary organizations. The author suggests that readers will be struck by the richness of the book in terms of ideas, wealth of material and relevance to business life today.

Peter F. Drucker's The Practice of Management (1954/1986) has earned him a cult-like following even after death. Drucker claimed that a business enterprise had two basic functions – marketing and innovation. He established the argument of management by objectives and that it was the customer who established the nature of a business. Nevertheless, **Timothy L. Wilson** suggests that it was his co-editor who induced him to write about this work. The author also wonders whether Scandinavians will read the chapter, although, as the author argues, "an individual starting to study management will either find [this book] useful in order to establish a base or appreciate the derivation of a wide variety of topics."

Karin Holmblad Brunsson suggests that *Henry Fayol* "designed modern management" and reviews his *General and Industrial Management* (1916/1949). Fayol's claim "that all organizations need management – and the same type of management" led to management becoming "a specialty in its own right." However, as the author suggests, as a person Fayol is all but forgotten; perhaps because his management recommendations "are *too* well known; so well known, in fact, that very few people reflect on their origins." Reconnecting to this giant is time well spent, as his work has "proved to be a true token of globalization."

Ulla Johansson and **Jill Woodilla** tell the interesting story of the selection of their giant. Ulla "quickly fell in love" with the work of *Mary Parker Follett* and *Mary Parker Follett's Prophet of Management* (ed. 1995) and especially her notion and treatment of power. Jill, on the other hand, was initially confused, although "has come to appreciate the 'gentle persistence' of Follett's observations and generalizations." Through three fundamental concepts we learn the advantages of framing power within "a non-hierarchical view" (versus the hierarchical view of power) and of framing responsibility as "joint responsibility" (versus the common blame and praise model in which responsibility is individual).

Johan Sandström indicates that he would not aspire to stand on the shoulders of *Erving Goffman* and his *Asylums* (1961) but rather peek over them. The author claims that he, like so many others before him, became "high on Goffmanesque" after reading Asylums. However, there is still a lack of "[l]ong, ethnographic studies of ordinary, or lower level organizational people." So even if Goffman in general, and particularly so in Asylums, addresses central concerns for organization studies he is "under-used by students of organizations". The author thinks that this is a pity, since studies of ordinary or lower level organizational people are far from boring, mundane or unimportant.

Alexander Styhre champions the reading of *Alvin Gouldner* and *Patterns of Industrial Democracy* (1954). The author asserts that "Gouldner was not only a 'formidable intellect' but also a tragic figure", which might explain why he has been somewhat neglected. Gouldner is worth reading because he provides deep insights into the theory of bureaucracy as well as the role of resistance and emotions in organizations (the latter in Gouldner's terms nostalgia). Parts of Gouldner's work that are used today include the term "mock bureaucracy", often re-labelled as soft bureaucracy, as well as the empirical notion of the bureaucracy's dynamic and processual nature. But as the author shows, there is more to discover in Gouldner's work.

In *Jeff Hearn's and Wendy Parkin's 'Sex' at 'Work'. The Power and Paradox of Organisation Sexuality* (1995), **Charlotte Holgersson** points out that "[t]heir book is one of the very first attempts to create a framework for understanding the linkages between organization, sexuality and gender". The author shows how sexuality in organizations is not only constructed physically but also at a symbolic level, through language and imagery. The author claims that using this framework of gender, sexuality and power reveal "aspects of organizational life" that are normally invisible and taken-for-granted.

Rossabeth Moss Kanter's Men and Women of the Corporation (1977) is "considered a groundbreaking and innovative book at the time", but "still provides plausible interpretations to analyses of empirical findings in organization studies." When reading the book again, **Anna Wahl** is struck by its "extensiveness, lively language and images". Despite the book being "grounded in a gender-neutral perspective that is based on mainstream, gender-blind organizational theory", it provides valuable explanations as to how "the fate of women is inextricably bound up with organizational structure and processes" as well as patriarchic roles and images.

Elisabeth Sundin chose to review *Gunnar Myrdal* and *Objectivity in Social Research* (1968). The author highlights the importance of continuously discussing which "norms and criteria" social science commits to. Myrdal and his discussion on truth and objectivity are of great value in this ongoing discussion; particularly so, according to the author, because he deals with the same questions as Thomas Kuhn and exclusively discusses the matter of truth and objectivity from a social science perspective. In particular, "Myrdal demonstrated that the claims of value-neutral innocence made for economic theory" are erroneous; an argument that can be applied to other disciplines as well.

Maria Ossowska is the giant selected by **Barbara Czarniawska**. Re-discovering and re-reading *Bourgeois Morality* (1956/1986) some 40 years later, the author discovers that "everything I am doing is but an imitation of Ossowska's work." However successful the author has been in imitating Ossowska and her work, "the elegance was one trait that" she "wasn't able to imitate". Not only is Ossowska's work fundamental to the author, it would seem as though her work has made a pioneering contribution to, for example, studies of science and technology (SST). "Sometimes the giants are hidden by the clouds in which they reside," the author writes.

In summarizing his reaction to *Chaïm Perelman* and *Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca* and *The New Rhetoric – A Treatise on Argumentation* (1969), **Hervé Corvellec** writes that it was "love at first sight". Reading one sentence was enough: "[N]o one deliberates where the solution is necessary or argues when against what is self-evident." Their major contribution, as suggested by the author, is the understanding of how argumentation "follows ways that cannot be reduced to logic, either formal or informal." Reading this book offers "a unique way of understanding how people actually manage to gain and retain the adherence of those they address, in speech or in writing."

What does one do with a giant who rejects his own work? **Daniel Ericson** argues that *David Silverman* and *The Theory of Organisation* (1970) is basically misinterpreted and rejected. Nonetheless, Silverman himself is partly to blame for this. In order to "see the world alright", the later Silverman urges the reader to read the book and then throw it away. The author therefore chooses to enter into a kind of dialogue with the giant's own assessment of his work, ensuring us that keeping in touch with the book after reading is rewarding because "[t]he critique formulated [---] towards the positivist and managerialist biases of organisation researchers is still pertinent".

Markus Hällgren's selection for review is *Karl Weick* and *The Social Psychology of Organizing* (1979). Going through several core concepts connected with organizing, the author argues that at least two key concepts seem to have been neglected. The author claims that "[t]his implies that key concepts like sense making and the entire organizing concept may be flawed." The author also shows how contemporary developments within organization studies, i.e. the practice turn, could benefit from a tighter coupling to core concepts of organizing.

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1 Georges Bataille

On His Shoulders (And Other Parts of the Body of Knowledge)

Alf Rehn and Marcus Lindahl

Introduction: On the genealogy of critique

> I was not even satisfied with the usual debauchery, because the only thing it dirties is debauchery itself, while, in some way or other, anything sublime and perfectly pure is left intact by it. My kind of debauchery soils not only my body and my thoughts, but also anything I may conceive in its course, that is to say, the vast starry universe, which merely serves as a backdrop.
>
> *From Story of the Eye (1928/2001: 42)*

Can a librarian with a penchant for mysticism, pornography and human sacrifice be considered a "giant" in management and organization studies? While most would probably doubt such an assertion, here we argue that at least in the case of Georges Bataille, the description of both person and standing is apt. By focusing on an idiosyncratic thinker and his equally quirky masterpiece – *The Accursed Share* (1949/1988 & 1991) – we wish to highlight the ways in which the field of organization studies needs to consider that the shoulders upon which we stand cannot only be those of our own giants. That more established fields have giants that may well stand taller than our own might be a painful thing to acknowledge, but any frank discussion regarding the history of and debt to those who came before needs to face up to such matters. It might have been easier to pick a name that is universally acknowledged as a founding father of social inquiry, such as that of Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, Adam Smith, or Karl Marx. However, we've opted to highlight the challenging theoretical input of a less well-known thinker, partly in order to discuss a figure that is close to our hearts and partly in order to show how important it is to include critical and surprising voices in order to enrich and enliven the field.

One might say that by bringing in Bataille, we're engaging in what has now become a classic, even constitutive, move in the field of *critical management studies*. Here, one of the most popular tactics for generating novel theorizations has been the introduction of scholars and intellectuals from other fields in order to bring their powers of inquiry to work on issues of management and organization. This has sometimes turned into something akin to sophistry. Still, it has also served to bring in figures such as Michel Foucault and thereby more complex notions of discourse and power, Jacques Derrida and engagements with language and ethics, Jacques Lacan and a renewed interest in the symbolic and unconscious dimensions of the organized world, as well as very many others. Even if all these figures – and their introduction to matters often considered more pragmatic and concrete than philosophical and abstract – have been met with considerable criticism, it would be wrongheaded to claim that they haven't been part of how the field has developed. For instance, although one might brush the impact of Derrida and Lacan aside, the influence of Michel Foucault cannot be ignored, nor the fact that the field has gained from being at least subjected to alternative understandings and theoretical approaches. What is particularly interesting for us is that the specific thinker we're engaging with here, Georges Bataille, was in fact a distinct influence on not only the three central post-structuralist theorists we've mentioned, but also on a whole host of others, such as Girogio Agamben, Jean Baudrillard, Roger Caillois, Pierre Klossowski and Jean-Luc Nancy to name but a few, and thus played an important role in developing philosophy and social science generally after World War II. Today, his influence can be detected in fields as far apart as philosophy, sociology, literary theory, theology, feminist theory, anthropology and cultural studies, and many others besides.

Stated somewhat differently, Bataille was a giant upon whose shoulders an entire generation of giants stood; scholars who in their turn have affected numerous researchers in management and organization studies. In this chapter we are thus involved in a kind of meta-shoulder analysis or genealogy of critique that simultaneously tries to present a major thinker in context and state why we believe that his insights are still important for the field we're working in.

The talented Mr. Bataille

Born in 1897, in Billon, Puy-de-Dôme, the boy who was to eventually become a philosopher of some renown did not have the easiest of childhoods. His mother suffered from severe depression and attempted suicide several times. His father was syphilitic, which led to him becoming both paralyzed and blind – something that had a profound effect on young Georges. He was later to describe seeing his father urinating and defecating himself as key traumatic incidents that later coloured his writing. Despite having been brought up in a troubled family, he was seen as a good, devout boy. He even considered becoming a priest, but chose academia instead.

For reasons never fully explained, Bataille ended up at the École des Chartes in Paris, where he studied to become an archivist. After finishing his studies, and after a sojourn in Madrid, he accepted a post at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, where he mainly worked with medallions and numismatics. However, he had already become a bit of a nuisance in the general intellectual circles of Paris, hanging out with the Surrealist movement. In a move that showed just how volatile his thinking was, he was to be seen as a disturbing presence, and was later officially excommunicated by André Breton – who seemingly did not see the paradox in calling someone weird enough to be a disturbance to Surrealism. Later, Bataille was to found important intellectual journals such as *Documents* (1929–1931), the *Acéphale* review (1936–1939), as well as *Critique* (founded in 1946), which was to become one of the most respected publications of its kind in France. For much of his early career he remained a librarian, but was forced to leave his position at the Bibliothèque Nationale in 1944 for health reasons. For the rest of his life he struggled financially, but managed to secure a series of editorships, teaching posts and the like to make ends meet and enable him to keep writing. His work with the aforementioned journals was to be a key legacy, as he not only established several important outlets but also became the one to first publish such luminaries as Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida. His shoulders, then, are broad enough for a multitude.

Bataille's body of work was one that developed over a long, scholarly life. Even though his works contain both literary fiction and profound academic treatises – due to lack of space we are unable to discuss his poetry or more literary works here – it is clear that the form that was most natural to Bataille was the essay. Many of his most important contributions were published as essays, either as freestanding or as parts of a greater work, in one of the many journals that Bataille was associated with, either as a founder, an editor or a frequent contributor. His key essays contain such texts as *The Inner Experience* (1943/1988), *On Nietzsche* (1945/1991), *Eroticism* (1957/1987), *Literature and Evil* (1957/2001), and *The Tears of Eros* (1961/2001). In addition there is the monumental, three-volume work *The Accursed Share* (1949/1988 & 1991), as well as a veritable cornucopia of minor works, ephemeral annotations, short texts, half-finished manuscripts and the major unfinished work that was published in partially reconstructed form as *The Unfinished System of Nonknowledge* in 2001. To give a full account of the vast expanse of interests that characterizes Bataille's work is not only impossible within the scope of this short text, but also probably impossible in general. The title of his posthumous and unfinished work is telling, as Bataille was never interested in orders that could be made into totalizing, closed systems. In this, he presages the work of e.g. Borges and Foucault, and also much of what is today accepted as true regarding the very nature of systems. But whereas a sociologist such as Luhmann would attempt to formalize the nature of systems and somehow capture their open-endedness, Bataille laughed in the face of such human vanity. Or, to use his own words:

> I believe that truth has only one face: that of a violent contradiction.
>
> *(Violent Silence, 1984: 26)*

This is an ontology that is far removed from nihilism, even though it has sometimes been seen as just that. Bataille did not want to reduce human understanding to a set of functions, but instead revelled in the very complexity of man's striving for knowledge:

> A judgment about life has no meaning except the truth of the one who speaks last, and the mind is at ease only at the moment when everyone is shouting at once and no one can hear a thing.
>
> *(L'abbé C, 1950/1983: 107)*

So, whereas the hunt for your average giant would take the follower to whatever towering achievement can be said to represent the pinnacle of that particular human's thought, an incursion into the thinking of Bataille will by necessity take us to far less enlightened crevices. It is into these that we must now plunge.

On experts and excrement

In one of his early and most evocative texts, *The Solar Anus* (1931, in Bataille 1985), Bataille presents a grand surrealist picture of decay, waste, excrement and death; one which might seem as far removed from organizational theory as humanly possible: "An umbrella, a sexagenarian, a seminarian, the smell of rotten eggs, the hollow eyes of judges are the roots that nourish love." But it is precisely the paradox and the enigma that is Bataille and that makes him so important for organization and management studies. Whereas these are normally, if implicitly, understood as research into the ordered and legitimate, Bataille raises the ever-present issue of disorder and the illegitimate, the dark side of things. Where our field has normally been obsessively focused on the head – reason and communication, thought and tongue – Bataille looks to the anus, the most unclean and forbidden part of the body of knowledge. Excrement and waste are not things one wants to talk about – particularly in management studies where there is a long tradition of ignoring central matters such as burnout, industrial accidents, panhandlers, piles of garbage, exploitation and resource depletion. But this is exactly what Bataille wanted to open our eyes to.

In Bataille's work, waste is not merely that which is cast off or what is left when the true hero or actor of a specific organizing movement has moved on, but is instead something that is much more fundamental to any form of social organizing. In his grand project, waste is the grand organizing logic of human endeavour and something that one needs to take into account when trying to be objective about what occurs in human action. While some might read Bataille and see him as a pervert, a pornographer and as someone who has nothing to contribute to management studies, he in fact inverts this claim. For if business studies is to be a science, does it not follow that it needs to consider all aspects of its phenomena and not merely those that are pure enough to suit our delicate sensibilities? This is Bataille's challenge to us, to consider all that is, rather than the subsets that we're most comfortable with. In this way, Bataille represents a creative interruption to the purified notions of social science and, through this, a major influence on how the notion of critical engagements herein could be understood.

The role of the anus in Bataille's writing can of course be traced back to his experience as a child, seeing his father shitting himself and thereby being alerted to the fundamental baseness of the human condition. Later, Bataille wrote some of his more challenging works under the pseudonym of Lord Auch, which can be translated as Lord Shithouse. In these texts (among them *Story of the Eye* (1928/2001), from which our introductory quote is taken) he repeatedly challenges the notion of human purity and juxtaposes this with low, base and even faecal matters. Still, this should not be seen as mere coprophilia[5]. Instead, what Bataille is trying to evoke is a fundamental truth of human existence. Shit, by any other name, might be something that people by and large want to ignore as being improper, impure and impolite to discuss. However, none of these facts indicate that we're dealing with something that should be objectively ignored. On the contrary, one could argue that the very human tendency of not dealing with human waste is a severe problem for any truly analytical human science, as this would be an attempt to purify human existence and making it more sacred than it is. Consider, for example, the amount of time it took the economic sciences to fully incorporate negative externalities into analyses of economic activity. Similarly, Bataille's approach could be understood as an exceptionally early introduction of ecological thinking into the human sciences, as he pointed out that waste – such as the trash, sewage and effluent created by factories and other systems of production – was not something to be forgotten and ignored but something to pay attention to. What is today thought of as systems thinking came naturally to Bataille, and yet we still struggle with taking organizations *as a whole* into account.

What we could thus say about Bataille is that he represents a case of extreme empiricism; one that does not end with the empirical matters that we wish to observe and analyze, but which consciously and through a series of intense engagements attempts to highlight the totality of human being. It should come as no surprise that Bataille was exceptionally interested in the literary works of Marquis de Sade, in whom he probably saw a like-minded empiricist. By paying attention to matters that many thinkers – of his time and ours – regarded or regard as wholly improper, even blasphemous, you might say that Bataille expanded the realm of inquiry in a fundamental manner. His institutional embeddedness also ensured that this would not simply become poetic engagement. We might even state that how Bataille inverted the traditional interests of social science laid the groundwork for many of the critical engagements that were to follow from the (broadly speaking) French challenge to structuralism and functionalism. Without Bataille, the post-structuralist challenge would have looked quite different, and with this the social sciences as a whole – as pointed out before, giants like Foucault, Derrida, Nancy, Lacan, Agamben, Baudrillard and others were fundamentally influenced by our mild-mannered master of transgression.

Looking to the state of modern business studies, one can safely say that Bataille is rarely referenced and that his project still reverberates. Without the manner in which Bataille and those influenced by him made the dangerous and the forbidden areas of serious inquiry, the social sciences might still be caught in the functionalist trap of only looking to those things considered worthwhile by polite society, and thus remaining something far less than a proper science. Similarly, the real challenge that critical management studies has presented to the field is novel empirical engagements and dragging things into the light that had previously been ignored or marginalized by the "mainstream" (cf. Rehn 2008). The spirit of Bataille thus hovers over our field, as those dark, forbidden realms that Bataille was so fond of are increasingly being seen as central, even fundamental to an understanding of business, management and organization in late modernity. Yes, shit is still something that we feel shouldn't be discussed in the corridors of academia, but how can we claim to understand industrial production if we turn a blind eye to its production of waste? How are we to understand human relations if we ignore that the human being is a corporeal and embodied presence, and thus a producer of human waste? All social and human processes produce their own version of waste, refuse, shit. To claim otherwise is to lie, and Bataille was perhaps the greatest champion of this fundamental human truth. In fact, he claimed that this – the waste we inevitably produce – was our very *raison d'ètre,* our accursed share.

Looking to the field of organization, this is not difficult to see. We celebrate things such as innovation and creativity, knowing full well that for every successful idea, hours, days, weeks and years have been ploughed into unsuccessful ones. We look to entrepreneurship as the prime example of value-production, being very well aware that most entrepreneurial projects fail, some of them spectacularly. Office life is rife with frivolous time by the water cooler, just as project work contains overlaps, redundancies and slippage. In fact, organizations might be the greatest time-wasters we've ever created – and if you don't believe that, maybe you should visit one and sit through some of their meetings.

The Accursed Share

Even though he produced an impressive corpus overall, the main theoretical contribution of Bataille can to a great degree be traced back to one *magnum opus,* the magisterial *The Accursed Share (La Part maudite,* 1949/1988 & 1991). This exceptional work contains three "volumes", one on consumption, one on eroticism (obviously), and one on sovereignty. Of these, the first one on consumption is the most famous by far, and is often erroneously referred to with the name of the whole work. Here (in the first part), Bataille continues the project that he first outlined in the essay *The Notion of Expenditure* (1933/1997), namely a wholesale recasting of economic theory along the lines of seeing waste and expenditure rather than parsimony and efficiency as the key elements of economic systems.

The key argument of this first volume is that all dynamic, developing systems have two aspects to them, one limited and one general. Even though Bataille was primarily interested in systems of human action, here he ventures much further and includes both cosmological and biological systems in his sweeping analysis of the logic of systems. Discussing economy (broadly understood), he begins by pointing out that most studies have completely misunderstood the foundational aspect of this system. Most theorists of economy start from the assumption that its key logic is one of efficiency. One thus assumes that things such as the conservation of energy, the parsimonious use of resources and savings – things we often state as positive and "economic" things to do – are natural and basic for economic functioning. Bataille disagrees in the most violent manner possible. Presaging modern economic anthropology, he instead turns the entire question on its head. If we look back to the very birth of the economy, the moment in which society started forming around productive functions, what actually occurred? As Marshall Sahlins later showed to great effect in his *Stone Age Economics* (1972), the state of primitive man was not one of dearth. Instead it seems that our ancestors lived fairly pleasant lives, with limited time spent on anything like work due to their very limited needs. With few people in the world, and food thus being plentiful and relatively easy to gather or hunt, work and means were minimized as there were no real ends to pursue. It is here that Bataille enters the picture. How did we develop culture and economy? Not because we had to, as we might well have opted to live in a pre-historical bliss. No, we developed because we desired something more – something that Bataille calls the accursed share. We desired feasts, fetish-objects, larger huts, bigger prey, rituals and merrymaking. For some this seems normal, as we're programmed to understand progress and development as something natural and necessary. But Bataille points out that this is a very peculiar assumption, and that all these things can in fact be understood more analytically as "waste". Looking to a wide range of anthropological evidence, Bataille argues that progress isn't driven by some natural necessity, but rather by the tendency of all systems to create great eruptions of energy, magnificent waste and sacred excess.

> I will simply state, without waiting further, that the extension of economic growth itself requires the overturning of economic principles–the overturning of the ethics that ground them. Changing from the perspectives of *restrictive* economy to those of *general* economy actually accomplishes a Copernican transformation: a reversal of thinking – and of ethics.
>
> *From The Accursed Share, Vol. 1 (1949/1988: 25)*

We didn't need to start storing grain, but did so because we wanted to organize huge drunken feasts in which our saved surplus could be gloriously wasted (and during which we ourselves could get wasted – as archaeological research has convincingly shown that the first instances of farming were not for the production of necessities but for producing beer and thus drunkenness). We developed complex logistics in order to lay our hands on trinkets and frivolities such as gold and spices. We built societies in order to arrange huge events – such as wars, huge art galleries or the Olympics – without apparent purpose. Waste, nothing but glorious waste! The problem, maintains Bataille, is that we've assumed that the limited system of economy, the part of it that strives for efficiency and order, is the whole story. No, he continues, *the general economy* is the correct unit of analysis, and here efficiency and parsimony only exist in order to *enable* waste and expenditure.

Bataille continues this vision throughout the three volumes of *The Accursed Share* and ends up by presenting a sweeping understanding of human systems in which all calls for rationality or closedness are turned inside-out by the pressure that general systems brings. For Bataille, all systems are attempts to transcend themselves, to waste themselves, to enact excess. To be economic, then, is to enable waste or to make waste possible. This can obviously be enacted in numerous ways. In the sphere of eroticism, Bataille notes how it is in the realm of desire, transgression, limitations and prohibitions that the true nature of the erotic come into being, namely eroticism as a grand frivolity, escaping the repressive notion of humans as procreation machines:

> Life has always taken place in a tumult without apparent cohesion, but it only finds its grandeur and its reality in ecstasy and in ecstatic love.
>
> *From The Sacred (1985: 179)*

This view obviously influenced a great deal of later writing on sexuality and had a distinct influence on queer studies. But what is modern marketing theory if not an attempt to grasp the ecstasy that Bataille sees as the highest points of life? What is a grand vision of strategy if not a striving to escape prohibition and limitations? If organizations are merely seen as functional units that strive to survive, we miss much of what makes them special, and human. The interesting thing about organized activity is not that it manages to create a loaf of bread or a new kind of mousetrap, but that it strives towards greater and greater things. Consider the Manhattan project, or the moon landings. These were not purely rational endeavours, but attempts to see what man could achieve – extreme, even ecstatic attempts. Something similar can be found in things like product development, consumer behaviour, social entrepreneurship, or any other activity where a dream or a desire creates an organization. What one must be careful about when reading Bataille is getting too caught up in his specifics, as this would be synonymous with keeping to a limited economy of thought. Instead, the challenge Bataille poses is that he forces us to think about how and whether we're capable of thinking freely. It is therefore fitting that the final volume of his great work deals specifically with human freedom, our sovereignty and "the independence of man relative to useful ends". Indeed, these are not simply shoulders on which to balance. This is a giant who actually demands that we take our freedom – even our freedom from giants – seriously.

Truth and transgression

So why would this magnificently quirky theorist be a "giant" in the field of management and organization studies? We have of course already intimated that his recasting of economic theory is in itself a major contribution to the possibility of understanding economy as a cultural phenomenon. Nonetheless, it is our belief that to simply emphasize this would be to miss out on the grandeur of Bataille's critical engagement. What Bataille shows us is not only a *critical* stance, one that dispassionately analyzes a specific cultural ordering, but rather a *transgressive* one. In his work, Bataille continuously strives to seek out those points of assumed stability and propriety that he felt limited our vision and impaired our thinking. In an age in which both the relevance and the very point of management studies is questioned, this is something that needs to be taken seriously. If we're to develop the field, the key is not necessarily to pay homage to our giants, but to envision how we can go beyond them. Bataille's writing is one that permanently exhorts us to go beyond, take the extra step and transgress the boundaries of knowledge. In terms of management studies, no single movement may be more important today. If we don't take that step we will stay tied to those things that most of us want to leave behind – the slavish attachment to economic rationality and *homo œconomicus,* the blind allegiance to the market economy, the myopic focus on profit above all. These are all things that need to be addressed, questioned and transgressed.

For us, the writers of this chapter, the importance of Bataille as a giant is specifically this: the way he taught us (and so many others) to transgress. He showed Foucault how to think beyond limited visions of power and sexuality and he inspired a generation of theorists to look to darker, less purified themes. In urging us to look beyond he represents a continuous juxtaposition to those thinkers who want to limit development to the agglomeration of observations. With him, we've learned to look for order in areas assumed to be chaotic, but also for chaos in assumedly ordered spheres. He has challenged us to look in places where others do not look, to find the beauty of truth in places which can at first look filthy, or immoral, or dangerous. In inquiry, the true size of a giant should not be measured in terms of how far they could see, but just how far they could enable others to see. And in this, Bataille is a giant who grows with every transgression perpetrated in his name. Obviously, he cannot be lifted onto a podium, and he would in all likelihood have protested against undue adulation. He is not a template, nor a temple, but a jester in the rooms of knowledge, a trickster that encourages us to turn our questions around. He is the paradox, the riddle, the enigma. He is not the formal producer of knowledge, or the master thinker. Instead, he was a thinker who even transgressed himself. Consider the title of his last, unfinished work: *The Unfinished System of Nonknowledge* (2004). This is his legacy to us. Knowledge as unfinished, and always accompanied by nonknowledge, the Other, the accursed share of thinking.

> The stirrings within us have their own fearful excesses; the excesses show which way these stirrings would take us. They are simply a sign to remind us constantly that death, the rupture of discontinuous individualities to which we cleave in terror, stands there before us more real than life itself.
>
> *From Eroticism (1957/1987: 19)*

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2 Zygmunt Bauman

The Holocaust and Organization Studies

Tommy Jensen

Holocaust as a textbook of scientific management

> Considered as a complex purposeful operation, the Holocaust may serve as a paradigm of modern bureaucratic rationality. Almost everything was done to achieve maximum results with minimum costs and efforts. Almost everything (within the realm of the possible) was done to deploy the skills and resources of everybody involved, including those who were to become the victims of the successful operation. Almost all pressures irrelevant or adversary to the purpose of the operation were neutralized or put out of action altogether. Indeed, the story of the organization of the Holocaust could be made into a textbook of scientific management.
>
> *(Zygmunt Bauman, 1989: 149–150)*

Suggesting that the horrific events of the Holocaust could be made into a textbook of scientific management is, I believe, tremendously challenging. It asks us to think of the Holocaust as a logical, yet horrific, outcome of modernity and that one of its prime inventions – bureaucracy – had an essential role in paving the way for the horrific events that took place.

The shoulders on which Bauman stands, when combating the widespread belief that the Holocaust is best explained by the fact that the Nazis and their collaborators were absolutely evil and that they, the few, managed to influence the masses, are primarily those of Hanna Arendt (other visible giants are Theodor Adorno and Stanley Milgram).

Hanna Arendt, one of the greatest thinkers of the 20th century, concluded, after following the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem, that evil is banal (1963/1994). Eichmann was not mentally insane, a sadistic, a pervert, nor had an abnormal personality (the Israelis had Eichmann examined by psychologists). Eichmann abided by rules and law, felt a strong sense of duty to the task at hand and obeyed authority. At his trial in Jerusalem, Eichmann defended himself (somewhat proudly) by saying that he had never killed anyone but had simply organised deportations and had been expert at it (Arendt, 1963/1994). To Arendt he was terrifyingly normal. Her account of Adolf Eichmann and the Holocaust was furiously opposed.

When I was confronted with Bauman's "Modernity and the Holocaust" I was exposed to how fragile human moral willingness and capability can be when faced with the disciplining processes of bureaucracy: Authority, hierarchy, specialisation, order-giving and order-taking, loyalty to the cause as well as to the organization (esprit de corps, peer pressure). It was shocking to realize that the horrific deeds were committed by ordinary men (to use the historian Christopher Browning's term) and not by perpetrators driven by blood-lust, primal hatred and pure evil.

"Modernity and the Holocaust" has crept under my skin. I simply cannot rub it off. My reading of Bauman suggests that his account is tremendously important to organization studies.

In the next section I outline essential arguments made by Bauman on the matter of the Holocaust.

Adiaphoric organizations

My reading suggests that Bauman in "Modernity and the Holocaust" makes visible that bureaucratic processes have devastating effects on people's sense of right and wrong and pave the way for horrific events in so-called highly developed civilizations.

This brings morality into the equation. The moral philosophical position that Bauman takes, a position I share with him, is that there is no given thing as an inner moral self. That is to say, humans are morally ambivalent and therefore assertions that humans are either naturally good or bad are misleading. This moral philosophical position rejects the idea that societies have a predestined path towards becoming either moral or immoral (or human/inhuman, good/evil, altruistic/egoistic for that matter) and puts the emphasis on contingencies. What is counted as moral and immoral is, thus, historically and institutionally dependent (Hume, 1739/1978; Rorty, 1989).

Turning to a more detailed exposition of Bauman's work on Modernity and the Holocaust, I have identified three central organizational processes that have helped me to understand how organizational contexts silence morality (see Jensen, 2010). In other words, these processes are demoralizing in character. The identified processes are: 'differentiation through mediation of action', 'substitution of moral for technical responsibility' and 'technology of segregation and separation'.

According to Bauman (1989: 199), differentiation through mediation of action implies "social production of distance". What this demoralizing process give rise to is

> a great distance between intentions and practical accomplishments, with the space between the two packed with a multitude of minute acts and inconsequential actors. The "middle man" shields of the outcomes of action from the actors' sight.
>
> *(Bauman, 1989: 24–25)*

Meditation of action thus creates a physical and psychological distance between our actions 'here' and consequences 'there'. Mediation of action, to Arendt (1963), Bauman (1989) and Milgram (1974/2005), stands out as one of the most salient and seminal features of the organization of modern society. However, not only 'middle men' shield the outcomes of action from the actors' sight. Information technology and computer power also extend our actions enormously in time and space, and technology-mediated action serves as yet another moral filter; it physically and psychologically amplifies the moral distance (Bauman, 1989, 1995; Jensen, 2008).

Furthermore, it is not only the shielding of 'middle men' and lack of personal experience that increases moral distance,

> but also the lack of similarity between the task at hand and the task of the office as a whole [---], which distances the contributor from the job performed by the [organisation] of which he is a part. In a functional division of labour, everything one does is in principle multifinal; that is, it can be combined and integrated into more than one meaning-determining totality. By itself, the function is devoid of meaning, and the meaning which will be eventually bestowed on it is in no way pre-empted by the actions of its perpetrators. It will be "the others" (in most cases anonymous and out of reach) who will some time, somewhere, decide that meaning.
>
> *(Bauman, 1989: 99–100)*

Individuals who live and breed this context and confront specialization, division of labour and mediation of action find themselves belonging to a context that "emancipates most – however decisive – constituents of the collective venture from moral significance and scrutiny" (Bauman, 1989: 194). The effect is morally devastating:

> The increase in the physical and/or psychic distance between the act and its consequences achieves more than the suspicion of moral inhibition; it quashes the moral significance of the act and thereby pre-empts all conflict between personal standard of morality decency and immorality of the social consequences of the act. With most of the socially significant actions mediated by a long chain of complex causal and functional dependencies, moral dilemmas recede from sight, while the occasions for more scrutiny and conscious moral choice become increasingly rare.
>
> *(Bauman, 1989: 24)*

The second demoralizing process – substitution of moral for technical responsibility – adds to the quashing of the moral significance of the act, or, put differently, "effectively conceals the moral significance of action" (1989: 199). According to Bauman, the prerequisite for the process of substitution of moral for technical responsibility is means-ends rationality. In Max Weber's classic formulation:

> [A]ction is rationally oriented to a system of discrete individual ends (zweckrational) when the end, the means, and secondary results are all rationally taken into account and weighted. This involves rational consideration of alternative means to the end, of the relations of the end to other prospective results of employment of any given means, and finally of the relative importance of different possible ends. Determination of action, either in affectual or in traditional terms, is thus incompatible with this type.
>
> *(Weber, 1964: 117)*

Bauman argues that as the social production of distance increases through the first demoralizing process (differentiation through mediation of action), the more organizations will be embedded in technical (or instrumental) rationality; a process in which the criteria for fulfilling Weber's formulation of rationality (above) are undermined. In Weberian terms, the substitution of moral responsibility for technical responsibility is an irrational process and the outcome is that "the more unconditionally the actor devotes himself to this value for its own sake, [---] the less is he influenced by considerations of the consequences of his action" (Weber, 1964: 117).

The demoralizing process of substitution of moral for technical responsibility has been confirmed by the classical experiments conducted by Milgram (1974/2005), in which men and women participated in an experiment under the fabricated condition that they were to deliver punishment (electroshocks) to another person in order to see how the punished person's learning capacity was affected. Despite the obvious agony expressed by the victim (a hired actor), the subjects gradually become "so absorbed in the narrow technical aspects of the task that he [or she] loses sight of its broader consequences" (Milgram, 1974/2005: 9).

Worryingly, this also seems to be a self-propelling process. Differentiation through mediation of action gives rise to the substitution of moral for technical responsibility, which in turn increases differentiation through mediation of action, and so it goes on (Bauman, 1989). The self-constituting and self-enforcing process threatens to separate itself from human agency, to a life of its own, which means that it could actually be irreversible (Arendt, 1958/1998; Bauman, 1989).

Individuals and collectives of individuals in this context forget, or rather deny, that

> action is a means to something other than itself. As outer connections of action are effectively removed from the field of vision, the [---] act becomes and end in itself. [---] Once isolated from their distant consequences, most functionally specialized acts either pass moral test easily, or are morally indifferent. When unencumbered by moral worries, the act can be judged on unambiguously rational grounds. What matters then is whether the act has been performed according to the best available technological know-how, and whether output has been cost-effective.
>
> *(Bauman, 1989: 101)*

The classic dilemma with goal-displacement thus arises. As Milgram's experiments have shown, the obedient subject gradually adjusts his/her thoughts to not being responsible for his/her own actions by defining him- or herself "as an instrument for carrying out the wishes of others" (Milgram, 1974/2005: 135). A typical statement during interviews was "I wouldn't have done it by myself. I was just doing what I was told" (Milgram, 1974/2005: 9). The situation and the task at hand thus becomes an end in itself where "[t]he options open to the actor in his relation to the other split into effective and ineffective, efficient and inefficient – indeed, rational and irrational – but not right or wrong" (Bauman, 1989: 180).

The third demoralising process is technology of segregation and separation, which starts "at the point when, thanks to the distantiation, the objects at which the [---] operation is aimed can, and are, reduced to a set of quantitative measures" (Bauman, 1989: 102). Operations that are reduced to a set of quantitative measures make it possible to express humans (or any other substances for that matter) in technical and ethically neutral terms. Humans reduced to kilograms, centimetres, litres, purchasing power, annual income, work hours, salary, productivity etc., are dehumanized and become an "entity, devoid of quality" (Bauman, 1989: 103; cf. Bonnedahl, Jensen & Sandström, 2007; ten Bos, 1997). Human individuals lose their distinctiveness and as a consequence

> [d]ehumanized objects cannot possible possess a "cause", much less a "just" one; they have no "interests" to be considered, indeed no claim to subjectivity. [t]he language in which things that happen to them (or are done to them) are narrated, safeguards its referents from ethical evaluation. In fact, this language is unfit for normative-moral statements. It is only humans that may be objects of ethical propositions. (True, moral statements do extend sometimes to other, non-human, living beings; but they may do so only by expanding from their original anthropomorphic foothold.) Humans lose this capacity once they are reduced to ciphers.
>
> *(Bauman, 1989: 104 and 103)*

The main conclusion that could be drawn, or the main effect when the three demoralizing processes are taken together, is that individuals become embedded in a context that promises to release them from their moral ambivalence by declaring organized action as morally indifferent. In Bauman's words the demoralizing processes render

> social action morally adiaphoric (the term adiaphoron belongs to the language of ecclesia; it meant originally a belief or a custom declared by the Church indifferent – neither merit nor sin – and hence requiring no stand, no official endorsement or prohibition): neither good nor evil [---].
>
> *(Bauman, 1993: 125)*

In full bloom, adiaphorization declares actions as exempt from moral judgement and moral significance (Bauman, 1989; Silver & Geller, 1978), which means that questions of human/inhuman, good/evil, altruistic/opportunistic, empathy/indifference, caring/exploitation are turned into non-questions. The notion of adiaphoric organizations, in which ethically founded shame is washed away from immoral, and indeed cruel and inhuman, actions, suggests that individuals who have to perform in contexts *permeated by demoralizing processes* will find it difficult to take responsible action.

Contributions to organization studies

The seminal contribution that Bauman makes to organization studies is a conceptual framework through which it is possible to comprehend how individual moral responsibility is negatively affected by organizational contexts. Consequently, with the help of the three demoralizing processes outlined above we have the possibility to set out to investigate:

- How the demoralizing processes manifest themselves in contemporary organizations; or what shape and form they take
- How the demoralizing processes influence and condition each other
- To what extent the demoralizing processes have a negative effect on individuals' moral judgements and capabilities to take moral responsible action

Such investigations are important in order to detect and understand what we might call adiaphoric organizational action, which may or may not be an essential part of contemporary organizations. My feeling is that organizations today rest upon a logic that naturally promotes adiaphoric organizational action (cf. Stein, 2001). In other words, modern, contemporary organizations rely on demoralizing processes right from the start (see for instance, Bonnedahl et al., 2007; Jackall, 1988; Stokes & Gabriel, 2010; ten Bos, 1997).

This, however, does not imply an analysis in which individual agency goes bankrupt; terminated under deterministic pressures. It is not possible to fully regulate and order human practice, not even in total institutions (Goffman, 1961). It is thus always possible to exercise "one's freedom of authorship and/or actorship" (Bauman, 1995: 1). Consequently, even if the current situation in which the choice between good and evil has to take place might provide an explanation as to why an individual does not take moral responsibility, it does not release the individual from moral guilt (Bauman, 1989).

For organization studies, as I see it, exploring Bauman's account of the Holocaust and using it on contemporary organizations provides an opportunity to detect and understand organizations in which "rationality and ethics point in opposite directions" (1989: 206) and, as Stokes & Gabriel (2010: 464) point out, "to unlock the organizational and managerial processes that make [horrific events] possible." Let me also add that detecting and understanding such contexts renders it possible for researchers to make a difference by interfering with organizational reality!

Even though the scale of the organizational problem that I am trying to assess here – on the shoulders of Bauman – and the suffering inflicted is much less than that of the Holocaust, the root causes and the nature of the events of the Holocaust are fundamentally important, I believe, to furthering the understanding of how normal organizations can participate in the creation of immoral events. Following the insights of Bauman gears the analysis towards seeing ordinary, normal organizations as capable of producing mini-Holocausts. The Holocaust, or the "management of the business of genocide", and normal organizations share

> core concepts from organizational and managerial theory [and] many of the psychological, social, political and organizational processes present in genocide are not fundamentally different from those that may be encountered in organizational life in general.
>
> *(Stokes & Gabriel, forthcoming: 2010: 464 & 476)*

The issue of careful reading

Within organization studies some scholars heavily criticize Bauman's account of the Holocaust. I think that Paul du Gay's book "In Praise of Bureaucracy" (2000) is the most well-known, although I believe that du Gay seriously fails to read "Modernity and the Holocaust" as Bauman intended. Bauman is at pains to communicate to the reader that his account is not a superior one – one that disqualifies all previous ones – but that his attempt should be put alongside other accounts of the Holocaust. Consequently, Bauman's account, together with similar accounts mentioned earlier in the text, should not be read as "The Only Valid Account of The Holocaust" and be automatically transferred to organizations. The Holocaust is a tremendously complex and multifaceted phenomenon. Understanding the Holocaust, if that is possible, demands bringing in an entirely different set of perspectives. Essentially the same holds true for organizations.

Homing in on du Gay's critique, I believe that he is loyal to the normal explanation of the Holocaust; how the few committed Nazis managed to steer the masses in Germany, and in other involved countries, towards disaster. This prevents him viewing Bauman's account as another important piece to be inserted into the jigsaw puzzle of the Holocaust (for another well-known and more well-read critique, see ten Bos, 1997). Taking this position, and reading Bauman in this way, du Gay accuses Bauman of delivering an "ahistoric critique of bureaucracy" (2000: 48). Therefore, Bauman fails to realize that the Nazis destroyed the bureaucratic ethos in Germany long before the events of the Holocaust started. This destruction escalated in the thirties:

> By parasitically and progressively dissolving the institutional apparatuses it had inherited, the Nazi regime effectively undermined the administrative structures on which its own stabilization and reproduction depended.
>
> *(du Gay, 2000: 49)*

The antagonistic relationship between the Nazis, state officials and the bureaucratic ethos can, according to Du Gay, even be traced back to the twenties:

> Even before they seized power, the Nazis had expressed considerable antipathy towards state officials. Mein Kampf indicates Hitler's despair at the capacity of the state and its officials to perform its essential protective function in relation to the Volk.
>
> *(2000: 49)*

That is to say, the bureaucratic ethos of the bureau that regulated the protective function of the state towards its people was targeted, and later overruled, by the Nazis.

But there must have been a lot of state officials and bureaus in Germany. In order not to provide a totally unrealistic historical account, du Gay must assume that many people were Nazis in Germany. But were there many Nazis, and what is a Nazi anyway? Du Gay does not problematize this, which is normal: We do know what a Nazi is, don't we? Even a critical scholar like Mats Alvesson (2003: 154) seems to take this question for granted. The statement 'the Nazis killed millions of Jews and other people' is, according to him, characterized by a low degree of uncertainty. Consequently, there is a high degree of intersubjectivity on what we know about the Holocaust, and that this knowledge can be viewed in 'objective terms'. That 'the Nazis killed millions of Jews and other people' is also a true statement for Alvesson (2003: 154).

The counter statement provided by Bauman is that many of those who committed horrific crimes, or indirectly assisted by acting as bystanders, were ordinary, normal men and woman.[6] Bureaucracy was essential to manage to go from persecution and harassment to murder on an industrial scale. The question of who is a Nazi, I would say, is one of the most uncertain questions that social science has ever faced!

However, du Gay, rightly I believe, points out that bureaucracy has an inbuilt capacity or ethos to secure justice through impartial treatment of individual 'cases'. Furthermore, the bureaucratic ethos that is developed implies, according to du Gay, that a certain resistance towards Bauman's demoralizing principles is present (and du Gay gives a number of examples as to how this resistance might occur). Overall, I actually think that Bauman would agree to this, but that disagreement occurs when an explanation as to why the bureaucratic ethos collapses is sought. When du Gay seeks external causes (the Nazis and their regime) to explain the fall of the bureaucratic ethos, Bauman's analysis directs us to bureaucracy itself and how the demoralizing principles undermine its (potentially good) ethos.

Admittedly, bureaucracy and its demoralizing processes are parts of a social coordinating mechanism that affects individual moral responsibility. Bauman has been criticized for relying too much on the rationality of bureaucracy when explaining the corrosion of individual moral responsibility (du Gay, 2000; Stokes & Gabriel, 2010). In his later works (see 1998; 2002; 2008), Bauman seeks to understand why organizational members refrain from taking moral responsibility by adding another prime invention of modernity – the capitalistic market. There, he argues, other types of demoralizing processes exist that might seem incompatible with the demoralizing organizational processes that have bureaucracy as their origin. However, they join forces on a seminal issue:

> [T]hey are both bent on the eradication of emotions or at least keeping them off limit. Since they are enemies of affection, they have both been hailed since their inception as incarnations of rationality and instruments of rationalization. Each embarked on achieving the same effect in its own fashion.
>
> *(Bauman, 1996: 4–5)*

We should remember that bureaucratic mechanisms and market mechanisms are common social coordinating mechanisms in most organizations today. This is something that Weber, in his classic work on bureaucracy, noted long ago (Weber, 1964). However, neither the Weberian ideal type of bureaucracy nor any ideal type of the market is present in organizations; there are only mixtures (Jensen, 2010). Although they are theoretically separated in practice they find common ground; to declare organized actions exempt from moral judgement and moral significance (which, of course, is an ethical statement in its own right).

Possible causes for refraining from Bauman's account

Why do organization scholars refrain from using Bauman's account of the Holocaust? The major reason, as I see it, is that a grand narrative has evolved as to how to understand and explain the events of the Holocaust – a narrative that both du Gay (2000) and Mats Alvesson (2003) seem to adhere to. As Bauman points out, this grand narrative has turned the Holocaust into an archetypical story of evil and bestiality – on how the few, committed, evil Nazis managed to influence the masses – and into a taken-for-granted truth that the phenomenon is best seen as "an interruption in the normal flow of the history, a cancerous growth on the body of civilized society, a momentary madness among sanity" (1989: x).

Even though the grand narrative of the Holocaust is challenged, and has cracks and holes, it still manages to keep its paradigmatic status. As Thomas Kuhn observed some time ago (1962/1970), paradigms can defend themselves by integrating (in an expansive manner) accounts that challenge what is taken for granted. Another Kuhnian possibility is to keep certain accounts outside the paradigm, but yet allow them to take part in the debate because the grand narrative needs it to secure its own status. These visible 'Others' are of course subject to furious attacks and cannot be allowed any other position than the marginalized one.

However, there is a third way, namely that scholars who challenge a paradigm risk being accused of blasphemy and condemned as a stranger; someone who threatens to bend, make ambiguous or even tear down the demarcation lines between right and wrong (Bauman, 1993; 1995). This type of account is condemned to the realm of 'the absent Other' (Law, 2004). It certainly takes a lot to stand up and resist any grand narrative, but I cannot think of any other grand narrative that appears as frightening as this one. Imagine being condemned to the realm of 'the absent Other' in terms of the Holocaust! I believe that both Hanna Arendt and Zygmunt Bauman have been in this position.

Bauman (1989) admits that he lived a great deal of his life embracing the paradigmatic narrative on the Holocaust. It was not until his wife, Janina Bauman, completed a book about her experiences of life in the ghetto (1986) that he started to critically assess the story he had lived by for so long. It would appear, however, that the narrative of the Holocaust as an extreme yet logical outcome of modernity has escaped from the position as the absent Other (Bauman indicates this in his afterword to the 2000 edition of Modernity and Holocaust). This type of account can nowadays be bought at regular bookshops. Bauman, together with many others (of which I have listed only a few) has played an important role in making this happen (although their views on the Holocaust are by no means accepted by the grand narrative).

Conclusions

As a sociologic/philosophic writer, I would say that Zygmunt Bauman has made a distinct imprint on organization studies; particularly his writings on the ethical challenges of the postmodern condition, now relabelled by Bauman as "liquid modernity". But even if the authorship of Bauman is widely used in organization studies, the use of his thoughts about the Holocaust is often fragmented – an insightful argument inserted here and there, a quote used now and again. Seldom are Bauman's thoughts about the Holocaust taken into full consideration, taking the full implication of his thoughts to the area of investigation. As far as I know there is no empirical study on organizations that has Bauman's account of the Holocaust as its starting point (admittedly, I have so far not conducted an empirical study with this starting point either).

That Bauman's account of the Holocaust is more or less disregarded by organization studies tells us that this discipline refuses "to stop viewing the Holocaust as a bizarre and aberrant episode *in* modern history, and think it through instead as highly relevant, integral part *of* that history (Bauman, 1989/2000: 223, afterword).

So, my uneasy feeling that Bauman's insights into the Holocaust are extremely important to organization studies seems not to be widespread (indeed, there is a general lack of interest from organization scholars on genocides in general and on the Holocaust in particular, Stokes & Gabriel, 2010).

If you are a young scholar, and happen to read this, I would say that if you pursue this research path, then you have found your theoretical and empirical black spot. And an important one as well, namely to study

> how 'small' indiscretions escalate to bigger ones, ultimately leading to events that can be viewed as apocalyptic. This type of escalation is now a widely recognized feature of genocide [---] but can also be observed in everyday management and organizational practices [---].
>
> *(Stokes & Gabriel, 2010: 471–472)*

However, be aware that pursuing this is a risky business. But that is really not a reason for giving it up; science should not refrain from dealing with critical, messy issues, and this goes for organization studies as well (Jensen & Sandström, 2009). As long as organization studies refrain from taking on the challenges of the Holocaust, it says a lot about the state of the discipline and its capacity to add to our knowledge about organizations.

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3 Reinhard Bendix

Work and Authority in Industry

Markus Kallifatides

On the shoulders of Reinhard Bendix

There has always been something about those Europeans who left for life in America. In fact, there seems to be something about subjects formed in and through transition, transgression or migration – or all of it. One could mention the noteworthy line of the French Pieds Noirs, who left Algeria to establish themselves in Paris, and then the world, as the giants of social science and the humanities. I could have opted to write about one of them, but I did not. They somehow speak and I listen. Instead I have chosen to write about an author to whom I might envisage myself speaking – and being listened to. On the other hand, it is an author whose diligence I could only dream of measuring up to. What follows must surely be diagnosed as a standard case of homosocial admiration (as is the case with every chapter in this book, or at least would have been according to the original independent choices suggested by invited authors). For this I apologize, and ask for the opportunity to redeem myself by showing that it was worth it.

Reinhard Bendix was born 1916 in Berlin and migrated in 1938 to the United States. From 1947, and until his death in 1991, he held positions at the Department of Sociology at the University of California, Berkeley.

The magisterial empirical study published in 1956, *Work and Authority in Industry*, was mentioned in an encyclopaedic article written by Michael Reed (1996). That is how I stumbled across the book. Later, I learned that Barley & Kunda (1992) had included the book among the opening references of their often cited article on the evolution of (American) management ideology. As is regularly the case in the publish or perish climate of globalizing academia, almost everything that Bendix actually wrote in his book was then forgotten, misconstrued or blatantly repeated without reference in the rest of the Barley & Kunda article. Bendix's book, however, is an exemplary study – with "Weberian imprimatur" (Reed, 1996: 150) – of *managerial ideology.* In the book, managerial ideology appears as "a continued wrestling with counterpunctual themes", just as Barley & Kunda (1992: 365) indicate. Bendix clearly does not perceive of its evolution *only* as a "progression" (Barley & Kunda, 1992: 365) from the vile social conditions of the 18th and 19th centuries to slightly less disturbing social conditions in the 20th. His is a much more complicated story. The qualitative improvements in the lives of average industrial workers in, for example, America in the time period covered by Bendix, should be quite clear to all but nihilists. The aspect of progression from outright contempt for all weakness and poverty to more "liberal" mainstream management ideas can of course be debated. In Bendix, it is as if the continual wrestling with counterpunctual (ideological) themes takes place on a progressive plane. Or so I believe.

Work and Authority in Industry is a study of the ideology promulgated by and on behalf of a particular social class: (industrial) managers.

> This book deals with ideologies of management which seek to justify the subordination of large masses of men to the discipline of factory work and to the authority of employers.
>
> *(Bendix, 1956: xix)*

Weber, like Marx, had made 'class' a concept indispensible for the analysis of human affairs, and with the aid of Karl Mannheim, 'ideology' had become an indispensible concept too. Like so many others of an anti-Soviet, anti-Stalin bent, Bendix opens with a shot at the scientific theory of some of Karl Marx's arguably less talented followers in sociological research. Bendix argued that in post-Marxist accounts:

> it was denied that ideas should undergo a more or less autonomous development, and the search was on for the discovery of ever more elusive societal influences upon intellectual life.
>
> *(Bendix, 1956: xxi)*

Bendix argued that ideas themselves had somehow been lost from this research agenda and made a case for bringing them back into analysis. Furthermore, instead of simply assuming that a given set of ideas, an ideology, was an expression of the (real, objective) interest of a given class, Bendix claimed that there was a case for analyzing ideology as though it was not self-evident, or self-explanatory. Although being certain that ideologies were formulated to defend economic interests, Bendix wondered whether this formulation could be done in more than one way. In order to build his case Bendix further claimed that every class was not perfectly homogenous in its social composition. Indeed, homogeneity and ideological coherence had to be constructed (or realised, accomplished, articulated, performed, enacted, narrated or whatever other voguish terminology one might have a vested interest in promulgating). And no matter how dull and sometimes stupid such an ideology might be, it was a worthy object of social scientific investigation and theorizing. This is a theme of enduring importance in contemporary social science and might be regarded as one good reason for us to keep on reading the work of Bendix. Organization studies should study organizational ideologies in detail, no matter how repetitive and simplistic they may seem at a distance. There are always things to be learned. Further, and to quote Catherine Lutz (2006), it can argued that "empire is in the details" and consequently that resistance to imperialism of all kinds hinges on detailed description.

In short, Bendix devoted his full attention to the study of managerial ideology and did this by performing four case studies: of the early period of industrialization in Great Britain and Russia respectively, of the transition to large-scale industrial society in the US, and, quite remarkably, of the then immediate history of the Soviet-controlled East Zone of recently defeated Germany. Without a shadow of a doubt, Bendix strove to investigate social life on both sides of the Berlin Wall between 'Capitalism' and 'Communism' – only to find, *empirically*, that the Wall was in essence the line of demarcation between 'Democracy' and 'Dictatorship'. I shall return to this conclusion shortly.

The Spirit of Capitalism

In my own research (Kallifatides, 2002), I have made use of Bendix's work on managerial ideology on this side of the Berlin Wall and in the two engines of evolving Western market economies, namely the UK and the US.

The Swedish armchair social philosopher Johan Asplund has somewhere dubbed Bendix as one of the great braggarts of the social sciences. I guess that one instantiation of such a character is overly underlining differences between oneself and other authors. In Bendix the great other author is Max Weber. In *The Protestant Ethic and the Sprit of Capitalism* (1905), Weber had already long ago argued the case that capitalism in its entirety as a social formation was to be understood as a secularization of a particular version of Christianity – and that this was turned into a core rather than peripheral cultural formation in America by those evicted from the peripheries and famines of Europe. Strictly speaking (with Calvin), there are no signs in life on Earth of whether one belongs to those (pre-) destined for heaven or those destined for hell. This anxiety-generating system of belief was of course never upheld as practical ideology by anyone. Instead, a large contingent of religious consultants offered their services to those able and willing to pay, explaining that there are indeed signs of the afterlife: if one is successful here on Earth, one might go to heaven in the afterlife. In England, and rising out of the "birth-pangs" (Marx) of the new mode of production, this "rising ideology of individual striving and success" (Bendix, 1956: 205) was perhaps only one of many traditional cultural conceptions that were enacted as work performance in industry.

In America, this Gospel of Success reigned supreme, only to be reformulated as scientific theory under the influence of the natural sciences, and in particular the teachings of Charles Darwin. The captains of industry, surely, are the fittest to survive – that is why they have become the captains rather than the ordinances of industry. The right to decide, to uphold authority, flows from this: having proven to be fit for survival.

Already at this early stage of his exposé, Bendix clearly showed that multiple, counterpunctual even, legitimating narratives were available to particular managers. Managerial ideologies were always already managerial ideologies in plural. Is success a matter of religious virtue or of natural selection? As "industrial capitalism" (Marx, 1867) erected its phallic installations across both the old country and the new, men in greater numbers came to "need" such narratives to legitimize their authority in industry; individually in personal relations on the factory floor and collectively in national politics. From very early on, a completely secularized and derived idea came to dominate: Authority in industry is rooted in success and success is rooted in "certain qualities of mind".

> Anything is yours if you only want it hard enough. Just think of that. Anything!
> Try it. Try it in earnest and you will succeed. It is the operation of a mighty law.
> *(Bendix, 1956: 260, citing Atkinson from 1901)*

Expressions of this kind have since been repeated in many a popular management book, in a long and seemingly never-ending tradition of generalized and very egalitarian optimism. Ideology, however, regularly comes up against reality. Many people fail. And managerial ideology is there to explain that too. In an equally long and never-ending tradition voices condemn the poor, the ne'er-do-wells, the infidels. Managerial ideology sometimes legitimizes authority in industry by depicting those subject to authority as lesser mortals.

At this point, it is essential to conceive of *managerial* ideology as a Napoleonic ideology: it deals with war on two fronts. On the one side there are angry, sometimes destitute and very often worn-down industrial workers, and their labour unions. On the other there are those of the old order – those that inherit rank and position and for whom authority is synonymous with responsibility or with duty. Both of these enemies have made inroads into managerial ideology at various junctures in history. In the beginning, the noble right and duty to exercise authority was something to be reckoned with. Later, and increasingly, the organized labourers had to be reckoned with too, because they might just want to exercise authority.

For my own purposes, perfectly in line with Barley & Kunda and Bendix, and from the detailed empirical descriptions and interpretations of Bendix, I extracted and made use of a four-fold typology of managerial ideology, potentially available as subject positions to someone perceiving themselves as managers: The Father, The Tough One, The Expert, The Bureaucrat. These are all unashamedly upper or middle class, masculine, white and Judeo-Christian identity types – social products through and through (Berger & Luckmann, 1966), with which the actual manager, who might be working-class, female, feminine, black and Muslim, objectively grapples to form a subject position. As some of the jargon has it, managerial ideologies give rise to a "kaleidoscopic" reality in which alternative ways of doing and thinking are produced and consumed – also by managers in their industrious work of establishing authority in industry. Those occupying more articulated subject positions in organisational life come into conflict, or at least friction, with those occupying other semi-firm subject positions.

To a large extent, my work was a structuralist hermeneutic attempt to interpret contemporary management practice at the level of the single management team and its immediate organizational surroundings as giving expression to rather old ideals, basically providing an image of daily practice as echoes of the past. Of some importance to me, and hopefully to my readers, was the perception that the bulk of organisational practice continues in ways that are very seldom articulated in management teaching materials.

It is a postulate of Bendix himself (p. 342) that we may always suspect that, among those professing various elements of ideology, there are a few true believers in an ocean of modern individuals (and in a reified sense entire organizations) who double-think quite persistently; in private, one acknowledges that most of what is said by managers is little more than corporate bullshit. Publicly, bullshit remains the preferred language. Following Bendix, we must assume that it as such has social efficacy as ideological "glue" between those being constituted as members of a managerial class. Bendix, however, had even greater plans for his readers than to present such ideas and analyses of Western conditions.

Management in "Russia"

From the Russian orbit we must now, in order to fully acknowledge the breath of Bendix's work, add one type to a more complete, more global repertoire of managerial identity types: the Functionary.

The Russian experience of industrialization was not completely unique. Many of the features well known to contemporary observers and later day historians appeared in Russia in much the same way as in England, France or elsewhere on the European continent. The brutal exploitation of factory hands, including women and children, was run-of-the-mill all over the industrializing world. Death, disease, injury, deprivation, fraud, deception, corruption and corporal punishment were among the facts of industrial life. For Russian peasants travelling back and forth between the estates of the landed aristocracy and the factory towns or mining sites, there was very little new in this situation. Life in the country was not necessarily that much better. It all depended on the idiosyncratic character of the local master and the local public officials. Up to the end of the 19th century, masters and officials were basically united on one side, while the mass of the people were stacked up on the other, subordinated side.

The peculiar quality of the Russian experience is the entrenched tradition of autocratic rule. In Bendix's knowledgeable story, this grew out of the repelling of the Mongol invaders 500 years before large-scale industrialization. The Tsar (the Duke of Moscow) and his supreme powers grew out of the leadership that this position upheld in this particular rebellion against unjust invaders. With Peter the Great and Catherine (also the Great) the absolutist tradition was brought to perfection.

The aristocracy was as subservient to the Tsar as it was supreme in relation to the peasantry, from 1649 bound for life to the land, and hence to the master, the aristocrat. The importance of competing factions among the aristocracy, sometimes spurred by impulses from the rest of the world, was really of little significance except for at the times of vacuum after the demise of a Tsar. Once a new one had been installed, his or her will was supreme, to which all subjects had to obey. Of course, various factions propounding differing managerial ideologies were successful (or lucky) on differing occasions in terms of who appeared as Tsar, and in what relation one found oneself to him. Power in Russia was primarily wielded at the court of the Tsar, which is also why very few aristocrats knew much about technology or industry or even agriculture. They knew how much rent (*obruk*) to collect from their serfs, and which taxes to collect (or avoid collecting) on behalf of the Tsar. Hence, the first industrial workers in Russia were serfs performing forced labour. The cultural heritage left behind is one of Tsarism. Even the serfs seem to have entrusted their hopes and dreams with the Tsar – for a couple of hundred of years and despite constant disappointments. On a regular basis, pretenders posing as 'the real, legitimate Tsar' received popular followings, and the actual Tsar-in-office (of whom one also said that s/he was an imposter) received a steady flow of complaints from serfs regarding injustices incurred, only for the serfs to be denied compensation in the vast majority of cases. Almost needless to say, these conditions of autocracy put extraordinary demands on central authorities to monitor and police the nation (aristocrats, middle classes and serfs alike). The *servitor aristocracy* rose to social elevation, and the Functionary was born.

> The underlying temper of Peter's reforms was the totalitarian assumption that everything he ordered was possible. On that assumption it became logical to issue orders without regard to the feasibility of their execution, and then to inflict extraordinary punishments upon those held responsible for failure.
>
> *(Bendix, 1956: 157)*

Peter the Great took it upon himself to make Russia economically self-sufficient by decree. The Functionaries took it upon themselves to administer his will. Among the many reforms actually undertaken we find the introduction of taxes on beards!

These are the words of a Russian factory owner/manager at the time of the birth of large-scale industry:

> I am your master, and my master is the Emperor. The Emperor can issue commands to me, and I must obey him; but he issues no commands to you. I am the Emperor upon my estate; I am your God in this world, and I have to answer for you to the God above.
>
> *(Bendix, 1956: 164, citing from a 19th century work by Baron von Haxthausen)*

This spirit of absolute managerial power in the factory and, in fact, outside the factory as well, was generally supported by the Tsarist regimes. When ideas of granting some rights to workers appeared, as one might think might happen, one particularly successful counter-argument to such proposals was that masters could not infringe on workers' rights if they had none. Hence, granting workers rights might in itself cause (unwanted) social unrest. Catherine the Great was particularly vigilant in not promoting any kind of freedom or rights for workers and peasants. Even though it might on occasion be needed to punish members of the aristocracy, and factory managers among them, such action should be taken secretly, so that the masses did not have a "motive to step out of servility" (Bendix, 1956: 166).

It was against this regime that the Russian populace revolted, once in 1905 and again in 1917. In 1905 they were actually led by undercover government agents. Unsurprisingly, that revolt was defeated. It was only with Lenin and the Bolsheviks that the majority of Russians truly revolted against the Tsar. Perhaps more surprisingly, in lieu of the old Tsar, a new one was installed, albeit under a different name, the Secretary General.

Bendix briefly but beautifully traced these autocratic principles from the Russian *ancien régime* to Lenin's writings on industrial organization. Workers, as workers, are to be completely subordinated to managerial power. Managers, and these are responsible for making good proletarian use of all the methods available, including those invented in capitalist nations, are subservient to the Party. And the Party is subservient to the People. Hence, the same organization or organizational body is ideally depicted as simultaneously fulfilling subservient and super-ordinate functions. The particular debate about the possible role of trade unions in Soviet industry is illuminating. Should there be such a thing and, if so, what role should they have? Surely, they must be subservient to the Party?

> Thus, autocratic as well as Communist rulers on occasion call upon the people to take their demands or to participate in the formulation of policies, while the police as well as the trade-unions see to it that these demands and this participation remained within "proper" bounds.
>
> *(Bendix, 1956: 196)*

The principle of autocratic rule was essentially brought forward, uninterrupted really. Once the Tsar is in office, everybody is subservient; be it as Functionaries (servitor aristocracts) or as serfs. That was, and perhaps remains, the managerial ideology in any empire?

The East Zone of Germany

Bendix crowned his work by presenting one more case study: that of managerial ideology in the East Zone of Germany. The entire purpose of the book is to argue the difference between 'dominance' in the West and 'authoritarian rule' in the East:

> A ruling party is distinguished from a dominant class by the fact that its interests and ideology are authoritatively defined by a central governing body.
>
> *(Bendix, 1956: 350)*

The conclusion of Bendix's work is perhaps most clearly expressed as follows:

> …a totalitarian control of industry is established when the leaders of management and of the workers are forced to become the agents of the same political organization.
>
> *(Bendix, 1956: 340)*

The control over economic enterprise in the planned economy of the East Zone was exercised through two parallel hierarchies. One was the managerial hierarchy, ranging from central planning authorities, through managers, to the individual worker. The other was the party hierarchy, ranging from the Politbureau and Central Committee, various intermediate levels, to the local party cell. Each of these party entities served at as "propagandist, executor of special orders, supervisor of plan fulfilment, discoverer of faulty organization, critic of individual performance, and secret police" (p. 353). In principle, everyone checked up on everyone else, and every executive official in the hierarchies was held responsible for much more than what was within his or her formal authority. These particularly complex organizing principles were, of course, rooted in the firm ideological proposition that the Party and its functionaries were the true representatives of the interests of the working masses. The single manager at the factory or enterprise level was paradoxically regarded both as a supreme authority within the enterprise and yet in need of extra support from the party hierarchy and its organization of the workers, including the strengthening of their level of cultural attainment. The preferred solution to this riddle was to make every manager a senior ranking member of the Party. These figures, quite heavily loaded with responsibilities were then subject to all the arguably conflicting demands placed on them from above. Increase productivity! Improve safety! Defend the honour of women! Prevent alcohol abuse! (or whatever) and do it "democratically"! This, Bendix concluded, accorded with the spirit that was laid down by Peter the Great and re-enacted by Lenin (p. 362). In short, everything was possible.

> Every functionary is instructed not to interfere with the work of another but to "aid" him in the appropriate way. In every case the party reserves for itself the right to judge and to distinguish "aid" from "interference".
>
> *(Bendix, 1956: 399)*

In this quite pressing situation, Bendix both postulated and illustrated with a wide range of examples, party functionaries becoming very adept at avoiding too much contact with both the Party and the masses, opting for various forms of well-orchestrated criticism-from-below in the "democratic" spirit rather than personal communication. Indeed, personal communication with subordinates was to be avoided. As far as the Party itself was concerned, its overarching goal was to retain maximum control over its own apparatus, and one key element in achieving this was keeping its functionaries in splendid isolation. This, in turn was primarily achieved by making the position of functionary particularly attractive in terms of material and other benefits, enjoyable in themselves, and good reason to keep away from the envious others.

Sixty four years later

Reinhard Bendix was clearly not a fan of Communist Party rule or of Functionaries. This is not to say that he was a fan of Western managerial ideology – which clearly he was not. In the concluding chapter, he warned that many downsides were to be discovered in Communist Party rule. Here the argument is expressly directed at the world's poor, the liberated colonies etc., of the 1950s (pp. 448–449).

Since then, we have learned ever more clearly that mainstream (American) management practice resembles the practices detailed in the inner workings of the East Zone of Germany. Works such as those by Dalton (1959), Kanter (1977), and Jackall (1988) supremely depict the "moral mazes" of contemporary work organizations, in which the guiding principle is that you do whatever your boss tells you to do and even try to guess that in advance. If you succeed most of the time, without any major hiccups, you will be handsomely rewarded and become or remain a member of a very privileged elite.

Hence, the difference between a ruling party and a dominant class is perhaps not so much that the one has and the other lacks a centrally formulated ideology. I would regard that as more of a question of empirical variation. The more theoretical and principal question is whether or not members of grouping(s) equipped to formulate managerial ideology are *(s)elected* or not. Indeed, Bendix was aware that he was studying dictatorship and non-dictatorship respectively. But perhaps he was not fully aware? He seems to have compared an analysis of organizational *practice* in the East with an analysis of organizational *talk* in the West. It seems quite logical, does it not, that the latter should come out as significantly more appealing?

Scandinavian institutionalist organizational research (e.g. Brunsson, 1989) has elaborated the politicization of even the simplest "action organisation" in the direction of the "political organization" subject to all possible and impossible demands at once. Bendix's description of industrial life in the East Zone of Germany constitutes a supreme detailing of such organizing. It is therefore perhaps a highly relevant depiction of our "Russian" reality in working life, most of the time covered by ideological bits and pieces produced in America. Again, Bendix probably remains unsurpassed as a surveyor of those ideologies too. In terms of my pedagogic; the Functionaries dominate organizational life parading as Fathers, Tough Ones, Experts and Bureaucrats. Whether or not the practices of this servitor aristocracy are (re)formed or simply defended by ideological perturbations remains one of the unresolved questions.

But these were but minor commentaries of Bendix's work. A major one was provided by P.D. Anthony (1977: 1) who also explicitly responded to the challenge of Bendix's book. He asked how it was that *work* became the cultural norm in our part of the world. Reinhart Bendix would never have thought of that question. He would never have thought that he was perhaps investigating two sides of the same ideological coin. Talk of individual striving and success is perhaps not that far removed from attempts at collective striving and success? Striving and succeeding just might lie at the heart of most of our problems, don't you think?

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4 Marta B. Calás and Linda Smircich

Seductive Poststructuralist Re-readings of Leadership
Ulla Eriksson-Zetterquist

Introduction

The first encounter with my giants was in 1992. In one of the first meetings with my PhD supervisor, he suggested that I read the article *Voicing Seduction to Silence Leadership* by Marta B. Calás and Linda Smircich, which had recently been published in the journal Organization Studies. Being a rigorous reader of the postmodernist implications for social science, my first suspicion was that the article, somewhat in the then tradition of feminist studies, would claim something essential of women and men – a sin in the light of all my previous readings. While reading the article all my doubts became history. *Voicing Seduction to Silence Leadership* was an almost revolutionizing textual analysis in which a poststructuralist informed feminist approach was used to examine theories of leadership. When doing an assignment for a PhD-course in organizational theory a couple of months later, I chose to read and present the article to the group. In contrast to some of my PhD-student colleagues, who found themselves rather at ease in the group, I prepared myself meticulously. The presentation was favourably received, and my colleagues and teacher who were all informed in mainstream organizational theory and leadership classics appeared to enjoy the provocative thoughts of Calás and Smircich. They were astonished and laughed at some of the surprising interpretations. The presentation turned out to be a memorable occasion for many of us. In short, the article led to success in the initial stages of my PhD studies.

The giants chosen for this chapter have had a considerable influence on me, both with regard to teacher experiences and research orientation. For me, being a first-year PhD-student in organizational theory and interested in poststructuralist feminist approaches, it was a timely publication. The article is pedagogic in many aspects, in that it introduces three different and at that time new poststructuralist approaches, and in addition, shows how these might be used in organizational studies. My guess is that readers of this study, some twenty years after the article's publication, will still find it illustrative of the shortcomings of leadership studies. It provides an overview of three poststructuralist approaches: a thrilling understanding of how gender informs organizational studies in practice and theory, a vibrant example of how skilful use of language games can provide several dimensions to a text, and finally, how research of organizations and management is contextually limited in time and space.

Three poststructuralist approaches

The article by Calás and Smircich can be regarded as representing ten intervening parts, including introduction, concluding discussion, and of special interest in this multi-voiced representation, a separate comment from Henry Mintzberg. Foucault's genealogies, deconstruction by Derrida and feminist poststructuralism make up the three poststructuralist approaches applied to the re-reading of four classical organizational texts. Some explanatory notes about the postmodern and poststructuralist debate preceding the article are needed when introducing how I came to use the text. The postmodern and post-structuralist approaches go hand in hand, are sometimes mixed, but have some differences based on origin. While postmodernism focus the situatedness of knowledge and challenge the notion of representation, poststructuralism originally focused subjectivity and language. Since the introduction of the approaches, language, knowledge and subjectivity have often been found to be interwoven, as have the two approaches.

In 1979 Jean-Francois Lyotard published the book *The Postmodern Condition* in which he opposed the general claim about meta-narratives made by thinkers under the influence of the Enlightenment, in which grand large-scale theories about the world were the guiding principle for science. Lyotard claimed that as the contemporary world was better understood as diverse and different, knowledge could only be micro-based and would never be able to represent anything other than what was used in that particular study. At present, many qualitative-oriented researchers, and perhaps a few quantitative-oriented ones, would agree with Lyotard. At the end of the 1980s, though, some of the issues raised were whether a postmodernist-oriented research could use modernist methodologies when conducting research, and in addition, how a postmodernist text might be represented. The latter included a number of issues, as former texts were all informed by the Enlightenment norms that provided legitimacy for representation. In short, how could scientists write a text that would be read by research colleagues but not be treated as a meta-narrative?

Parallel to the postmodernism discussion, poststructuralist approaches had begun to flourish in the 1960s and 1970s. In contrast to structuralism approaches, focusing systems as interrelated parts of separate entities, poststructuralists claim that the "self" is a result of conflicting categories like gender, ethnicity, profession and sexuality rather than an outcome of related structures. According to poststructuralism, the subject is located within language and also constituted by language. Hereby, a reading will be informed by the categories and experiences of the person writing as well as the person reading the text in question.

In order to follow Calás and Smircich's re-reading of leadership texts, the contribution from each poststructuralist approach used in the article is briefly presented. To begin with, Foucault led to the historical perspective that facilitated a tracing of how "different modalities of power are capable of producing a netlike organization of practices and discourses that society ends up calling *knowledge*" (Calás and Smircich, 1991: 569, italics in original). By using this perspective, it is shown how knowledge is not about discovering truth (as would be the classic claim in science and philosophy) but is a product of "heterogeneous practices of power" (ibid.).

From the French philosopher, Derrida, the idea of deconstruction was assembled in order to analyze limits caused by the discourses of leadership knowledge. Derrida is known to have questioned language as a carrier of communicated thoughts. Instead he showed how meaning is a product of signifiers within the system of a text. Texts are structured around hierarchical binary opposites like good – bad, led – not being led. According to the hierarchical construction, one term is used in favour of the other as being axiologically (that is, relating to values) or logically (that is, relating to correct and valid reasoning) subordinated by the other. By deconstructing the meaning produced, ambivalences, self-contradictions and double-binds will be revealed (Cooper, 1989). In organizational studies, deconstruction was for instance used by Joanne Martin in 1990 in the paper "Deconstructing Organizational Taboos". The deconstruction concerned a manager who was proud to be progressive in issues of gender equality and thus family friendly. In order to help a female project leader who was about to have a caesarean section, the manager told how TV-monitors were installed in her hospital room so that the project leader could follow a central project launch. By comparing the caesarean section to a bypass operation (mainly conducted on men at the time), Martin convincingly made clear how the manager and organization in question were far from progressive. A man with a bypass would have been given time to rest and recover, while the woman giving birth was expected to be up and running almost immediately after surgery. The project leader was thus under the control of the organization, rather than given some extra liberties or benefits due to childbearing.

The third poststructuralist approach was collected from feminist poststructuralism approaches, founded mainly by French feminist philosophers. In this way it was possible to cast light on how gender contributed to the constitution of knowledge. More precisely, the researchers were able to show how patriarchy and the structure of masculinity/femininity influenced how knowledge about leadership was constructed over time.

Some seminal contributions

Based on this, the contribution made in "Voicing Seduction to Silence Leadership" is hopefully more easily conveyed. The subsequent part is by no means a review, but rather an attempt to illustrate some of the article's central findings. These can be summarized as seductive leadership, the re-reading of four classical organizational texts and discussion of alternative approaches.

As an example of deconstruction, Calás and Smircich discussed how the theoretical concept of leadership claimed to represent knowledge about what was done in organizations and the doings of organizational leaders. When deconstructing leadership they showed the doubleness of leadership as it was "constructed over an opposite concept, 'seduction', which it devalues and tries to make invisible in relation to 'leadership'" (Calas and Smircich, 1991: 569). The Oxford English Dictionary was used to make an etymological analysis of leadership and seduction, which revealed that the concepts were alike and they concealed genderedness. The following can be learned from the article:

> **Lead**: to guide on a way, going in advance, … in a direction …
> … Synonymous
> **Guide**: implies intimate knowledge of the way and of all its difficulties and dangers …
> **Seduce**: … to lead astray; to entice into unchastity; attract
> … Synonymous
> **Lure**: implies a drawing into danger, evil, or difficulty through attracting and deceiving …
>
> *(Excerpt from Calas and Smircich, 1991: 572).*

The contrasts make the hierarchical order clear, as lead is good and seduce is bad, while the comparison shows how "seduction includes leadership", it is "leadership gone wrong". Continuing their argument, Calas and Smircich asked why leaders were not called "seducers". When reading the dictionary they could follow the terminology "seducer", "seductor", "seductress", and as "seductor" was declared an obsolete expression (as Calás and Smircich 1991: 573 wrote: "obsolete means no evidence of standard use since 1711"), it turned out that "many can be a 'leader' but only a woman can be a 'seductress'. No need for the term 'seductor' when 'leader' will do" (Calás and Smircich, 1991: 573). As the argumentation was very persuasive in this matter, it was clear to the reader that studying leadership texts would include learning about seduction.

As a consequence of applying a poststructuralist approach, Calás and Smircich abandoned the typical argumentative logic and instead presented their analysis as reading effects. In these, it became clear how sexual meanings were implied in the analyzed organizational writings. Re-reading *The Functions of the Executive* (1938) by Barnard emphasized his moral dimension and the image of the leader as a vital catalyst for organization, facilitating cooperation and coordination which would result in social structures. Barnard's leader is regarded as a Father/priest with a mandate to attract organizational participants who still denies seduction as "part of his craft" (1991: 578) (on behalf of free will or morals).

In the deconstruction of *The Human Side of Enterprise* (1966) by McGregor, the starting point was McGregor's suggestion that leaders would be better off promoting Theory Y, which represented egalitarian, relational and situational aspects in relation to the organization's members. Classical theorists like Barnard were more for Theory X (that is, a model assuming that people are lazy, passive and make unreasonable demands regarding the compensation they will receive for work). Theories X and Y could be easily related to the context of the late 1950s when these chromosomes were both found and named. Even though claiming to be egalitarian, the analysis by Calás and Smircich showed that Theory Y was based on assumptions of class and sexuality, since the managers, even if they were equal, were still the ruling masters who seduced other organizational members into remaining in lower positions.

The third re-reading analyzed the (seductive) account of daily managerial activities as described in *The Nature of Managerial Work* (1973) by Mintzberg. According to the reading by Calás and Smircich, the manager focused in Mintzberg's studies is solitary, narcissistic and omnipotent. In order to follow the competitive Western culture, this leader will maintain the homosocial order. Calás and Smircich explained that Mintzberg's text "has inscribed a discourse that seduces us into believing 'this is leadership'" (1991: 584). Although the leader became oversexed and permissive, it was a position that others who were equally equipped could counteract, which meant that the leader did not have to wield a seduction based on fear but rather a seduction based on the willingness to take part in the narcissistic play put forward.

The subject for the fourth analysis was *In Search of Excellence* (1982) by Peters and Waterman, in which they claimed to report from the necessity of a strong leader hoisting an organization to excellence. Throughout the re-reading it became obvious that the implicit leader of this text was still a man who imposed knowledge on lesser men. Even more, as the text was a pastiche – a result of the only way to engage in a ongoing debate – it repeated the words uttered by Barnard so that the transcendent leader of this text became a person who closed the "homosocial *circle of seduction* for organizational leadership" (1991: 592). Having been convinced, the reader would then agree to the idea that studies of leadership were simply copies of earlier versions, constructing their appeal on signifying seduction.

In an effort to go beyond the limiting leadership that emanated from a male dominated culture, Calás and Smircich tried to find alternative understandings in Utopias provided by feminist authors. Here they examined three Utopias. The first two were based on novel feminist readings. In the first, a feminine community of women was found to be defined according to masculine standards. In the second, the fiction society that had abandoned categories like gender, class and race still replaced known oppression with unintelligible alternatives. These unintelligent alternatives included the fictive reproduction according to which motherhood was given up as the last strand of women's power. This situation resulted in everyone becoming active parents while pregnancy produced special brooders. Instead of being given to women and men equally, the possibility of pregnancy was taken away from everyone. The third Utopia was provided by Calás and Smircich themselves. Here they reflected the textual exercises conducted and concluded the article by calling for "*the need to accept the temporality of our knowledge and the need to write and re-write organizations and organizational theory as we move along in an ever changing world*" (1991: 598).

The unveiling of the leadership concept and theories containing seduction is rather pervasive. Indeed, one of the most seductive parts of this article emanates from this. The comparison between leadership and seduction as presented and based on the *Oxford English Dictionary* is multifaceted yet simplistic. Whichever signifying thread is picked up by the authors, the result will still show how leadership comprises seduction. This is also easy to explain to an audience. Since most people are familiar with leadership and seduction, and the combination of the two is so astounding, the learning experience is immediate.

The similar seducing and learning outcomes apply to all three Utopias. Perspectives like these are common in feminist studies, for example when trying to find alternative feminine ways to organize. For instance, various writers have discussed what would happen if men in management were substituted by women in management. As pointed out by both Kanter (1977) and Cockburn (1983), this would merely result in replacing one hierarchical system with another. It is naïve to expect that women leaders would be able to manage in different ways than men, since in contemporary organizations organizing requires certain structures and practices to become legitimate. In a *Feminist Case against Bureaucracy* (1984), Kathy Ferguson took the issue even further by claiming that women, due to their different experiences, would probably organize their workplace in a different way than men. For instance, decision making would be democratic, with every organizational member having their say and coming to an agreement. Participative self-government would be the guiding principle in an organization in which everyone would share responsibility, control and management. Even if *The Feminist Case Against Bureaucracy* is a favourable idea, there are some shortcomings. As in Utopia two presented by Calás and Smircich, it is hard to think of a system without oppression. A system like this is oppressive in itself. A disadvantage of the organization outlined by Ferguson is the temporal aspect, as an organization organized like this would hardly survive in competition with other organizations. Even if not discussed by Ferguson, Calás or Smircich, institutional theory has explained that the environment will both shape and be shaped by the organization in question.

The final comments and learning from Calás and Smircich are easier to present in general terms than in detail. It is difficult to briefly present the idea that leadership theories are hierarchical and based on implicit assumptions of sexuality and seduction. Such a task would demand an audience being well oriented in the theories as such. As this final part of the article is especially nuanced and uses words that imply several underlying meanings and significations, and in addition, various reading effects in an effort to escape the mainstream leadership discourse, a summary will by no means do it justice. Every part in this section suggests yet another method for creating reading effects and new understandings of a text. Accordingly, this writing strategy advocates the very rationale of the article and shows how a text inevitably contains multiple meanings and cannot claim to represent anything outside itself.

Inspiration and being led astray

During my undergraduate studies I wrote a paper in which I explored feminine, masculine and androgyny traits in leadership theories, using for instance *The Prince* (1517) by Macciavelli and Sargent's (1983) *The Androgynous Manager* (and other texts about leadership which can no longer be recalled). The results of this paper of mine included a deeper understanding of how the division of feminist and masculine categories often builds on essentialist notions (notions claiming the existence of given biological and social traits for men and women) as well as a realization of the uselessness of disputing whether a phenomenon like "the sun" or "caring" was masculine or feminine or the other way around. These categorizations change over time and context. The results also implied that leadership theories and issues were rather similar over time. As Calas and Smircich promoted similar yet infinitely better research based results that are far more convincing, I had no choice but to make them my giants. In addition, I was fairly seduced by the approaches applied. If this was an alternative way of doing research, then I wanted to be a part of the deconstructing of organizational studies. While learning how to do research within the PhD program, I harbored an unspoken desire to follow in their footsteps.

As time went by I was sent to do field work. This partly collided with my conceptual ambitions. Whenever possible I continued to read French feminist poststructuralist philosophers, like Julia Kristeva among others, and tried to weave them into my writing assignments. Thanks to good supervision I managed to construct a thick material on socialization among newcomers in an apprenticeship program. Writing up the text as such became a process littered with obstacles. Early on I was advised to abandon the French philosophers when researching organizational issues. This advice was followed by stories about PhD students who had never been able to finish their theses due to their interest in some more or less strange philosopher. As I really wanted to finish my studies I chose to defuse any part played by feminist poststructuralist like Kristeva and colleagues.

This did not resolve the writing problems, however. If one did not believe in language as representing something outside itself, how could a field material then become represented? As texts inevitably contained double meanings, how was I to construct a text that did reasonable justice to an understanding of my subject? And, how would I ever deal with a reader's subjective interpretations of the same text? With this in mind, my goal was to use gendered perspectives that per se would highlight sexual meanings, hierarchical constructions and reading effects. By stating men and women as categories, reading effects would come about. Luckily, I was part of an allowing and understanding research community with supportive guidance provided from many sources. In addition, as it at this time was still considered normal for Swedish PhD studies to take more time than the pre-set four years, I had the possibility to combine PhD studies with some teaching, thus allowing me time to try different strategies to represent my text, to do my analysis and to ponder on issues extracted from my reading of Calás and Smircich and other poststructuralist readings as well as postmodern conditions.

Even if my theoretical ambitions had to be set aside in my struggles to present the field material, another part of the field helped me to invoke deconstruction and solve the issue of how to make the reader remember the textual matters in the final version of my thesis. In this I studied the social construction of gender in corporations (Eriksson, 2000). A major contribution to solving my struggles to introduce and finish the monograph came from the audience that attended one of my presentations. When presenting parts of my material for public sector managers taking a course in organizational changes, I let them read parts of the material and in smaller groups discuss how to change the situation. Below is an excerpt from the original material presented to the public sector managers. The material is based on a situation in which the HR manager has to explain to the newly recruited apprentices why there are so few women leaders in the company:

> Göran began to explain:
>
> Göran: – Over the last ten years, 55% men and 45% women have been recruited to the trainee program.
>
> Erik (apprenticeship candidate): – How many of these continue their career after the program?
>
> Göran: – There is a lack of women in the executive groups, and this has been focused on for some years now. The problem is that both the company and the women themselves have to make sacrifices for their careers. It is a hard problem.

The next person to speak at the event was the financial manager, a person with long experience in the organization. He continued by giving his explanation:

> Tage is 60 and he introduced himself as "a relic in the company". For him there were no career lists, just the X-it (exit)-list. Everyone laughed. He also claimed that he could explain what happened to the "girls" in the company:
>
> – We employ girls with good grades, who are both nice and good looking. I used to say that these girls get chased by the men in the company who try to catch them into family bonds in order to keep them for themselves.
>
> After this introduction, everyone laughed again.

This example reveals parts of the construction of gender in the studied organization. The HR manager tried to include more women, and even if he did his best the older managers in the organization upheld a fairly conservative view of women by claiming that they belonged within the family. In one of the groups at the course in which the excerpt was presented it was suggested that a better understanding of the played out situation would be constructed by changing men into women and vice versa, i.e. a simple deconstruction. As the idea was so striking this was done in the group. The outcome from this exercise reads as:

> Anna began to explain:
>
> Anna: – Over the last ten years, 55% women and 45% men have been recruited to the trainee program.
>
> Lisa: – How many of these continue their career after the program?
>
> Anna: – There is a lack of men in the executive groups, and this has been focused on for some years now. The problem is that both the company and the men themselves have to make sacrifices for their careers. It is a hard problem.

And so on. It is easy to return to the statement made by Tage and exchange men for women. The reading effect comes immediately, since the mere thought of women chasing men into family bonds in order to keep them for themselves is somewhat inconceivable. When writing the thesis the field excerpt proved to be a good introduction, and the deconstructed example an epilogue. This led to new interpretations and understandings of my research field within the actual thesis.

By doing this I reached another goal, which was the opening up of my own texts for re-readings. Yet another contribution in the article by Calás and Smircich is a subsequent comment published in the journal, resulting from a brief letter by Mintzberg. In this he congratulated them on an entertaining reading, and contributed with a venture of his own, based on the same exercise as that undertaken by Calás and Smircich. Deconstructing the first four words of their paper "Following from the epigraphs above" (Mintzberg took out epigraphs as he "did not dare to entertain" them), it turned out that they were all in the same seductive discourse when it came to writing about leadership. "Following" can be deconstructed as "pursuit, pursuing, undressing with eyes, i.e. intention to seduce, also reference to the tail, hence the penis. "From" can be deconstructed as "elimination, withdrawal, i.e. completion of seduction. "The" "may have no reference to seduction". "Above" can be deconstructed as "being on top, i.e. domineering, mounting, penetrating, i.e. the act of seduction itself" (Mintzberg, 1991: 602). He signed off with: "Yours, in the hot kitchen, Henry Mintzberg" (1991:602). A re-reading becomes infinite and by choosing to add a postscript such as this I could of course be criticized for not sticking to my argument. Yet, this is an example of how textual re-readings never end.

Present use and contemporary value

Knowing that the study by Calás and Smircich was illustrative, pedagogic, or more precisely phrased, "seductive", I came to refine my presentation of leadership as seductive practice for various audiences after the first successful performance. The presentation has been used for undergraduate students, for master level students and eventually, for people outside academia. It has been appreciated by almost all audiences. In fact, I can only recall one occasion when it was not well received. Giving a lecture at a course in which the course manager had just received her PhD in the field of leadership studies, in which I claimed that the field had not developed further in the last sixty years, she was rather upset. It was of course not a very tactful statement to make, and it turned out to be one of those learning occasions that resulted in me becoming more attentive to my claims in relation to the audience. Seductive leadership is an eye-opener for most listeners, even though some might find it too provocative.

In addition, whenever there is an opportunity I now use Calás and Smircich as a foundation to question leadership. They have become somewhat of a backbone in my understanding. For instance, the reading qualities of Barnard's *The Function of the Executive* are enhanced when applying seduction to his strategies.

Based on these experiences, I would recommend any PhD student of organization and leadership or management to take read this particular work by Calás and Smircich. If doing research in the area of leadership and/or management, their article will bring new perspectives. For those interested in poststructuralist or postmodernist approaches, this paper serves as an introduction. PhD students of gender, class or ethnicity will find suggestions of how to interpret power and social categories in organizational research. And, last but not least, anyone who needs a short but refreshing reading of classical management texts will probably find this work helpful.

The article *Voicing Seduction to Silence Leadership* gains by re-readings. As part of the linguistic turn, the article enhances a basic awareness of texts as contextual, and of bearing claims within science but not necessarily beyond. It could be asked how this applies to practical issues in organizations? At first glance, not at all. Linguistic analyses are interesting but often remain part of an internal, scientific discussion. Studies of management in popular culture would, however, claim the opposite. Even if they are ever so progressive in providing examples of successful women as managers, popular culture descriptions of women in management still tend to end up showing the disadvantages of women in career. Often they turn out to be an account of damned if you do, damned if you don't; leaving the readers and popular culture consumers with the implicit notion that women should not be managers (Wahl et al, 1998, Bowring, 2004). As the language from popular culture as well as all other cultural events contributes to the understanding of the work/life division and to the construction of men, women, managers and organizing, the absence of successful women in cultural expressions becomes a limitation (Bowring, 2004; Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2007; Czarniawska, Eriksson-Zetterquist and Renemark, 2007). If using the language of popular culture, such as change agent, thus enabling more gender equal organizations, the stories of women in management have to be profoundly reconstructed.

The ambiguity of Calás and Smircich's text is also one of its shortcomings. If you are not familiar with organizational classics or poststructuralist approaches the text is hard to interpret. In addition, as it is now, almost twenty years after the analysis of organizational classics was published, new classical texts have appeared which if incorporated would update the text. Based on the findings of Calás and Smircich this would be a contradictory claim, since these texts are unlikely to contain anything new. As the leadership discourse is constituted, new leadership ideas will be more easily found in fields other than that of organizational theory. If readers of organizational theory know their classical texts and can critically discuss leadership and management, as well as the possible deconstruction of the text, they may be able to discover new aspects of organizations and organizing.

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5 Richard M. Cyert and James G. March

An Eye-opener and a Lifelong Love Affair
Rolf A. Lundin

The basis for the love affair

When do you get insights? Is it when you have reason to say "Aha!"or when you retrospectively ponder how your own thinking might have been affected by your experiences in the past? For me it is a combination of both. Without really knowing, my belief is that when you are young emotions play an exceptionally important role in your development. It was like that for me, at least. However, the role model for researchers is that they should never let feelings play an important part in their research work. But for most of us the fact of the matter is that feelings are more important than we might officially admit. Researchers are ordinary people too, so why not take that into account?

I came in contact with the Cyert & March line of thought in the 1960s under very special circumstances and fell in love with it almost instantly. That line of thought has stayed with me ever since. So when observing and theorizing about temporary organizations, it appeared natural to consider the Cyert & March line of thinking and adapt it to this special organization where time is particularly important. When contemplating the empirical data at hand and the theoretical work done in the area, an oppositional insight was gained. The focus on "decision making" was too strong in the original book – influenced by economics? – whereas "action" was hardly mentioned at all. Decisions and actions should be more intertwined in organizations! In the political sciences that problem has led to "implementation research" concerned with projects and temporary organizations being an appropriate solution for management studies. Anyway, admitting flaws in the loved one is a good way of demonstrating true love!

The beginning

In 1963, a book that was to transform my life was published for the very first time. "A Behavioral Theory of the Firm" really broke new ground and the authors, Richard M. Cyert and James G. March, made academic headlines – or more appropriately, achieved academic fame. In my own case, as a young, aspiring academic, it represented something new and different from most of the business studies on offer in Sweden at the time. Much of what was written in the book about behavioural mechanisms had intuitive validity and at the same time provided a coherent view of the entire firm. The book represented a perspective for understanding firms and, indirectly, also the world.

However, the experience was not only an academic eye-opener at the time but also provided considerable inspiration. During a memorable summer's week in 1968, a seminar was arranged by Professor Walter Goldberg from the Gothenburg School of Economics and Business Administration at "Aspenäsgården" in Lerum, outside Gothenburg, in which the faculty of GSIA at the Carnegie Institute of Technology (in Pittsburgh) and the business administration faculty at the Gothenburg School of Business and Economics participated. Everybody, including junior PhD students, was expected to give a presentation to the entire group, which also included the Nobel Laureate to be, Herbert Simon. The GSIA faculty certainly impressed with its attitude towards academic life and the requirements it felt should be expected of academics. One thing that made an impression on most Swedes was the habit mentioned by someone from the Carnegie group about drafting at least one paper per week, every week of the year. Considering the work involved I presumed that the drafts would never develop into a fully-fledged paper every week, but rather a "one idea page" for future consideration. Anyway, I seem to remember that I felt very envious about the matter.

It should be noted that the stress was on writing and not on publishing. Publishing was seen as the effect of good academic writing rather than the reason for doing the writing. Anyway, the productivity of the entire GSIA came into focus and many of us started to read a forerunner to the Cyert and March book, namely "Organizations" authored by March and Simon and published in 1958. This book on formal organizations, as well as the one authored by Herbert Simon on "Administrative Behavior" (Simon, 1945), made us realize that the eye-opener book was part of a pattern. It was based on consistent thinking among the members of GSIA who had been working on similar themes for some time, even though they simultaneously worked on related scientific projects. The new book now presented a "solution-in-principle" to a theory of firms based on behaviour rather than the discipline of economics. People who wrote about economics tended to rely on (unrealistic) rationality assumptions and view firms as "black boxes", thus disregarding the internal processes within the firms. Anyway, it stood out as my favourite for two reasons – it was the first one to treat the firm as one entity and the first of its kind I came into contact with.

Eventually, I got to know both authors personally. Dick Cyert assisted in the project to create the Business School for Norrland in Umeå towards the end of the 1980s, when he was also the president of Carnegie-Mellon. It was certainly a privilege to have him as an advisor. A group including the entire leadership of the University of Umeå visited him and others at Carnegie in Pittsburgh and he visited Umeå a couple of times to pave the way for the business school endeavour. He even sent his assistant, Bernie Goldsmith, to help us out for longer periods. I got to know Jim March in a completely different context. A long time ago he established a special organization called Scancor (at Stanford University), which is essentially a meeting place for researchers from the Nordic countries where research ideas can be aired at seminars and where important acquaintances can be made. Many prominent researchers doing research related to behavioural aspects of organizations and from our part of the world have stayed at Scancor for periods of time, and enjoyed comments made by Jim and others on their work. I did that too, together with Anders Söderholm, when we were working empirically and theoretically with projects and temporary organizations. I learned a lot from these two gentlemen, Dick and Jim, although the most important thing is probably that, with few exceptions, Americans have a tendency to show off when the opportunity arises, but those who really have a lot to boast about do not do that. For these two gentlemen, everyone is important. It is the ideas rather than the people who express them that really count, and they always seemed to prefer novel ideas.

When Anders Söderholm and I were trying to make sense of all the studies and the information we had gathered about projects and temporary organizations in the early 1990s, we eventually gained inspiration by comparing what had been said about "firms" with our own data and thoughts about temporary organizations. Similar behavioural mechanisms were definitely at work in both "ordinary" and temporary organizations, but it occurred to us that making a contrast between what was said in the famous book about firms (to be in existence for ever – which is the way it was conceived of then) and our own material on the essence of "temporary" would be useful. So, even though our vantage point mostly consisted of an analysis of cases and data relating to projects and temporary organizations, the endeavour made it possible for us to rediscover the wealth hidden in the material presented in the 1963 book.

All in all, there are several reasons why the book is special. Apart from breaking new ground, it became one with its authors and served to inspire my own thinking and work!

The behavioural theory

If you Google the author names, you will find that a lot of researchers have referenced the book. Even though the bases for counting citations in Google is unclear (or at least not official for scholars in general), the numbers signify something. In the social sciences, the 1963 book certainly belongs at the top. At the time of writing this article it has been quoted about 10,000 times. Very few publications in the social sciences have ever reached that number.

What, then, made it great? Most readers of the book – whether coming into contact with it when it was brand new or subsequently – probably have their own, personal views of what made it a great book. My feelings when I first read it were that the material in the book also had a firm base in economics by referring to some prominent name in that field at that time, and that it was presented as an almost natural next step to some of the concerns and worries that people of that discipline had. Simultaneously, the book seemed to be written as a challenge to some of the taken-for-granted conventions or basic assumptions of that discipline. Even though it is not my task here, I would certainly recommend young economics researchers to read this book in order to get a behavioural slant on their own studies, since most of the basic assumptions in economics are still unchanged. To those in the behavioural pen, my advice would be to rediscover the classics. If you have not yet read Cyert and March then do so!

The book sets out to predict and explain decision-making behaviour in a business context. In order to do this you need a sequence of partial models for the firm: 1) how organizational goals are arrived at; 2) how organizational expectations are formed; 3) how choices are made and interact; and 4) how all these partial models are interrelated.

Starting with the notion of goals, as the old assumption of maximizing profit as a taken-for-granted goal needed to be reframed to fit the decision-making context, the authors presented an alternative, arguing that only individuals and not organizations could have and set goals. In addition, individuals do not necessarily maximize profit, but instead define when they are satisfied with the outcome. In some instances, it might be enough to define the firm as entrepreneurial, in which the entrepreneurial goals and the goals of the organizations are the same. But in most instances there is a need to define the goal of a collective, the organization. By viewing the organization as a coalition of individuals in which individuals make an active choice of being or not being a member, a model of coalition objectives is formulated (in fact, the model of "interested parties" eventually becoming so widespread and popular had one of its earliest formulations in the book). Individuals contribute to the organization if they are induced to do so in a bargaining process in which the notion of "side payments" plays an important role. One result of viewing goals in this way is that goals are formed in a process and might change over time, given that the motives of the individuals in and members of the coalition might also change. The sub-notion of "organizational slack" is described as a means of keeping the organization together and keeping individuals loyal to the firm. In short, organizational slack stands for a surplus in the firm that can be used in negotiations with actors who might otherwise threaten to leave the firm.

Along the same lines as the notion of coalition formation as a process for defining goals, there is a need to understand how expectations about the future are formed, since such expectations are important for decision-making. The authors outline the components of a theory of organizational expectations by insisting that expectations have to be explained and by arguing that there is an interaction between expectations and aspirations. The traditional view that all components of choice, and in particular the choice alternatives, can be made known has to be abolished.

Attempting to search for all possible choices is neither feasible nor manageable in a real organization. Rather, the search for alternatives to choose from is limited, in the same way as expectations are dependent on hopes, wishes and internal bargaining in the organization. The elements of choice can never be whittled down to one, single dimension. Further, the components of expectations are affected by biasing mechanisms as well as bias correction. Computations concerning expectations are quite simple and communication mechanisms within the firm also affect what is to be expected in an organization.

In a sense, organizational choice lies at the heart of the book's conceptual content. Attempts at rationality lead to a reliance on fairly simple rules of thumb in the organization. One such attempt concerns the avoidance of uncertainty. Organizational members in general tend to avoid predicting uncertainties related to the future. Reliance on rules is also a mechanism that simplifies life in organizations for individuals, since they do not have to apply their personal judgment (which might involve being held responsible). Rules that are simple *per se* are instead favoured. The notion of "standard operating procedures" forms the core of the argument. These procedures are rules that are enforced at the same time as they appear natural for individuals and function as a stabilizing mechanism in the organization.

In the sixth chapter of the book the previously described components are summarized and the partial models are integrated into the behavioural theory of the firm. The variables related to organizational goals, organizational expectations and organizational choice are described and included in the basic framework. Four relational concepts tie the partial models together: 1) quasi-resolution of conflict, 2) uncertainty avoidance, 3) problemistic search and 4) organizational learning. As to the relational concepts, some very specific mechanisms (previously discussed but hidden in the text) are presented in a systematic way and discussed in the following terms: 1) potential conflicts are resolved by means of a sequential attention to goals and search for satisfactory solutions; 2) uncertainty is avoided until you really have to attend to pressing problems. Fire-brigading is generally preferred before pro-action; 3) by a problemistic search the authors contend that a problem initiates an investigation of alternatives and once there a solution has been found the search is suspended; and 4) organizational learning implies that the organization adapts over time in response to outcomes and experiences. In this way, the learning implies a bridge from the past to the future. The chapter ends with a flow diagram of how the different mechanisms are linked together in an abstract model of the organizational decision process.

One way of describing the remaining seven chapters/appendices of the book is to say that they elaborate on themes raised in the first section. One specific chapter has received some attention of late, since it was written by Oliver E. Williamson, who received the Nobel Prize in Economics in 2009. All in all, the book is very rich in terms of idea content. It provides a comprehensive model for the entire firm and gives a lot of impetus for similar, albeit more fragmented, work.

Remaining strengths and emerging weaknesses

The most impressive trait of the book is that it combines analyses of specific sub-systems in the firm with syntheses encompassing what is learned about the firm as a total entity. My view is that in this, the book still leads and is unique. Other, more recent organizational researchers have presented important results concerning the sub-mechanisms of a firm, but no successful attempts have been made to cover all this in a logically consistent and empirically based way. Indeed, some of the attempts can be classified as minor elaborations of the schemes already presented in the book.

One weakness of the book is that the first six chapters (the first 127 pages) provide both the weight and the substance. The sixth chapter summarizes the main messages of the book, while the remainder of the book is largely an elaboration of what has already been said. In any case, the material contained in Chapter 7 and onwards is not developed in the same dynamic way as in the first six chapters. Those who refer to the Cyert & March book in general refer to the first part.

As to a general weakness of the overall scheme, one might suggest that the empirical notion of what a firm is has changed since the book was written. The reference to an organization's goal as the same as that of the entrepreneur responsible for setting up the entrepreneurial venture indicates a belief that entrepreneurialism was possibly a very important part of the business game at the time of the book's conception. Both then and subsequently we have experienced stable years with relatively stable organizations, where vested interest and powerful coalitions have contributed to stability (or lack of flexibility if you wish). The idea that coalitions are formed has been obsolete for some time. Nowadays, when instability reflects unpredictable downturns in the economy and with the renewed popularity of venturing and entrepreneurship, the notion of coalition formation might experience a revival.

One related concern – in the sense that models are time dependent – is how in many instances the computer and Internet have changed the way that people rely on their own feelings and abilities as described in the book. Several of the routines previously carried out by individuals have now been taken over by computerized procedures. The prospects for an "economic man" in practice may have improved considerably with the computational and search opportunities inherent in modern computer equipment. Evaluations of decision alternatives have sometimes been handed over to non-human mechanisms, where rationality in the old economic sense has been revived as something possible to strive for. The decision-making options that are now available expand the limits for what can be done.

One of the book's strengths is that the reasoning has face validity. A question one might have is: will this always be the case? In the social sciences we have been weak when it comes to the fact that societal systems and preoccupations change. Most theories should definitely have a "best before date". This means that there is a need to revisit conjectures made in the past and previous models to find out whether they were firmly based on the outlook at the time or whether they still hold. Society is changing and our theories about society should definitely change with it (Lundin, 2009). Any scholarly-based endeavour needs a critical attitude on the part of the beholder. Leaving the description and evaluation of the book from 1963, I will now switch to the role played by the book in the construction of a theory of temporary organizations.

Relevance for the temporary

The word "firm" in the title of the book guides our thoughts to something that exists for ever; a going concern and a fact of life for the future. The notion of eternity is even almost included in the word itself. But organizations definitely have different time perspectives. Some are of a temporary nature and have a more or less built-in termination point (even though there are examples of organizations set up to 'temporarily' survive for a considerable period of time). An implication of 'temporary'" is that the mechanisms found in projects and temporary organizations are different to those in firms.

At one point in my career I took part in the study of an entrepreneurial construction company and what happened when they recruited their first CEO from outside the owner family. The study, which was eventually published (Lundin and Wirdenius, 1989), included extensions to the subsidiaries of the company as well as the construction projects they were running. I then realized that much of what I had done in my academic career prior to this point had in one way or another been related to projects. With regard to that observation, construction projects are temporary – they simply have to be if the construction company is to make money. The feeling that studying the temporary was legitimate and necessary led a group of colleagues and I to embark on studies of temporary organizations in all kinds of settings. Those studies were also published in a book (Ekstedt et al., 1999) and were based on the notion that projects play an important part for neo-industrial society.

Prior to the publication of the book, Anders Söderholm and I tried to summarize what we had learned about projects/temporary organizations in a theoretical article in a special issue on projects and temporary organizations of the *Scandinavian Journal of Management* (Lundin and Söderholm, 1995). Our work was in many ways guided and influenced by the 1963 book. An attempt was made to construct a theory for the temporary organization as a whole. The elements of the theory had many similarities, even though the conspicuous thing about temporary organizations is that they have a beginning, middle and end. For most people involved in projects there is a natural sequence of events. Anyway, inspired by our studies of projects in a variety of contexts the main variables were identified as: 1) Time, 2) Task, 3) Team and 4) Transition (the four Ts). These variables denoted kinship with the book from 1963 at the same time as they signalled a distance.

Decision-making was not considered to be the focus of temporary organizations, but a sequence of events that characterized the development of a project. A theory of temporary organization did not aspire to explain decisions, but actions, in a stream of events. "Time" is an important variable for the simple reason that a project is time-constrained. The "task" represents the *raison d'ẽtre* of a project. "Team" stands for humans involved in carrying through the project (even though it is not always a real team with frequent face-to-face contact), whereas "transition" means that something different is done when the project is finished.

These four variables correspond to the general concepts used by Cyert and March: goals, expectations and choice. When it comes to relational concepts (which is the terminology used by Cyert and March, but termed sequencing concepts in the article) the parallels are: Action-based entrepreneurialism (covering the initiation of a project), Fragmentation for commitment building (dividing the project into manageable sub-projects), Planned isolation (as a means to control disturbances) and Institutionalized termination (there is often an inbuilt mechanism for ending the project). Of necessity, these sequencing mechanisms differ by from the Cyert and March conceptions, since our approach to the model of a temporary organization is based on the notion of a beginning and an end (with something in between).

More recently, in research into temporary organizations the notion of time has been cleverly refined, although, like in the book by Kenis and co-authors (Kenis *et al.*, eds, 2009), distinguishing between different ways of relating the variable time to temporary organizations. They focus on the role of time for the participants in a project and delineate distinct approaches to "temporality". Indeed, the awareness of impending termination has a very special impact on project participants.

The parallels between the efforts of the temporary organization and the behavioural theory of the firm should be evident. The similarities consist of a limited number of basic variables (general concepts) and a set of sequencing (relational) concepts. However, one definite difference is that in the theory of temporary organizations the notion of "task" as something one-dimensional is the key to the action orientation. Projects are created in order to get things done. In the work undertaken by Söderholm and myself, we attempted to go from "a behavioural theory of the firm" to "an action theory of temporary organizations".

The essence of the love affair

When re-reading the book again before writing this essay I found the sources of our thinking on temporary organizations. I also found new things, rediscovered things. I had two specific reactions to the content: 1) I was struck by the richness of the book in terms of ideas. It was so densely written with lots of material that was relevant to business life today and 2) I found myself "walking away" from the book, pondering not only the implications of what was said but also the ideas that seemed untrue, and were also possibly untrue when the book was written. These two aspects of the re-reading experience are really two sides of the same coin. The book does not only impress, it also makes you think.

To me this is an indication that the love affair is continuing. Despite being almost half a century old, the book still serves as a source of inspiration and as food for thought. You want to embrace it and discover or possibly re-discover new traits in it. At the same time you seem to identify flaws that give you new vibes – that in turn remind you of the ongoing love affair. My own love affair is now deeper than ever. I am dazzled and impressed by what is presented, and at the same time can see the limitations without rejecting the original ideas.

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6 Peter F. Drucker

Father of Management and Grandfather of Marketing

Timothy L. Wilson

Selection of a giant

I hope that I am not perceived as hypocritical in admitting to not being a Drucker fanatic. In fact, I did not select Drucker as my first choice for writing a chapter for this text. I thought, in fact, that someone else might choose him. But no-one did and, in the end, my young associate and co-editor, Jensen, said that because I am an American he should be my choice.[7] After all, the gentleman has come to be known as the "Father of Management," with the implicit understanding that U.S. management is understood.

Tommy also calls Peter the "king of one-liners" and in a sense he is right. Drucker's remarks are not only pithy, they are also spot on. This relevance is the main justification for my selection. When writing my dissertation I needed a good quote for the introduction – from someone noted for their reputation in business management and one that related directly to the study. In soliciting advice from my advisor he suggested looking at Drucker. In the advisor's opinion, "he (Drucker) has written just about anything and everything in business." True to my advisor's opinion, I found the following quote, concerned with product development, with which to start my dissertation (Wilson, 1981: 1):

> It is a company's first and most important task to stay in business. And it cannot do so without a steady flow of new products.

Things seem to have come full circle. I was recently asked to read a young student's manuscript. Although it consisted of six papers that had successfully gone through the peer review process, he indicated that he was having a problem relating them to the whole. To be sure, there was a division in the papers. About half related to the use of the web in marketing, while the other half dealt with innovations by small businesses. The relationship between these functions can be found in Drucker (1954/1986: 37).

> Because it is its purpose to create a customer, any business enterprise has two – and only these two – basic functions: marketing and innovation. They are the entrepreneurial functions

Thus, just as my dissertation was served by a Drucker quote, so it was with the student who came to me to read his manuscript. It can thus be ascertained that Drucker is not a bad choice at all when looking for useful quotes.

The book that I have selected for review is Drucker's *The Practice of Management*; the book containing my young colleague's choice of quote and the book for which Professor Drucker is perhaps best known. There is a degree of irony in the selection of this book because it is a book written for my father and his generation and not for me or mine. Brokaw (1998) called this generation "the greatest". It was a generation that had learned self-reliance during the great depression, fought a world war on two fronts and had now come back to secure their peace, if not world peace, under what was called their GI Bill. In his introduction, Drucker (1954/1986, x) wrote, "These were the people who knew that they were managers – their predecessors, who had made their careers before World War II, were often barely conscious of the fact. These younger achieving people knew that they needed systematic knowledge: needed concepts, principles and tools – and had none. It was for them that I wrote the book." In 1954 my father took the first step on the ladder of management. I cannot say that he read the book, but it was available and he could have used and understood it. For sure, millions of others did so to their – and the country's – advantage.

Drucker's seminal contribution

Drucker has written so much and so much has been written about him that it is difficult to add anything that has not already been said. The *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*,[8] for instance, has devoted a whole issue to recalling the contributions that Professor Drucker made to the marketing function. In Philip Kotler's interview (Gunther, 2009), he said:

> Peter Drucker is the father of management. For many of us, he is our role model, continually generating new ideas and refining old ones. I regard it as a compliment when some people call me "the father of marketing." I tell them that if this is the case, then Peter Drucker is "the grandfather of marketing."

In his introduction to *The Practice of Management,* the author positions this text within the framework of existing texts on management – Chester Barnard's *The Functions of the Executive* (1938), Mary Parker Follett's *Dynamic Administration* (1941), Elton Mayo's *The Human Problems of an Industrial Civilization* (1933) and *The Social Problems of an Industrial Civilization* (1945), Henry Fayol's *Industrial and General Administration* (1916/1930) and Frederick Taylor's *Scientific Management* (1911) and his own *Concepts of the Corporation* (1946). He characterized it as relating to the "discipline" of management; that focus was its mission and intent. It was the first book to look at management as a whole and attempted to depict management as a distinct function, managing as specific work, and being a manager as a distinct responsibility. He suggests that the book was the first to talk of objectives, to define key result areas and tell how to set objectives and how to measure performance. He said that he wrote the book for younger people in middle and upper-middle management who had come out of the war (WWII) and hungered to achieve success. He needed something that he could give to managers with whom he was working in order to help them to do their jobs and prepare themselves for top-management responsibilities. He met these needs. To the degree that we still have these needs, this book is a good place to start. Drucker attempted to make his material accessible and readable – and it remains so to this day.

In my personal case, I will go on record as saying that the idea expressed by Drucker of the customer as defining a business is a favorite of mine,

> What is our business is not determined by the producer but by the consumer
> *(1954/1986: 50).*

This appreciation comes from experiences as a consultant.[9] Invariably, somewhere along the line, someone would ask in an initial meeting, "What exactly can you do for us?" The stock answer was, "we can give you the customers' perception of your business". Because it is axiomatic that organizations know what business they are in, that capability provided value to the firm and *always* will provide value to a firm

One can only guess that this concept of business came to Drucker early in his career. In his reflections on an "Uncle Henry," which came in that first "real" job in England, he wrote (Drucker, 1978/1998, 199–200), "While in London, Uncle Henry used Freedberg & Co. as his headquarters, with a desk and a telephone in the big room where I otherwise sat alone. He would tell stories constantly, (…) (which) would drive me up a wall. But gradually I learned to listen… If the customers don't behave the way you think they should behave, don't say, 'They're irrational.' And don't start 'reeducating' them – that's not the merchant's job. His job is to satisfy customers and to make them want to come back. If they don't behave rationally, go out and look at the store and the merchandise through the customers' eyes. You'll always find that they behave rationally, only their reality is different from yours." Reflections on this experience, which probably occurred in 1935–36, until he wrote his *Practice of Management* some 16–18 years later, comprises his (our) approach to business. Put another way, customers are not only *kings* as we tend to reflect nowadays, they also are *architects*.

Drucker today

As luck would have it, while I was preparing for this chapter I was also in the process of writing two papers based on Peter Drucker and the material that he developed. The more serious of the two involved an assessment of the Swedish experience of management in terms of objectives in upper secondary schools (Lindberg and Wilson, 2011). Here it is natural to refer to Chapter 11 (Management by Objectives and Self-Control) in *The Practice of Management,* since the concept was first developed in this text. The less serious, or more appropriately less academic paper involved reflections on Drucker for a "Shoulders of Giants" series published in an Indian trade magazine.[10] The reason that this commentary has been put off in preference to the first five articles in the series is that so much has been written about Drucker lately – first of all in connection with his death and secondly in relation to the 100th anniversary of his birth in 2009 and the conferences that were developed in his memory – that it is difficult to say anything new about him or his interpretations of business and management.[11] The use of Drucker (1954/1986) goes beyond these papers, however, and is wide ranging. It is easy and still somewhat profound to suggest that it is the customer who defines the nature of a business, the role that effective executives have in organizations (Drucker, 1967/2002) and the seminal work of Drucker in non-profits (1990) – including stakeholder salience in Tanzania (Masoud and Wilson, 2010), technology and change in the Swedish architectural industry (Zackariasson, Boström and Wilson, 2009), creativity in video game development (Zackariasson, Styhre and Wilson, 2006; Walfisz, Zackariasson, Wilson, 2006; Zackariasson, Walfisz and Wilson, 2006) and cost control and revenue generation in Swedish public housing (Lindbergh, Larsson and Wilson, 2004).

Value for a reader

I would not be surprised if at some time in the future I learned that this chapter on Drucker was the least read in the book. Given that the main audience is likely to be a Nordic one, and as I have read *Nordic Lights* (Czarniawska and Sevón, 2003), Drucker's approach would seem out of phase with present interest here. He was very much practice-oriented from a base of what might be called proof by assertion. It therefore might stand out as being simplistic in a collection of otherwise elegant chapters. Further, *The Practice of Management* has been around for over a half century and has thus been instrumental in the education and practice of almost two generations of managers. Thus, the material that is contained in the text has been well plowed and cultivated. Whereas it was once encyclopedic, it now tends to be basic and a primer of sorts. Consequently, a situation may exist where there is likely to be little interest in Drucker and even less interest in what Tim Wilson has to say about Drucker. Notwithstanding, mature readers may find a similar response as Philip Kotler has suggested, namely that Drucker contributes new ideas and the refining of old ones (Gunther, 2009) – and that perhaps we should actually read Drucker instead of simply reading what others say about him.

To PhD students, the value is that Drucker's work is: a) historical, b) comprehensive and c) easily read. Put another way, it indicates in a very readable style the derivatives of many of the concepts of management practice. Consequently, an individual starting to study management will either find it useful in order to establish a base or appreciate the derivation of a wide variety of topics. Further, the parts of the text in which the author backs away from management practice and approaches business philosophy continue to provide fruitful areas of and for thought, as Professor Kotler has suggested

Additionally, readers may find the text, and indeed any Drucker text, of similar value as I did., To me the writing style is particularly important here, given I come from a background that stressed writing to *express* rather than to *impress*. Drucker's straightforward style thus serves as a model in that respect.[12] Readers may also be impressed.

Shortcomings and reflections

In contrast to the accolades regarding the memory of Professor Drucker, three criticisms have been leveled at his writings. First, they are not theory based. Second, despite the fact that the writings are extensive, reflections on individual topics tend to be cryptic. Third, he missed the boat on a couple of important topics and his examples have become outdated.

Let us examine these three criticisms of his work. We begin with the shortcoming concerning theory. Indeed, the seminal work that is frequently cited is The *Practice* of Management (emphasis added). That is, it intentionally focused on the practice aspects of management. In his preface to the 1986 re-publication of his text, Professor Drucker acknowledged that he was writing the book for the young managers who would run U.S. businesses after World War II (Drucker, 1954/1986, x). Thus, it deliberately had a practice orientation. Drucker was writing for a specific audience – a process that he understood well. Despite this practical focus in this book, Webster (2009) notes that as a life-long student of management, Drucker was frequently critical of managers' general lack of interest in theory guiding practice. However, in his autobiography (Drucker, 1978/1998) he is on record as being an admirer of theory built on specifics. He suggests, "It starts out with the most specific, the most concrete, and then reaches for the generalization." (p. 202) He goes on, "We have gone much too far toward dependence on untested quantification, toward symmetrical and purely formal models, toward argument from postulates rather from experience, and toward moving from abstraction to abstraction without once touching the solid ground of concreteness" (p. 203). I also think that he was attracted to good practice. In his reflections on learning, he reflects on early advice he received, "Don't ever try to learn from other people's mistakes. Learn what other people do right" (p. 75).

Secondly, we observe that Professor Drucker tends to be cryptic on individual topics. Consider, for instance, that he covers the practice of management in about 400 pages – not *some* practices of management, but *the* practice of management (Drucker, 1954/1986). In this text, two topics are considered to be tenets of current management/marketing thought:

> it is the customer who determines what a business is, and
>
> any business has two, and only these two, basic functions: marketing and innovation (cf. Darroch, Day and Slater, 2009; Gunther, 2009; Maciariello, 2009; Mohr and Sarin, 2009).

These two concepts are covered in one page – in fact, the same page of the text (ibid, 37). Some of this approach is style; Drucker started his writing career as a journalist (Drucker, 1978/1998, 159). Certainly the ease in reading his material reflects that early training. He also has an apparent preference for brevity. Once, when asked about the American Marketing Association's definition of marketing, he responded by saying,

> Marketing is an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders.

He also claimed that, "It's much too long: a definition that has more than 5 words (cannot be effective)" (Darroch, 2009).

Finally, with regard to his "missing the boat", we might reflect on one of his core concepts, namely managing by objectives, or MBO. I tend to be particularly sensitive about this topic, because I was in an MBO system for four or five years while in industry and did well because I understood the system and how to game it. As MBO systems tend to be inflexible it did not work well in the application in which it was then used, because we were running a technology-push laboratory and thus needed a highly flexible workforce and program. Others have also found this to be the case. In our paper on MBOs for Swedish upper secondary schools (Lindberg and Wilson, 2011) we write the following,

> Robbins (1997) defined MBO as 'A system in which specific performance objectives are jointly determined by subordinates and their superiors; progress toward objectives is periodically reviewed and rewards are allocated on the basis of this progress'. MBO was first presented by Peter Drucker in his classic, The Practice of Management (1954). An MBO process converts overall objectives into specific objectives down to organizational units and individual members. By linking objectives throughout the levels of the organization it allows each employee to make a specific, identifiable contribution. The process is promoted as being motivational because employees participate and improving efficiency because well-defined, measurable goals are set. Drucker (1979, pp. 439–440) writes, 'The greatest advantage of management by objectives is perhaps that it makes it possible for a manager to control his own performance. Self-control means stronger motivation: a desire to do the best rather than do just enough to get by. It means higher performance goals and broader vision. Even if management by objectives were not necessary to give the enterprise the unity of direction and effort of a management team, it would be necessary to make possible management by self-control.' It might be noted that early on, studies were made of the effectiveness of MBO. Kondrasuk (1981) surveyed results from 185 studies of MBO effectiveness made up until the time of writing. The results of reports of positive contributions to not positive were 9:1, he noted 'that the less sophisticated the research approach, the more likely the study to show MBO as effective. There are also tendencies for MBO to be more effective in the short term (less than two years), in the private sector, and in organizations removed from direct contact with the customer.' Thus, one has to be careful in matching the system with the organization and tasks in which it is being applied and really should understand the original development.

Put another way, Drucker proposed MBO to primarily cover manufacturing situations. Attempts to extend it other applications, such as public administration, have not worked out so well and perhaps represent a misapplication of the basic idea.

The final concept that poses some problems in current thought is the manner in which he evaluates his observations on management practice. For instance, he perceived computers to be (solely) manipulators of data and writes, "All it (the computer) can do is react to the way it has been instructed and programmed. It no more makes 'decisions' than the slide rule or the cash register.[13] All it can do is *compute*" (emphasis added, Drucker, 1967/2002, 160). What was missing when this assertion was made was an appreciation of the development of emergent software such as artificial intelligence. Consequently, in addition to monitoring capabilities, computers now routinely make pre-programmed, real time institutional investment decisions. Such an assertion exposed his human vulnerability in assessing the future. Coupled with this lack of perception of where the computer might lead us has been an unfortunate selection and promotion of certain companies as role models. In assessing the future, no-one can be right all the time. His *Concepts of the Corporation* (1946) seems to suggest that an organization such as General Motors was a role model for decision making. That may have been the case in 1967, but few things last forever – forty years later the firm was on the verge of bankruptcy, primarily as a consequence of sequentially made, poor decisions. Another of his examples, Sears, acclaimed in 1954, is now not much better off. To put it simply, an association with operations and competition appears to have been lost along the way.

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7 Henri Fayol

The Man Who Designed Modern Management[14]

Karin Holmblad Brunsson

Nothing new?

At Uppsala University, undergraduate students of business administration were required to study and compare Henri Fayol's *General and Industrial Management* and Frederick Winslow Taylor's *The Principles of Scientific Management*. When asked to reflect on their work, many commented that they found Taylor to be the most interesting author. Fayol did not offer "anything new," they lamented.

My first reaction to Fayol's book was somewhat the opposite: that of astonishment rather than boredom. I expected a book on historical management, but found one that described how we think about – and teach – management today. In another sense my response was similar to that of my students. Like them, I found very little that was "new" in Fayol's book on management.

These sentiments seem at odds with the fact that neither the students nor I were familiar with Fayol's management recommendations. Most of us had probably heard Fayol's name, but that was about it. Why, then, did we find Fayol's management perspective and recommendations commonplace?

In this chapter I address this question by assessing the enormous impact of Fayol's management recommendations. I do this by discussing a number of interrelated questions:

- Who was Henri Fayol?
- What kind of management did Fayol recommend?
- Why should Fayol's influence be appreciated (rather than that of Frederick Taylor)?
- Why is Fayol's impact not recognized?

These, then, are the questions for the following paragraphs.

Who was Henri Fayol?

Born in 1841, Henri Fayol was the youngest in his class at the National School of Mines in St. Étienne (*École des mines de Saint-Étienne*), from which he graduated at the age of 19. Fayol was employed as an engineer with the Commentry group of coalmines of the Commentry-Fourchambault Company, where he remained all his working life. After twelve years he was appointed head of a group of coalmines and sixteen years later became Director General (*Directeur Générale*) of the company. At that time the company was on the verge of bankruptcy, although when Fayol retired at the age of 77 it was flourishing. Fayol left behind a staff of well-educated and skilled people "to whom he might safely leave the management of the company" (Göransson, 1950: 6). Fayol remained on the board of the Commentry-Fourchambault Company until his death in 1925.

Fayol's career could be regarded as unidirectional. Fayol not only impressed his contemporaries with his engineering qualifications but also as a business leader and financier. In addition, and most important for the present argument, Fayol took a keen interest in developing management principles. He founded the Centre of Administrative Studies, which held weekly meetings for representatives of a variety of professions. He urged the Government to take management seriously, and in 1924 addressed the International Federation of Universities in Geneva on the importance of a management doctrine that promoted peace (Urwick, 1949).

At the end of his career, when he was 75, Fayol published his own management recommendations, *Administration industrielle et générale* (1916). The book was not made available to the US public until some thirty years later (*General and Industrial Management*, 1949), and even then it was primarily seen as being important to Europeans:

> … as a philosopher of administration and as a statesman he [Fayol] left a mark on the thinking of his own and of many other European countries, not less than the mark left by Frederick Winslow Taylor in the U.S.A.
>
> *(Urwick, 1949: ix)*

Sixty years later, Fayol's management recommendations seem as pertinent as ever – in the USA, in Europe and worldwide.

What kind of management did Fayol recommend?

Fayol's perspective was clearly that of the organization. He concentrated on business organizations and drew on his experience of the mining and metallurgic industry. Fayol believed, however, that organizations shared a number of properties irrespective of whether they belonged to the private or public sectors and regardless of their size. He regarded an organization as a social organism with management as its nerve-system:

> Being present and active in every organ, it [the managerial function] normally has no specialized member and is not apparent to the superficial observer, but everywhere it receives impressions which it transmits first to the lower centers (reflexes) and thence, if need be, to the brain or organ of direction.
>
> *(1916/1949: 59)*

In Fayol's view, a family is an organization that should be managed by the same principles as a large corporation or the French Government (Fayol was quite critical of ministers' short periods of office, which he believed made ministers irresponsible and negligent of the welfare of the nation). He argued that every organization needed some kind and degree of management, depending on its size, and that the position of a particular employee determined the extent to which he was engaged in management. (Fayol relied on his experience of the mining and metallurgic industry at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. This is probably the reason why he did not include female employees or managers.)

The larger an organization, the more important its management, and the higher up in the hierarchy an employee finds himself the more crucial his managerial competence. Fayol conjectured that out of a total score of 100, for a large enterprise and in a technical function, the relative importance of a manager's technical competence was 15, as compared with 40 for his managerial competence. For a minister, the corresponding management number was 50, and for the head of state 60. The manager of a small enterprise, in contrast, was allotted 30 for technical competence and only 25 for managerial competence.

Fayol subdivided management into five kinds of managerial activities: *planning*, *organizing*, *coordinating*, *controlling*, and (after some discussion) *commanding*. In this last function, for which a more modern term might be leadership, Fayol included activities that promoted employee cooperation and enthusiasm.

Since Fayol concentrated on large organizations he expected managers to be distanced from the employees doing the work. This explains why he believed that managers needed elaborate planning procedures – short-term as well as long-term procedures – and an independent control function. Obviously, managers at a distance do not have as many opportunities to observe what needs to be done and what has been accomplished, unlike those who are more directly involved in monitoring the work. Instead, managers at a distance have to rely on reports. They need plans to avoid unconnected, non-logical activities and unwarranted changes of direction, and inspectors to provide impartial information about the efficiency of the work.

To Fayol, centralization and a strict hierarchical organizational structure were both a necessary and natural means of creating order within organizations. Fayol identified two kinds of order: material order and social order. Not only should organizational belongings have their designated places, but employees should also be appointed to positions that enabled them to best serve their organization. Fayol emphasized the importance of "the right man in the right place," and stressed the significance of this postulate by all of a sudden using the English language (1916/1999: 42).

Fayol further discussed how fair wages and – perhaps – special bonuses and incentives might encourage employees to be loyal to their organizations. However, due to the difficulties of identifying the effects of one individual's work on organizational performance, Fayol saw drawbacks with all kinds of bonuses and incentives systems. His view was that there was no ideal wage system; whether or not the employees were willing to serve their organization depended to a large extent on managers' fair and just behavior.

Fayol increasingly stressed the importance of managerial behavior. Managers should serve as models for their subordinates, whom they should treat with respect and empathy. Such exemplary behavior was yet another way of helping managers to create order out of something that might otherwise (one would expect given that many people are involved) prove insurmountably chaotic.

Fayol expected the activities that managers performed to be sufficiently similar to justify general management principles. The problem was, however, that such principles were not readily available. Fayol acknowledged an abundance of "private" principles, which might misdirect managerial behavior and even lead to inefficient and contradictory behavior. It would not be difficult, Fayol believed, to find empirically based management principles, if only some influential managers took the time and trouble to reflect on and document their managerial experiences. Unfortunately, many left their offices without leaving any documentation that described what they had accomplished and how. Nor did they appoint anyone to continue their work. Fayol was optimistic, however, and saw his own work as a first step towards a general discussion on management, to be followed, hopefully, by a management theory.

Fayol's view that all organizations need management – and the same type of management – means that management becomes a specialty in its own right. Given that managers become organizational or management experts, all kinds of organizations might ask for their expertise. According to Fayol, when managers are seen as a coherent group of professionals it makes sense to recognize the advantages of a general management education. Fayol was therefore convinced that there was an urgent need for such education. He also thought that technical schools neglected the fact that management would dominate the professional lives of their students. Instead they focused on technical competence and did not include management in their curricula. In particular, Fayol criticized what he saw as an undue emphasis on mathematics:

> It is not sufficiently well known that the simple rule of three has always been enough for business men as it has for military leaders, and it is a false move to sacrifice four of five years' general education in favour of an excess of mathematics.
>
> *(1916/1949: 82)*

In an argument with Professor Haton de la Goupillière, who saw mathematics as a powerful instrument "for training the mind" (p. 85), Fayol countered that excessive application of any science might be detrimental to the physical and mental health of the most balanced of people "and mathematics is no exception to this rule" (p. 86). Fayol referred to the French philosopher and sociologist Auguste Comte, who observed that mathematical facts are barren and remote, whereas social facts are complex and subtle. He concluded that judgment did not depend on a command of mathematics; should this be the case a number of highly esteemed professionals – lawyers, priests, doctors, writers and businessmen among others – would lack judgment, as would all the skilled workers on whose common sense the industry relied.

According to Fayol a management theory should further a general management education that began within the family and included all levels of the school system. As already noted, Fayol expected such a theory to emerge with time. The development of a general management theory has proved more difficult than Fayol imagined, however. As a result, Fayol's management recommendations are all the more cherished.

How might Fayol's influence be appreciated?

In his foreword to the English translation of Fayol's work, *General and Industrial Management* (1949), the British management consultant Lyndall Urwick lamented the fact that the French word *administration* had been translated as *management*. Although he found it to be an accurate and convenient translation, Urwick pointed out that management has a number of meanings – including, according to the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, that of "trickery, deceitful contrivance." "A close association to these ideas," said Urwick, "is unlikely to enhance the dignity either of the subject or of those who practise the activity" (p. xiii).

But Urwick was mistaken. Fayol's management recommendations have proved to be both successful and highly durable. Management has become a subject in its own right, and is now independent of engineering or any other discipline. All over the world, universities and business schools teach management as a set of activities that apply to all kinds of organizations. This means that a Fayolist kind of management is not only a European concern, but has proved to be a true token of globalization.

During the early years of the 21st century, more than 100,000 students have graduated each year from Master of Business Administration (MBA) programs in different parts of the world. This is more than three times the number of law degrees, and more than seven times the number of medical degrees (Navarro 2005). An MBA-education is seen to:

> provide business executives from all walks of life and in every layer of management with the most powerful arsenal of analytical weapons ever assembled to fight the corporate wars.
>
> *(Navarro, 2005: 3)*

Obviously, the objective of management education is to prepare students for a professional career in business. But at the same time its highly general character is found to be helpful. The Director of Admissions of one MBA-program, who, like Fayol, saw management as something that penetrates society as a whole, said:

> What's so wonderful about the MBA is that it provides fundamental skills that you can use whenever and wherever you need them.
>
> *(Gilbert et al., 2004: 17)*

Fayol's notion of general management provides the *raison d'être* for this education; for turning managers into professionals and for an abundant management literature. To this day, management students learn the acronym POSDCORB – planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting and budgeting – in order to remember what their job is about (Watson, 2001). Business schools' curricula remain stable, and Fayol's definition of management is still seen to comprise "management" (Fells, 2000; Harding, 2003; Smith and Boyns, 2005; Pfeffer and Sutton, 2006). (A modern disapproval of words like "commanding" and "controlling" may explain the slight divergence from Fayol's five managerial functions. Moreover, Fayol did not separate budgeting from planning, but saw budgeting as one kind of planning.)

Over the years, like Fayol, many asked for a management theory. Some were optimists like Fayol and expected that, with time, such a theory would be available. For example, in the mid 1950s, management expert Peter Drucker expressed an ambition very similar to that of Fayol when he hoped that:

> twenty years from now, we shall be able to spell out basic principles, proven policies and tested techniques for the management of worker and work.
>
> *(Drucker, 1954/1986: 288)*

But no management theory emerged, and forty years later Drucker still found the question of *what to do* to be the central challenge facing managers (1994: 3).

The difficulties of developing a management theory may, in fact, relate to Fayol's notion of general management. Common sense tells us that successful organizations are, and indeed must be, different. The present interest in branding supports this observation. Not only should organizations be unique, each with their own name, but their products should also stand out as singular (the Swedish company IKEA, for example, gives a unique name to every one of its products). It seems logical to suppose that organizations that are different in important respects should also be managed differently. In effect, this is the contention of the now-popular recommendations for evidence-based management (Pfeffer and Sutton, 2006). Fayol's notion of general management, and his insistence on a general management education, contradicts such perceptions, and we are led to believe that Frederick Winslow Taylor was right in regarding management as a set of organization-specific activities.

How did Fayol relate to Frederick Taylor?

The preface to the 1949 English translation of *Administration industrielle et générale* makes it clear that in the late 1940s comparisons of Henri Fayol and Frederick Taylor were tokens of appreciation. There are also important similarities between the two engineers. For example, both had considerable experience of large corporations and shared a keen interest in management. Further, both argued that their management recommendations were general ones in the sense that they applied to all kinds of organizations.

But their approach to management was radically different. Where Fayol highlighted the similarities between organizations, Taylor (1911/1998) emphasized their differences. The managers that Taylor envisaged were technical experts, who were expected to support the workers and help them to produce as much as possible, given the "scientific" knowledge of how work ought to be performed. Whereas Fayol took a "top-down" approach to management, Taylor's approach was "bottom-up." As a consequence, Taylor did not advocate a general management education; any such proposition would be counter to his very perception of management.

Fayol declared that he appreciated much of Taylor's work, including his invention of high-speed steel and his conscientious mode of studying and designing a variety of working conditions. In particular, Fayol liked Taylor's assertion that managers of large departments need the support of their staff. This was one of Fayol's favorite ideas, which he vigorously promoted.

But Fayol contested the matrix kind of organization that followed from the scientific management principles. Somewhat scornfully, Taylor described the notion that each employee should have only one boss as *the military type of organization*. While Taylor insisted that this principle was non-functional, Fayol, in contrast, did not believe that any organization could function without it. Problems arise as soon as two people are to instruct one person or one task, Fayol maintained. To be in a subordinate position with regard to two or more managers makes people anxious; as a consequence the order that should prevail in organizations is disrupted.

Fayol thus questioned Taylor's conclusion that one employee might be managed by as many as eight managers. His objections seem relevant to this day. Matrix organizations may exist, but they are seldom appreciated. Like Fayol, and in spite of any possible military connotations, most organizations prefer the principle of one employee, one boss.

Why is Fayol's impact not recognized?

By now it seems obvious that Fayol's way of approaching management has made an exceptional impact, which Taylor's approach does not at all parallel. Yet Frederick Taylor is not only famous (or infamous) among those who study management, but also in terms of the general public. Henri Fayol, in contrast, has been consigned to the "rubbish bin" of management history (Parker and Ritson, 2005: 1351). Management professors either have difficulty remembering his name ("that other guy…what's his name again?"), or declare that they only read summaries of Fayol's book.

Perhaps Fayol's management recommendations are *too* well known; so well known, in fact, that very few people reflect on their origins. People treat Fayol's recommendations as something obvious. They see the planning, organizing, coordinating, controlling and commanding postulate (or some variant of this postulate) as the natural starting point for describing management. When asked about their work, managers therefore tend to describe something orderly:

> If you ask a manager what he does, he will most likely tell you that he plans, organizes, co-ordinates and controls.
>
> *(Mintzberg, 1975: 49)*

In practice, and as numerous studies of managerial practice verify, managerial work may differ considerably from this description. For example, the Swedish professor, Sune Carlson (1951/1991: 46), compared managers to puppets in a puppet show, on whom hundreds of people prevailed to act in one way or another. Another Swedish professor, Sten Jönsson (1996:146), later exclaimed:

> One cannot help wondering if, perhaps, all these intelligent, successful managers indulge in managerial work characterized by brevity, variety and fragmentation because it is an efficient way of running a company!

Like Carlson, Jönsson presented his observation as something extraordinary, or even revelation-like. It is doubtful that this would have been possible if the professors (and their readers) had not been familiar with the orderly view of management as presented by Fayol (or some Fayolist-inspired management textbook). The professors question "traditional" views of management, but at the same time epitomize the enormous impact of Fayol's way of defining management.

To many managers, a people-oriented mishmash of varying duties is the natural order of things. As an accountant in a multi-national company said:

> Well it is, you see, how things evolve. I suppose in the academic world it's all clear cut; but it isn't really you know. When you come down here, it's a hell of a big mishmash, all inter-related influences. It's not clear cut and logical. It looks completely illogical, but that's how it happens.
>
> *(Scapens, 1994: 315)*

Nevertheless, and despite such evidence, those who are not managers may still believe in the Fayolist notion of management. Managers at the beginning of their careers might do likewise. Linda Hill's (1992) study of how sales and marketing managers experienced their first year in the job illustrates this point nicely. Hill described how newly appointed managers were taken by surprise when they realized just how many diverse tasks – including "people issues" – they were expected to deal with. Even though they had previously observed how managers within the organization worked, they expected that *their* managerial work would be orderly. *They* would plan, organize, coordinate, control and command. In many instances, ingrained Fayolist ideas of what management should be like become as real as – or more real than – any experience of what management is actually about.

The taken-for-granted character of the Fayolist perspective of management does not mean that Fayol's management recommendations are not disputed, however. They are. In fact, many management recommendations invalidate Fayol's recommendations as a means of making organizations successful. As a consequence, there are many alternatives to "traditional management" that either modify these recommendations or propose what they describe as radically different ones. The balanced scorecard is but one instance of alternative "perspectives" being explicitly included in the managerial function (Kaplan and Norton, 1992). In addition, authors of popular books on leadership often question the order that follows from Fayol's planning, organizing, coordinating, controlling and commanding recommendations. Instead they see a strong, preferably charismatic and often quite impulsive, personality as the road to organizational success (Holmblad Brunsson, 2007). But such management innovators also use Fayolist notions of management as their point of reference. If no such "traditional" notions of management were available, asserting the novelty of their recommendations could prove difficult.

If Fayol had not painstakingly documented and reflected on his managerial experience, the meaning of management might have taken a radically different turn. But Fayol did not just walk out of his office like other CEOs of his time. He left behind management recommendations that still make up the bulk of management textbooks – and attract innumerable disciples. To them, Fayol's recommendations serve as a model with realistic properties. This means that students of managerial practice see the everyday life of managers as deviations from this model, whereas those who set out to improve management do not refer to managerial practice but to the model of how management (according to Fayol) ought to be performed.

Many influential Fayolists are probably ignorant of their affiliation. As a man, Henri Fayol has more or less been forgotten. His management recommendations, in contrast, are common knowledge and are still taken for granted by undergraduate students and their management teacher at Uppsala University: *Nothing new!!*

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8 Mary Parker Follett

An Almost Forgotten Giant who is Worth Remembering

Ulla Johansson and Jill Woodilla

Introduction: The chapter authors meet each other and Follett

It is winter on a university campus in New England, distinguished by short days, long nights, snow and bitter cold. Two doctoral students meet in class – one from Sweden and the other a displaced Briton clinging fiercely to her heritage despite many years in the United States. Here they read several classics or "great books" every week, have conversations with established and emerging scholars about the meaning and relevance of the texts, often in the companionship of a glass of wine after class while sharing their cultural understandings. Indeed, the authors' close friendship and professional collaboration emerged from such an experience and has spanned many years.

"The great books" were the seminal writings of the giants of organization and management theory, read in historical sequence and each presented by a professor for whom the work had particular relevance – much like the chapters in this book. Students discovered theorists who would become their own "giants", and cultivated an appreciation for those whose epistemological and ontological underpinnings were different from their own.

Ulla quickly "fell in love" with the work of Mary Parker Follett; the concepts and illustrations resonated with her own life and work. She was particularly fascinated by Follett's notion of power. While reading Follett she started to see power as equivalent to "energy" – which has a linguistic similarity in the English language that does not exist in Swedish. She remembered some exhausting theatre exercises when she was so tired she felt she would fall asleep at any moment. The teacher said to one of the other participants, "Go and give Ulla some power" – which he did. He started to play and joke – and suddenly she was awake instead of sleeping. It was like an injection of energy – or an injection of power if you prefer. In that moment – as well as in Follett's notion – it was the same.

Jill was confused; each theorist had something special and Follett was initially just one among many interesting theorists. She could not understand what it was about Follett's writing or personality that had such intense meaning to some of the other students; clearly she had not had the same experiences in her own life. But over time, and especially in working with Ulla, she has come to appreciate the "gentle persistence" of Follett's observations and generalizations.

Mary Parker Follett wrote three books – two with a political science perspective (*The New State*, 1918 and *The Speaker of the House of Representatives*, 1896) and one developing her view of the individual, *Creative Experience* (1924). Most of Follett's ideas were developed and conveyed through her lectures, with concepts and examples interwoven and presented in a variety of venues. Some of these lectures were compiled and published posthumously in *Freedom and Coordination* (1949, editor Urwick) and *Dynamic Administration: The collected papers of MPF* that appeared in a number of edited editions starting in the 1940s. These collections are now out of print, but copies exist in some university libraries. The most accessible collection of Follett's thinking is Graham's edited, *Mary Parker Follett: Prophet of Management*, Harvard Business School Press, 1995. This book contains a selection of Follett's original papers, together with commentaries by scholars who may be considered giants in their own right. We selected the Graham collection for its particular collection of original papers and for its accessibility.

Mary Parker Follett: A biographical sketch

Mary Parker Follett was born in 1868 into comfortable circumstances, and lived in Boston, U.S. By the time she died in 1933 she had given numerous lectures that became the basis for books, first in the fields of politics and public administration, and later in industrial management. The shift from political science to business management came from her experiences with the Boston Placement Bureau and the Minimum Wage Board, and provided her with the intellectual stimulus to develop her concept of integrating opposing points of view for overall control of the whole situation (Parker, 1984).

Follett had a broad understanding of different intellectual streams, which was a characteristic of many intellectuals of her time (O'Connor, 2000). She often used arguments that were rooted in psychology or philosophy. In psychology she drew from German Gestalt therapy, and her view of the human being as a holistic entity was the ground for all her thinking on human relations and her concept of circular response. In philosophy, Whitehead and Hegel had the strongest influence on Follett. Whitehead's process philosophy, stressing "becoming" over "being", underlay the Gestalt therapy mentioned above. From the Hegelian perspective, Follett took the dialectic view that she later used as a base for her discussion of conflicts (Ryan & Rutherford, 2000). Conflicts, according to Follett, are a source of dynamic development where new *integrations* (or *synthesis* in Hegelian terms) are made.

Follett never labelled herself a feminist (Morton & Lindquist, 1997). She was not part of the suffragette movement of that time, although she was involved in a number of causes concerning opportunities for girls and women. A gender-neutral perspective does not create a fair representation of her, however. Follett was an active volunteer in social welfare work, an experience that was an important grounding for her holistic world-view. If she had been a man, this opportunity would not have been possible. Instead, she would have probably needed an academic post as a professor to carry out her reading and writing, rather than doing it in a position of financial independence. This, in turn, may have changed the way that followers related to her and to her work.

Mary Parker Follett had neither strong opponents nor devoted disciples; something that distinguished her from her contemporary, Frederick W. Taylor (1856–1915), who is often referred to as "the father of scientific management," and had plenty of both. This may be one reason why she and her theories were more or less forgotten for several decades after her death. Another reason might be that there were no grounds for integrative and holistic views in the U.S. during the World War II and Cold War eras (Drucker 1995). These reasons, as Kanter (1995) points out, are not unrelated to gender. The ways of holistic thinking, including merging private and professional spheres, integrating ethics into one's whole life and bringing citizenship into the company, are ideas that were later labelled as women's culture (Morton & Lindquist 1997). Both cultural feminism and radical feminism have taken the point of departure that women's culture has been underprivileged and silenced in favour of male culture (see, for example, Tong 1998). Thus, both the political and social environment may have contributed to the fact that Follett's ideas were not included and debated as part of the development of organization theory until the late twentieth century.

Follett's ideas were not totally forgotten, though. Her concepts and ways of thinking experienced a revival following a compilation of her writings with comments by leading contemporary management scholars, *Mary Parker Follett–Prophet of Management* (Graham, Ed. 1995). Over the last decade, Follett has been related to recent streams of thought and management practices, including chaos and complexity theory (Mendenhall, Macomber & Cutright, 2000), empowerment (Eylon, 1998), lifelong learning (Salimath & Lemak, 2004), organizational justice (Barclay, 2005), social entrepreneurship (Simms, 2009), spirituality in the workplace (Johnson, 2007) and stakeholder theory (Schilling, 2000).

Three foundational concepts

Follett was a keen observer of the organizational world and brought her observations into her writing in a very personal way, linking the observation with a description of the context, whether dinner-party conversation or a tour of a "works." Perhaps because her observations were presented in lectures, her writing is that of a woman who was not afraid to show her emotions. Although the language and examples are from the first part of the twentieth century, reading her text is similar to engaging in an ongoing conversation with someone with a lively mind and a wealth of examples to bring to whatever point she wants to make. Her examples are both large and small, and create connections to a world that can be translated into contemporary organizational life.

All of Follett's work in "industrial management" (business administration) draws on three foundational concepts: circular response, the law of the situation and power-with, not over. Although she discussed many situations and elaborated on other concepts (such as, "constructive conflict", "authority", "control", "leadership", "citizenship" and "responsibility"), they were always based on and returned to these three. We first of all present the three foundational concepts and then show how she elaborated on them from her more general view of power and her view of responsibility. We present each concept in her own words first and then with our interpretation.

"The circular response" perspective

> The most fundamental about all this is that reaction is always reaction to a relating…I never react to you but to you-plus-me; or to be more accurate, it is I-plus-you reacting to you-plus-me…that is, in the very process of meeting, by the very process of meeting, we both become something different. It begins even before we meet, in the anticipation of meeting…it is I plus the-interweaving-between-you-and-me meeting you plus the-interweaving-between-you-and-me, etc. If we were doing it mathematically we should work it out to the nth power.
> *(Graham, 1995: 41–42; originally published in Follett, 1924, Creative Experience, New York: Longmans Green)*

The relational view that people were not something separate in themselves, but rather something in relation to other people, was the ground for Follett's thinking about both people and organizations. She gave the example that you might be one character with one person but not the same with another – you are and become in relation to other people. This relational view, which Follett combined with an analysis of the entire system of beliefs in a holistic manner, was also applied to organizational reality. She saw organizations as something that were constantly changing, and in a non-technical way described principles of non-linear dynamics in social systems (Mendenhall, Macomber & Cutright, 2000). She regarded all interactions as having a potential for every participant to affect every other participant in the organization, whether the person was aware of it or not – a view that was quite different from the prevalent one of direct one-to-one cause and effect. While it is not appropriate to call Follett a "social constructionist[15]" (because that concept was coined in the 1960s and because she also could be called a "system's theorist"), she can be seen as someone who, in the 1920s, described the human being in ways that would today be given such a label.

The law of the situation

> I think the solution is…to depersonalize the matter, to unite those concerned in a study of the situation, to see what the situation demands, to discover the law of the situation and obey that. That is, it should not be a case of one person giving commands to another person. Whenever it is obvious that the order arises from the situation, the question of someone commanding and someone obeying does not come up. Both expect what the situation demands.
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> *(Graham, 1995: 128; originally Follett, 1933, paper delivered to the newly formed Department of Business Administration at the London School of Economics and published in L. Urwick, ed. 1949. Freedom & Coordination: Lectures in Business Organization by Mary Parker Follett, London: Management Publications Trust, Ltd)*

The law of the situation means that participants do not worry about having control over other people, but about having control and power over the (common) situation. It means going from a hierarchical view to a view in which the problems at hand and their solutions are at the core of the interaction and relationship.

Follett frequently referred to "the law of the situation", "to see what the situation demands", or "discover the order integral to a particular situation". Her approach was the opposite of Frederick Taylor's (1911) universal principles that neglected the situation at hand and demanded that workers rely on orders and instructions. Follett, on the other hand, said that the situation at hand had precedence over principles, and further, that what is required for the situation at hand should be the ultimate order, with priority over all other orders. In this was she was a forerunner of management theorists who, many decades later, stressed the importance of contextualization (see, for example, Rosen 1984).

"Power with" instead of "power over" another person

> We should learn to distinguish between different kinds of power…It seems to me that whereas power usually means power-over, the power of some person or group over some other person or group, it is possible to develop the conception of power-with, a jointly developed power, a co-active, not a coercive power…I do not think the management should have power *over* the workmen, or the workmen over the management.
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> *(Graham, 1995: 103, originally: Follett, 1925, paper presented before a Bureau of Personnel Administration conference group, and published in E.M. Fox and L. Urwick, eds., 1973, Dynamic Administration: The collected papers of Mary Parker Follett. London: Pitman)*

Power is self-developing capacity *(ibid, p. 113)*

Follett was in opposition to both the conservative and the Marxist movements and therefore saw "power over" another person as something to be avoided. She even said that "one person should not give commands to another one" (Graham, 1995: 128, originally, Follett, 1933, *The Giving of Orders*), thereby constructing the world as non-hierarchical. Instead of having "power over" another person, you should have "power with" or shared power.

Elaboration: Follett's concept of power

Follett's notion of power is interesting for many reasons. It is grounded in a democratic view of society that stresses freedom over repression. As a non-hierarchical view, it stands in contrast to most managerial views of organizations that presuppose a hierarchy. Even most critical management and feminist perceptions consider hierarchy as a taken-for-granted ground – even if they want it changed or reversed. To Follett, power was more equivalent to a capacity or ability to be receptive rather than to control or coercion. Power was something that enabled actions and provided freedom rather than repression. From her social liberal and democratic standpoint, it was important that the "power of the individual" did not constrain other people's freedom.

Follett's strong emphasis on "power with" or shared power gave her a particular view of delegation. Delegation was often – and still is – seen as a commodifying activity (Johansson 1998), in which authority and power are moved from one person to another. Follett commented that such is not necessarily the case. You can delegate power without losing it by sharing the power. The crucial thing, Johansson says, is that power does not have the character of a commodity of a given size that can be moved back and forth, like delegation. Rather, power has characteristics that are similar to feelings or emotions (of hate or love, for example) that can be expanded and therefore do not necessarily leave one person because they are given to another. Follett describes this characteristic of power as one of "capacity."

In hierarchical organizations, power is distributed to positions rather than to people. This is the foundation of Weberian organizational theory. Follett had a very different idea of power, however, in that she started with power as a force and a capacity. Delegating power therefore became a complex process. Power could be delegated yet still held by the person, but delegation also needed to be accompanied by capacity or ability.

Follett also referred to the "power over the situation" as collective power. Here, instead of trying to get or give power, or compete for it, we turn to "the situation at hand" – the one that we are in together – and try to develop (joint) power over the situation. To have joint power over the situation accordingly becomes almost akin to working together or collectively, and the concept of "power over the situation" accordingly becomes an alternative to the individual competition that is prevalent in most organizations today.

Follett had a remarkable view of conflict. In contrast to Taylor, who tried to avoid it, Follett saw conflict as the root of organizational development and something that should be handled openly. She divided conflict resolution into three types. The first was domination, which was something negative and related to "power over" rather than her democratic "power with". The second type was compromise, which was also something negative because it required curtailing the wish or need of one or all those involved. The third strategy of conflict resolution was integration, as in her simple example of opening a window in the library. Follett tells the story that she wanted some fresh air, but another occupant in the reading room did not want a draft, so by opening the window in an adjoining room the conflict was resolved in an integrated way. (Graham, 1995: 69, originally: Follett, 1925, paper presented before a Bureau of Personnel Administration conference group, and published in E.M. Fox and L. Urwick, eds., 1973, *Dynamic Administration: The collected papers of Mary Parker Follett*. London: Pitman)

Follett's distinction between compromise and integration is also noteworthy, and is closely related to Hegelian dialectics where opposite positions may be resolved in synthesis. In order to reach a synthesis – or integration in Follett's vocabulary – between conflicting interests or organizations, a circular behaviour or response is needed. By looking at both the situation at hand and the evolving situation, new possibilities for creative solutions might appear. The concepts that Follett uses are therefore closely related: "power (of the situation)" meaning that you should have joint power; "the law of the situation" meaning that you should take the specific situation at hand as your starting point; "integration", her special way of looking at how conflicts should be treated in a constructive way, and "circular response" meaning that the situation and even we as human beings are created in response to the situation. In an ever-changing world, the situation or the reality at hand was more important than holding onto universal principles. Follett's reality was a consequence of human interaction, so that the very base for power, one could say, was creativity and constant circular response in looking for a more democratic and human world.

Power in an organization or between individuals is normally regarded as something very different from electrical power. However, embracing Follett's texts on power, we see power as something that has similar characteristics or qualities to electrical power: characteristics of flow, providing energy and sustaining activity. Power as energy also contains an emotional dimension, because being full of power or feeling powerless are emotional states. This is a dimension that is seldom recognized within the social science power concept.

To summarize, Follett's power concept begins with, and always returns to, the circular response. It is about responding both to the situation at hand and to other people, i.e. "power with" is more important than "power over". Power is related to conflict, and conflict should be handled creatively in order to try to find an integrative solution rather than compromise or domination. Therefore, her non-hierarchical power concept is a tool for creative and organizational development. This is a very different power concept from the one that is taken-for-granted in most corporations and described in management theories.

Elaboration: Follett's concept of responsibility

Follett opposed the common view of that time, which was that responsibility was a matter of finding the final (individual) person to be blamed if something went wrong and praised if things went right. This is still a common view in both management and society as a whole. In her view, responsibility was more of a process, and joint responsibility was more interesting. Responsibility was also more of an approach to work, a holistic understanding of the tasks and a response to "the law of the situation", rather than doing specific things when told to do by a chain of command (Johansson 1998).

Responsibility, in Follett's view, was more of an ability or response (i.e., response-ability) to "the law of the situation". A responsible person does what needs to be done from a human, moral and/or professional perspective. Follett's relational view of responsibility, relating to the situation and emotional values rather than a statement of general principles, resembles that of late 20th century feminist critiques of mainstream moral theories (such as those by Gilligan, 1982).

As the basis of fostering responsibility, Follett suggests replacing "arbitrary command" with a mutual understanding of functions, tasks and responsibilities, while not going to the opposite extreme of not giving enough orders. She talks about depersonalizing and re-personalizing orders as the way of exploring relationships between those who give and those who are given orders in and through the situation as a whole. By teaching the technique of the job, not in an ad-hoc way but through deliberate training, and giving reasons for the order, supervisors can run their unit more efficiently. Directions would also be more cheerfully and carefully obeyed.

Another question that concerned Follett was the connection between responsibility and authority. She recognized the need for "final authority", by which she meant that some things need to be decided on by the head person alone. But she also claimed that this "final authority" was often given too much focus in relation to professional expertise. She wanted professional people, such as a nurse, a cook, or a workman, to be more noticed in the process of authority. She regarded both authority and responsibility as processes, and a mutual relationship to the situation was essential.

To summarize, Follett's concept of responsibility was related to the "circular response" – or the dialogue – through which subjects were constructed and solutions to conflicts were created. Instead of being related to abstract principles, her concept of responsibility was contextual, non-hierarchical and connected to ongoing dialogues. Her construction of organizations was in many ways similar to what is envisioned in the empowerment discussions of the 1990s, where the concept is related to organizational design.

How we have used Follett's work in our research

We have used Follett's work in two different applications. Follett's concept of responsibility was foundational to Ulla's analysis of the empirical data in her doctoral dissertation. Follett's view of non-hierarchical power provided Ulla and Jill with insights into problems with working relationships between designers and managers in the area of design management.

In her dissertation, Ulla (Johansson, 1998) focused on delegation of responsibility in the Swedish housing industry. The empirical study provided a contextual view of situations in which the concept "responsibility" was applied by "shadowing" workers and managers in their daily work in three housing companies, taking field notes to understand their meaning-making and recording interviews with workers, managers and industry consultants. A grounded theory-informed analysis created a thematized list of verbal statements from interviews and conversations and non-verbal expressions of behaviour, attitudes and emotions observed during the fieldwork.

The symbolic meaning given to "responsibility" in the three different companies could be interpreted according to six different themes – all of which indicated that workers, when identifying themselves as responsible, reconstructed themselves and their relationship with the work tasks. Responsibility seemed to be a symbolic device that not only reconstructed the identity of the workers but also their view of the organizational reality, that is, their tasks at hand and their actual behaviour. Specifically, the relationships towards organizational hierarchies changed. How managers acted and top management's understanding of the taken-for-granted concept of "responsibility" seemed to be important for the workers' capacity to develop their own responsible identity.

Other "giants", notably Taylor, Fayol and Barnard, take a managerial view and construct "responsibility" as a concept that is closely related to hierarchies and (abstract and general) principles. In this dissertation, however, a counter-narrative was identified, related to Follett's view of responsibility as a circular response and the feminist view of responsibility as an open and empathetic response towards a contextualized situation rather than general principles. It is argued that the practices of the field cannot be properly understood if the conventional organization theory concept of responsibility is used. Both the mainstream and counter-narrative understandings of "responsibility" are needed to understand the reality of the field.

Our common interest in design management created another research opportunity. Design is often mentioned as a strategic asset for innovation, yet we know that the working relationship between designers and managers, marketers or engineers is frequently problematic. We focused on power relations in such situations and, following Follett, discussed the concept non-hierarchical power and what that concept might mean for the relations between designers and other organizational professionals. Our method was deductive and analytical comparison, or what Glaser and Strauss (1967) label as "armchair research." In contrast to the observations and qualitative methods of Ulla's dissertation that led to grounded theory, in this instance we assumed the validity of the theory *a priori* and cited examples and links with explanatory concepts without any empirical work.

Follett valued creativity and understood the nature of creative work. She did not specifically mention design, but we see many connections. Follett and designers share the holistic view and also the ability to observe details. Designers often work with details and are trained to be careful. However, they do not stay at the detail level but rather jump between different scales and zoom in and zoom out as necessary.

The holistic view has consequences for the collaboration between designers and other groups such as marketers, engineers and top management. Designers do not pretend to be experts in other fields, however, and given that they work with the combination of form and function and take production aspects into account they need help from these other areas. This help cannot be given in a hierarchical relationship, because no discipline can be above the other. It is rather a relation like that of consulting, although here the question is who is consulting whom? In the best case it is a mutual consultation and collaboration within what Follett calls "the law of the situation". If the situation at hand is the focusing element, the solution evolves as relationships are created and changed as knowledge is exchanged. A good design process is created through non-hierarchical relationships.

We also argue that it is difficult to sustain the design method of framing and reframing both problems and solutions in a hierarchical organization, where people tend to decide on a solution-path as soon as they define a problem. Instead, we argue, a consulting and non-hierarchical power relationship is needed in order to use the competence of the designer. No one profession should be above another and the manager or team leader needs to create an open and democratic process for working together.

Our assessment of the contemporary value and shortcomings for the reader

Reading Follett is rather like reading an ethnographic research study in that she constantly refers to examples and weaves her prior observations into the development of a generalized point. This style may also be considered a shortcoming for the norms of contemporary research. Finding a single direct reference or "seminal" definition in Follett's work is difficult, because she reviews and adjusts her ideas in different situations. We urge the readers of this chapter, as individuals just beginning their scholarly careers, not to be put off by the fact that Follett's examples come from the organizational world of a hundred years ago, but rather to understand that she presents a different style of thinking and writing, and to reflect on why it is a style that is no longer valued.

Follett's teaching is not theoretical. It is rather the search for general understanding that underlies business administration. Some readers may consider the lack of clear definitions and stated relationships of variables to be a shortcoming, while others may be comfortable using Follett's principles to guide their interpretation of contemporary situations.

To conclude, Follett commented on many aspects of the realities of the organizational world, making her collection of papers an excellent primer for organization studies. She integrates her views from a psychological perspective with those on the place of the citizen in society, blending what subsequent work divided into discrete levels of micro and macro. She is therefore a giant "worth remembering" – and reading and referring to when discussing a variety of themes in contemporary organizations and management.

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9 Erving Goffman

On the Underlife of Organizations[16]

Johan Sandström

Prologue

A large auditorium at the business school in Clermont-Ferrand, France. I'm in the audience. An American professor is presenting a paper on the negotiation of cultural identity in a cross-cultural setting. It's an intriguing talk. She is very engaging. Throughout her talk, however, my mind keeps drifting to Goffman. But she doesn't reference any of his work.

Her presentation ends. The floor is open. "I love your talk", I say, "but I thought about Goffman when you…" She interrupts me: "I think about Goffman all the time".

Of course.

A couple of months before, I had read *The presentation of self in everyday life* (1959) and *Asylums* (1961). I was high on Goffmanesque. Not only did I read dramaturgy into the setting (scene, role playing, audience), but into the content of her presentation as well. To me, Goffman was highly present, but no evidence could be enrolled to support this. Until she interrupted me.

She had read Goffman in her youth and his writings had since then strongly influenced her work. Somehow, I saw myself in her. I would not be able to get rid of him.

Background

Erving Goffman, born in 1922, grew up in Canada. His parents were from Ukraine, fleeing the pogroms at the break of the 19th–20th centuries. He was married twice, one child from each marriage. He died in 1982 from stomach cancer.

Goffman received an undergraduate in chemistry at the University of Manitoba, a bachelor in sociology and anthropology at the University of Toronto (1945), and a master and PhD in sociology at the University of Chicago (1949 and 1953, respectively). He was professor in sociology at the University of California, Berkeley (1962–68), and at the University of Pennsylvania (1969–1982).

Thomas Scheff argues that Goffman is "probably the most widely read sociologist in the history of the discipline" (Scheff 2006: 2) and probably most known for developing a dramaturgical approach (influenced by Kenneth Burke). Put simply, a dramaturgical approach emphasizes that personal identity is created in interactions with others, metaphorically on a stage (scene) in which the person (actor), performs (action) in front of others (audience), trying to manage his or her impression on them (Goffman 1959). Gary Alan Fine and Phillip Manning claim that: "The dramaturgical metaphor has become sociology's second skin. As a consequence, Erving Goffman is arguably the most influential American sociologist of the twentieth century" (2000: 457). Goffman's dramaturgy has also made an impact on the field of management and organization studies (c.f. Mangham 2005) and "reference to Goffman primarily arises through his linkage to the theatrical/dramaturgical perspective" (Samra-Fredericks & Bargiela-Chiappini 2008: 658).

His book, *The presentation of self in everyday life* (1959), which is a revised version of his doctoral dissertation, was also predominantly dramaturgical. Peter Manning points out, however, that "not all his work is easily captured by this label [dramaturgical]. He does not see life as wholly theatrical, but rather he argues that aspects of it can be so seen" (2008: 680). *Asylums* (1961) was the book that followed *The presentation of self* and although the latter continues to travel, in hindsight *Asylums* was his breakthrough book. It is Goffman's "most extensively cited work, the book that is best known to audiences outside academic sociology" and that had "a major impact on public policy" (Smith 1999: 10).

Asylums was based on over a year long field-study at the St. Elizabeth Hospital in Washington, DC, a hospital for the mentally ill housing about 7000 patients. His study was financed by the National Institute of Mental Health, which eventually tried to stop the book's publication. *Asylums* was not only a rich sociological study of total institutions, but also a fierce criticism of how mental institutions in the US worked at the time. Goffman's book questioned the "career" of the mental patient, beginning with the assumption that if you are in a mental hospital you must indeed be mentally ill. But, as Greg Smith puts it: "A major accomplishment of *Asylums* is to show the reasonableness and normality of much of the conduct of the mental patient" (1999: 10). Goffman even referred to mental illness as "mental illness".

A reason behind the success of *Asylums* was its timing. Michel Foucault published his *Folie et déraison* (Madness and Civilization) in 1961, which helped him earn a doctorate (from Clermont-Ferrand of course). Ken Kesey's book, *One flew over the cuckoo's nest,* came in 1962 and R.D. Laing's *Divided self: An existential study in sanity and madness* in 1969. Critical madness studies, it seems, had its breakthrough in the 1960s.

Asylums, self and the organization

> Where enthusiasm is expected, there will be apathy; where loyalty, there will be disaffection; where attendance, absenteeism; where robustness, some kind of illness; where deeds are to be done, varieties of inactivity. We find a multitude of homely little histories, each in its way a movement of liberty. Whenever worlds are laid on, underlives develop.
>
> *(Asylums, pp. 304–305)*

The full title reads *Asylums: Essays on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates*, and yet, when I re-read the first pages of the book I immediately associate to life in the large, "non-total" or "normal" organization. Goffman strikes a general nerve in his book. Mental institutions in particular, total institutions in general, he writes. But he knew that his findings would be applicable to social encounters outside the walls and gates of prisons, marine vessels, monasteries and their likes. He also explicitly refers to organizations in more general terms; to what he calls an "instrumental formal organization", which:

> may be defined as a system of purposely co-ordinated activities designed to produce some over-all explicit ends. The intended product may be material artifacts, services, decisions, or information, and may be distributed among the participants in a great variety of ways.
>
> *(Asylums, pp. 175–176)*

His particular focus was on "those formal organizations that are lodged within the confines of a single building or complex of adjacent buildings" (*Asylums*, p. 176), which has its advantage. As Stewart Clegg, David Courpasson and Nelson Phillips argue: "Goffman's argument is that total institutions demonstrate in a heightened and condensed form the underlying organizational processes that can be found, albeit in much less extreme cases, in more normal organizations" (2006: 147). One example from *Asylums* that seems to be general for organizational life is people's tendency to carve out a space for autonomy. Goffman states that:

> The practice of reserving something of oneself from the clutch of an institution is very visible in mental hospitals and prisons but can be found in more benign and less totalistic institutions, too. I want to argue that this recalcitrance is not an incidental mechanism of defense but rather an essential constituent of the self.
>
> *(Asylums, p. 319)*

His descriptions of *primary* and *secondary adjustments* and of how the latter plays a role in creating an *underlife* in the organization (three central concepts in *Asylums*) are also valid for much of organizational life in general. In brief, primary adjustments are performed by an individual when s/he "co-operatively contributes required activity to an organization and under required conditions [---] is transformed into a co-operator; he become the 'normal,' 'programmed,' or built-in member" (*Asylums*, pp. 188–189). Secondary adjustments, on the other hand, are "any habitual arrangement by which a member of an organization employs unauthorized means, or obtains unauthorized ends, or both, thus getting around the organization's assumptions as to what he should do and get and hence what he should be" (*Asylums*, p 189). Goffman distinguishes between *disruptive* and *contained* secondary adjustments, in which the former entails "the realistic intentions of the participants to abandon the organization or radically alter its structure" and the latter implies sharing "with primary adjustments the characteristic of fitting into existing institutional structures without introducing pressure for radical change" (*Asylums*, p 199). Contained secondary adjustments, which he on the following page simply defines as "practices", are Goffman's main concern. These adjustments seem seminal in creating what Goffman calls the underlife of an organization.

Peter Manning states that: "Every organization has an underlife – the modes of interacting in places and times that are contrary to the stated instrumental aim of the organization" (2008: 685) and that "so much of what is done in an organization, and needs to be done, does not pertain to accomplishing the rational instrumental and stated goal or goals of the organization" (2008: 684). *Asylums*, Manning states, could therefore be depicted as "an exploration of the limits of the concept of a 'rational' organization, and of the concept of organization" (2008: 682). As such, it is an important book for organization studies. It is also an important book for our field in how Goffman highlights the centrality of organizational belonging to questions of personal and social identity. This is how Goffman concludes the perhaps most central essay in *Asylums* (in total, there are four essays in the book):

> Without something to belong to, we have no stable self, and yet total commitment and attachment to any social unit implies a kind of selflessness. Our sense of being a person can come from being drawn into a wider social unit; our sense of selfhood can arise through the little ways in which we resist the pull. Our status is backed by the solid buildings of the world, while our sense of personal identity often resides in the cracks.
>
> *(Asylums, p. 320)*

Given that Goffman in general and *Asylums* in particular address central concerns for organization studies, Goffman's writings seem rather under-used by students of organizations. This even seems to be the case for the field of sociology: "there are remarkably few scholars who are continuing his work. In part, this is because Goffman has a signature style, but it is also because Goffman's stylistic approach is not broadly valued in the discipline" (Fine & Manning 458). Peter Manning also argues that "there has been little progress in Goffman-based work in the last 25 years" (2008: 677).

Then again, Manning also claims that "Goffmanesque analysis cannot be based on 'narratives' or stories for they are secondhand versions, accounts, tales, stories, myths, legends, and not encounter-based analysis" (2008: 678). An alternative explanation to why Goffman is not explicitly present in our writings might then be that we do indeed continue his work, but we just don't cite him. As indicated by the American professor in the Clermont-Ferrand lecture: "I think about Goffman all the time". He is present, yet absent. Then again, maybe more credit should be given to his writings, although I don't think Goffman would be too bothered about it. He seldom self-referenced and it was almost as if he started anew with each book. Several concepts also appear between his books, but he does not reference where he first launched them. He also showed a very low interest in those who in turn relied and commented upon his work. As far as I know, he only once, close to his death, wrote a reply to one of his critics (Goffman 1981). The important thing then, is that he is read and that his work is allowed to influence our research, not that we increase his citation index.

Associating *Asylums*: A corporate identity project

Asylums can be a true companion to an organization study. Goffman seems to have an X-ray vision on social encounters. For that reason, I would not like to stand on the shoulders of this giant (he was, by the way, a short man), but rather peek up behind them, following his eyes, reactions and notes. In practice, however, and maybe for the better, I rather feel that he is standing behind me, poking me in the back, pushing me in front of him, asking: "Did you see that?" I will not be able to get rid of him! But don't take that as a reason for not reading him.

Through *Asylums*, Goffman provides us with what I would like to call "small" concepts (trimming, looping, underlife, primary and secondary adjustments, make-do's, working the system, free places, a stash etc.), which give you ideas about what might be going on in social encounters, what to look for, below the surface, behind face (Goffman 1967). They might not be concepts to build grand narratives on. Goffman's hypotheses are poetic rather than positivistic.

Some years ago, Sven Helin and I conducted a case study of a large, global corporation's work with its so-called identity project. The group had experienced a rapid growth through acquisitions and there was an acute demand to harmonize the culturally diverse subsidiaries throughout Europe. In our study, we targeted the Nordic subsidiary, at the time employing about 5000 people. I convinced Sven that Goffman was the man for the job and *Asylums* the main work to focus on (remind me, our text is still under construction, although I sneaked *Asylums* into a previous paper, see Helin & Sandström 2010). Our case company is, of course, no total institution. Its employees do not eat, sleep, play and work within the same social arrangement (*Asylums*, pp. 4–12). It is rather a successful global corporation. It is thriving, financially at least.

We did not conduct an ethnographic study á la Goffman (but who does nowadays? I'll come back to this). Instead we relied on loads of interviews and re-interviews, and on participant observations and textual analyses of different "institutional ceremonies" (*Asylums*, pp. 93–112) arranged by the corporation. About such ceremonies, Goffman states that:

> every total institution seems to develop a set of institutionalized practices – whether spontaneously or by imitation – through which staff and inmates come close enough together to get a somewhat favorable image of the other and to identify sympathetically with the other's situation. These practices express unity, solidarity, and joint commitment to the institution rather than differences between the two levels.
>
> *(Asylums, p. 94)*

The task to accomplish in the corporate group then, was to bring the diverse set of members –Eastern Europe, Western Europe, top management and local workers – closer to each other. The identity project's motto was "growing closer by growing together". Goffman gives some examples of institutional ceremonies in the total institution: a weekly newspaper or a monthly magazine, the annual day, the Christmas celebration, the institutional theatrical, the annual open house (as an institutional display) and intermural sports. In our case, we could basically tick them all off (check, check, check): annual seminars, project workshops, project awards, a global company "olympics" etc. These ceremonies were all central to the identity project. Games, t-shirts, pins, videos, posters and web pages were too. Small "credit cards" that listed the vision, mission, core values (integrity, openness, trust, courage and social responsibility) and core behaviors (customer orientation, drive for excellent performance, change initiation, teamwork, leadership and diversity and development), were also distributed to all employees so that they could carry them in their wallets.

Our question was how people at different levels in the Nordic subsidiary received and reshaped this project. What did they do with it? Did the ceremonies do their job? Did they create unity, solidarity and joint commitment in the organization? In Goffman's words: "In many cases it is a nice question whether these role releases create any staff-inmate solidarity at all" (*Asylums*, p. 110). Our study did not reveal a success story in this regard, but rather echoed an historical parallel to the feudal context that Goffman drew:

> The gentry aspects of these ceremonies, incidentally, should not be taken lightly, since the model for some of them seems to derive from the "annual fete" which joined the tenants, servants, and masters associated with a "great house" in competitive flower shows, sports, and even dances with "mixing" of some kind.
>
> *(Asylums, p. 109)*

The ceremonies rather served to legitimize the asymmetrical power relations in the organization as well as to prescribe an identity to those working for the company. In our interview with the manager responsible for the identity project, the "great house" was also no longer just an association to history. It became rather contemporary. He told us that: "We wanted to bring in good ideas from other countries. They were like houses with different colors, red, blue and yellow. [We wanted] One house, red with blue windows. In one house, one common understanding." The ambition with the identity project was in this sense rather grandiose and the project also indicates a basic fact about formal instrumental organizations. Such an organization:

> does not merely use the activity of its members. The organization also delineates what are considered to be officially appropriate standards of welfare, joint values, incentives, and penalties. These conceptions expand a mere participation contract into a definition of the participant's nature or social being. [---] Built right into the social arrangements of an organization, then, is a thoroughly embracing conception of the member – and not merely a conception of him *qua* member, but behind this a conception of him *qua* human being.
>
> *(Asylums, pp. 179–180)*

During our study we got a feel for how the identity project travelled to lower levels in the corporate group and triggered identity work. The predominant outcome was that the employees created larger social distances to top management and to the corporate group. Primary adjustments, in which the member performs as required by management, were also encountered of course. One of our respondents at the local level, for example, argued that "the company hat" always had to be on top of the head. Things he did in his spare time must be in line with the company's core values and behaviors. The CSR manager of the Nordic subsidiary echoed this view: "Our employees represent our image. If someone expresses racist opinions about foreigners, his neighbors might say that he is a fool and that would hit back on all levels in the company." The local respondent with the hat on, however, also had strong resentments to how rules concerning gifts and representation were more generous to top management than to him (he worked as a salesman for the company).

It was also evident that even those employees who tried a little bit more to interpret management's intentions with the project had difficulties doing so. One example of this comes from a workshop on the identity project with young, Swedish up-coming managers in the organization. At this stage, the project had already been cascaded to all employees in the organization, even though it could still be considered to be in an early phase. Below is a dialogue from one of the small group discussions during the workshop:

Manager 1: What is the identity project and what will it achieve?
Manager 2: Communication plans are my project. I might see a purpose but… We are former trainees so we should know.
Manager 1: Then, what is a value-based company?
Manager 3: Is it anything we should have an idea about?
[---]
Manager 4: He [the Nordic identity project leader] might intend to cascade a way of thinking.

Below is another short extract from another small group discussion during the workshop:

Manager 1: What is accepted? What happens if you stand up for your values? Will you be fired?

Manager 2: Interesting issue. I heard from the market department that they [top management] argue that if you do not accept the values, you would better quit.

Manager 1: And if that happens, what will I do?

Manager 2: In a rule-based company, there are sanctions, rewards and punishments, but a value-based company operates with encouragement and shares each other's sorrows.

Most interviews, however, told of some kind of distancing and showed clear signs of contained secondary adjustments. I would like to give two examples of this. The first is from an interview with a manager of a department at the local plant that we studied:

Manager: The identity project day, a very nice day with a following party in the evening. But then all the four colored booklets and the web pages. It is too much communication as I see it. Storytelling videos, it's all a massive message that you cannot avoid.

Researcher: Do you talk about it with your employees?

M: Yes and no. They keep it at a distance.

R: Any comments?

M: Rather a lack of comments. We had a team briefing and I noticed that they were just fed up on this. It is too big. You receive stuff, but you do not say anything.

R: BOHICA [Bend Over Here It Comes Again]?

M: Exactly. I have an example. There is one copy of the [identity project] booklet in all 50 postboxes and then you will find 50 copies in the wastebasket. I do not know what they [the group's top management] want to achieve.

R: We have heard mostly positive reactions about the identity project from top management.

M: It is an encouraging project. The competition, the exchange program and so on. It is encouraging. But all the enormous… the machinery that just goes on.

The second example is shorter. It comes from another manager at the local plant who refers to the group's top management by stating that "for them, the company is everything; for us, it is a job". Goffman also concludes that:

> Persons at the bottom of large organizations typically operate in drab backgrounds, against which higher-placed members realize their internal incentives, enjoying the satisfaction of receiving visible indulgences that others do not. Low-placed members tend to have less commitment and emotional attachment to the organization than higher-placed members. They have jobs, not careers. In consequence they seem more likely to make wide use of secondary adjustments.
>
> *(Asylums, p. 201)*

Care has naturally to be exercised in this enrollment of *Asylums*. The managers quoted above do not operate in drab backgrounds, but must be considered as having rather good working conditions in terms of pay, working hours and other work-related benefits. They are also in a position to make a career. Yet, they are carving out a distance to the organization and unity, solidarity and joint commitment between top management and the local levels do not seem to be produced. In *Asylums*, however, Goffman describes the sentiments that these managers try to convey.

I also think that it is not taking it too far to use our case company to suggest that a large, global corporation, just as a total institution, in different ways: (i) prescribes a world, an identity, to its members, (ii) handles the needs of large groups through bureaucratic organizations and are guided by an instrumental rationality, (iii) develops institutional, or feudal, ceremonies in order to create role releases and commitment to the institutional arrangement, (iv) creates conflicts between institutional effectiveness and personal principles, and these conflicts are usually determined in favor of the institution, and, (v) pressures members to develop a distance between the institution and the private sphere, and the mechanisms by which this take place are often remarkably similar between total and non-total institutions.

The similarities, not the differences, stand out.

Epilogue

Goffman kept his private life to himself. One example is that I can only find two pictures of him on the web, one in which he sits behind his desk at Berkeley (the one most frequently used) and one portrait photo in which he is a bit older. In Dmitri Shalin's interview with Samuel Heilman (see Shalin 2008), who studied for Goffman and spent hours in his house, Heilman states that:

> I remember there was a story on him in *Time* magazine, a number of stories in the *New York Times Book Review*. I remember that in all of those places they had the hardest time getting pictures of him because he didn't like to have himself photographed, so they all used the same picture of him as a Berkeley faculty [member].

Heilman states that Goffman "was very comfortable in being marginal", which his fame complicated to some extent. Close colleagues also testify that they never, or very rarely, saw his family (Shalin 2008; 2009).

Some claim that he was an "odd character", viewing social encounters as "action" (Scheff 2006: 1–14). In that sense, he could be seen as creating his own dramas. One of his nicknames was apparently "the little dagger". He was also a gambler, known for counting cards at Casinos in Nevada. He also "trained, qualified, and worked as a blackjack dealer at the Station Plaza Casino in Las Vegas, where he was promoted to pit boss" (Fine & Manning 2000: 459). His famous essay "Where the action is" in *Interaction Ritual* (1967) perhaps captures this part of his personae. He also played the stock market and has been quoted as saying that he earned a third of his income from trading stocks. He was also said to be a "terror on the slopes", a downhill skier (Shalin 2008). Action, that is. It seems as if he was always on the job.

Why Goffman wrote *Asylums* and why he focused on total institutions is not really clear. Goffman does not elaborate too much on the issue either. In general, he also did not seem to care about applying methodological how-to-do-it nor to reveal too much about how he actually conducted his field studies (Shalin 2009). Evaluating his work too strongly on such bases would also only render it appropriate for the archives of unpublishable papers (of course, he still published articles in top journals). In *Asylums* he references Fyodor Dostoyevsky, the holy rule of Saint Benedict, an article by George Orwell, an ASQ paper and even management acquaintances such as Chester Barnard, Richard Cyert and James March, Reinhard Bendix, and Philip Selznick. All together it comes across as a bit arbitrary, yet effectual and appropriate. Peter Manning summarizes Goffman's style well: "The most basic truth of his work is that it captures what 'we all know' in a literary and perceptive fashion and assembles examples that are themselves amusing, queer, even wacky" (2008: 679).

On methodology, Goffman, as in *Asylums*, also points to the importance of "fine-grained studies of the in situ" (Samra-Fredericks & Bargiela-Chiappini 2008: 665). Longitudinal, ethnographic studies of ordinary, or lower level organizational people have much to offer, but there is a lack of such studies in contemporary organization studies. Maybe we are too tied up with producing for the short-term (publish or perish). Maybe it is because we lack competence to conduct such ethnographic studies, or maybe we just think that such studies are boring, too mundane and unimportant. I believe that Goffman proves the latter argument wrong. The ordinary is anything but boring and has the potential to generate important knowledge about social interaction. The up-tempo journal article production, "fast research", is, however, becoming default in large parts of organization studies and this speaks against doing "slow research". In the preface to *Asylums*, Goffman raises an interesting issue that is also relevant for our contemporary situation:

> this freedom and opportunity to engage in pure research was afforded me in regard to a government agency, through the financial support of another government agency, both of which were required to operate in the presumably delicate atmosphere of Washington, and this was done at a time when some universities in this country, the traditional bastions of free enquiry, would have put more restrictions on my efforts.
>
> *(Asylums, p. xi)*

One tentative explanation as to why he wrote *Asylums* is that his first wife suffered mental health problems and eventually committed suicide in 1964. Rumors have it that she was being treated at the St. Elizabeth Hospital while Goffman researched the institution (Shalin 2008). Although perhaps a somewhat awkward thing to do, I would like to believe this rumor. He studied something that he had a strong involvement in (which would also be valid for his essay "Where the action is" and his part-time job as pit boss). The death of his first wife also seemed to have influenced his position on mental illness as years went by. Predominantly known as emphasizing the social, almost rejecting the psychological, in the article "The insanity of place" from 1969, Goffman dropped the quotation marks around mental illness.

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10 Alvin Gouldner

The Three Faces of Bureaucracy

Alexander Styhre

Introduction

Given the title of this book, it is somewhat ironic that the great sociologist Robert Merton, the professor and mentor of the subject of this essay, Alvin Gouldner, straightforwardly rejected this Newtonian metaphor and preferred to speak about the scientist as someone standing on a "pyramid of midgets". In modern science, Merton contended, there were no longer giants like Galilei or Copernicus, only a great number of small but significant contributions made by many individual scientists. Gouldner was part of Merton's sociology department at Columbia University in the 1950s, one of the birthplaces of modern organization theory. During his career, Gouldner studied at Columbia University and held chairs in sociology at Washington University in St. Louis and at the University of Amsterdam.

The key text discussed in this chapter, Gouldner's classic study *Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy* (1954), was part of a major empirical research project orchestrated by Merton and his doctoral students in the wake of interest in Max Weber's concept of bureaucracy. Hallett and Ventresca (2006: 912) claim that *Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy* "is considered a pillar in organizational sociology." Even though *Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy* is still a key text in the somewhat extensive bureaucracy literature, it is surprisingly little referenced in the contemporary organization theory and management studies literature. Being part of the first wave of empirical bureaucracy studies, more or less derived from the publication of the first translations of Max Weber's work (e.g., Weber, 1948) alongside his colleague Peter Blau's *Bureaucracy in Modern Society* (1956) and eventually Michel Crozier's more critical view of bureaucracy in *The Bureaucratic Phenomenon* (1964), Gouldner's serves as a nexus between more formal sociology and the more empirical work of the Chicago sociology tradition and as a figure that bridges sociology and what has eventually has come to be known as organization theory or management studies. For Gouldner, bureaucratization and bureaucracy are not necessarily, and by definition, bad or dysfunctional, but are more or less applicable in different settings. A bureaucratic procedure may work very effectively when based on collective representative norms, but in other cases work may less smoothly (such as in what Gouldner calls mock bureaucracies). That is, bureaucratic organizations may appear to be immutable and have a life of their own, but at the bottom line they are social arrangements based on human beings' abilities to operate in accordance with collectively enacted norms and beliefs and to institute routines. This does not suggest that Gouldner romanticized bureaucracy. On the contrary, the organization theory literature, in many ways concerned with the implications of various forms of "resistance", is indebted to Gouldner's work. Another field of research that carries Gouldner's mark is emotional management.

Gouldner published his early work on bureaucracy in the 1950s when working in the Merton circle, although also published books on the sociology of knowledge (another accomplishment indebted to Merton, Camic and Gross [2002: 98 suggest]) and a series of sociological works in genre of the post-Kuhnian critique of the positivist tradition in the social sciences, e.g., *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology* (1970). Gouldner was skeptical about the idea of a value-free sociology and published many works in which he advocated a post-positivist and reflexive sociology; a sociological framework emphasizing interpretative approaches to understanding situated actions (Camic and Gross, 2002). Given the development of organization theory into a truly multidisciplinary field of research, Gouldner was in a position to side with other key figures of his generation (e.g., Philip Selznick).However, together with his colleague Peter Blau, he shares the fate of not being given the prominence that many think he deserves. Silvia Pedraza (2002: 75) claims that "Gouldner's work is less known today than it should be," but also points out, based on personal experience, that Gouldner's "rather difficult personality" kept him isolated from peers who came under his attack and prevented him from generating students who would carry his work forward. In Pedraza's (2002: 78) account, Gouldner was not only a "formidable intellect" but also a tragic figure, alienated from the scholarly community "he so much wanted to be part of." One might also add that Nord (1992) tells quite another story about Gouldner; a more explicitly heroic and less tragic story of foresight and intellectual vigor. Taken together, the secondary literature on Alvin Gouldner is not very extensive. A search for journal papers with Alvin Gouldner in the title in Business Source Premier (EBSCO) generated six hits ranging from 1973 to 2002 (accessed in October 14, 2009). *The Sociological Quarterly* dedicated an issue (Vol.43, No. 1) to Gouldner's work in 2002, but after this relatively little has been said about him. In the management literature, Nord's (1992) praise is one of very few explicit recognitions of his work. The secondary literature is also more focused on his later, more conceptual and meta-theoretical work than his early bureaucracy studies. My standpoint is that it is precisely Gouldner's early empirical work rather than his later works (*pace* Nord [1992: 350]) – today a rather unfashionable blend of Frankfurt school criticism and orthodox Marxism (see e.g., Gouldner, 1976) – that justifies a rehabilitation of his sociology. By way of summary, it could be said that Gouldner is an interesting figure for two reasons: because he made a seminal contribution to organization theory with the book that is the topic of analysis in this essay and because Gouldner (and other "great writers") is something of a ghost that haunts organization theory. The modern social sciences, including organization theory and management studies, are at pains to create a "research front", which means that older contributions are easily abandoned, underappreciated or simply left to slip silently into oblivion as new studies are published. Yet these texts maintain a zombie-like existence – neither alive nor dead but in a position of permanent liminality–in textbooks and other works providing oversight of an ever expanding theoretical field, wherein carefully designed studies and beautifully written texts like *Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy* are accounted for in a few terse sentences. Works like *Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy* deserve a better fate. This kind of edited volume thus gives us an excellent opportunity to celebrate the pioneering work in our field.

This essay is structured in the following way.: First, some of the historical background of Gouldner's work is presented. Second, the main ideas in *Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy* are examined. Third and finally, some of the implications of Gouldner's work and the relevance of the study for contemporary organizations are addressed.

The Merton circle and Gouldner's concept of bureaucracy

In Richard Scott's (2004) historical overview of the history of organization theory, two places are emphasized as the sites in which the discipline was first articulated. At Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Herbert Simon and his colleagues were working on the question of administrative routines and behavior and more specifically on the practice of decision-making. At Columbia University in New York City, Robert Merton ran a research group including Philip Selznick, Peter Blau (eventually Scott's own supervisor and co-author, see e.g., Blau and Scott, [1963]) and Alvin Gouldner. There is little doubt that these two research groups produced a series of works that today constitute the *elementa* of organization theory. Robert Merton is one of the more renowned sociologists of the post-World War II period, making many contributions to both formal sociological theory and empirical research. While biographic accounts of Merton do not portray him in entirely sympathetic terms (Cole, 2004), Merton obviously managed to advance a few research frameworks and empirical research questions that are still relevant today. Merton shared a dislike for the highly functionalist and formalist sociology of Talcott Parsons with the more radical contemporary sociologist Charles Wright Mills (1959), who coined the term "grand theory" in order to dismiss such an overtly formalist "sociology without empirics". Merton introduced the term "middle-range theory" to denote the level of abstraction and limitation that he believed a theoretical framework should aim for. Later in his career, and influenced by Karl Mannheim (1936) and his *Wissensoziologie*, Merton (1973) studied scientists and formulated a sociology of science. Today, much of Merton's work on science is perceived as obsolete and it is adequate to say that much of the more recent research in what has been called science and technology studies (Jasanoff et al, 1995) is more or less a critique of and departure from Merton's view of science.

Back in the 1950s, the work of Max Weber had only recently been introduced in North America (Weber, 1948) and sociologists were grappling with a number of sociological issues derived from Weber's magnum opus *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (translated into the somewhat misleading title of *Economy and Society*). Among the many ideas presented by Weber, Robert Merton (1957) was interested in the theory of bureaucracy as an ideal-type form of rationalized organization that was capable of breaking with the nepotism and dilettantism present in many pre-modern forms of administration. Merton (1958) advanced the thesis that, notwithstanding its many formal merits, bureaucracy is bound to be "dysfunctional" because of the opportunistic behavior of human beings. In the 1950s, sociologists had paid some attention to the new mass-society-management guru Peter Drucker talked about a "society of organizations" (Drucker, 1946)–wherein large corporations displaced small enterprises and where the entrepreneurial spirit was abandoned as the "organization man" entered the historical stage (Whyte, 1956; Mills, 1951; Riesman, 1950). The large, faceless organizations that grew in size and number during the first decades of the twentieth century were of great interest to study from the perspective of the Weberian theory of bureaucracy.

In order to actually study bureaucratic organizations empirically, Merton orchestrated a number of studies whereof at least the contributions of Peter Blau and Alvin Gouldner are seminal texts in the field of organization theory. In the discipline of sociology, the so-called Chicago Sociology tradition, emphasizing detailed empirical research and qualitative research methods (Deegan, 2001), had been highly influential during the first decades of the new century. In addition, the 1950s and 1960s were the heydays of industry sociology and studies by Donald Roy (1952, 1954), which sought to understand group dynamics on the shop floor by using ethnographic research methods, and Melvin Dalton's (1959) study of middle managers' work in organizations, further explored the findings of the much debated and experimental Hawthorne studies conducted in the 1930s (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1943). During the 1950s, modern organizational forms not only became an object of theoretical concern and speculation, but also a subject for empirical studies. Applying the Chicago sociology methodologies in organization studies was not a major leap for Merton's research group. Blau and Gouldner started their research work equipped with the research question "are bureaucracies dysfunctional?"

It is also noteworthy that for Merton, Blau and Gouldner, the concept of bureaucracy is not exclusively reserved for public sector organizations or administration as such, but is an ideal-typical form of governance based on a series of formal rules and procedures articulated by Max Weber. The number of potential organizations to study in the research project is therefore quite extensive.

In his *Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy*, Alvin Gouldner (1954a) studied what he called "processes of bureaucratization" in a Midwest gypsum plant. The gypsum plant was divided into a mining division and the factory processing the natural resources. The miners and the so-called "surface men," the workers in the factory, were organized in different types of work organizations, essentially demonstrating different company cultures. The miners worked under harder and more hazardous conditions, and the authority of management was weaker. Gouldner's narrative is structured around a manager succession story, pointing at a series of events occurring as new management routines are established. When the old manager called "Old Doug" retired, a new manager named Vincent Peele was appointed. Old Doug was popular among the workers and followed his principle of "leniency" in which the workers were not too closely monitored and where they would always get a "second chance" if they were caught ignoring the company rules. In contrast, Peele started to control the working hours in greater detail and quickly abandoned Old Doug's principle of leniency. In short, Peele aimed at implementing a number of bureaucratic principles and rules that were to be followed. The workers responded unfavorably to the new managerial policy and, as the relationship between Peele and his workers eventually deteriorated, a wildcat strike ended the worsening relations within the gypsum plant (accounted for in Gouldner's *Wildcat Strike*, more or less a pendant to *Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy*).

For Gouldner, Peele's regime was centered on the bureaucratization of the plant. The "flexible application of rules" that dominated Old Doug's management was displaced by more detailed job descriptions. While the miners were capable of avoiding many of Peele's directives, due to their strong professional culture and idiosyncratic working conditions, the workers in the gypsum plant were more directly affected. In Gouldner's (1954a) account, the concept of bureaucratization does not denote a neat transformation of activities into a coherent and unified framework. Instead, local conditions, idiosyncratic interpretations of rules and political negotiations of the meaning and function of rules pervaded the entire process. In the great organizational change of activities orchestrated by Peele, a number of complementary "patterns of bureaucracy" were developed. Firstly, Gouldner speaks of *mock bureaucracies,* where rules are implemented but ignored by virtually everyone because such rules are not reinforced by various forms of instituted behavior and the breaking of rules is accompanied by effective punishment procedures and sanctions. For instance, Peele implemented a non-smoking policy in the factory which most people de facto ignored on the basis of a variety of more or less credible arguments. In the case of mock bureaucracies, formal decisions are made and policies are implemented but behavior fails to comply with these new directives. There is a mismatch between rules and behavior that creates a wedge between policy and behavior. In mock bureaucracies, the map does not really represent the terrain.

Secondly, Gouldner uses the term *representative bureaucracies* to describe those cases where decisions and policies are supported by the co-workers and when decisions are anchored in widely shared ideals and beliefs. For instance, the safety rules that were enacted and implemented were supported by all workers and were consequently adhered to. In this case the formal policy is based on collectively enacted rules and instituted beliefs and the rules and regulations are therefore representative of underlying shared beliefs. Speaking in Weberian terms, the *representative bureaucracy* is the ideal-typical form of bureaucratic organization, where there is a tight coupling between socially legitimate objectives and norms and the actual processes and regulations of the bureaucracy.

Thirdly and finally, Gouldner uses the concept of *punishment-centered bureaucracies* to denote all those practices and procedures that are employed to make co-workers follow the rules and regulations on the basis of penal practice. While the central organizational principle in bureaucracy is that of self-discipline and auto-surveillance, Gouldner says that there is a need for certain punishment procedures when key rules and norms are violated and when activities that threaten the axial principles of the bureaucracy are conducted. In order to subsist, there is a need for a penal arithmetic.

In the case of the gypsum plant, the three divergent patterns of bureaucracy were observed during newly appointed manager Peele's regime. For instance, Peele's directives were less attended to among the miners because their work was already highly determined by a variety of instituted rules and specific practices jointly agreed upon by the miners themselves. The nature of their work, including the risks the job implied and their strong professional culture and identity, made them less prone to follow the management's directives.

Nostalgia and resistance

In addition to contributing to the theory of bureaucracy, Gouldner's (1954) study addressed *nostalgia* in organizations (Strangleman, 1999; Ylijoki, 2005). Anticipating the term *emotional management*, first used by Hochschild (1983) in her classic study of flight stewardesses, Gouldner here emphasizes the importance of emotions in organizations. Gouldner (1954a: 80) writes: "Almost to a man, workers in the plant were in the spell of a backward looking reverie. They overflowed with stories which highlighted the differences between the two managers, the lenience of Doug and the strictness of Peele." Nostalgia, the sense of longing for one's home, i.e., a past that is more familiar than an uncertain future, is a strong human sentiment, exploited in politics, popular culture and many other social fields. In Gouldner's study, the "old days" of when old Doug was in charge were the measure of Peele's new initiatives and many of the co-workers lamented the lost regime. Gouldner was perhaps not the first to address nostalgia in organizations, but he was among the first to theorize it and point to its consequences.

The concept of resistance is central to Gouldner's study. The term resistance is not staged as one of the key concepts in the empirical research, and it is indicative that Gouldner chose to publish his account of the strike that eventually took place in a separate book rather than making it the key event of his study. At the same time, resistance is always present in the text in the form of the small and at times insignificant activities that emerged as responses to new directives and rules. For instance, the construction of mock bureaucracies, arguably Gouldner's single most important term in the organization theory dictionary, is based on the reconciliation of the demand for formally enacted procedures and some leeway on the part of the co-workers. The term mock bureaucracy enables formal rationality and behavior that is beneficial for organizational effectiveness to co-exist in time and space. The ban on smoking maintains the impression that the management is capable of separating (salaried) work from (non-salaried) non-work, and that the transgression of the rule is beneficial for the co-workers' sense of authority and ability to decide when and where to smoke. In mock bureaucracies, management is therefore capable of having the cake and eating it too (see e.g., Cavanaugh and Prasad, 1994). In Gouldner's account, resistance to change and resistance to the expansion of managerial authority are key organizational traits. Organizations are never without discussions, debates and controversies, and resistance is neither "irrational" (as it is sometimes portrayed in the mainstream literature) nor "heroic" (as in much of the orthodox critical management studies literature) but is the immediate and unavoidable effect of the uses of power in organizations (Dent and Goldberg, 1999; Gabriel, 1999). Gouldner's work illustrates a variety of social processes in organizations without taking sides or praising individual behavior.

Gouldner's contribution to organization theory

The concept of bureaucracy has a somewhat odd position in organization theory vocabulary, as it is simultaneously very central and peripheral to the field of research. It is centrally located in terms of being the key organization concept in Max Weber's theory of the rationalization of society and therefore what Bruno Latour (1987) calls an "obligatory passage point" in organization studies, and peripheral in terms of being commonly conceived of as archaic, backward and obsolete. In the latter perspective, bureaucracy is almost always portrayed as something that is supplementary and additional to new forms of organizing and–like the faceless "positivists" subject to endless criticism *en bloc* by qualitative methodology oriented researchers– serves as a strawman–what is set up to be beaten down. Among the first thing you learn in organization theory and management courses is to define a bureaucratic organization and that it is both ineffective and populated by untalented and dull bureaucrats who are unable to understand their broader social function. Such a dismissive view of bureaucracy is not presented in Gouldner's work. Instead, the bureaucratic organization per se is what needs to be the subject of empirical studies and deserves to be theorized in more detail than Weber's initial statements in *Economy and Society*. In Robert Merton's original proposition, it is assumed that bureaucracies are to some extent dysfunctional, or at least structurally determined to become dysfunctional. Little of this proposition is confirmed in Gouldner's study. Unlike most theorists of bureaucracy (Peter Blau being another example), Gouldner does not suggest that bureaucracy is worse or better than other organizational forms. Instead, bureaucracy is what is produced and emerges as a pattern of actions through the active engagement of enacting rules and procedures that address practical work. Adhering to a truly empiricist tradition of research, Gouldner does not start from the theory and then applies it to cases, but instead applies the abductive *modus operandi* that Charles Sanders Peirce once advocated, that is, empirical observations justify the choice of specific theoretical perspectives which in turn feed back into the data collection and data analysis work. In the end, what Gouldner presents is an empirically grounded and thoughtful study of how social processes actually produce patterns of bureaucracy. Bureaucracy is thus not a solid and fixed entity that is determined once and for all by the rules, procedures and practices that are enacted, but is instead a constant process of reshaping and reconfigurating. Karl Weick (1969) is commonly praised for his emphasis on studying processes of organizing rather than organizations–verbs over nouns, that is–but more than a decade before the announcement of such a reorientation Gouldner showed the value of such a processual view of organizations. Not even bureaucracy, the epitome of what is regarded as being inflexible and non-adaptable, is as fixed as one may think. Even in seemingly stable systems, there is a Brownian motion at the elementary level, a constant fluidity and change on the molecular scale. Gouldner's work helps us to recognize these elementary processes.

In addition, the very term "bureau" suggests the authority of written rules and instructions rather than human interaction and relations. Gouldner helps organization theorists to abandon such reification of organizational processes and points to the opportunities to say no, to resist and to overturn the formal rules. Smoking in places in which you are not supposed to smoke may seem futile and of minor importance, but Gouldner suggests that it is exactly these small acts of resistance that may, when followed by others, produce significant consequences. An example of this is Rosa Parks, a black woman living in Montgomery, Alabama, USA who refused to give up her seat on the bus to a white person, as prescribed by the racial laws of the state; an event that marks the start of the American civil rights movement. The consequences of her action were such that the black community in the USA was eventually acknowledged as equal in American society. In 1996, Parks received the Presidential Medal of Freedom. In hindsight, then, small matters may have large consequences. As the old saying goes, the shape of Cleopatra's nose changed the shape of the world.

In Gouldner's view, the fear of faceless bureaucracy needs to be replaced by detailed studies of how bureaucracies actually operate. No bureaucracy or organization operates without the influence of humans, and thinking in organizations is therefore a matter of human interaction and relations. Paired with his empiricist credo, Gouldner is arguably a key figure in the organization theory tradition.

Gouldner's legacy

For a work published in the mid-1950s, *Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy* has resisted the influence of time relatively well. The modern reader may notice an absence of women in the text, though, given that Gouldner examines an exclusively male terrain. In addition, *Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy* does not demand any specific form of reading but may be approached as a research monograph unfolding along a temporal storyline. Gouldner writes in the great tradition of industrial sociology and many readers may engage in the story about the loss of old Doug, the appointment of the less likeable Vincent Peele and all the turmoil caused by his new policies.

Gouldner's work is hopefully becoming increasingly recognized in the literature on so-called post-bureaucratic organizations (Maravelias, 2003; Iedema, 2003; Josserand, Teo and Clegg, 2006; Styhre, 2007, 2008). Studies of organizations that are structured along temporal dimensions (e.g., project organizations), spatial dimensions (e.g., network organizations), or maintained and integrated through the use of various media (e.g., virtual organizations) are all assumed to deviate from the conventional bureaucratic organizational form. In this body of literature, it is not an uncommon plot to say that "we used to have bureaucracies, but now we have X" (X being the favored organizational form), thereby portraying bureaucracy as something that by definition is outmoded or even obsolete. More recently, a few research monographs and anthologies have been published in the defense of bureaucracy (Du Gay, 2000, 2005) and we might see more such paradigmatic debates in the next few years. The entire discourse on "post-bureaucratic organizations" is both indebted to Gouldner and to other scholars' contributions, but may equally draw on these seminal texts as sources of inspiration. In my own research of knowledge-intensive work in e.g., pharmaceutical companies, architect bureaus and the automotive industry, Gouldner's work has served as a source of inspiration in terms of first examining actual events and practices prior to any evaluation or judgment regarding the effectiveness of legitimacy on events and practices. Unlike e.g., Crozier's (1964) forceful critique of bureaucracy, Gouldner maintains a more analytical and scholarly attitude towards his object of study. Gouldner seeks knowledge and understanding rather than passing judgement or erecting tribunals. These are in my mind admirable scholarly qualities. More specifically, the term mock bureaucracy has been used in empirical studies (Hynes and Prasad, 1997; Adler, 2005; McGivern and Ferlie, 2007) and has engendered a variety of re-workings of the term, including *soft bureaucracy* (Jermier, Slocum, Fry and Gaines, 1991; Courpasson, 2000) and or *selective bureaucracy* (Kärreman, Svenningson and Alvesson, 2002). Jermier et al. (1991) is an early attempt to further develop the concept of mock bureaucracy. In their study of police officers in a small southern town in the U.S., Jermier et al. (1991) found that behind the official slogans prescribing "crime fighting" and "to serve and protect," a variety of norms and ideologies guided the actual police work and led to various practices and consequences. Rather than being a work that is clearly determined by rules and procedures, police work is emerging as a soft bureaucracy where some rules are to be followed (i.e., punishment–centered bureaucracy) while others are more open to interpretation and negotiation. Soft bureaucracy is thus a combination of hard and soft rules. In Courpasson's (2000) use of the term, a soft bureaucracy is the combination of a hierarchical organizational form in which decision-making authority is maintained in the executive tiers while an entrepreneurial orientation is expected in the lower tiers. In many contemporary organizations, co-workers and employees are expected to take on an entrepreneurial identity while still recognizing managerial authority. Hodgson (2004) suggests that the field of project management, increasingly regulated and under the surveillance of professional interest organizations such as PMI (Project Management Institute, see Hodgson and Cicmil, 2007), is a re-articulation of bureaucratic forms of control shaped by contemporary beliefs in the value of enterprising ideologies. By and large, interest in the mingling of bureaucratic organization forms of control and new entrepreneurial ideologies and activities calls for a return to the founding texts of the field. Needles to say, as one of the first empirical studies of bureaucracy, *Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy* is a key to the field.

In an era in which bureaucracy is largely dismissed without any empirical evidence, Gouldner's insistence on actually *studying* bureaucratic organizations prior to articulating a verdict on the organization form is admirable. In many cases, terms like *bureaucracy*, *bureaucrats* and *bureaucratic* are used *en passant* to capture the less well functioning aspects of organization. Such simplistic vocabulary is not only part of the popular culture and everyday language, but is also surprisingly often used in scholarly texts. The contribution of Gouldner lies perhaps, as Gilles Deleuze said of Nietzsche's work, in its ability to be "bad for stupidity," that is, to drag unjustified, preconceived beliefs into broad daylight and examine them exactly as they are, as beliefs resting on little more than assumptions and emotionality. As soon as key terms are not used to denote specific procedures or empirical observations but to represent universals without necessarily including the particular, the language ceases to be analytical and instead takes on a demagogic and rhetorical function that does not harmonize with scholarly endeavors. Scholarly work operates on the basis of abstraction and precision. In the case of bureaucracy and its various additional terms, there is a need to restore these concepts and shelter them from being appropriated by polemics that are insensitive to empirical variety. When standing on Gouldner's shoulders we may see more than just the shortcomings of bureaucracy. We might also see some of its apparent merits.

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11 Jeff Hearn and Wendy Parkin

On Organization Sexuality

Charlotte Holgersson

A neglected issue

I am a scholar in the field of feminist organization theory; a field that has established itself over the past 40 years. My first encounter with feminist organization theory was in 1992 at a course on gender in organizations offered by Anna Wahl at the Stockholm School of Economics. This course gave me a language with which I could describe and analyze my own experiences of exclusion in the workplace. Since then I have devoted myself to exploring the complexities of gender ordering processes in organizations.

The field of gender and organization is a large and expansive field of research with many "giants" from which to choose. I could have chosen to write about favorite references, such as the work of Rosabeth Moss Kanter on the token-situation of women managers and homosocial cultures among managers, Joan Acker's seminal texts on gendered organizations, Anna Wahl's work on gendered structures in organizations, Marta Calàs and Linda Smircich's feminist critique of leadership and management, or Gerd Lindgren's analysis of interactions in same-sex groups in the workplace, in particular men's homosociality. Even though these are important contributions to the literature on organizations, I have selected a book that highlights a central but still often neglected aspect of organizations, namely sexuality. The "giant" that I have chosen to write about in this volume is the book 'Sex' at 'Work' by Jeff Hearn and Wendy Parkin, that was published for the first time in 1987. Today, Jeff Hearn is Professor at the Department of Gender Studies at Linköping University, Sweden and the Department of Management and Organization at the Hanken School of Economics, Finland. Wendy Parkin was previously Principal Lecturer in Sociology and Social Work, University of Huddersfield, UK. She is now retired but her interest in gender issues continues.

Their book is one of the very first attempts to create a framework for understanding the linkages between organization, sexuality and gender and is an important contribution to organization studies. On the back cover of the first edition from 1987 one can read that, "The text engages with key issues, and will be a landmark book in the study of this extremely important and all-pervasive cluster of issues." The wording on the back of the second edition from 1995 has changed and acknowledges that in fact it "has become a landmark book". I could not agree more.

Sexuality and gender are two interrelated, fundamental aspects of power relations in society and organizations. It is in fact difficult to imagine gender and sexuality without each other. Indeed, after having read 'Sex' at 'Work' it is difficult to understand organization without gender and sexuality – subjects that are however rarely explicit in most mainstream literature – both classic studies and general theoretical positions – on organizations. In their review of literature on organizations in the first edition, Hearn and Parkin write that, "[c]lassical Theory and its associated practice ignores sexuality, conflates masculinity and asexuality, and creates the possibility of the conflation of femininity and sexuality" (p. 21, Hearn & Parkin 1987). They note that dominant post-war organization and management theory, such as Human Relations and related theories, take emotions into account when conceptualizing organizations. However, due to the use of neutral concepts and an almost complete neglect of gender, these theories fail to make sexuality in organizations visible.

While gender is increasingly recognized by mainstream organization and management literature, sexuality continues to be overlooked. This neglect may seem strange considering the tremendous expansion of literature on gender, sexuality and organization since the 1970s. As the authors write, "(d) esexualized academia appears slow at noting certain aspects of organizational reality, that do not fit easily into recognized malestream theories and traditions" (Hearn & Parkin, 1987: 39).

The first explicit analyses of sexuality in organizational settings are found in studies and surveys of sexual harassment. These studies show that sexuality in organizational life is a matter of power and makes aspects of organizational life visible that were often taken for granted and thus not described and problematized. The surveys of sexual harassment were followed by a number of more general studies of sexuality in organizational contexts often highlighting the political impact on power relations of actual and potential sexual relationships in the workplace. As Hearn and Parkin point out in the second edition, research on sexuality and gender has developed in two directions since the late 1980s: one dealing with material oppressions and the other focusing on discursive constructions. The first approach draws attention to how dominant groups oppress others through a variety of social processes. The second approach highlights how dominant discourses are produced and reproduced in and through organizations. Although these two approaches are often seen as conflicting, and as mirroring the tensions between modernism and postmodernism, Hearn and Parkin suggest that they may also be seen as converging. Material oppression is understood in increasingly complex ways and the reproduction of discursive constructions can also be seen as material accomplishments. Therefore, Hearn and Parkin propose that, "…organizations may be analysed in terms of cultural reproductive materialism, that is simultaneously discursive and material" (Hearn & Parkin, 1995: 175).

What is sexuality?

But what do Hearn and Prakin mean by sexuality? They see sexuality as a public process that is ordinary and frequent, rather than an extraordinary and predominantly private process. They also see sexuality as an aspect of an all-pervasive body of politics, rather than a separate and discrete set of practices. Sexuality is not a phenomenon that is easily defined in one sentence, however. I therefore refer to Hearn and Parkin's definition in (almost) its entirety:

> The term sexuality is used to refer to the social expression of or social relations or social references to physical, bodily desire or desires. They can be by or for others or for oneself. Others can be of the same or opposite sex, or even occasionally of indeterminate gender…indeed imagined or fantasised sexual relations may be as important part of sexuality as observable sexual practices. Sexual practices may range from mild flirtation to sexual acts, perhaps with enclosure and/or penetration. While such acts may be accomplished willingly, unwillingly or forcibly by those involved, the notion of consent needs to be viewed with caution. It is important to emphasise that sexuality may include references to narcissistic, bisexual, homosexual, heterosexual and various other sexual preferences and practices, even though the notion of individual preference remains problematic. … Sexuality is best seen as both a specific, and a wide-ranging, necessarily open-ended topic. In addition to the question of desires within sexuality, there is a range of other relevant bodily states and experiences that relate to these desires, including puberty, pre-menstruation, pregnancy and menopause. Thus, to summarise, the definition of sexuality used here is the social expression of, and relations to bodily desires, real or imagined, by or for others or for oneself, together with the related bodily states and experiences. Sexuality is thus a broad set of phenomena and practices, as defined above; but it is also diverse. To reduce this broad range of power, actions, thoughts and feelings just to sexual acts is likely to give an inaccurate, even sexist, view of realities. Sexuality is no monolith; it includes and refers to the body and touch, emotion and desire, thought and fantasy, image and appearance. Thus sexuality is a very broad category that can include numerous material, discursive elements and practices
>
> *(Hearn & Parkin, 1995: 175–176).*

In addition, Hearn and Parkin are careful to point out that they adopt a power perspective on sexuality and gender. Sexuality is always connected to power as it can both be subject to other powers and can impact other powers. Moreover, they emphasize that sexuality and gender are constructed in relation to other power relations, "Gender and sexuality do not exist in isolation, but in their specific conjunctures with such divisions as age, ethnicity, class and bodily facility" (Hearn & Parkin, 1995: 176).

How organizations construct sexuality

How, then, is sexuality linked to organizations? Hearn and Parkin start out by proposing different ways of understanding the impact of organizations on sexuality and distinguishing two main categories of organizations that construct sexuality: the external organizational form and the internal organizational divisions. I explain each of these elements below.

The external organizational form comprises both the territoriality of organizations, goals and beneficiaries and aspects of closure and openness. Territoriality relates to the fact that the size of an organization impacts the sexuality of its members. Small organizations may, for example, offer fewer potential partners in the organization but a potential for close relationships as well as resistance to closeness. Large organizations, on the other hand, offer more potential partners in the organization and less close relationships that might also potentially include resistance that produces closeness.

Organizations also vary according to their goals and primary beneficiaries, and Hearn and Parkin outline four types of organizational goals:

- Sexploitation organizations, where sexuality is exploited for the benefit of managers and owners, either commercially or sexually, e.g. the pornography industry.
- Sexual service organizations, where the organization has the goal of serving clients for their sexual benefit, e.g. sex therapy.
- Mutual sexual organizations, where members come together for their mutual sexual benefit, e.g. gay liberation organizations.
- Subordinated sexual organizations, which represents the most common type and where the sexuality of members is subordinated to the 'non-sexual' organizational task.

According to Hearn and Parkin, an organization may include aspects of more than one type. For example, in a non-sexual commercial organization that uses sexuality to advertise its products, sexuality is the means to 'non-sexual' ends. The authors note that repressive rules on sexuality are characteristic of organizations that subordinate sexuality yet are explicitly physical and implicitly sexual, as for example in medical or military organizations. Sexploitation organizations, on the other hand, involve the exploitation of both men and women producing all kinds of sexualities. However, these organizations also exploit the 'non-sexual' work of men and women regardless of their sexuality.

Furthermore, the degree of openness and closure of an organization in relation to the outside world has an impact on the sexuality of its members. In total institutions where people eat, sleep, work and play, such as military institutions and prisons, the borders between the public and the private are blurred and are often characterized by stricter controls of sexuality compared to open organizations.

Gendered divisions of labor are reinforced by gendered divisions of authority and power and also have effects on sexuality. Hierarchical organizational structures lead to hierarchical interpersonal, including sexual, relationships between organizational members. Since men tend to occupy higher and women lower levels, this also affects sexuality. The most classic example of this is the relationship between managers and secretaries where secretaries often act as office wives. The valuation of men over women is paralleled with the valuation of men's sexuality over women's sexuality. While men often see women at work as sexualized beings, this can mean that they also undervalue women professionally. In contrast, men appear as asexual to each other, but are at the same time sexualized according to status and power in the organization. Success and career thus become indicators of men's masculinity and sexuality, while they may undermine women's femininity and sexuality.

In addition, male managers may use sexuality, sexual harassment and sexual joking as a means of maintaining their power position over women. Men's homosocial relationships at work are also a means of maintaining power positions. However, this is often coupled with homophobia that is related to the compulsory heterosexuality that infuses most organizations. Men's power over women is thus intricately enmeched with the oppression of homosexuality and other sexualities that are seen as deviant. Hearn and Parkin highlight that although compulsory heterosexuality is continued through dominant ideologies, it takes place in organizations through everyday social practices ranging from managerial policies to informal conversations.

Moreover, the actual work performed can affect the sexuality of organization members. For example, sexual harassment can be interpreted not only as a result of 'sex-role spillover', but also as an attempt to create human contact in reaction to alienating work. Work hazards can also have effects on organizational members' sexuality, for example infertility or impotence caused by chemicals. Also, work stress due to overtime and night shifts can have an impact on sexuality. Furthermore, work involving close working relations between people, such as social work, caring and nursing, affects the emotional life of organizational members.

How sexuality constructs organizations

It is thus clear that organizations construct sexuality in a multitude of ways. However, sexuality also impacts organizations. Following the idea that sexuality and organization construct each other in a dialectic relationship, Hearn and Parkin suggest that the sexual construction of organizations can be conceptualized in terms of a series of 'fronts' that both reveal and obscure sexuality and its power. These fronts are ways of defending organizations against the power of sexuality and of denying that sexuality is present within organization both to members themselves and others outside. The authors examine four major fronts: visible, secret, unseen and elusive.

Visible sexuality – includes explicit sexual behavior such as open sexual acts, sexual liaisons, harassment, as well as implicit sexual behavior, such as, gazing, movement and touch. Moreover, dress and appearance are both explicit and unspoken ways of making sexuality visible. Visible sexuality also comprises written documents such as policies on recruitment and promotion as well as dress codes.

Secret sexuality – sexuality in organizations is often kept secret. Secret sexuality may refer to systems of formal rules, policies and records that are recorded yet inaccessible. For example, records on individuals and their families that include intimate details about sexuality exist in organizations such as hospitals and the police or in HR-departments. Such information may be used as a means of power by those who control these records. Moreover, secret sexual relationships have a variety of organizational impacts, including favoritism and punishment.

Unseen sexuality – includes a variety of bodily and mental processes, in particular sexual states, perceptions, desires and fantasies. Although some of these processes are primarily diagnosed as bodily or mental, the relationship between body and mind is inextricable. Examples of sexual states are premenstrual tension, menstruation, menopause or early pregnancy. A wide range of sexual perceptions can also be found among organizational members, such as sexual assessment by those in formal positions of power when interviewing, which may be translated into action but can also remain invisible.

Elusive sexuality – refers to the fact that sexuality is open to multiple interpretations, to the difficulty of producing accounts of sexuality and to the way in which sexuality often only appears by reference or allusion. Elusiveness also refers to the shortcomings of the written word that can give rise to research difficulties. Due to the elusiveness of sexuality, ambiguities, subtleties, rumors, gossip, joking, innuendoes and allusions become critical resources for researchers studying organizations. For example, gossip and rumor about sexual events are interesting sources of information, since regardless of their truth-value they say more about the teller or the organizational context than the object of gossip. The elusiveness of sexuality is also evident in joking, where sexual references are available, for example, for maintaining contact between employees, for affirming status and power and for coping with management or dull tasks. Hearn and Parkin conclude that the elusiveness of sexuality in organizations largely arises from the elusiveness of sexuality in society, where sexuality is displayed and exploited yet unknown and mystified.

Sexuality and organization are thus bound together in a dialectic relationship where sexuality constructs sexuality and sexuality constructs organization. In organization studies, however, this dialectic relationship is normally neglected as a result of the artificial division between sexuality and organization. Organizational life is not sexual in specific situations and sexuality does not occur separately from organizational members. In order to transcend this division and highlight the simultaneity of organization and sexuality, Hearn and Parkin suggest the concept of organization sexuality; a concept that does not privilege organization over sexuality. Power relations, such as men's power over women and heterosexuality over other sexualities, are maintained, reinforced and contested as well as mediated through processes of organization sexuality.

Hearn and Parkin highlight a number of interrelated concepts that conceptually constitute organization sexuality: physical movement and proximity of people, feelings and emotion, ideology and consciousness and language and imagery.

Both organizations and sexuality are combinations and discriminations of movement and proximity. Gaze, touch and proximity within organizations can be arranged and managed to both ignore and take account of sexual connotations at the same time. In medical organizations, for example, professional and organizational rules permit certain members, usually doctors and nurses, to touch and gaze at others, usually patients. However, in doing so, the rules confirm their sexual connotations.

Organizations are also places of emotion, and emotions are simultaneously sexual and organizational. Organizational sexuality includes complex patterns of sexual-emotion dependence and independence that affect the relationships between organizational members. For example, heterosexual relations between peers or colleagues are rarer due to the horizontal and vertical gender segregation in organizations. Moreover, the impact and interpretation of emotions vary according to gender, organizational context and position.

Organization sexuality can also be seen as ideology and consciousness. In most cases, organizational ideology can be characterized as patriarchal and heterosexual. While heterosexual ideology is not necessarily patriarchal, this is the most common form of patriarchal ideology in society and organizations. Hearn and Parkin point out that heterosexual ideology can also incorporate contradictions, such as the contradiction between men's heterosexuality in mixed-sex organizations and men's preference for other men. Moreover, organizational forms may represent or reinforce sexual ideology, like for example traditional forms of bureaucracy that can be seen as patriarchal in themselves. Finally, organizations are to a varying degree conscious of their sexual ideology. In fact, heterosexual ideology is seldom explicitly articulated or acknowledged.

Organization sexuality also exists at a symbolic level, through language and imagery. Organizations produce language and images and are simultaneously produced by them. Sexuality is expressed though language and imagery that also produce forms of sexuality. Thus, organization sexuality consists of a simultaneous interplay between language and imagery. Hearn and Parkin emphasize the importance of understanding how words are linked to meanings and things and how these are linked to other words. For example, the word secretary is associated with many meanings. It can mean a task definition, as well as a woman, an office wife, subservient, attractive, sexually available, prim, efficient, neat and so on. Moreover, having a secretary can also be a sign of power. It is through such processes of association that things may become sexualized. Finally, much of the power of sexuality in organizational contexts arises out of the ambiguous interplay with the supposedly 'desexualized' world of organizations. For example, the seemingly non-sexual appearance of objects such as uniforms may in fact, through the ambiguity of organization sexuality, paradoxically increase their sex-appeal. The more organizational and non-sexual something appears, the more sexual it becomes. In sum, organization sexuality occurs simultaneously and paradoxically through the social organization of movement and proximity within workplaces, patterns of feelings and emotions, the construction of ideology and consciousness, and the use of sexual language and imagery.

'Sex' at 'Work' in my work

The relationship between sexuality, gender and organization is thus very complex, which is of course reflected in the framework proposed by Hearn and Parkin. The framework is nevertheless very useful and has been an important reference in my work since I began researching gender and organization. One of the first papers I wrote as a doctoral student back in 1994 dealt with incidents of sexual harassment and of male colleagues frequenting strip clubs and brothels in work-related contexts, e.g. when entertaining customers or on business trips. For this research, my source documents included media texts reporting on a series of scandals, one involving a CEO accused of sexual harassment and a couple of incidents where politicians had visited strip clubs on official trips and when entertaining work-related guests. I developed this paper into a book chapter (Holgersson 1998) that later became the foundation for a larger research project on the organizational consequences of the use of sexual services in work-related situations.

The research project problematizes the use of sexual services as part of the operations of 'ordinary' work organizations, i.e. organizations that do not have sexuality as their primary goal, and highlights organizational and societal consequences of the linkages between 'ordinary' business and sex business, i.e. subordinated sexual organizations. Many studies have dealt with the consequences of the sex industry on women, men and children involved in selling sex. However, few have discussed the consequences of the use of these sexual services from an organizational perspective. Drawing on the work of Hearn and Parkin, I have interpreted colleagues' visits to strip clubs and brothels in work-related situations as homosocial processes in which a certain male identity that builds on the subjugation of women is confirmed in organizations. Hearn and Parkin highlight the complex and contradictory aspects of heterosexuality of such homosocial interactions among men. It is as if the heterosexual context of the strip club or brothel guarantees the heterosexuality of the men participating so that the intimate character of their relationship with each other is obscured. Visits to strip clubs and brothels also affect colleagues who do not participate. In my research, I have for example interviewed women in administrative positions who have had to deal with receipts from strip clubs and women professionals who have heard their male colleagues brag about visit to strips clubs. These women have been deeply offended by their colleagues' actions. My analysis shows that incidents such as these can both lead to the reinforcement of a sexist organizational culture and to overt critique and altered organizational practices depending on whether the issue is kept secret or discussed openly and what the approach to sexuality and gender is in the organization.

Studying sexuality in organizations is nevertheless difficult due to the secret and elusive aspects of it. It has been a challenge to find people with direct and indirect experience of incidents of visits to strips clubs and brothels in work-related situations who are willing to share their experiences in an interview. It has been difficult to explain that this is a legitimate research subject and that even their own reactions to hearsay are interesting from a research point of view. In order to find other sources of empirical data, Hearn and Parkin have inspired me to look at rules and policies. I have for example studied corporate codes of conduct in Swedish multinational companies and interviewed directors in charge of Human Resources and Corporate Social Responsibility issues on their work with these codes. Drawing on this empirical data, I have identified different approaches to sexuality, gender and organization. Although very few of the rules and policies in the corporations studied explicitly address issues of pornography and prostitution in work-related situations, such actions were not considered acceptable. The assumption was that organizational members, after having gone through training regarding codes of conduct, should understand that going to strip clubs or brothels in work-related situations is not acceptable, even if this type of behavior is not explicitly named. According to the directors, the consequences of such behavior might range from strong reprimands to dismissal. However, some directors discussed the difficulties of knowing where to draw the line between work time and private time, how much the company could interfere in their employees' lives and whether all employees were subject to the same demands on conduct. They also discussed that it was sometimes difficult to judge which actions were sexual and not acceptable, for example dance performances at corporate events.

The results of the project concur with Hearn and Parkin's discussions on the complexity of organization sexuality, how denial or silence regarding sexuality in organizations perpetuates power relations and how the ambiguity of organization sexuality makes it challenging to deal with from a management perspective. The project also highlights changes, at least at a discursive level, have taken place over the last decade regarding issues of sexuality and gender in these Swedish companies. There is indeed a common discourse among the directors interviewed, although not explicitly articulated, that visits to strip clubs and brothels are not acceptable, and although such incidents still occur they are not necessarily silenced or defended. However, these incidents are not only part of the reproduction and change of power relations in organizations, but also have an impact on the relationship between sexploitation organizations and subordinate sexual organizations. The incidents highlight how 'ordinary' organizations may both contribute to the expansion and increased legitimacy of the sex industry and to the undermining of the same.

Looking back at 'Sex' at 'Work'

Since the first edition of 'Sex' at 'Work', significant developments have affected organization sexuality. Firstly, the impact of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has been of great magnitude. 'Sex' at 'Work' was written before the Internet, email, mobile phones and text messaging became part of most people's everyday lives. Today, employers have to deal with new phenomena as a result of the development of ICTs. Surfing on pornographic websites, addiction to such surfing and sexual harassment through the use of email and text messages have become issues for employers to handle. ICTs have also had a deep impact on all aspects of sexploitation organizations dealing with prostitution, trafficking and pornography. Moreover, ICTs create possibilities for new forms of sexualities. Working life has also become more globalized, facilitated by ICT developments. An increasingly globalized world of business and politics and the continued expansion of the sex industry have given rise to new questions, in particular in relation to the ambitions of many global corporations of providing equal opportunities to employees irrespective of gender, ethnicity and sexuality.

This brings us to work for change where important developments have been made. For example, the women's movement as well as lesbian, gay and queer movements have both given rise to new organizations and have also changed conditions for existing organizations by affecting organizational policies and national and supra-national legislation. Some changes in legislation have also affected sexploitation organizations. For example, Sweden has introduced a law that only criminalized the 'buyers' of prostitution, while other countries such as the Netherlands and Germany have legalized prostitution or part of the sex business in work-related laws. Linked to these developments, there exists an on-going debate about the concept of 'sex work' that is often used to name the work performed in sexploitation organizations. The concept has been criticized, however, since it normalizes these activities instead of problematizing them. The concept of 'sex work' is nevertheless different from the concept of 'sexual work' proposed by Hearn and Parkin, that highlights the sexual component of work.

Although we find examples of organizational sexuality other than those offered by Hearn and Parkin, their framework for understanding organization sexuality continues to be relevant to the study of organizations. This is especially valuable since sexuality continues to be invisible in mainstream organization literature that in turn continues to be infused by sexist and heteronormative ideology. To quote the authors:

"The neglect of sexuality within organization theory, management theory and the like is in simple terms an example of the sexism of such theories. It is a particular instance of making invisible that which is already visible… It is an interesting example of ideology and how theoretical disciplines which attempt to undercover underlying structures and systems of organizations can in doing so ignore the 'obvious'" (Hearn & Parkin, 1987: 5).

Of course, some concepts have been developed further since the first edition was published. One such term is sexuality. As Hearn and Parkin note in the second edition, sexuality is today more commonly referred to in the plural, sexualities, in order to emphasize both the multitude of forms of sexuality beyond hetero- and homosexuality, and that sexualities are not fixed but subject to change. Although they do not use the term in the plural, Hearn and Parkin adopt a broad view on the different forms of sexuality. Moreover, they discuss the dominance of heterosexuality in society and the situation of lesbians and gay men in organizations; issues that are now further explored within queer studies.

Patriarchy is another term that has been much debated and that is no longer used as often as it used to be. Many scholars have opted for other concepts, such as gender order, that not only designate a specific form of power relation between women and men but a variety of gender relations. The main critique of the concept of patriarchy is that it has often referred to a monolithic and static system and is therefore not able to deal with the variation of power-relations over time and space. Many theories of patriarchy have also been criticized for focusing too narrowly on one base for the subordination of women. However, Hearn and Parkin adopt an understanding of power, and thus also of patriarchy, in which men's dominance is (re)produced, challenged and subverted through a variety of different processes and in relation to other social categories. They develop a multidimensional understanding of power in organizations by drawing on psychoanalytic, Marxist/socialist and radical feminist scholarship, as well as the work of Foucault. They show, in a convincing way, that power relations are the result of simultaneous interrelated material and discursive processes. It is interesting to examine this approach in the light of the developments within feminist theory and the influence of poststructuralist/postmodern feminist scholarship since the 1980s. After a strong focus on discursive constructions, and the critique that this approach may obscure power dimensions, there is today a call for reconsidering materialism. As Calás and Smircich (2006) write, there is now "a broader positive reassessment of the material for feminist theorizing." So, in view of the persistence of men's hegemony over women and the continued need to remind ourselves of the importance of a power perspective in research, the concept of patriarchy is most relevant.

'Sex' at 'Work' thus continues to provide a solid foundation for future, fruitful discussions about the (re)production and change of patriarchal power relations in organizations. Although the richness and complexity of the 'Sex' at 'Work' is difficult to convey in such a short text as this chapter, I hope my introduction will inspire scholars to read 'Sex' at 'Work' and explore the phenomenon of organization sexuality in order to further deepen our understanding of organizations and society.

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12 Rosabeth Moss Kanter

Men and Women of the Corporation

Anna Wahl

The "women's issue" and organization structure

Men and Women of the Corporation, by Rosabeth Moss Kanter, was published 1977. It is without doubt the most cited and referred to text in the field of gender, organization and management. It was considered a groundbreaking and innovative book at the time, but what is even more noteworthy is that it still provides plausible interpretations to analyses of empirical findings in organization studies. Reading the book again after a number of years still leaves me impressed by its extensiveness, lively language and images. It is first of all recognized for the structural analysis of gender in organizations. The cultural perspective on gender in organizations is also present throughout the text, although this has not left the same trace in later references. Kanter opens by referring to Adam Smith and Karl Marx, who agree on one essential point: the job makes the person. She continues by stating that corporations are the quintessential contemporary people-producers. The corporation chosen for her study, called Indsco, is one of the biggest and most powerful multinationals to dominate American industry and is also one of the most socially conscious. Indsco has taken an active look at its employment practices in order to live up to the designation "people-conscious organization". According to Kanter it is not a backward organization. The human problems associated with it illustrate the irresolvable dilemmas of large hierarchical organizations. The focus is on the people who work in offices and run the administrative apparatus of the large organization. The "women's issue" appears as a sub-theme. Somewhat rhetorically, Kanter asks "why is the women's issue joined with examination of the effects of organization structure?" Her answer is that the fate of women is inextricably bound up with organizational structure and processes. While life does not consist of infinite possibilities, the limits are not so much rooted in the person but are instead structural and situational. The problematic view of life in organizations is balanced by a hopeful vision of the transforming power of outside intervention. As Kanter concludes at the end of her introductory chapter, new tools can be provided and job relationships can be changed.

This groundbreaking book in the gender and organization field is, surprisingly enough, grounded in a gender-neutral perspective that is based on mainstream, gender-blind organizational theory. Overall, gender theory is lacking and feminism is mostly referred to as activism. The concept of gender is neither mentioned nor analyzed, but is surreptitiously referred to as the "women's issue". Gender related to power structures in society is avoided. The structural analysis aims at *replacing* explanations related to gender when analyzing women's subordination in organizations and in society. Notwithstanding, the book has been integrated into gender theorizing by a number of other scholars. In contrast, Kanter's structural analysis is regarded as basic when understanding that organizations are not integrated into mainstream organization theory to the same extent as in gender studies, in spite of the lack of gender theory. Although critics in the gender field are many, most make empathetic interpretations. When I analyze *Men and Women of the Corporation* using Kanter's own theorizing about gendered power relations, it serves as an example of the token woman who aims at acceptance by the male majority by confirming gender neutrality as a sign of loyalty in mainstream management theorizing. Paradoxically, the book is confirmatory in the sense that Kanter herself is the token woman in a male dominated field, who aims at acceptance by denying the importance of gender while claiming that it all comes down to numbers.

The players and the stage

A theoretical frame of reference is presented with which to understand corporate capitalism and the growth of managerial ideologies, including scientific management and human relations theory. The classic works of Max Weber, Frederick W. Taylor, Chester Barnard, Elton Mayo, Mary Parker Follet and Chris Argyris are referred to and discussed, also in relation to women. Kanter notes the emergence of a "masculine ethic" as part of the early image of managers. This "masculine ethic" elevates the traits assumed to belong to some men to necessitate effective management. The first thrust in management theory, scientific management, is to put the "rational man" into management. The "masculine ethic" was thus invoked as an exclusionary principle. The second thrust, human relations theory, concerned motivation and morale and acknowledged the human order behind the machine. This did not significantly change the image of the manager, however, but added "feminized" elements to the "masculine ethic" and to new forms of organizations, although management theory still told men how to be successful as men in the new organizational worlds. The image thus provided a rationale for women in management. Emotional fine-tuning was more appropriate in people-related functions. A pervasive stereotype of women is that they are "too emotional" and, because of this, unfit for management, in contrast to the male monopoly of rationality. While management was being defined as a masculine pursuit, more routine office work was being feminized, Kanter concludes. Men and women of the corporation relate to each other and to their work through jobs that are sex-segregated and laden with idealized images of the capacities of the people in them. Legends about old presidents are retold and the corporate headquarters are described in detail. Images of buildings of glass and steel, gleaming chrome elevators, tables with coffee and bagels and dining room interiors give us a lively idea of the surroundings. The dining room was divided into two parts: a large cafeteria for everyone and a small area with already set tables, hostess seating, menus and waitress service. The tables were occupied by groups of men and the women tended to eat in the cafeteria. Special meetings were held in the individual executive dining rooms and conference areas on the top floor. Corporate officers were to be found at the very top of the building on the forty-fifth floor, where the silence was described as deafening.

Two major types of corporate personnel occupied the crowded elevators at headquarters: immaculate men in dark, tailored business suits and more colorfully and casually dressed women who were almost exclusively secretaries. Managers of whatever sex (the concept gender is never used) were likely to present a tailored, conservative appearance. Others dressed less professionally. Someone explained that: "You can easily tell the professional women from the secretaries by their shoes. The professionals wear pumps and the secretaries wear four-inch wedgies". The casualness of younger secretaries' attire made some men uncomfortable, while others enjoyed having young women around. Kanter concluded that a formal and an informal company culture were reflected in language, rituals and styles of communication. Many men seemed more confused than hostile about the trickling of women into management, but there were also those who were openly angry. Some men did not know how to respond to changes, as many of them had literally never interacted with a woman who was anything but a secretary or a wife.

Structures and processes

The seductiveness of opportunity and how this creates self-fulfilling prophecies and accounts for what might seem to be "sex differences" in work behavior is also explored and analyzed. The part relating to *numbers* is beyond doubt the most influential when theorizing about gender and organization. It explores the situation of the "token" woman and how she manages, and fails to manage, her situation.

Numbers: minorities and majorities

At managerial and professional levels women held less than ten percent of the positions, and at these levels no women reported to officers. The few are called "tokens" and are treated as representatives of their category and as symbols rather than individuals. The numerical distribution created strikingly different interaction contexts for women than for men. The most cited part of Kanter's book is *why tokens face special situations*. The rarity of tokens is associated with three perceptual tendencies: visibility, contrast and assimilation. They are derived from the ways in which objects are perceived. Kanter illustrated this phenomenon by using the letters "x" for majority and "o" for minority persons. If a group of managers consists of x persons, you will notice the differences between them. They will look different – tall, small, fat or thin – as illustrated by the upper and lower case 'x's' below. However, a typical situation of a large number of male managers and a single woman manager will be perceived like this:

X x x X x X X X x x x X O x X X X x

The O in the above line stands out. It may be overlooked, but if seen at all will get more attention than the X's that now appear similar and homogenous. Visibility tends to put performance pressure on the token. Contrast leads to heightening of dominant culture boundaries, including isolation of the token. Assimilation results in the token's role encapsulation. Some of the expressions and consequences of the structural effects that are explored in the book are listed in the following text.

Visibility:

- Upper level women become public creatures
- Mistakes are known
- Freedom of action is restricted
- Displayed as a showpiece
- Visible as category members and representatives of women
- Hard to get achievements noticed
- Focus on appearance and other non-ability traits
- Make dominants look bad when performance is outstanding
- Blend into the male culture to become socially invisible

Contrast:

- Exaggeration of the token's differences
- Interruptions as reminders of difference
- Informal isolation
- Loyalty tests
- Defining themselves as exceptions and turning against other women

Assimilation:

- Fit pre-existing generalizations about women
- Status leveling; being taken for secretaries, wives or mistresses
- The woman's slot
- Stereotyped informal roles; mother, seductress, pet and iron maiden
- Easier to accept stereotyped roles than to fight them
- Role encapsulation confirms dominants stereotypes and proves them right

In a situation in which there are two tokens in the organization, dominants can prevent an alliance between them by making comparisons. For example, one woman was identified as the success and the other as the failure. The woman given the success label felt relieved to be included, recognizing that alliance with the identified failure would jeopardize her acceptance. However, there has to be more than two, or a few, women if supportive alliances are to develop between women in the token context. Organizational, social and personal ambivalence surrounds women in token situations, which in turn means dilemmas and contradictions, here summed up as:

- Tokens are simultaneously representatives and exceptions
- They are made aware of their differences from the dominants, but must often pretend that the differences do not exist, or have no implications
- Tokens are among the most visible and dramatized of performers, yet they are kept away from the organizational backstage where the dramas are cast
- Tokens are the quintessential "individuals" in the organization, since they stand apart from peer group members, yet they lose their individuality behind stereotyped roles that can distort their sense of self
- Situations that are supposedly relaxing (after work drinks, dinners, sporting events etc) are often the most stressful for tokens, when defined positions and structured interaction disappear
- Tokens suffer from loneness, but seek advantage by dissociating themselves from other women.

Opportunity

The incentives for mobility and success meant moving up the hierarchy. Some jobs became stepping-stones on the path to upper management. The appropriate pathway to desirable managerial jobs was to hold a variety of positions across functions for two or three years. Especially advantaged were those placed on "fast tracks", identified as outstanding performers who moved up faster than the norm. For those who had it, opportunity was seductive and linked self-image to career progress. They invested themselves in work and concerned themselves with the things that would be useful on their upward journey.

Mobility could be blocked in several ways. Among the stuck, the largest category of people was those who had not had much opportunity to begin with. Most women clericals and supervisors of office workers and personnel were in this situation; stuck in what were called dead-end jobs. Among them, the occupational culture developed around and supported a lower level of aspirations, concerns about security and low-risk activities.

Women in low-mobility organizational situations develop attitudes and orientations that are sometimes said to be characteristic of women as a group, but can be viewed as responses to blocked opportunities. Kanter closes by stating that there are costs for those with very little opportunity, also to the organization. But there are also costs related to those with great opportunity for the organization. The promise of increased power can breed competiveness, an instrumental orientation towards relationships, an upwards political focus and an excessive absorption in work. Here Kanter again makes a gender-neutral comment when being skeptical to calling this a "male style" of career. She regards it a response to the way that large hierarchies are structured regardless of whether men or women are in power. Gender studies, in contrast, have proved how constructions of masculinities in organizations differ from constructions of femininity in relation to power structures and career opportunities.

Power

Organizational politics was a fascinating topic of conversation at Indsco. People watched for signs of favor and inclusion. Kanter defines power as the ability to get things done, mobilize resources, get and use whatever it is that a person needs to meet his/her goals. Having a powerful boss was considered an important element in career progress and the development of competence, just as lack of success was seen as a function of working under a dead-ender. Power could be accumulated as a result of performance or job-related activities. In order for activities to enhance power they had to be visible enough to attract the attention of others. Power comes from long-term and stable social connections. Alliances should include "sponsors" (mentors in the organization), peers and subordinates. The importance of power in organizations and the behavioral consequences of powerlessness for management styles explain clichés about women's lack of potential for organizational leadership. Women were more often in powerless positions, and were judged as less suitable for management. Preference for power means a preference for men, as men dominate in power positions. If you want to survive it is safer to prefer men in management positions. According to Kanter, stereotypes of women managers as bossy, too sensitive, overly concerned with detail and too critical are connected with people who are powerless. Powerlessness tends to produce those characteristics attributed to women managers, as women's nature.

Roles and images

Three dominant groups are chosen in the analysis, all of which contribute to the understanding of management and to gendered constructions of management. The forces that lead men who manage to reproduce themselves in kind and the reasons for conformity pressures on managers are explored. How secretaries are rewarded for behavior that keeps their mobility low is described, and the sources of resistance to changing jobs are analyzed. The peculiar position of the wives of male managers and the dilemmas confronting corporate wives as their career sequences unfold in parallel to their husbands are also discussed.

Managers

The similarities in appearance among managers are striking, which reveals the extent of conformity pressures on managers. They rely on outward manifestations to determine the right kind of person. Commenting on this phenomenon, a metaphor that Kanter develops is the "bureaucratic kinship system, based on homosexual reproduction", where men reproduce themselves in their own image. Conformity pressures and the development of exclusive management circles stem from the degree of uncertainty surrounding managerial positions. Personal discretion that embraces social issues like trust, loyalty, commitment, mutual understanding and the sharing of values becomes crucial. Greater uncertainty increases the pressure to form homogenous groups. Uncertainty, discretion and the need for trust are three concepts that Kanter introduces in her analysis of the homogenous management group. The social homogeneity of business leaders is also marked by similarities concerning class background and other social characteristics. They are largely white, protestant men from elite schools. People without the necessary social characteristics tend to be clustered in those parts of management with the least uncertainty, namely away from the top and in staff positions. Most women have found management opportunities in low uncertainty, non-discretionary positions with more routine functions and in expert rather than decision-making roles. They are also found in areas where least social contact and organizational communication are required, i.e. in staff roles rather than line management.

Communication and the preference for social certainty are the next two concepts introduced in the analysis of managers. Kanter refers to other studies that confirm her findings that managers spend most of their time talking: in meetings, on the phone and at business luncheons. The structure of communication involved in management generated a desire for smooth social relationships and a preference for people with whom communication would be easy. Women were decidedly placed in the category of the incomprehensible and unpredictable. Many men felt uncomfortable having to communicate with women. It was described as taking more time, never knowing where you stood and not knowing how to treat them.

The last concept introduced by Kanter to interpret conformity pressures in management was the demand for loyalty, expressed by the term management as total devotion. Loyalty to the company was an important part of a manager's self-perception and was shown in accepting demands for unbounded commitment. Sixty-hour working weeks were typical, as was a visit to the office on a Sunday. Pressures for total dedication sometimes served to include wives in peripheral roles, but also to exclude many other women from employment as managers. Men in management were concerned about the suitability of women in managerial positions when affirmative action officers tried to enlist support for women in management. The issue behind this had to do with marriage, Kanter concluded. The question of marriage was contradictory to women in management. Sometimes the message was that being single was an advantage, and sometimes the opposite was expressed. Women had been told that they could not be given important jobs because they were likely to get married and leave, or that they could not be promoted because they would probably become pregnant and leave.

The implications are that management becomes a closed circle in response to uncertainty and communication pressures. This promotes social conformity as a standard for conduct. Forces insisting that trust means total dedication serve to exclude those, like women, who are seen as incapable of such single-minded attachment. There is a self-fulfilling prophesy in this, where the more closed the circle, the more difficult it is for outsiders to break in.

Secretaries

Secretaries added a personal touch with color, signs of individuality and taste. They remembered birthdays, were expected to look out for personal things and to see to the comfort of guests. In many ways, visually, socially and organizationally, the presence of secretaries represented human qualities in the organization. The work involved the most routine of tasks and at the same time the most personal of relationships. As there was little chance of leaving the secretarial ranks for another job in the company, secretaries learned to count on a relationship with a boss as their reward. The secretary-boss relationship is the most striking instance of the retention of patrimony within bureaucracy, Kanter explained. Three important aspects of the social organization of the relationship were conceptualized as status contingency, principled arbitrariness and fealty.

Status contingency refers to the fact that secretaries, primarily, and managers, secondarily, derived status in relation to each other. Secretaries derived their formal rank and level of reward not from their skills or the tasks they performed but from the formal rank of their boss. His power determined the power of the secretary. Sometimes secretaries functioned as status symbols for executives, and managers tended to want highly skilled secretaries as a way of inflating their own importance. Personal appearance, attractiveness and social skills, were factors that affected a secretary's career prospects. They became identified with their bosses, and could be disliked and avoided if their bosses were disliked.

Principled arbitrariness stands for the absence of limits on managerial discretion and the personal latitude managers had around their secretaries. There was a constant flow of orders instead of routines. Personal services were expected of secretaries, like watering plants, cleaning cups and serving coffee. They also participated in presenting a front, where chaos behind the scenes was transformed into order. They really knew how bosses spent their time and set the stage to impress visitors. They served as a buffer between the manager and the rest of the world, controlling access and protecting him from callers.

The third patrimonial feature, as Kanter called them, was forces toward fealty, an expectation of personal loyalty where secretaries should derive their primary rewards from the relationship with their particular bosses. Her access to the real story about her boss made it important that she would not compete for his job. Secretaries occupied a separate career ladder. Relationships of fealty developed and secretaries were offered symbolic rewards. The manager restricted the secretary's freedom, but she lacked similar rights to restrict him. He evaluated her, but she seldom evaluated him. She was rewarded for her attitude rather than her skills, and for her loyalty rather than her talent. Love was one non-material reward secretaries were supposed to appreciate, which was translated into constant praise for secretaries. Women were supposed to be managed through flattery, and a constant flow of "thank you" and compliments. They were expected to be bound by ties of personal loyalty, to value non-utilitarian rewards and to be available as emotional partners. The image of what secretaries wanted was shaped by these expectations, and was extended to the image of what all women in organizations wanted.

These elements in the relation between manager and secretary can be captured by an often-used marriage metaphor of the secretary as an office wife. Kanter finished by stating that forces perpetuating low mobility were connected to secretaries' working conditions. They were locked into self-perpetuating cycles in which job and opportunity structure encouraged personal orientations that reinforced low pay and low mobility. The fact that these jobs were almost entirely held by women reinforced stereotypical views of the nature of women at work.

Wives

Some managers' wives considered themselves as unpaid workers for the corporation, in the sense of direct services and the cost of opportunity options they had forgone in their own lives. They saw themselves as very much inside the corporate system. Men could thus bring two people to the organization, and there was a preferential hiring of married men. But women managers did not have this advantage. There was no "corporate husband" equivalent to the "corporate wife". When a man enters upper management the wife's role is shaped by the growing importance of the husband's involvement in company social networks. There is a career progression of a corporate wife, including increasing visibility, with each shift in phase. Kanter analyzed what she called a number of dilemmas that corporate wives had to handle regarding inclusion/exclusion, instrumentality/sentimentality and publicness/privateness. There is only a brief comment about signs that women married to Indsco managers no longer deserved to be known as wives but had primary identities elsewhere. This part of the book was somewhat difficult to relate to Nordic and Swedish circumstances when the book was first published. We recognize the asymmetric power relation between top male managers and their supporting wives, but the situation with full-time housewives was and still is less dominant in Swedish working life. More often than not women married to male managers in Sweden have some kind of career that makes organizational expectations of being a full-time wife less common.

On the shoulders of Rosabeth

The most problematic aspect of *Men and Women of the Corporation* is the lack of a theory about gender and the general approach to gender relations from both a societal and organizational perspective. Feminist theorists have criticized this, but at the same time have given credit to the impact of Kanter's study on feminist theory (Acker 1991, Cockburn 1990, Pringle 1989, Witz and Savage 1992).

Particular critical concern has also been directed to parts of her theorizing, where the de-gendering of power is one crucial point. Kanter tends to neglect the asymmetrical power and domination of managers and men (Collinson and Hearn 1995). The social construction of men and masculinities is as much about relations between men as those between women and men. It is when Kanter moves from description to explanation that problems in her analysis begin to emerge, according to Collinson and Hearn (1995: 5). Kanter explains homosocial reproduction ("homosexual" is the term used) with reference to the nature of management itself, inherent with uncertainty. Kanter fails to see that constructions of gender are integrated in organizational structures and in power relations. Gender issues are not only concerned with structural effects. Later and more critical organizational studies of gender and management have examined power relations as forms of asymmetrical domination in contemporary organizations. Overall, the critical studies of men and constructions of masculinities, following Kanter, explore, develop and analyze men's systematic domination of women and the structure of gendered power relations in organizations. Particularly by examining the interwoven significance of the asymmetrical power of men and managers, and its mutual reproduction in organizational practices, the weaknesses in Kanter's argument are revealed (Collinson and Hearn 1995). I will now leave the overall criticism about the lack of gender theory and the inbuilt de-gendering of power and management. It has been articulated, and taken in. The book is enough of a "landmark" and "classic" to be thoroughly criticized and to live on.

Secretaries and wives

Re-reading the book made me reflect on which parts, in a much less general sense, could be regarded as outdated. The chapters on secretaries and wives were not really plausible in a Swedish, or probably Nordic, context. Housewives supporting their husband full-time as a general phenomenon seemed outdated when I first read Kanter in 1980. The chapter about wives could, however, easily be related to the Nordic tradition of using the "relative subordination" concept (Haavind 1982). In our gender equality discourse, being a housewife was not accepted, although the subordination of the wives of male managers and executives was obvious – and still is according to contemporary studies of managers in Sweden.

The role of clerical women in organizations is still credible, even though the secretarial role has changed dramatically since the 1970s, due for example to the use of personal computers. Contemporary organizations are still marked by gendered structures, however, where segregation and gendered positions place women in subordinate jobs in relation to men.

Gender structures in organizations

Finally I turn to my own thesis *Gender Structures in Organizations* (Wahl, 1992). When planning my doctoral project in 1983 Kanter's book was very important to me. I was mostly inspired by feminist theories from anthropology, history and sociology. Empirically and theoretically I leaned on fantastic and radical Norwegian work-life studies (e.g. Holter, 1984; Haavind, 1984; Waerness, 1980). But, when it came to management studies there was nothing – except Kanter! The lack of a critical perspective on gender and power was not problematic to me, however, because I found relations to feminist theories elsewhere on which to build my scientific position and critical perspective.

I was first of all inspired by the structural perspective on women's situation as managers in organizations. The lift from the individual perspective, that dominated most "women in management" studies, was innovative. As a consequence, I looked for the women that could have been in top management positions in my empirical study, instead of studying the few that were already there. Instead of selecting women in minority situations, tokens, I constructed a potential group of women managers, namely MBA's and engineers. Secondly, I related to Kanter's way of analyzing the response of the minority women to structural effects. It was of great importance to articulate an understanding of the ways in which women reacted and acted in organizations, in relation to the reproduction of men's dominance in management positions. I used and developed theory about women's strategies for survival in the analysis. I still find it very central to understand the situation of women in minority and why they adopt a gender-neutral, relative or positive strategy (Wahl, 1992). This is crucial to an understanding of why change takes so long, and why women's practices are part of processes that reproduce men's power in organizations.

From minority to majority managers and the issue of culture and sexuality

In later work during the 1990s I copied others and turned my focus from minority women to majority men in management (Collinson and Hearn, 1996; Höök, 2001; Holgersson, 2003). In several studies the men and the reproduction of men's dominance in management resulted in the development of theories about homosociality and the relation between constructions of masculinities and constructions of management (Wahl, 1996; Wahl et al., 1994; Wahl et al., 2003). I remember being surprised when re-reading Kanter at the time, that so much was articulated in her book about the way that men reproduced themselves, which was also helpful in my research into men and masculinities. Indeed, the cultural aspects in the descriptions are still interesting and valid.

There are many references to the subject of sexuality in organizations even though this is not specifically articulated or analyzed. The whole issue of relations between male managers and secretaries and wives, the discussion about the meaning of marriage in relation to female managers' careers, the seductress stereotype and the obvious heterosexual norm at Indsco are all present in Kanter's text. These are also subjects that have been further explored in later work, e.g. Hearn and Parkin (1987).

The impact on teaching and management training

Ever since I first started teaching "gender and organization" in the early 1990s, the theories relating to numbers, minorities and majorities have been of immense importance, since they illustrate the difference between an individual and a structural perspective on gender in organizations. The same goes for lectures on management training and courses in gender equality. On innumerable occasions women and men in groups have for the first time expressed an understanding of their previous experience of majority/minority situations in organizations. They often share situations with me, or the group, through which they can interpret themselves, other women or men in organizations, in new and illuminating ways. It is easy to relate to the X's and the O's, and the structural effects can be transformed into contemporary, local experience in inventive processes in the room. It is usually easy to move on to more sensitive concepts like homosociality/heterosociality and from there, gendered power perspectives. In addition, it is helpful when moving away from the recurring essentialist and biologist approaches often articulated in teaching and lecturing situations by participants.

I am most thankful to this giant, who has influenced the thinking and theorizing of so much in the gender, organization and management field. She has also inspired critical dialogue among researchers in the field, and had an impact on development in different directions.

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13 Gunnar Myrdal

Objectivity and Social Research

Elisabeth Sundin

The necessity of critical social science

I am a Professor of Business Administration (företagsekonomi in Swedish) in Sweden. This discipline is one of the largest, and is studied by a substantial number of students at all levels at universities and colleges throughout the country. This means that our task is extraordinarily important, in that it is we who educate and train the leaders of the future. The content of business administration is unique in Scandinavia because it is so broad and incorporates areas that in other countries are spread across a range of disciplines, such as accounting, financing, entrepreneurship and human resource management. For this reason, our theoretical core is difficult to define. However, it is accepted that our unique competence lies in the fact that we understand how organisations work.

We are a social science, part of the faculty of social sciences, even if our teaching duties are also outside our own faculty. Our research deals with social phenomena. Social science research is, in my view, the most important research field. If doctors and medical researchers fail it can lead to negative consequences for individuals and groups of individuals. The same applies to those working in technology. But if we fail, major catastrophes will ensue and democracies are likely to be toppled. As a rule, the answers to medical and technology questions and failings also lie in the social sciences. Environmental issues are an illustrative example of this, since although causes can be explained by natural scientists, the consequences must be dealt with by society, and the social scientists are the ones responsible for that research. For this reason it is important that we do a good job. However, this is considerably more difficult for us than for other academic fields, given that the debate relating to the aims and means of scholarship must be continually maintained in our subject. This was clearly stated by Gunnar Myrdal – my choice of giant on whose shoulders we stand!

Academic disciplines and fields are sometimes referred to as communities. Within such communities internal norms and criteria develop. It is, or in any case it has been, the researchers themselves who determine what good science is. Those who rebel against the prevailing conceptions in their own group risk both their position and their reputation. Calling into question is more cherished in theory (to use the expression in a very everyday sense) than in practice. Genuine paradigm shifts are preceded by major disputes, with most disputes not leading to paradigm shifts but to frustrated researchers and ruined careers. Yet, a critical stance – critical of one's own fraternity, our own taken-for-granted truths and theories, our methods and prevailing conceptions of 'how things are' in the world and in our society – is of central importance for the survival of research and our justification for existence. One could say: no critical stance, no science.

In this article I highlight Gunnar Myrdal and his ideas. He challenged both his own fraternity and general conceptions about how things are. Gunnar Myrdal was a Swedish economist who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1974. When re-reading Myrdal I was struck by the similarities to the observations and criticism made by many feminist researchers. I therefore use examples from feminist research because they are powerful illustrations of the importance of Myrdal's work and how his findings have been continued. I view his dual undertaking, of criticising and questioning his own field and his questioning of predominant conceptions in society, as being of the utmost importance. This dual task is particularly salient, and particularly difficult, for social scientists.

Gunnar Myrdal's Objectivity in Social Research

When I read the Swedish translation of *Objectivity in Social Research* (1968) in the mid-1970s, I was a young PhD student at the University of Umeå. We were a group of young researchers who, under the leadership of our also young professor (Rolf Lundin), oriented ourselves among both classical and newer thinkers who had written or were writing about the development of society or about the social sciences. As it made a great impression on me at the time I have chosen to draw on this book in this chapter. When not otherwise stated, the references refer to this book.

My first reading of *Objectivity in Social Research* was an aha-experience. There were a number of reasons for that. Firstly, Gunnar Myrdal was an economist. My impression of economists, especially in discussions with those of us studying business and management, was that they always claimed they knew best. The basis of their cocksureness was that they regarded their own discipline as more scientific than other fields – due to its clarity and precision of definition, its manner of asking questions, formulating hypotheses and answering those questions – i.e. their methods. In short, they had a critical stance to everyone apart from themselves. Secondly, Myrdal was in a way conducting the same discussions as Kuhn (1962) on scientific truths and re-examination, although Myrdal did this from a social science perspective. For that reason his discussions relating to scientific shortcomings were more pressing and more difficult than those I had encountered before. But therein lay also the challenge. Examples from the natural sciences, for example between those who viewed the earth as flat and those who claimed it was round, are amusing illustrations of scientific controversies. The controversies that exist within the social sciences are harder to illustrate.

Objectivity in Social Research is a slim volume of only 100 pages and was based on a manuscript that Myrdal wrote for a lecture delivered on receipt of an academic prize at an American university. The positions that Myrdal put forward had developed over several decades of lecturing and publishing. The book is therefore a summary and cultivation of insights gained from studies of various economic and political phenomena. Thus, in his presentation of Myrdal in the series 'Great Thinkers in Economics' (2008), William J. Barber states that: "The first phase of his career included a critique of the tendency of mainstream economic theory to incorporate implicit value judgements into its conceptual framework." These also contained political biases. Myrdal demonstrated that the claims of value-neutral innocence made for economic theory were erroneous (the citation from page xi is from *The Political Element in the Development of Economic Theory,* which was published in English in 1953, more than 20 years after its publication in Swedish and German).

In this chapter I use several of Myrdal's examples of the valuation-guided bias that exists in the social sciences. I also take up his argument that it should be different, as well as how researchers and research should work to achieve a better situation. Myrdal was convinced of the importance of good quality research in the social sciences – and so am I, as stated at the very beginning of this chapter. Striving for objectivity is particularly important and I will return to this definition and ambition at the end of the chapter. The objectivity question includes all those misrepresentations and imperfections that Myrdal wrote about. Below I discuss value-laden concepts, researcher characteristics, questions (and non-questions) as an expression of the value judgements and the significance of the boundaries of the discipline for the research conducted. Each section begins with a quote from the chosen book. This is followed by some of Myrdal's arguments on the issue, and thereafter my own reflections and discussions on the relevance for research and society today. In some respects times have moved on from Myrdal. In other respects he is, unfortunately or fortunately, very current.

Concepts with implicit value judgements

> Our whole literature is permeated by value judgements, despite prefatory statements to the contrary. But these conclusions are not presented as inferences from explicit value premises; rather, in the age-old fashion, it is claimed they are evident from the nature of things: as part of what is presented as objective data. They are most often introduced by loading the terminology. Words like for instance, "equilibrium", "balance", "stable", "normal", "adjustment", "lag", or "function" have in all the social sciences served as a bridge between presumably objective analysis and political prescription
>
> *(page 52 referring to An American Dilemma, pp. 1047 ff.).*

Myrdal claims, therefore, that many concepts in the sphere of the social sciences are mixed with a meaning that is rarely made explicit. *Stable, equilibrium* and *function* are examples of terms that Myrdal cites – they appear to be value-neutral but are used and interpreted in a value-loaded way. Myrdal writes that there is nothing wrong in using value-loaded concepts, but this presupposes that "they are clearly defined in terms that explicitly state value premises" (p. 61). It is in this last point that we find the greatest deficiencies. Myrdal illustrates the use of the concept 'function' by placing it in the discourse of entrepreneurship (as we express it nowadays). He writes as follows: "It may, for instance, be said that it is the 'function of the entrepreneur to shoulder that risks' or 'to combine the factors of production' or 'to direct production.'" However, in economics it is, as we know, so very easy to proceed as follows:

> As a reward for performing this function, he receives a profit, and there after to go further and to regard the fact that the entrepreneur fulfils a 'function' as constituting some kind of justification for the profit he receives.
>
> *(Barber, 2008: 13)*

This quotation clearly demonstrates how topical Myrdal's book is in certain details. Entrepreneurship and its implicit value-loading are still popular in political and academic arenas today. Entrepreneurs are the heroes of our time and the hunt for them is on, as Karin Berglund (2007) puts it. Within the field we can find tendencies to question, for example gender researchers (Ahl, 2002 and 2006; Berglund, 2007; Sundin, 2002) and researchers who problematise the delimitations of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs to include only positive outcomes for individuals and society and a certain type of context (Rehn and Taalas, 2004). The debate in the main furrow of research, i.e. that conducted at the most prestigious conferences and in the most prestigious journals, corresponds with Myrdal's conclusion that social scientists "move as a flock, reserving their controversies and particular originalities for matters that do not call into question the fundamental system of biases they share" (p. 53). An expression of this is that those researchers who classify themselves as entrepreneurship researchers largely applaud entrepreneurs and stress the importance of their function. Positive researchers like this are very much in demand – to advise decision-makers and provide courses for entrepreneurs. Academic discussions in the value-impregnated main furrow refer to aspects such as the definitions and delimitations of given value judgements – related to individuals or functions – within the framework. Genuinely calling into question is, however, rare.

Today, 'leadership' is one of those terms that, in my view, 'tops the list' of value-loaded phenomena but is seldom questioned.[17] Of course, in academic contexts researchers discuss how leadership should be defined, whether there are differences in leadership between women and men, between young and old, between different sectors and so on, as well as what the best type of leadership is. The fact that leadership exists and is important in organisations and in society is seldom questioned, however. People usually call for greater and clearer leadership rather than less. In connection with this critical attention is not often drawn to conflicts and power. In other words, in order for someone to lead there must be someone who needs to be led. The importance of leadership is also emphasised in a 'Godlike' manner, infiltrating a range of areas such as 'healthcare management'. Old designations like 'personnel work' are also ousted and replaced by 'human resource management'.

The examples given here suffice to show that Myrdal's observations still hold today and that there is reason to assume that they have actually increased in significance. I will list a few more concepts to reflect on: 'co-worker' (previously employee), 'competence', 'technology intensive', 'network', 'high (or low) in the value chain', 'project' and 'efficiency'. I usually tell my students and colleagues that the latter term, efficiency, in the constellation 'efficient organisations', is what I want my teaching and research to lead to. No-one can be against 'efficient organisations' or 'good quality', I often say. My audience, whether they be students, researchers or practitioners, usually nod in agreement. But what are actually they nodding for and what am I actually saying? On reflection, perhaps I should refrain from making such a cocksure claim and start to ask which implicit value judgements I am aiming at?

In the social sciences we should concern ourselves with reflection on and a questioning of our central concepts, which is after all what Myrdal seeks. It is depressingly easy to see a number of contexts in which we social science researchers 'go hand in hand' with the practitioners who are seeking support and legitimacy from us. Here the more appropriate metaphor would rather be 'the blind leading the blind'. We are not doing our job if we do not critically reflect on social phenomena and interpret them.

Even researchers are human

> In our profession there is a lack of awareness even today that, in searching for truth, the student, like all human beings whatever they try to accomplish, is influenced by tradition, by his environment, and by his personality. Further, there is an irrational taboo against discussing this lack of awareness. It is astonishing that this taboo is commonly respected, leaving the social scientist in naiveté about what he is doing *(p. 4)*.

The book that I am using here as my point of departure is infused with such observations, i.e. that researchers are human beings who are shaped by their background, their experiences and their personalities (although the latter expression is seldom used nowadays). Researchers carry all this 'baggage' with them wherever they go. They cannot leave it behind when they leave their normal private world and enter the world of academia.

That researchers' experiences beyond the academic world also influence their research, from the research question through to analysis, is also acknowledged by social science researchers. After first reading Myrdal's book I noticed that people referred specifically to him and to the book to justify the fact that information of that type was provided for readers. I seem to remember that this was especially the case for authors of academic works with a gender perspective, who in the foreword emphasised their sex/gender[18], sexual orientation, race and in some cases parenthood inter alia. The intention was no doubt to provide information that would help the reader to uncover any particular bias. Curiously, other researchers with no gender consciousness poked fun at such information, seeing it as proof of a lack of objectivity. They viewed themselves as objective and able to place themselves above such personal preferences and experiences. In many research fields, such as organisation studies to which I am mainly referring, it is precisely as Myrdal writes, namely the taboo that is commonly respected. Myrdal's point is that such an attitude is naive; a viewpoint with which I fully agree.

An important human characteristic of researchers is their sex/gender. Another recurrent theme is the academic schooling and groups to which researchers belong. This theme will be taken up a little later in connection with a discussion about the effect on and of discipline boundaries.

Research questions and missing research questions – expressions of value judgements

> There is an inescapable *a priori* element in all scientific work. Questions must be asked before answers can be given. The questions are all expressions of our interest in the world; they are at bottom valuations *(p. 9)*.

One aim of research is to provide answers to questions posed. Myrdal writes that the questions we ask are a result of our value judgements. The questions are "at bottom valuations". Without valuations we have no interest or sense of relevance or significance, and consequently no object. This is perhaps self-evident. Many choices and valuations precede academic question formulations. Already as undergraduates this is a choice and an expression of our interests (or those of our friends, or of our parents' ambitions). There are considerable differences in views and understanding between students of different subjects. The same holds true at postgraduate level. Even when we join an established research project with already established research questions, this is also a choice based on our valuations. The same is true for those who, for example, for career reasons choose a subject that leads to sure and quick results. This is also an expression of value judgements – even if perhaps not of a type that Myrdal would sympathise with. Thus, many choices, guided by value judgements, precede the choice of questions put by researchers in their academic work.

When research problems and questions have been formulated, the way the questions are asked is also a result of choices governed by value judgements similar to those cited above, namely tradition and context. This, for instance, can concern which method is regarded as appropriate in the subject or at the institute in question. If questions with fixed answer alternatives are posed this obviously determines the answers, although so-called open answers can also be directing and directed. Even questions that address existing material are a result of value judgements, for instance in what material the answers are sought – the union's minutes or the owner's? Perspectives and interpretations are choices. The findings of Joan Acker (1974) are an example of this. When re-reading the findings of the Hawthorne studies she found that the conclusions were drawn from a group of workers that was quite different from the majority with regard to sex, age and ethnicity.

There are many examples from various academic fields of how the characteristics of the researcher, as discussed above, change both the questions asked and the way of asking them. I will illustrate this with two concrete examples: the first is connected with where, i.e. in what region and what place the researcher lives and works and the second is connected with gender. When the University of Umeå was founded, archaeologists at the university began to dig in the vicinity so to speak. A result was that Sweden's earliest history had to be rewritten, because up to that point academics had believed that archaeological finds were concentrated in Uppland and Scania, i.e. close to the oldest universities of Uppsala and Lund respectively. This literal example shows that what you find depends on where you dig. The other, gender-related example is in fact several examples from various academic fields and disciplines, all of which produced the same results. When women entered academia they began to study women in society and we had to rewrite (or in any case complement) the histories of art, literature, education and even economy. Not only were women's perspectives and experiences systematically excluded by researchers, but other subordinate groups or categories were also neglected. An example of this is small companies, to which researchers paid little attention until politicians began to demand knowledge about them.

The examples of women and small companies illustrate that it is not only the questions that are asked that express value judgments. The questions that are not asked do this too. Myrdal formulates it as follows: "The hypothesis is that we almost never face a random lack of knowledge. Ignorance, like knowledge, is purposefully directed" (p. 29). Such neglect is found at individual, organisational and societal levels.

I will end this section on questions by also saying something about answers. Myrdal writes (p. 9) that: "Valuations are thus necessarily involved already at the stage when we observe facts and carry on theoretical analyses." In the social sciences no facts are simply waiting to be uncovered. Facts are ordered, systematised and grouped to give them meaning. The concept 'interpretation', which is often used nowadays in social science contexts, is appropriate here. Researchers often make interpretations even though they themselves believe that they are presenting simple facts.

Disciplinary boundaries

Problems are "in reality (there are) not economic, sociological or psychological problems, but simply problems, and as a rule they are complex" (p.10). It is of course self-evident that individual researchers or research groups are unable to work on everything and that every discipline is not able to address every relevant question. Nevertheless, we should be conscious that formulated research questions are the result of a great many choices. Sometimes subjects or communities erect strict boundaries – sometimes it is the researchers themselves. Subject boundaries are often unnecessarily restrictive, however, which hinders the acquisition of adequate knowledge. The growing specialisation of research means that we increasingly overlook this fact. Perhaps in business and management we do this less than many others, since we do not have a common `nuclear´ theory. We are a very pragmatic discipline where 'we use what we've got'. Sometimes we are accused of being too broad and much too open. But we should perhaps not regard this as a sign of weakness in our discipline of business and management, rather as an advantage for the role that social scientists ought to play. Perhaps we, more than others, have the ability to "find new and original ways of posing questions, put forward new ideas on causes and politics, a characteristic that often makes them somewhat controversial" (Press Release, 1974).

Objectivity – is it desirable and is it possible?

Given the discussion above, we can of course ask ourselves whether objectivity is possible in the social sciences – and even whether it is desirable. For Myrdal, objectivity and striving for objectivity are central; perhaps the most central issue in the social sciences. But what demands can we make on objectivity in the social sciences and how might it be achieved? The answer to the questions depends on the definition of scientific knowledge. Myrdal argues that the task of research in the social sciences is to show which facts are relevant and what the connections are between them, as well as perhaps what is cause and what is effect? According to Myrdal, doing that is to seek after truth. He believes that this is only possible if we distinguish between 'beliefs' and 'valuations'. Given that human beings have thoughts about reality and wish to influence reality, researchers must help them to distinguish between the two. 'Beliefs' are our ideas about what reality actually is, while 'valuations' express our ideas of what it ought to be like. Myrdal continues by saying that methodology and valuations are the key characteristics and that the "ethos of social science is the search for objective truth. This I consider not only a moral precept but also a description of the factual situation" (p. 40).

I usually argue that the task of a social scientist is to study society, to describe and analyse society and to disseminate these insights to those who pay our salaries, namely the taxpayers, rather than solely to other researchers. I believe that I have Myrdal's support on all these points. I also wish to add my support to him in that it is the task of research to deliver these facts and to clarify the valuations they are constructed from.

In social science research today we can find what Myrdal referred to as naive empiricism and naive constructionism. Naive empiricism is widespread and found in many disciplines. With that, in Myrdal's view, is the idea that a truth exists that is just waiting to be discovered. This way of thinking is mainly associated with the natural sciences and medicine, but can also be found in certain areas of the social sciences. Those of us who conduct research on sex, gender and gender relations frequently meet this type of argument. Naive empiricism is easily spread with the help of numbers (nothing is as convincing as a clear table!). Numbers are often regarded, both by those who have counted (on) them and by those who read them, as more objective than words. Researchers both exploit and are exploited by the mass media in this respect. However, in modern social science research we can also find contributions that reject such claims of truth and generality, sometimes with reference to the fact that everything is ultimately social and subjectively constructed.

In my view, both the naive empiricists and the extreme constructivists fail to admit that they are seriously 'influenced by tradition, by environment, by personality' and what this means for research. This is relatively easy to show for the naive empiricists but more difficult for the naive constructionists. It is especially difficult for naive constructionists, who sometimes counter that their own bias is positive and raises quality. That they use mixed-value concepts in other respects is therefore more difficult for them to see and more difficult to show to others.

Does research have any meaning?

A lot of what Myrdal writes in *Objectivity in Social Research* sounds familiar. Judging by the citation statistics the matter is current but virtually forgotten. Myrdal's insights and way of conveying them were very important for me and influenced my thinking on the importance of the social sciences, thus strengthening my critical stance. Has he influenced anyone else? Yes, in my view – even if he is no longer cited in these areas, many have been influenced by his contributions. At the beginning I stated that I find Myrdal's discussion and arguments of relevance today. I am convinced that both my presentation and the illustrations used have proved that. The critical perspectives taken by researchers in the fields of management and entrepreneurship are also examples of this. Mats Alvesson (2000) can be mentioned as an example from the first field. Daniel Hjorth (2003) and Bengt Johannisson (1990), as well as others mentioned under the head-line Concepts with implicit value judgements, are examples from the other, since they expand the concept to fields outside business and acknowledge a diversity of incentives. I also stated that times have moved on from Myrdal. It would perhaps be better to reformulate that statement and point out that Myrdal also had `white spots´, which is shown by my examples from the sex/gender field. Myrdal does not mention that perspective once in his book.

Myrdal concludes his Nobel lecture as follows: "Even though my world view must be gloomy, I am hopeful about the development of our science. We can by immanent criticism in logical terms challenge our own thinking and cleanse it from opportunistic conformism. And we can widen our perspective. Everything can be studied. We are free to expand and perfect our knowledge about the world, only restricted by the number of scientists working and, of course the degree of their diligence, brightness and their openness to fresh approaches." It is therefore a hopeful conclusion, and one that I will also adopt. I am, as I wrote at the beginning of this chapter, convinced that research in the social sciences is important. It is our task to conduct it in a way that serves society.

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14 Maria Ossowska

These Shoulders so Elegant…[19]

Barbara Czarniawska

Re-discovering the giant

In his book *On the Shoulders of Giants*, Robert Merton (1965/1985) declared that although a received picture of progress in science consists of that idea (attributed to Isaac Newton), in (historical) reality, it is the appointed giants who stand on a pyramid of midgets. But it is a demand of the narrative convention that big discoveries must be made by big heroes; a story about ant-like workers would be dull (Czarniawska, 2009a).

I would like to suggest yet another possibility: that of a midget (myself), who believes to be standing alone, not on the top, but at least in a place with a view, and suddenly discovers that she was, in fact, all the time standing on somebody's shoulders. Was the reason for invisibility that the shoulders belonged to a female person?

This discovery happened in connection with a text I was asked to contribute to a *Festschrift* for Lars Engwall (Sahlin et al., 2009). I had been studying the production of news in news agencies (Czarniawska, 2009d), quite convinced I was alone in this endeavor, when I discovered that Engwall had conducted a similar study thirty years earlier (Engwall, 1981). Thus sensitized to the possible existence of unknown or forgotten predecessors, I left for my summer vacation. I spent some time with my Polish friend who has a house in the Alps. We had studied psychology together at Warsaw University between 1965 and 1970. She had in her summerhouse some old books for which she had no room in town. I was looking through them one day, and discovered among them the *Bourgeois Morality* by Polish sociologist Maria Ossowska (1956/1986). As I had recently read Deirdre McCloskey's *The Bourgeois Virtues* (2006), this title attracted my attention and I pulled the dusty volume off the shelf. Ossowska's book, and especially the chapter on method, was filled with underlines and annotations. "It was obligatory reading during our second year", my friend said, and I believed her, although I could not recall it.

I decided to re-read the book, and discovered that everything I am doing is but an imitation of Ossowska's work. To be more precise, it must be her method chapter that really sunk in. What is more, not only her work has had a great impact on *how* I do research, it has also influenced *what* many of us are studying nowadays. Let me begin by presenting the author.

Life (1896–1974)

The biography of Maria Ossowska has been presented in several variations (even the alleged day of her birth varies), most likely due to Ossowska's various clashes with authorities that might have led to falsification or loss of documents.[20] Born in January 1896 as Maria Niedźwiecka into an intelligentsia family, she was threatened as a 14-year-old with disciplinary removal from a school run by nuns – for her heretical opinions. Her dream was to study abroad (there were no Polish universities at the time, Czarniawska and Sevón, 2008), but her parents were against it, and, being a woman, she would have needed their signature to obtain a passport.[21] When the Russians left Warsaw and the new German occupants permitted the opening of the first Polish university in 1915, she enrolled into the Faculty of Philosophy. A year later she had become Chair of the Philosophical Circle of Warsaw University Students, where she met her future husband, Stanisław Ossowski.

In 1921 she defended her doctoral dissertation. Then she could finally realize her dream; she spent two years at Sorbonne, from where she contacted Bertrand Russell, whose work became of central interest to her. She later visited him in London and maintained a continuous correspondence.

She accepted a post as Assistant Professor at the Philosophy Seminar at Warsaw University in 1923. In 1924 she married Stanisław Ossowski, and changed her last name to Ossowska.[22] Until 1929 she taught psychology and pedagogy at the Higher School of Education in Warsaw (observe the fluidity of disciplinary borders at the time).

Russell's ontology became the topic of her *habilitation* (the work required for an Associate Professorship), which she defended in 1932.[23] Between 1933 and 1935, Maria and Stanisław stayed in London on a government scholarship. While in London, financed by the Swedish Aid for Polish Culture, she worked on her book, *Podstawy nauki o moralności (Foundations of the Science of Morality)*, which was finally published in 1947.

During World War II, the Ossowscy organized underground education in Warsaw and helped to hide people in danger of persecution. As early as December 1939, Ossowska had started an underground seminar on the issues of morality, which continued until 1944. In 1940, an underground Warsaw University began its activities, with Ossowska teaching in the Departments of History and Polish Language. Until the summer of 1944 she taught five courses in philosophy, including her own seminar.

After the war, the couple moved to Łódź University, where Ossowska received a personal Chair in Morality Science. She returned to Warsaw University in 1948, taking the Chair of the History and Theory of Morality, although she never became a member of the ruling Party (most chairs were held by party members). In 1952 she joined other intellectuals in signing a letter of protest against the growing oppression of the Stalinist regime. As a result, she was forbidden to teach at the university until 1956, when there was a general relaxation of the regime after Khrushchev's famous condemnation of Stalin. It was then that *Bourgeois Morality* was published in Polish, and Ossowska returned to the Sociology Section of the Faculty of Philosophy at Warsaw University. She resigned from her duties as Chair in 1960, but remained a professor there. In the same year, probably on sabbatical, she gave a series of lectures at Bernard College, Columbia University at NYC, which were published in Polish as *Socjologia moralności* (1963).

In 1967 she was invited by the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia to give a series of lectures on morality. These lectures, along with the Bernard College lectures, were the basis of her book, *Social Determinants of Moral Ideas* (1970). In 1972, Ossowska was awarded a first-degree Polish National Award, the highest accolade of the Polish state.

A Polish sociologist and present politician, Jacek Kurczewski, wrote this about her:

> Ossowska was a feminist in the meaning that was given to the word in those times. (…) In prejudices against women she saw one of the fundamental intellectual errors, and herself concentrated on what was considered the most inappropriate for a learned woman: sex and war.[24]

It has been claimed that in a speech given during the celebration of 50 years of her scientific career in 1969, Ossowska said that throughout her life in science, she did what she wanted, and was even lucky enough to be paid for it.

It can be added that, during her life and afterwards, Ossowska was more successful by academic standards than her husband. Nevertheless, a review of the English translation of *Bourgeois Morality* (Szelenyi, 1988) presented this seminal work as though it was an appendix to Stanisław Ossowski's work. Contemporary Polish sociologists, however, delicately characterize Ossowski's scientific and political stance as "naive" (Kojder, 2005), and give Maria Ossowska her due, calling her the most erudite, talented, and systematic researcher, an independent scholar of unparalleled integrity.

I will now review the areas in which Ossowska's work has influenced mine – whether I was aware of it or not.

The origins of SST

During my time at Warsaw University, studies of science and technology (SST) were unknown to me, but have become well known since. Imagine my surprise when I learned that Maria Ossowska and her husband, sociologist Stanislaw Ossowski, are considered by many scholars to be the founders of the field of science studies. In 1935, they published a paper entitled "Nauka o nauce" (The Science of Science[25]) in the Polish journal *Nauka Polska* (Polish Science), which was published in English in a Polish review, *Organon,* in 1936. It was later reprinted in the international journal, *Minerva,* in 1964[26], and in an edited volume in 1982.

The authors did not claim to have invented anything – on the contrary, they said that interest in science was very old, but it had previously been expressed mostly from an epistemological point of view, focusing on cognitive processes. What was relatively new, they said, was a kind of anthropological interest – science as a part of culture, and science as a social practice:

> It [this new interest] was partly derived from historical research, partly called forth by the development of modern sociology, and partly by practical needs (the question of encouragement and organisation of Science).
>
> *(Ossowska and Ossowski, 1935/1964: 73)*

They continued by suggesting that this new interest could be expressed in at least five different ways, or in five different subfields:

- philosophy of science
- psychology of science
- sociology of science
- organization of science, and
- history of science.

They paid most attention to the sociology of science, locating a similarly minded group of German sociologists (including Karl Mannheim), who dedicated themselves to *Wissenssoziologie* (sociology of knowledge), and an article by Florian Znaniecki on the same subject preceding the work of the Germans.

The issue arose, however, of whether or not this new science of science deserved a special place as a discipline, or at least a sub-discipline, within the university. I find their answer to that question characteristic of Ossowska's own career and way of thinking:

> From the theoretical point of view this is an insignificant matter. To a large extent it is a matter of convention whether we shall recognize a certain system of problems as a separate branch of learning, or whether we shall subordinate it to a more general science or assign it to several various branches. But as certain practical consequences are involved here, we shall for a moment consider it ... (p.77) A new grouping of problems adds additional importance to the original problems and gives rise to new ones and to new ideas. The new grouping marks out the direction of new investigations; moreover it may exercise an influence on university studies, the foundation of chairs, periodicals and societies.
>
> *(1935/1964: 80)*

It is clear that the authors were already extremely knowledgeable about the way science works. Curiously enough, the issue of the autonomy – or lack of autonomy – of SST has still not been decided, though, Ossowscy strongly argued for it. There is no doubt, however, as to its growing importance.

As I said before, I was not aware of Ossowska's pioneering contribution to SST until recently. Sometimes the giants are hidden by the clouds in which they reside. But let me move to an influence that undoubtedly did take place in my career: reading the "obligatory lecture" in 1966.

Bourgeois Morality (1956/1986)

A brief summary

The book begins with the observation that, at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, various European countries witnessed a sharp critique of what was called a "bourgeois morality". This critique was as strong in countries with a dominant middle class as it was in countries where the middle class was insignificant. Furthermore, it came from at least three different ideological perspectives: the leftists, the gentry, and the bohemians.

After having briefly summarized those critiques, Ossowska began to search for the epitome of the bourgeois morality expressed in a text or texts. Her choice was Benjamin Franklin, whose model of the human being included *financial reliability,* based on hard work, thrift, orderliness, prudence, and monetary calculation; and a *non-elitist* independence, based on everyday gain. Ossowska showed how these ideas were transformed into the petty bourgeois bible as illustrated by the US sociologists Robert and Helen Lynd in their *Middletown* (1929). The text also works back in time, situating Franklin's predecessors, and shows that apparently opposite ideologies have a common background. Daniel Defoe's writings on "the complete tradesman" and "the complete gentleman" reveal the process of transformation of the "gentleman" model under the pressure of the bourgeois, who claimed the model as their own. Ossowska also scrutinized Weber's thesis on the origins of capitalism, and, although she was prepared to give Calvinism a key role in the process, pointed out the exceptions to this rule and the impact of other social factors. Under scrutiny was also the Danish sociologist Svend Ranulf's (1938) thesis that envy is the major element of bourgeois morality.

Having analyzed bourgeois morality as a kind of ideology, formulated either by its adherents or (more often) by its critics, Ossowska moved to the issue of moral practices. She addressed three cases: early capitalism (15th century) in Italy, the French revolution, and the uneasy interaction between the gentry and the bourgeois in 19th century Poland.

The book ends with two chapters dedicated to methodological reflection: the first addresses the approaches used – by former analysts and Ossowska herself – in the study of bourgeois morality; the second addresses the approach used in the text, and especially the usefulness of ideal types as an analytical instrument (my friend's notes were especially visible in these parts of the text as these were apparently important for our exams).

Poaching and trespassing

Whereas, on various occasions, I have made a great deal of fuss about "poaching" (an expression of Michel de Certeau) from disciplines other than my own (Czarniawska, 2008a), Ossowska did not consider the borrowing she did as "poaching", but as normal procedure. The *Bourgeois Morality* moves, without exclamations and caveats, swiftly and expertly between philosophy, economics, history, sociology and psychology, thereby covering all the disciplines I have poached at one time or another. It does not mean that Ossowska was unaware of disciplinary borders. On the contrary, she made a methodological point of the observation that, blinded by disciplinary borders, sociologists often do not notice how they unreflectively introduce psychological or economic axioms into their reasoning. According to Ossowska, moving across disciplines helps to avoid this kind of unreflective reasoning.

It is possible that the confidence with which Ossowska crossed the disciplinary borders (of whose practical importance she was well aware, as is clear from the previously discussed paper) depended on the fact that she was a philosopher by training, and at that time philosophy was still the queen of all the sciences. But she was also critical of philosophy, as I note later in this chapter.

Perhaps the most striking trait of the book is that it uses novels as field material. Again, Ossowska presented as quite obvious some of the deepest insights that I have struggled to formulate (Czarniawska, 2009b). It is not the case that novels always contain correct sociological observations; they can tell what does happen in the field or what should take place in a given field. To use Todorov's (1970) terms, one needs to distinguish between the fictional and the fantastic. Thus, to use a contemporary example, the detective novels by Helen Thursten describe (correctly in my view) what happens in Gothenburg's police department, whereas detective novels by Åke Edvardsson describe what should have happened in Gothenburg's police department if it followed the models of the US soaps. How to tell the difference? Easy, Ossowska would have answered. By comparing them with other texts – other novels and also other texts that formulate the philosophies and ideologies of a given time and place, sometimes by the same author, as was the case with Defoe.

The uses of popular culture

One of my recent claims (Czarniawska and Rhodes, 2006; Czarniawska and Gustavsson, 2008) was that popular culture – novels, but not only novels – is an important but neglected source of field material to be analyzed by management and organization theories. I encourage my doctoral students to cultivate an interest in it. Claes Ohlsson (2007), for example, studied texts, the aim of which was to convince Swedish people to invest in stock markets. Imagine my surprise when I found in Ossowska's book an analysis of the brochure issued by Polish Saving Bank (PKO) in 1948. A product of the new, socialist regime, it revealed to Ossowska's critical eye strong sediments of the capitalist past ("For the sociologist, it is intriguing to see the detritus of the past continuing by force of inertia into the present", p. 123). The title of the brochure was "Industry and frugality", alluding (unknowingly?) to the beginning of Benjamin's Franklin's maxim "Be industrious and frugal, and you will be rich." The text of the brochure continued in the same spirit, and ended with the (probably unintentional) allusion to a version of Aesop's fable about an ant and a grasshopper by Russian fabulist Ivan Krylov (1769–1844). All summer long, the ant was working and saving, the grasshopper was singing and now wanted a loan; "go and dance then", answered the ant. The Polish Saving Bank said almost the same thing, and in verse form. Having compared the two texts, Ossowska hastened to assure readers that:

> I am not concerned with taking the author of this pamphlet to task. After all, it is hardly surprising that any attempt to boost the virtue of thriftiness should have to tread well-worn paths, given the amount of propaganda devoted to this theme in bourgeois literature; though the climate of this propaganda should perhaps be recognized as alien in the new conditions, and in conflict (as in the fable of the ant and the cricket) with the ideals of socialism
>
> *(1986: 125).*

At the risk of over-quoting, I am citing even the text that follows, as I believe that it can be of use to the Swedish state in its efforts to encourage financial literacy among the Swedish people:

> Nor it is my purpose to develop an anatomy of thrift which would be in keeping with the new social structure and with the guidelines of life in a socialist society. It is clear that one would first of all have to make a sharp distinction between thrift in the public and thrift in the private sector. The due administration of public money and property cannot be subject to any of the structures we have made regarding the various forms of thrift, nor it is in any way threatened by the psychological deformations which are so often generated by a private obsession with thrift. No doubt the campaigns run by the savings banks, urging people to be thrifty, should contain a clause warning clients of the risks they run of becoming deformed by over-economising ('thrift may damage your mental health'?) – after all, obsessional economising might in the long run prove more harmful to the state than the temporary loss of revenue which such a clause may entail.
>
> *(1986: 125–126).*

Not only did she refuse to issue a prescription (I return to her reluctance to be normative), she also poked fun at the authorities in a very serious text published under serious circumstances.

Accounting and gender

Had I rediscovered Ossowska's book earlier, it would have helped me to write my paper on "Accounting and gender across times and places" (Czarniawska, 2008b), in which I tried to explain why accounting, historically and now, has been a women's occupation in Poland. My thesis was that accounting was one of the most attractive jobs offered to noblewomen from impoverished families (which were the majority of noblewomen at the turn of the 19th century). Trade was considered beyond their dignity, whereas teaching (at the elementary level), although it was believed that it did not require any talents but some education, did not suit all temperaments. I have argued for my thesis with the aid of Polish novels from that period, but was unaware of a novel called *The Princess* by Zofia Urbanowska, which would have further strengthened my argument.

The novel's central character is namely a daughter of a bankrupt nobleman who goes to Warsaw to earn her living, and is given housing and work by a bourgeois family (thus Ossowska's interest in the novel). The mother of the family tells the young woman: "Accounts are like a mirror – in them I see my understanding of life, my mistakes, sometimes also my good side. The account book is our mentor, our historian, our conscience." (quoted after Ossowska, 1986: 99). And the son of the family completes the instruction: "I suggest you learn how to keep accounts as quickly as possible. Accounting is the basis of all social order…" (ibid). Thus, while many young women in other countries sought jobs as teachers, many Polish women chose the career of a bookkeeper.

My only consolation in having missed such an important piece of evidence is that Ossowska admitted to being alerted to that work by Jan Kott (a famous literary critic, who moved to the USA in 1966 and became a renowned Shakespeare critic). On the shoulders, at the feet, or arm in arm, research is a collective endeavor.

At this point, I would also underline Ossowska's brand of feminism, which has been my ideal, but of which I still fall short. Never using the word, and never emphasizing her contribution, she constantly quoted women authors, and analyzed the role of women in various editions of bourgeois morality.

With nose close to the ground

As I have mentioned, Ossowska distanced herself from traditional philosophical pursuits. Her interest was in the everyday minutiae of great, sweeping ideologies, and she was keenly aware of the unorthodoxy of her analytical method:

> The researcher accustomed to working on purely philosophical themes in which conceptual analysis has a crucial role to play if the product is to be a genuine contribution to philosophy, is bound to feel daunted when confronted with the limitless sea of facts which go to form the history of human culture. As one burrows one's way into philosophical theories and concepts one feels – perhaps mistakenly – that one is in control of the material, and that it can be interpreted with some degree of precision. Not so here: the deeper one penetrates into the subject, the more one is convinced that some facts are escaping, eluding one's grasp; or that the very next source to be explored will force revaluation of one's whole carefully constructed picture of reality. We can never have the satisfaction of knowing that the ground has been covered, the material exhausted. *(1986: viii)*

Observe the subtlety of this statement: she did not criticize the methods of philosophy, and yet the text makes it obvious that they are inadequate for the purpose of studying human culture. The methods that are available – she describes the operation of abduction[27] here, briefly, correctly, and unpretentiously – seem to be full of weaknesses, and yet somehow these weaknesses seem to be their strength. One wishes that doctoral students could learn this way of presenting their methodology – without attacking the enemy and without defending themselves from criticisms not yet uttered.

Reflexivity digested

Another trait of Ossowska's texts that I admire lies in her skillful use of reflexivity. I call it "reflexivity digested", because the issue as such never enters her pages. She was also not prone to tell the readers details of her life, but revealed exactly what was needed, when it was needed, and in the amount needed:

> **3. A note on the growth of this study**
> It was during the German occupation of Poland that I begun to study the problem of bourgeois morality; and my intention was to demonstrate the class character of morality to those who still believed it to be homogenous and above class. As my starting point I took Benjamin Franklin, and the first edition[28] of the present work opened with my discussion of this writer. In the course of further study, however, it became clear that this particular choice was prompted by a subconscious conviction that I already knew what bourgeois morality was. Faced with a wide range of moralists of bourgeois provenance, why had I chosen Franklin to illustrate bourgeois morality? It could only be because in my mind's eye he already figured as an embodiment of it. Which in turn suggested that, if Franklin could figure as its paradigm, a preconceived notion of bourgeois morality was already present in my mind. (…)
>
> So how I acquired my preconceived idea of bourgeois morality? Today I do not doubt that what played a large part here was the criticism levelled at the unhappy bourgeois from many quarters in several countries in the second half of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth.
>
> *(1986: 14)*

She thus examined herself step by step, and what she discovered only reconfirmed her choice of material. It is exactly the eulogies, apologies and criticisms of the bourgeois morality that she analyzed in her work.

Against normativity

In a tribute to Maria Ossowska's integrity and talent, Andrzej Kojder (2005) wrote that Ossowska programmatically avoided normative postulates in her work. This trait was highly original for two reasons. The first was that socialist writers, whether scientists or not, were supposed to come up with prescriptions and instructions for the people of the new socialist republic. The second was that, irrespective of the political regime, issuing prescriptions – theoretical or methodological – is the common way of establishing schools of thought and attracting followers. The only exception was a pamphlet with the title *The model of the citizen in the democratic system*[29], and its existence can be explained by the fact that it was written in 1946, before the new regime enforced strict censorship. The very use of the adjective "democratic" rather than "socialist" indicates the recklessness of such an endeavor. What is more, this ideal democratic citizen was supposed to have a sense of beauty and a sense of humour – the latter serving as the ultimate protection against the temptations of totalitarianism.

By the time of *Bourgeois Morality*, Maria Ossowska was clear about where she stood: closely approaching reality with an acknowledgment of plurality, and no moral judgments. Her task was to study moralities, not to moralize. The English version of the book ends with the following sentences:

> Whether the attempt made in this book to establish such general truths [concerning classic types of bourgeois moral thought] has been successful or not, the author hopes that the reader is now in a better position to judge what actually *does* take place in the field where it has been customary to consider only what *ought* to take place. By the same token, a belief in "morality" as a constant may well yield to the realisation that many variants of morality may coexist – even in one and the same society. (1986: 368)

The question of style

Last but not least, I was surprised by Ossowska's style. By now I am used to the fact that when reviewers call something "essayistic", it means a harsh critique, not a compliment. But I still think highly of the essayistic style, and this is how she wrote. The certainty of the tone of natural sciences – or philosophy – does not fit the students of human culture, who "can never have the satisfaction of knowing that the ground has been covered, the material exhausted". I also recall that in the 1970s, when I was a young researcher, Ossowska's texts came to be considered "not scientific enough". As McCloskey (1985) so convincingly demonstrated, it was in the 1970s when "writing badly" became "writing well" in economics (and I would claim, in most social sciences) – when the rhetoric of scientism came to rule. Ossowska was free from that rule, which does not mean that she wrote like a journalist or a management consultant, but that she wrote well – I would say, like a literary critic, but perhaps here I am retrojecting my own values onto my idol.

Those elegant shoulders

As the photo of Ossowska is meant to illustrate, the title of my text is not merely metaphorical. Andrzej Kojder (2005) said that Ossowska's elegance was almost intimidating, especially in a time of mandatory ugliness and grayness. I can add that many older women professors dressed like Ossowska in that picture in my student days at Warsaw University (1965–1970), which by us was not taken as a sign of class, but as being hopelessly old-fashioned. We were already the hippies.

At any rate, her elegance was one trait that I wasn't able to imitate; almost everything else, perhaps – with varying results. If it had not been for the accidental finding of the book on my friend's shelf, I would not have even remembered it. I have three possible explanations of both my imitation and my lack of awareness – explanations that can actually be complementary rather than competing.

The first is simple forgetting. It does not have to be treated as a vice, if one accepts Michel Oakeshott's (1959/191) idea that science does not accumulate – that it is a conversation that continues for centuries. It may temporarily improve in style or in politeness, or equally temporarily worsen in those respects, and it includes more and more participants. But conversation it is. In such conversations, it is quite possible that certain topics recur either because the participants have been exchanged and the new group does not remember previous conversation topics or because those who participated in the previous one forgot it, internalizing its precepts as their own (as I did).

The second explanation is somewhat paradoxical, as the omission is explained by similarity. Gilbert (1977) proved that authors are least prone to reference properly those authors whose work is the closest to their own. It is the perception of difference that prompts referencing.

The third explanation is a cyclical topicality of certain issues. After all, Deirdre McCloskey's *The Bourgeois Virtues* can be seen as a new version of Ossowska's *Bourgeois Morality*, the former written without any knowledge of the latter, as the English version of Ossowska's book is little known and out of print. Bruno Latour (2002), to quote another example, recently appointed Gabriel Tarde as his scientific ancestor, although he has read him only now.

In any case, the image of a pyramid of giants, interspersed with midgets, is not convincing. Maybe, in the conversation of science, some say more, and some listen more. Then the listeners go home and try to repeat the most attractive arguments for the use of the wider circle.

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15 Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca

Arguing and Organising
Hervé Corvellec

Introduction: For argumentation

If there is an intellectual equivalent to love at first sight I have been through it. A single sentence on the first page of Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca's magnus opus *Traité de l'argumentation – La nouvelle rhétorique* (1958; English translation: *The New Rhetoric–A Treatise on Argumentation*, 1969), hereafter refered to as the Treatise, was enough to hook me to argumentation theory:

> no one deliberates where the solution is necessary or argues when against what is elf-evident
>
> *(p. 1)*

A contra-distinctive quote from Descartes' *A discourse on the Method* on the Treatise's next page might explain my fondness for this finding.

> Whenever two men [sic] come to opposite decisions about the same matter, one of them at least must certainly be in the wrong, and apparently there is not even one of them who knows; for if the reasoning of one was sound and clear he would be able so to lay it before the other as finally to succeed in convincing his understanding also.

If Descartes' claim, that when two people disagree at least one of them is clearly in the wrong, was correct there would be no deliberation or argumentation. The world would not know, and not tolerate approximation, in-betweeness, incertitude, ambiguity, or nuances. All knowledge would be framed in a binary true or false mode: from whether the Earth is flat to whether the death penalty is morally defensible. Rationality would be assigned both a narrow definition and an exclusive right to produce knowledge; the plausible would be held as false and only conformity with facts would serve as evidence. Everything else, inclusive of utopias, art and unwarranted theories, would be degraded to varieties of foolishness.

The massive and relentless efforts of scores of logicians and epistemologists notwithstanding (I am tempted to add economists), real life is not Cartesian. People argue all the time about things like the best drive to the City centre or whether corporations have a social responsibility or not. However, and this is where the above quote becomes important, people do not argue about what is obvious or self-evident. People do not argue at random or about everything. Argumentation is not chattering or prattling but focuses on what constitutes an issue. Argumentation is thus not simply a matter of providing an account or communicating a state of mind. It is a matter of confronting and convincing. Inversely, a lack of argumentation points at what is not an issue, for example because it is taken for granted, has been accepted as it is, or is no longer deemed as worthy of debate. Argumentation is an indication that something social is in the making. Correspondingly, a lack of argumentation is an indication that the social has been fully stabilised and normalised. This is why argumentation is an unmatched way of questioning the social.

Reframing rhetoric and argumentation

The ambition of the Treatise is nothing less than to present a post-Cartesian understanding of rhetoric, proof and reason. The Treatise wants to "break with a concept of reason and reasoning due to Descartes" (page 1). It challenges Descartes' claim that only demonstrations that extend by means of small and self-evident logical steps from axioms to theorems are rational ways of reasoning.

For Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, such a view of reasoning and reason only applies to mathematics, formal logic, or the experimental sciences. Opposing demonstration to argumentation, they mean that only demonstration stems from clearly stated premises and moves with logical stringency from these premises to a conclusion that cannot be challenged. Reasoning in the social sciences, to which organisation studies belongs, as well as in the everyday, to which management belongs, follows the more diverse routes of argumentation. Argumentation does not move irremediably from premises to conclusions. It mixes opinions, justifications and criticisms. It does not reason on truth but on values. And it does not belong to the domain of the rational, but to the domain of the reasonable. Moreover, whereas demonstration is a-contextual and irreversible, argumentation is embedded in individual, social and historical contingencies, and remains open-ended.

Central to the Treatise's criticism of Descartes is that people react to claims with adherence. The term *adherence* is akin to the French term *adhésion*[30], a term that suggests both the idea of support (*adhésion* to a political party or to a cause) and that of sticking (as of glue and wood). Adherence is to describe reasoning in terms of sticking to a claim, and giving it a considered approval and support. It intends to underscore that people do not necessarily assent to everything once and for all. People can subscribe more or less to the claims that they are presented with. And their support may vary over time. All claims that are made about the world cannot be answered with a binary "agree" or "do not agree. Approval is a matter of degree, support can be expressed with reservations and conviction can be strong or weak. Eventually, consent can over time even revert to disagreement.

The Treatise presents different discursive techniques with which to gain adherence. Leaving aside the psychological dimension of adherence, it focuses on the argumentative means that command adherence. To serve this purpose, the Treatise emphasises that argumentation develops in terms of an audience. The claim that a theory of argumentation should start by investigating the conditions for audience adhesion might seem obvious. But if one considers the unwavering interest among argumentation theorists for formal understandings of argumentation – for example syllogisms, fallacies or models of argumentation (Eemeren, Grootendorst, & Snoeck Henkemans, 1996) – one realises that it is not obvious at all. Even Toulmin's (1958) famous data-warrant-claim model of argumentation only assigns a limited role to the audience.[31]

The Treatise's ambitions are to re-conceptualise rhetoric as a practical theory of argumentation, alternatively to re-conceptualise argumentation as a rhetorical practice. Rhetoric is not to be understood in the Treatise as the art of saying things well (e.g., Fontanier, 1977). It is a philosophically informed alternative to (formal) logic to understand the nature of argumentation. Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca are, together with I.A. Richards (1936), Kenneth Burke (1969), Jörgen Habermas (1984) and Paul De Man (1996), among the theoreticians who have renewed the understanding of rhetoric in the 20th century.

A rhetoric-informed theory of argumentation is a practical way of reasoning about beliefs, opinions and values. It shows that it is actually possible to reason about the opinionable. In cases of disagreement it also opens up practical alternatives to the use of lies, manipulation, or simply brute force and violence. Such a potential should be of interest for anyone with an interest in developing a management practice that is infused with an open and tolerant view of the Other (Levinas, 2003). In particular, it respects (Corvellec, 2005) the right of humans to think differently.[32]

The logic of argumentation

The Treatise proposes a view of argumentation that is at the same time simple and complex. This view is simple in that it suggests that argumentation is basically a matter of: (a) identifying the premises that condition the initial adherence of the audience and (b) making use of adequate techniques of argumentation to manage this adherence further. This view is also complex in that premises and techniques of argumentation are not only many, approximate, changing and contradictory, but are also involved in intricate patterns of anticipation, interaction and retroaction that cannot be fully foreseen, controlled or understood.

Premises: The starting point of argumentation

Premises are the starting point of argumentation. They are objects of agreement that set the initial conditions for the audience's adherence and the grounds for further argumentative developments. The Treatise distinguishes among different types of premises, including facts, truths, presumptions, values and hierarchies.

Facts and truths are not to be taken in a positivist or objectivist sense of something that would hold anytime, anywhere and for anyone. In an interpretivist sense, they refer to premises that are held to be uncontroverted and subject to universal agreement. An example of facts would be that oil hit 100 $ a barrel for the first time on January 2 2008. An example of truth would be that a Swedish code of corporate governance exists (SOU 2004: 130). The argumentative force of facts and truths does not require any further strengthening, which means that they are able to function as platforms for further argumentative developments. From a critical point of view, however, there is good reason to question the alleged indisputability of facts and truths. The 100 $ limit was, for example, reached on a single ego-boosting deal on this particular day and oil prices did not close at 100 $ before February 19 2008. Neither is the existence of a code of corporate governance a guarantee of good governance. Simply, a recurrent trait of argumentative practice is to bracket caveats that can be raised against facts and truths, and give facts and truths a compelling force.

Presumptions are akin to facts and truths in that they too enjoy a broad agreement. An example of presumption would be the claim that "competition enhances organisational efficiency". This claim suffers so many proven exceptions that one should reasonably add "at least in theory". But it is nevertheless used regularly by organisation studies, liberal economists and politicians to promote deregulation and privatisation. A difference between facts, truths and presumptions, though, is that adherence to presumption falls short of being total and needs regular reinforcement. This may be why the claim that "competition enhances organisational efficiency" is hammered with flawless editorial regularity in business press outlets.

Other premises that are commonly invoked in business contexts are *values*. The reason might be that, as Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca observe, "the purpose of values is to induce the hearer to make certain choices rather than others, and most of all, to justify those choices so that they may be accepted and approved by others" (p.75). Values make people act, and since many arguments in organisational contexts aim at inducing action, one often encounters premises in organisational contexts that are values. For example, Deloitte claims to stand for personal integrity and public trust, and Volvo cars to put "Safety first. Always". What make values particularly effective argumentative premises is that they are difficult to escape. Advertisement agencies are well aware that it is nearly impossible to argue against liberty (e.g., Nike's "Just do it!") or the value of human life (e.g., L'Oréal's "Because you are worth it"), and that these values are therefore fine starting points for a commercial argument.

Finally, closely related to values are *hierarchies*. Hierarchies can refer to the nature of things, for example that profitability is to be preferred to growth. They can also refer to quantity, for example that few retail units are preferable to many when selling luxury goods. Or they can refer to time, for example that short-term profitability is more important than long-term profitability. Of particular interest is that value hierarchies are more important to the structure of an argument than values. For example, most managers value goal achievements, respect of ethical rules and collegial cohesion highly. But there are momentous differences between those who argue by putting results on the top, colleagues in the middle and ethics at the bottom, and those who argue from the opposite hierarchy.

Premises are the cornerstone of any argumentative reasoning and there is good reason to assess them critically. One should systematically wonder (and ask) why a manager calls on some facts, values or hierarchy since such calls are often arbitrary. One can invoke justice in defence of the most extravagant bonuses by arguing that these bonuses are fair rewards for exceptional individual contributions, although one can also invoke justice in opposition to the same bonuses by arguing that no individual can or should be singled out in an exaggerated manner, since an organisation's performance is always a collective achievement. The fact that a premise can support a claim or otherwise shows that there is no logical necessity in argumentation. There are simply argumentative moves that are more or less effective in gaining and maintaining their audience's adherence. A major contribution of the Treatise is to underscore that there is no obligatory starting or passing point in argumentation.

Associative techniques of argumentation

Once the premises of an argument are set, two main types of techniques can be used to develop it: techniques of association and techniques of dissociation.

Techniques of association are

> schemes which bring separate elements together and allow us to establish a unity among them *(p. 190)*.

There are many such techniques, including those that rely on quasi-logic, relations of succession or of co-existence, examples and analogies.

Quasi-logical associations are relations that try to draw an argumentative advantage by resembling formal reasoning in logic or mathematics, but that are not strictly speaking logical in the sense of undeniable or inescapable. For example, consider the argument that "nuclear power is environmentally friendly as it produces no greenhouse gas emissions," a claim that the nuclear power industry spreads to promote itself (Corvellec, 2006). The argument may seem to be logically compelling, but it is fallacious. That the proposition

a) [Excessive CO2 emissions induce climate change problems]
   is true does *not* entail that the proposition
b) [An absence of excessive CO2 emissions induces an absence of climate change problem]
   is true. As every logician knows, it is not because [A induces B] is true that [(non-A) induces (non-B)] is true. The proposition [A induces B] is not logically equivalent to the proposition [(non-A) induces (non-B)]. The proposition [A induces B] is equivalent, instead, to the proposition [(non-B) induces (non-A)]. What one can derive from the proposition (a) is therefore not the proposition (b) but the proposition (c) that:
c) [An absence of climate change problem induces an absence of excessive CO2 emissions].

The argument "nuclear power is environmentally-friendly because it produces no greenhouse gas emissions" sounds logical but is not. The correct argument should be: If climate change problems are solved, this means that problems with excessive CO2 emissions are solved. But such an argument would be of lesser interest to a nuclear industry that prefers to base its lobbying on fallacy, confident in the argumentative power of quasi logic. All that looks logical is not. Logic is often nothing more than an unwarranted rhetorical device.

Another way of building associations is to invoke *sequential relations* between things. Two successive events can be framed as involving a causal relationship. For example, good financial results following the appointment of a new CEO (Chief Executive Officer) are usually attributed to this CEO (although they are most likely rewards of efforts made prior to this appointment). Or one can argue in favour of carrying out a project simply because one has started it: an abhorrence of waste serves to bind future options to choices from the past. The argumentative rationale of a sequential relation is to suggest that this relation follows the direction that things take.

To build associations, one can also invoke *relations of co-existence* between things. An act is depicted as typical of a person (and therefore deemed a function of the person rather of the act itself) or a person is turned into a representative of a group (and deemed the function of qualities attributed to this group). This chapter is, for example, considered as classically Corvellecian or characteristically male. Likewise, an act can be considered as symbolic of something else. For example, a bonus is considered as a token of greediness, simply because it is called a bonus. The rationale of relations of co-existence is to bind things together by transferring qualities that pertain to the essence of one thing to something else. Such a transfer can take many forms.

Another way of building associations is to use *examples*. Examples bind individual instances together and they also bind them to a general rule. Many successful business people or companies have been heralded as exemplary and bound to general rules of managerial success. The argumentative force of examples comes from their offer to move easily between the particular and the general, and, therefore, between the contextual and the abstract. Such moves offer tolerant possibilities to produce generalisations that do not fully commit to or neutralise incoherence and that follow the whims of the audience, which explains why so many management gurus are so fond of arguing through examples.

Finally, the Treatise singles out *analogies* as associative techniques of argumentation. Analogies are essential to the workings of the intellect and imagination. Their rationale is that A is to B as C is to D; A and B being called the theme of the analogy and C and D being called its phoros. Normally the phoros is better known than the theme. But, as the Treatise underscores, this is not always the case. When a workplace is described as a family, the characteristics of group dynamics in a family are not necessarily better known (or more harmonious) than those of a workplace. Likewise, when a reform is presented as a magic cure, how a cure that is magic works is by definition lesser known than how a reform works. Analogies can function as argumentative schemes even when they move, illogically, from a lesser known phoros to a better known theme. There is therefore good reason to suspiciously ask, for example: what is the point that managers want to make when they metaphorically consider their organisation to be a family, or a reform to be a cure?

Dissociative techniques of argumentation

The second type of argumentative techniques described by the Treatise describes is that of dissociation. These techniques:

> have the purpose of dissociating, separating, disuniting elements which are regarded as forming a whole or at least a unified group within some system of thought: dissociation modifies such a system by modifying certain concepts which make up its central parts.
>
> *(p. 190)*

The rationale of dissociative techniques of argumentation is to separate things that are in some way linked. The prototype of dissociations is the "appearance-reality" pair. The rationale of this argumentative scheme is to make a distinction between reality as it appears and reality as it is. Reality can be invoked to support or question appearances, or the opposite. For example, someone can argue that one abandons a project that "seems" to be going well by invoking that it "in reality" goes badly, or, inversely, that the project goes badly only in "appearance". The appearance/reality pair offers arbitrary possibilities to move back and forth between claims, all depending upon circumstances, and an adequate argumentative framing.

More generally, the rationale of dissociative schemes is to introduce a distinction between terms. However, no distinction is neutral. Every time one introduces a distinction, one also creates a hierarchy between the terms on either side of the distinction. One of the terms is valued and the other one is depreciated. Moreover, the valued term is used to explain the devaluated one. Simply, the hierarchies that one creates are thereby not stable. One can argue that rapid service is more attractive than slow, that modern design is more effective than traditional, or that an automatic production is more effective than a manual one. But one could also argue the opposite: that slow food is preferable to fast food, a classic font is more dependable than a modern one, or that manually delivered services command a higher margin than automatic ones. Distinctions create hierarchies, but the argumentative efficiency of these hierarchies is uncertain. It depends on the orator's intention, an audience's preferences and the argumentative premises that have been set forth.

Whereas Bowker and Leigh Star (1999) show that we are so used to thinking in terms of categories that we rarely reflect on where categories come from and which moral and political order they belong to and support, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca show that, in situations of argumentation, orators keep inventing, changing and even inverting hierarchies in order to manage their audience's adherence. Adherence is not only temporary, it is also relative in the sense that one rarely adheres to something in absolute terms but, instead, adheres relatively more to this than to that. Decision theorists have been aware of this for ages (e.g., Cyert & March, 1963).

Showing that people argue not only through association but also through dissociation, and that dissociation involves the creation of value hierarchies, that these hierarchies are changeable, and that people adhere less to values than to value hierarchies, contributes to an understanding of how argumentation works that can be particularly useful to organisation studies. One can for example question the premise of masculinity in job announcements ("Female applicants are welcome at…"), or the premise that profitability is a superior measure of all things (the "business case" argument). One can also question the political and human effects of associating, through word choice or organisational metaphors, the organisation's activity to war (strategy), sport (team), games (bet), or botanic (growth). Or one can question the effect of dissociating an organisation's activity from its own past ("a break with tradition"), competitors ("the choice of a new generation"), or society at large ("The World of Business"). As a rule, one should ask at least two questions about all argumentative moves in organisation studies: "What does it say that someone makes this argumentative move?" and "Why might it work?"

Conclusions drawn

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's (1958) Treatise is far from perfect. It does not mention the psychological nature of adherence. It is also silent on practices of delusion and power. It is marred with a hopelessly outdated vocabulary. One can consider with some right that the Treatise is too much of a catalogue of tricks of the trade, and too little of a cohesive theoretical construction, so that it falls short of its avowed ambition of being a *theory* of argumentation. Ironically, the Treatise is quite ineffective when it comes to its own argumentation.

Yet, the Treatise remains a remarkable achievement. Approaching argumentation from the angle of the practice of argumentation in literature, it provides a unique way of understanding how people actually manage to gain and retain the adherence of those they address, in speech or in writing. The Treatise shows how argumentation unfolds from the audience and how it follows ways that cannot be reduced to logic, either formal or informal. Its key message is that argumentative practice is an adherence-aiming work that consists of associations and dissociations articulated on premises. How people reason is not captured within the limitations of formal modelling of Cartesian inspiration. Not all arguments rest on Reason and Rationality (with a capital R), or even good or bad reasons. Irrationality, arbitrariness and whims follow from the variety of premises, associations and dissociations the orator makes use of. An argument may work here but not there, or one can be seduced by this argument but not that one. There is no universal shape to arguments, claims of formalist approaches to argumentation notwithstanding (Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004; Toulmin, 1958). Argumentation is a dynamic mundane activity that involves cultural sensitivity, creativity and flexibility, but that can be neither fully formalised nor controlled.

Understanding the nature of argumentation facilitates an understanding of work, organisational life and organising. As the examples in the text above indicate, people in organisations spend their time arguing. They sell or buy stuff, negotiate budgets, encourage their colleague, justify themselves, or simply explain their standpoint. In all these activities, and in many more, an argumentative activity is involved. It is therefore important to understand the mechanisms of argumentation, and to have a vocabulary with which to communicate this understanding.

For practitioners, understanding the mechanisms of argumentation is a matter of developing a reflexive awareness (Schön, 1983). This awareness should be directed at analysing argumentative techniques. Practically, I would suggest that one adopts the habit of critically assessing the premises as well as the techniques of association and dissociation used in arguments. Particular attention is to be paid to pseudo-logic, implicitly embedded values, delusively clear metaphors, sudden appeals to "reality", or the reversal of value hierarchies on circumstances. This is important for understanding how people argue. But it is also important to an understanding of how one argues oneself. As mentioned above, asking questions like "What does it say that someone makes this argumentative move?" and "Why might it work?" provide a direct understanding of what is going on.

To scholars within organisation and management studies, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca offer original analytical tools that complement those derived from narrative (e.g., Boje, 2008; Corvellec, 1997; Czarniawska, 1998; Gabriel, 2000), rhetoric (e.g., Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005) and, more generally, communication (e.g., Cooren, 2000) studies. More generally, argumentation theory provides critical insights into something that is important for the process of organising and the mechanisms of individual and collective creation of meaning (Corvellec & Risberg, 2007; Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Weick, 1995).

As a mundane activity, argumentation is not innocuous. Which brings me to my final comment, which is that broadly speaking, management is somewhat obsessed with consensus. If it wasn't for critically oriented voices (Alvesson, Bridgman, & Willmott, 2009), management discourse and practice would deny that there is any fundamental opposition between labour and capital; people in organisation are routinely invited to combine their efforts in consensual efforts toward the same goal(s) and are even regularly invited to develop personal values that are in line with the organisation's core values. But argumentation theory shows that such a view of social life is necessarily limited, or potentially more ideological than realist. Argumentation theory singles out disagreements and draws our attention to the fact that disagreements, arguments and controversies are productive and valuable activities. Social life is composed of people who disagree and argue. Disagreements, arguments and controversies are signs that some kind of social construction work is taking place. An argument takes us right to the heart what people are doing, why they interact and what is happening. Therefore, the obsession with management by consensus conceals that there might be more in an argument at a meeting than in the company's formal Five-Year Strategy Plan. When approaching organisational life, practitioners and scholars should keep in mind that:

> no one deliberates where the solution is necessary or argues when against what is elf-evident
>
> *(p.1).*

They should rather wonder why people disagree, and focus on arguments. This is why, as a teacher, I consider that my duty is to discuss controversies rather than established knowledge. Established knowledge can easily be found in textbooks. Classrooms should be filled with controversies – but this is another story.

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16 David Silverman

Struggling with The Theory of Organisations

Daniel Ericsson

Hoisting the ladder again

There are many reasons for attributing the status of giant to David Silverman and his *The Theory of Organisations* (TO), published in 1970, although there are also many arguments for not making such a claim. On the one hand there are those who can testify to the great impact the book, and the Action Frame of Reference presented in it, has had in the field of organisation theory (cf. Hassard and Parker, 1994; Clegg, 1994; Donaldsson, 1994; Alvesson and Sköldberg, 1994), especially in Sweden (Engwall, 1992; Norén, 1995). Yet, on the other hand, there are those who strongly reject the book and regret its alleged contributions to the field. Interestingly, chief among the latter is David Silverman himself, who over and over again has drawn attention to the many problems he – in the pale light of thought – has come to associate with his book (cf. Silverman, 1985; Silverman, 1989a, 1989b). Silverman (1994) has even tried to re-write TO under the influence of Roland Barthes (1977) and Ludwig Wittgenstein (1971). Following Barthes, he has stressed that analytically speaking "*the author of TO is dead*" (1994: 6), and following Wittgenstein (1971: 6.54), he has likened his book and its propositions to a ladder: Once you have used the book to climb up with, used its propositions as steps, throw it away, he writes, and then you will "*see the world aright*".

Now I belong to those who have climbed the Silverman ladder. But as much as I do not believe in the possibility of seeing the world 'aright' from this position (or any position for that matter), I do not find it necessary to throw it away. On the contrary, I find it rather appropriate to hoist the ladder again and to encourage others to do the same. The reason for this is simple. Although forty years have passed since TO was published, it is just as relevant today as it was back in 1970, if not more so. The critique formulated in TO towards the positivist and managerialist biases of organisation researchers is still pertinent, not least in view of the last couple of decades' sprawling of neo-liberalism within academia, and its call for a humanist sociology of knowledge still has its appeal.

The purpose of this text is thus to resurrect The Theory of Organisations, speak in favour of it and demonstrate that the book is most certainly alive and kicking. Besides the merits of such a resurrection in relation to the present day discourses within the field of organisation theory, I also believe that there is certain value in reading TO as an intriguing case of academic knowledge-making and institutionalisation of ideas. There is simply something fishy going on with the legacy of TO in the sense that the book's history is characterised by dubious interpretations and re-writing attempts, misdirected criticism, questionable inscriptions and even exscriptions. Put in this perspective I believe that TO could tell us something crucial about the processes that leads to the rise – and fall – of a Giant.

In the next section I present TO as it stands. First I account for what is to be seen as indisputable about the text and the context of its production. I then present the typical interpretations of the book. This is followed by a personal account of what TO has meant for me as a researcher, my own subjectivated "definition of the situation" so to speak. This way, hopefully, I will do 'justice' to the spirit of TO.

TO as it stands

The Theory of Organisations was written in 1970 by David Silverman, who at the time acted as senior lecturer in sociology at the University of London Goldsmiths' College. The book was to become his thesis and without doubt both the time and the context of production were of certain importance for his doctoral project. As a student of sociology in Britain, Silverman was positioned right in the middle of a burgeoning European movement of interpretivism, constructionism and humanism, and from that position he had the opportunity not only to write in tune with the times, but also to engage in a readership critically disposed towards the dominant Anglo-American ways of doing sociology in the wake of Talcott Parson's functionalism and C. Wright Mills' abstract empiricism. TO was "*sociologically timely*", Stewart Clegg (1994: 26) states, written for a generation "*brought up on*" Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's *The Social Construction of Reality* (1966) and, one might add, Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962).

The timeliness of TO is reflected in its basic argument. This consists of four propositions, all of which admittedly bear the signs of the times. In the first proposition Silverman identifies that the up-to-date study of organisations has been distinguished by a certain pattern of advances. A focus on techniques and efficiency has been replaced by one on knowledge: a one-sided focus on formal aspects of organisations has been replaced by a broader perspective on organisations, more attention is being paid to how organisations are related to their environments and the devotion to studies of industrial organisations has been interrupted by an increasing interest in a comparative analysis of different kinds of organisation opening up new theoretical vistas. However, in his second proposition Silverman draws attention to that the main direction of these advances – the Systems frame of reference – is vitiated with two problematic, and often interrelated, assumptions. The first of these is the assumption that organisations are made up of a bundle of interdependent parts, have needs for survival, and – as systems – think and act. The second is the functionalist assumption of analogy between biological and organisational/social structures (such as the CEO being "head" of an organisation). Taken together, Silverman argues, these assumptions inevitably lead to the problems of reification, i.e. the assignment of agency to social constructs and teleological explanations, i.e. that the causes of a phenomenon are found in its consequences – which in turn fosters nothing but a flawed understanding of social change as something inevitable and beyond human influence. Silverman wants to reserve the abilities to think and act for humans, and throughout his project he is devoted to Berger and Luckmann's idea which says that: Man creates society, society creates man.

In order to get to grips with the problem of reification inherent in the Systems frame of reference, Silverman comes to the conclusion that a revision of the existing framework, i.e. fusing parts of the Systems literature with alternative texts into a synthesis, is no alternative. Leaning heavily on Kuhn's (1962) rejection of science as some sort of cumulative evolution of data, and embracing Kuhn's idea of science as a competition of different paradigms, Silverman stresses – as his third proposition – that *"the time is right for the presentation of a clear-cut alternative to what is fast becoming a Systems orthodoxy*" (Silverman, 1970: 4). As a fourth proposition, Silverman states that this clear-cut alternative may be usefully derived from what he experiences as the state-of-the-art within the sociology of knowledge; the work of Berger and Luckman (1966) in which reality is perceived as socially constructed. Silverman thus positions his book on the shoulders of the Giants of the age.

The action frame of reference

Following the brief introductory chapter, Silverman goes on to approach the major strands currently operating within the field of organisation – systems theory, structural-functionalism, organisational psychology and technology orientations. Bit by bit he deconstructs them in order to show that they are all based on reifying assumptions and, in the processes of doing this, Silverman presents arguments stemming from a constructionist frame of reference. These arguments are then elaborated on in detail in Chapter 6 in terms of The Action Frame of Reference.

Outlining this alternative to the reifying system theory paradigm, "*pulling the threads together*" into a coherent exposition, Silverman (ibid., p. 126) especially draws on the works of Max Weber (1947), Alfred Schütz (1964) and Berger and Luckman (1966). He does not, however, present the arguments of these authors in any depth. Instead he chooses to present the action theory ideal in the form of seven propositions which he carefully explains and justifies by referencing his fellow constructionist writers.

As a starting point for his ideal-type, Silverman states that there is a fundamental difference between the social sciences and the natural sciences in the sense that they deal with different phenomena. People are subjects and not objects. As subjects they experience reality in such a way that they attribute subjective meaning to their actions and, because of this, sociology has (to have) understanding of action and meaning as its main concern, not observing behaviour (proposition 2).

People's subjective meanings, according to Silverman as he advances his list of propositions (ibid., p. 128ff), are in turn mediated by language and interaction among people into shared meanings and intersubjectivities, and with time institutionalised and experienced as objective facts, the reality. While this socially constructed reality is reaffirmed in everyday actions, it is in everyday actions that the socially constructed reality is also modified and changed (proposition 3–5).

From these propositions follows the concluding propositions that

> explanations of human action must take account of the meanings which those concerned assign to their acts; the manner in which the everyday world is socially constructed yet perceived as real and routine becomes a crucial concern of sociological analysis

and that

> positivistic explanations, which assert that action is determined by external and constraining social or non-social forces, are inadmissible
>
> *(ibid., p. 127).*

Action analysis of organisations

Having outlined the alternative to the system frame of reference, Silverman acknowledges that it is not actually a theory of organisations that he has provided. It is rather to be understood as a method that could be used to analyse actions within organisations, in that it offers new ways of understanding the origin of organisations, the nature of involvement of organisational members and organisational change. Within the Action Frame of Reference, for instance, worker performance is better understood as a consequence of their subjective definitions of their situations, rather than the outcome of objective conditions.

To further chisel out the methodological implications of the Action Frame of Reference, Silverman proceeds by suggesting "the path" one might – or should – take to engage in action analysis. According to Silverman, one should not only direct one's interest towards six interrelated areas, but also do this according to a specific sequence:

1. The nature of the role-system and pattern of interaction that has been built up in the organisation, in particular the way in which it has historically developed and the extent to which it represents the shared values of all or some or none of the actors.
2. The nature of involvement of ideal-typical actors (e.g. moral, alienative, instrumental) and the characteristic hierarchy of ends which they pursue (work satisfaction, material rewards, security). The way in which these derive from their biographies outside the organisations (job history, family commitments, social background) and from their experience of the organisation itself.
3. The actors' present definitions of their situation within the organisation and their expectations of the likely behaviour of others with particular reference to the strategic resources they perceive to be at their own disposal and at the disposal of others (degree of coercive power or moral authority; belief in individual opportunity).
4. The typical actions of different actors and the meaning which they attach to their action.
5. The nature and source of the intended and unintended consequences of action, with special reference to its effects on the involvement of the various actors and on the institutionalisation of expectations in the role-system within which they interact.
6. Changes in the involvement and ends of the actors and in the role-system and their source both in the outcome of the interaction of the actors and in the changing stock of knowledge outside the organisation (e.g. political or legal changes; the varied experiences and expectations of different generations).
   (Silverman, 1970: 154)

The sequence, or method, that Silverman proposes basically deals with the sources of action and its intended and unintended consequences, and addresses the orientations of the actors and the role-system that constrains and enables the actors' interactions. In conventional terms, the method thus deals with both micro and macro issues as well as with subjective and objective reality.

In the final chapter Silverman returns to the problem of reification and teleological explanations, once again stressing the merits of the Action Frame of Reference and its methodological implications, in order to clarify the relationship between the theory and the empirical research built into his method.

First of all Silverman points out that the method comes with a set of questions that only empirical studies can answer (ibid., p. 222). However, answering the frame's question does not imply that the role of the researcher should be that of a parrot, only re-stating the actors' subjective definition of the situation. The sociologist should, according to Silverman (ibid., p. 223), be concerned with placing social meanings "*in the context of an academic discipline*" and re-interpreting "*the meanings of common sense in terms of the meanings of Sociology*". That is, sociologists should be concerned with the taken-for-granted aspects of the life-world and should be interpreting the typical, 'un-masking' assumptions of everyday actions, using a sociological vocabulary that is different from the actors' but not superimposing concepts and definitions on the empirical situations (ibid., p. 223). The actors' point of view must be the reference point for every theoretical interpretation, Silverman emphasises quoting W.I. Thomas' famous theorem: 'If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences' (ibid., p. 224).

Secondly, Silverman points out that the method, in terms of 'measurement of meaning', requires careful consideration. On the one hand the sociologist runs the risk of verbalising meaning structures that are hard to articulate, half-conscious or even unconscious, while on the other hand there is the danger of 'measurement by fiat', assuming the sociologist's definition of the situation to be the actors' definition of the situation. The solution that Silverman brings to these problems is pragmatic in character: No research method is any better than the other; all have their strength and weaknesses. "*The fruitfulness of any method*", Silverman concludes, "*is structured by the degree of sophistication with which it is handled and its appropriateness to the task at hand*" (ibid., p. 229).

Third, and last, Silverman (ibid., p. 229 ff) stresses that the testing and verification of theories cannot be an integral part of the Action Frame of Reference, because such procedures – by imposing a priori assumptions onto the empirical setting – not only tend to distort social reality, but also 'mask' important aspects of the world.

The typical objectivations of TO

Depending on whom you ask, the alleged influence of The Theory of Organization varies. Stewart Clegg (1994), on the one hand, downplays the book's importance by arguing that "*it scarcely had any influence at all in the United States of America* (which according to Clegg is the place where works that counts in organisation theory are produced), that there is no recognisable 'Silvermania' and that no recognisable research programme follows the main ideas presented in the book. Lex Donaldson (1994), on the other hand, ascribes the quality of TO as the leading force in the "near destruction" of positivist organisational research, and concludes that: "*There is a recognizable stream of writing by British organizational theorists and organization theory commentators which stems from Silverman and which bears strong affinities to his work*" (ibid., p. 190). Among those singled out as being part of this stream, Donaldson (ibid.) highlights writers such as Whitley (1977), Burrell and Morgan (1979/1989), Reed (1989), Whittington (1989) and Clegg together with Dunkerley (1980).

The differing opinions about the impact of TO might very well have something to do with the accompanying differing attitudes that Clegg and Donaldson display towards TO, with Clegg being the affirmative one and Donaldson the opposing one arguing for a revival of positivist research in line with the neo-liberal movement. Despite these differences between the two, however, it seems as if they both embrace the same kind of understanding of TO in the sense that they both make use of rather typical and institutionalised interpretations of the objective meaning of TO. By purifying these interpretations into ideal types and relating them to typical interpreters, two typical (re)actions to TO can be sketched.

TO as non-constructionist subjectivism

The first typical (re)action to TO is probably Swedish in origin (and perhaps also in character) and part of a 'movement' within Swedish business administration during the 1970s located at the Scandinavian Institute for Administrative Research in Lund and the Aspenäs-seminars in Gothenburg led by Professor Walter Goldberg (Norén, 1995). Within this movement, TO was embraced by researchers like Richard Normann (1975), Nils Brunsson (1976), Ingeman Arbnor and Björn Bjerke (1977), and became one of the most cited works in thesis written by Swedish doctoral candidates (Engwall, 1992).

Indeed many interpretations of TO seem to have flourished in the early 1970s, thus leaving room for substantial discretion, but after Arbnor and Bjerke published their seminal *Företagsekonomisk metodlära* in 1977 (later to be published as *Methodology for Creating Business Knowledge* (1997)) one specific interpretation of TO seems to have been given precedence among the Swedes; an interpretation that basically positions TO as being based on a non-constructionist subjectivism.

Although explicitly referring to TO, throughout their book without any explication Arbnor and Bjerke (1977) refers to the Action Frame of Reference in terms of the *Actors* Frame of Reference (in Swedish: aktörssynsättet). Although this minor change of one word might look rather innocent at first sight, it has devastating consequences for the understanding of TO. Not only is the method for Action Analysis that Silverman presented reduced to one single proposition suggesting that all that counts are the actors' experiences, gone is the historical and situational awareness of the method and gone is the construction of ideal types of both actors and actions (cf. Ericsson and Kallifatides, 2003).

That Arbnor and Bjerke (1977) left Swedish organisation theorists with a flawed understanding of TO as being based on some sort of extreme subjectivism is reflected in several national key works on method. Lars Norén (1995), for instance, constructs the legacy of TO as standing in contrast to social constructionism and maintains that researchers working in the tradition of TO "*can understand the organization by understanding the actors as single subjects*" (ibid., p. 143, my translation), whereas Mats Alvesson and Kaj Sköldberg (1994: 101–102), referring to TO as bringing forward the 'the Actor's point of view', formulate a harsh – but rather unjust – critique of the constructionist movement, which they see TO as being part of, as reducing societal structures and functions to an individual level.

Reading TO in the light of this kind of critique, one can only come to the conclusion that there seems to be confusion between what Silverman actually wrote and the way he has been interpreted. Sad to say, this does not only lead to a false understanding, but also to the construction of false debates and false inconsistencies (cf. Ericsson and Kallifatides, 2003).

TO as power blind micro/macro theory

The second typical objectivation of TO arrives from Britain and Professor David Silverman himself, although it is most likely influenced by Clegg and Dunkerley's (1980) critique of TO of reducing society to face-to-face interaction. Silverman totally agrees with this interpretation of TO in his *Qualitative Methodology and Sociology* (1985) and admits that the action framework "*tends to become purely subjectivist*" (ibid., p. 75). Nine years later, once again looking back at TO, Silverman (1994) outlines what he sees as its main limitations.

First of all Silverman recognises the danger of TO being interpreted as "*atomistic or individualistic*" (ibid., p. 3) and acknowledges that he pushed his argument too far in such a direction. Secondly, he admits to have fallen prey to a 'romantic' belief in the authenticity of people's experiences, thereby underestimating their culturally pre-structured character. Thirdly, he finds his theoretical positioning to be a bit unclear. Finally, he believes that TO lacks a clear methodological answer to the question of how to "*get at an actor's meaning*" (ibid., p. 5).

So far much of Silverman's self-critique resembles the Swedish organisations theorists' interpretation of TO as non-constructionist subjectivism. However, the fifth limitation that he experiences with TO paves the way for an interpretation that typically frames the action analysis method as not overcoming the polarity between macro and micro. Specifically, the method is accused by Silverman (ibid.) of paying inappropriate attention to the exercise of micro-power within societal macro structures such as class, race and sex, taking power for granted as residing (only) in objective structures. To remedy this weakness Silverman turns to Michel Foucault (cf. 1977) for assistance, proposing a discursive turn (cf. Silverman, 1985, p. 82 ff).

The typical interpretation of TO that distinguishes itself through Silverman's self-criticism is that of TO as power blind. There is, however, a crucial difference between Foucault's intellectual endeavour and the objective of TO. As pointed out by Ericsson and Kallifatides (2003), Michel Foucault was primarily an historian engaged in trying to understand the West, whereas the sociologist David Silverman in TO was 'only' trying to say something theoretically interesting about actions in organisations. Trying to understand the West does not necessarily bring actors' subjective definitions of their situations into focus, but they are crucial if one, for instance, wants to ask 'what the hell is going on at Enron?' (cf. ibid.).

My subjective definition of TO

If one was to listen to the institutionalised meanings of TO the conclusion could easily be reached that TO does not offer any solid ground to stand on, especially if one is interested in contributing to social constructionist discourses within organisation theory. Silverman's shoulders simply seem too shaky to stand on. On the other hand, TO is 'out there' and is open to subjective interpretation, and for me – who read TO before I read the secondary literature – this has certainly made a difference. Not only have I had the pleasure of working with TO and exploring the possibilities of the Action Frame of Reference, I have also come to trust my own definition of the situation and to acknowledge the position that says that an author does not have exclusive rights of interpreting his/her work (cf. the discussion between Eco, 1992 and Culler, 1992). That is to say, I did not only learn things about organisations and how to carry out organisational research by engaging in TO, it also helped me to acquire a solid intellectual field (dis-)position to work from.

Looking back at my research over the years, the influence of TO is most clearly spelt out in my thesis (Ericsson, 2001), but its presence is felt in almost every piece I have written to date. In the course of time one could say that I have come to internalise TO to the extent that much of its content has become part of the assumptions that I make about reality and research. A glimpse at some of my writings might exemplify how I allowed TO to work, intended or not.

In my thesis *Kreativitetsmysteriet* (*The Creative Mystery*, Ericsson, 2001), an attempt to understand how creativity is socially constructed and organised in working life, TO was approached as leverage for working out how constructionist research might be carried out in a systematic fashion. Arguing against the interpretation of TO as non-constructionist subjectivism, I embraced the method of action analysis and spoke in favour of it as a kind of clarification of Berger and Luckmann's (1966) work as regards how to go about trying to say something about the way reality is constructed. At a meta-theoretical level, I argued that the six step model, (Ericsson, 2001: 107) sheds light on processes of internalisation, externalisation and objectivation in such a way that the dichotomies of subject vs. object, micro vs. macro and actor vs. system are transcended. For instance, I interpreted the first step of the model ("*the nature of the role-system and pattern of interaction*" etc) primarily as a form of externalisation, and the second step ("*the nature of involvement of ideal-typical actors*" etc.) as a form of internalisation.

Having said that, I concluded that TO contributes ideas about where to look; it inculcates the constructionist eye, so to speak. Nevertheless, I argued for a more elaborated frame as regards an increased focus on institutional aspects and the relation between processes of objectivation and internalisation, and I presented a 2-dimensional model in which subjectivated and objectivated reality is contrasted with externalisation, objectivation and internalisation. The outcome of this was six constructionist research strategies (ibid., p. 108 ff). Moreover, in order to accentuate the importance of identity construction, I added – as a third dimension to my model – a socio-cultural perspective in line with the writings of Pierre Bourdieu (1984), thereby fusing the Action Frame of Reference with the notion of *habitus*, the objectivated life-dispositions' structuring effects upon actors' experiences (Ericsson, 2001: 111).

After the thesis I edited a series of volumes (Ericsson 2003a; 2004; 2006) highlighting some of the un(fore)seen aspects of leadership, entrepreneurship and organisation without making any overt reference to TO. Covertly, though, these volumes owed much to TO, not least when it comes to the focus on constructionism and the un(fore)seen which of course could be seen as a short version of step no. 5 in the action analysis model ("*The nature and source of the intended and unintended consequences of action*" etc.). It is also clear that these volumes (see Ericsson, 2003b) stood on the shoulders of TO in the sense that the methodological intentions of the project were pretty much based on a realistic faith in science much in accordance with TO's allegiance to the theorem once stated by W.I. Thomas.

Also much embraced in these volumes is, as in TO, Schütz's (1953) idea that the researcher's role in society is to 'un-mask' assumptions of everyday actions and that this is done by using a vocabulary that is different from that of the actors, a theoretical vocabulary. With reference to Jonathan Culler (1992), the notion of overstanding, as opposed to understanding, was used to claim this theoretical position (Ericsson, 2003b), and was further manifested in the sequel to my thesis, *Musikmysteriet* (*The Music Mystery*, Ericsson, 2007), in which I tried to interpret the life and works of the Cumbrian singer-song writer Francis Dunnery. Here the Silvermanian call for overstanding anno 1970 was translated and condensed into what I believe to be the raison d'être of the social sciences and the humanities: to say something about something that people care about, but that they would not say themselves (ibid., p. 32 ff).

In sum, I thus commend a reading TO if you are looking for method for carrying out constructionist research, or if you are engaged in applying a critical perspective on organisations. TO will certainly give you something to think about – and with.

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17 Karl E. Weick

On Organizing

Markus Hällgren

Fascinated by Weick

"The Social Psychology of Organizing" is a book that has been cited 8,116 times on Google Scholar[33], and will most likely continue to inspire generations of organization theory scholars for a long time. According to Sutcliffe et al (2006), the contributions from Karl E. Weick stand out amongst other possible giants. Weick explains ordinary human behavior in depth and with a simple complexity that few are able to imitate.

I first came into contact with Weick's writings as a young doctoral student. One day I found a fascinating article describing how parts of the organization could act flexibly while other parts were stable. The article was "Educational organizations as loosely coupled systems" (Weick, 1976). Reading that and tracing it to "organizing" and the subsequent "The Social Psychology of Organizing" (1979) led to both Weick and the book making a strong impact on my writings. It is hard to specify why Weick has stuck, however. Perhaps it is Weick's predilection for extreme cases. These cases include the Tenerife Air disaster, the worst flight accident in history (Weick, 1990), The Mann Gulch Disaster, a smoke jumping firefighter's struggle for survival (Weick, 1993), Heedful interrelating, the practice onboard aircraft carriers (Weick & Roberts, 1993) or the philosophically oriented mindfulness (Weick and Sutcliffe, 2006), to name but a few. Or, perhaps it is the annoying feeling of there being something left to discover. It might be that this annoyance reminds me about Weick's book in the things that I observe, read and write.

The first version of "Social Psychology of Organizing" was published in 1969 and the second version, which this chapter deals with, in 1979. Although published many years ago, the content and its contribution are contemporary. As an academic, Weick "is widely regarded as one of the most influential thinkers in the field of organizational studies" (Sutcliffe et al, 2006: 1573). His contributions have been described as "a source of wisdom – of consolation as well as of gentle chiding. What is truly amazing is the continuous relevance of his insights in the face of changing reality – and academic fashions" (Czarniawska, 2006: 276).[34]

The contribution has targeted the common understanding of how organizations function. In particular, "The Social Psychology of Organizing" gives preference to what is *done* rather then what *is* in organizations. The aim of this chapter is to specifically target "The Social Psychology of Organizing" and reflect on it from a contemporary perspective. The chapter contributes by shedding light on the giant, and by fertilizing contemporary developments with those insights.

Organizing

"The Social Psychology of Organizing" is full of interesting, thought provoking ideas and examples explaining complex phenomena. Oddly, the text is illustrated with what at first glance seems like strange and vague cartoons and pictures. At a more careful reading the illustrations are rewarding. An example of this is a cartoon character from the MAD Magazine named Professor Bleent and the Floon beetle expedition. In the Floon beetle expedition Professor Bleent is looking for a rare specimen in the scorching desert, the Floon beetle. The beetle emerges once every 1,300 years and lays one egg. When the professor finds it and examines it with a magnifying glass, he accidently burns and destroys the beetle. The Floon beetle expedition illustrates that any researcher investigating a certain phenomenon has to be careful not to change the phenomenon as such – or in the case of the beetle expedition – destroy the phenomenon (Weick, 1979: 28). The other point is that deep insights into a phenomenon require closeness to what is observed in order to avoid reporting "some of the least important realities". Weick (1979: 29, citing Steinbeck, 1941) illustrates this with the description of the Mexican Sierra fish. Methods that 'counts the spines' say little when the fish lies dead and fermented in a glass jar and only the spines are left to count. Instead Weick suggests that something could be said about the fish when it is alive and in its natural environment. This should, however, not be confused with a critique of methods that 'count the spines of a Mexican Sierra', but rather a recognition that it is good to "know what you are doing. And this holds true for inquiry in general as well as for specific inquiries concerning organizational behavior" (Weick, 1979: 29). Weick's book and consequently this chapter are thus more about 'The Mexican Sierra behavior' than 'spine counting', and more about 'doings and sayings' than 'structures'. The reader should be aware that the cartoon is part of a methodological section in the book – something that is frequently disregarded.

The organizing concept is acknowledged as the most important contribution and one of the most frequently ideas of the book. Organizing puts verbs over nouns as a tool with which to understand organizations. In order to understand organizations, examiners should not study the artifacts of the organization, i.e. the openly visible structures, 'the spines of the Mexican Sierra'. In contrast, the analysis should focus on what is done, 'the behavior of the Mexican Sierra'. The basics of organizing are that an organization is nothing but a collection of human activities. The problem is that scholars, then as well as now, focus on the structures and representations of the organization and disregard the role of human action, or look at the spines rather than the behavior of the organization, therefore "we should urge people to stamp out nouns" (Weick, 1979: 44). Meaning that academics should pay more attention to how organization is achieved through processes of 'doings'. For example, the functioning of the organization cannot be understood by examining an organizational chart (the artifact). The chart is important, but it is only make believe illustration. In reality people takes shortcuts, think differently, disregard the hierarchical order and focus on getting things done or pursuing their own personal agenda (the behavior). Weick continues, "If students of organization become stingy in their use of nouns, generous in the use of verbs, and extravagant in their use of gerunds, then more attention would be paid to process and we'd learn about how to see it and manage it." This focuses the "ing" of organization, which "implies chronic rebuilding" and "a concern with flows, with flux, and with momentary appearances" that "can be thought of as a set of recipes for connecting episodes of social interaction in an orderly manner" or what is called "interlocked cycles" (Weick, 1979: 44). These interlocked cycles are not concerned with linear cause and effect, but rather a cause and effect that loops around itself and is thus self-determinant. This understanding of bounded rationality and idea of the open organization follows other influential writers of that time (for example James March, Richard Cyert). Weick's contribution is exceptional in the emphasis he puts on the group and the dependency on the social setting, explaining how organizations are held together as an entity from his social psychology perspective.

According to a citation analysis of "The Social Psychology of Organizing", and thus the concept of organizing in general, twelve concepts account for almost 70 per cent of the citations: Enactment, Equivocality, Action precedes goals, Organizing (verb) vs. organization (noun), model of organizing, Double interact/interlocked behavior, Metaphor, Tradeoffs between general, simple and accurate theory, Sense making, Deviation loops, Causal/cognitive maps, Social construction of reality, and finally, Loose coupling (Anderson, 2006: 1683). Given the total percentage, all the concepts are of importance. There are, however, a few concepts that stand out from my own studies and interest, which will be elaborated on. Interestingly, the citations do not refer to all the concepts necessary to explain the basics of the key concept of organizing and the main message of the book. Unmentioned concepts include selection and retention (enactment being among the top twelve). This implies that key concepts like sense making and the entire organizing concept may be flawed. Selection and Retention are therefore included among the concepts for explanation, as they may remain untouched in other sources. The concepts that are elaborated on are Ecological change, Enactment, Selection, Retention and Loose coupling. The reason is twofold: 1) other frequently cited concepts are touched upon throughout this chapter, and an interested reader may look up the concepts, and 2) the selected concepts explain most of the organizing concept.

Events are the basis for the investigation of organizing in general and the concepts above in particular. This is highlighted by the very first two sentences in the book (Weick, 1979: 1). The importance of events is thus reflected throughout the book, with a systems theory centered argument involving the aforementioned concepts. The events are acted upon and interpreted and experiences from the situation are kept for possible later use. This process has been named Weick's 'Sense making recipe'; "How can I know what I think until I see what I say?" (Weick, 1979: 133). The recipe consists of three parts: How can I (the person acting) know what I think (retention) until I see (selection) what I do (enactment)? Through the process human action is explained by understanding episodes of organizing that are then made orderly by interlocked cycles (Weick, 1979: 45). These actions are interpreted in a wider social setting that puts emphasis on the group and the social setting not on the individual per se:

> The meaning of any episode of organizing is massively conditioned by the context or field in which it happens to be embedded, the inputs being processed, the cycles available, and the interpretations that are acceptable and unacceptable at that point in time.
>
> *(Weick, 1979: 144)*

Turning to the aforementioned concepts, these episodes of organizing are initiated by an ecological change. An ecological change refers to an event that produces equivocality (a situation with at least two possible interpretations) and which provide the context that requires attention (Weick, 1979: 130,180). In a construction project this could be when something unexpected occurs that needs extra attention, for example when an important load arrives damaged at the construction site and may need replacement (Hällgren, 2009). This is an example of when typically smooth running activities that require very little attention are replaced by a situation that needs explicit attention.

In order to understand and manage the change a person enacts their environment to make sense of the ecological change using experiences in the light of present actions (Weick, 1979: 153). Enactment is thus associated with the co-creation of the environment. The enactment functions as tentacle-like sensitizing devices. The assumption is that action precedes decisions and it is therefore actions that give guidance to decisions, rather than the (traditional) other way around. It is important to recognize that the enactment does not provide the sense making process, but rather the raw material from which the sense making/organizing recipe constructs reality. Following the previous example, enactment includes a project manager being in contact with the contractor to find out what has happened to the damaged equipment and how a solution could be implemented.

When an event is enacted it is bracketed from other ongoing organizing. Bracketing thus separates activities to understand events separately. It is a process of simplification and de-complication of the environment. Following previous example, bracketing includes when the damaged equipment is found to be in need of replacement. Through the enactment, portions of reality are isolated and made understandable, and thus manageable when non-concurrent interpretations and circumstances have to be considered. Weick (1979: 153–154) exemplifies the necessity of bracketing with "a teletype machine whose output contains not punctuation into sentences or paragraphs. In the unpunctuated output one does not know where one 'story' leaves off and another story begins, or even whether a story is reasonable unit of analysis."

Selection follows enactment and is the process in which structures are put on top of the enacted, bracketed ecological change. These structures are 'cause maps', which are a cause and effect relationship from previous experiences. The cause maps provide a grid from which the selection of plausible interpretations is chosen. Selecting the plausible interpretation means that the equivocality produced in the enactment phase is reduced. Continuing the example, the project manager facing several interpretations of the damaged equipment decided that the contractor was to blame when the equipment was found to be damaged. The project manager argued that the contractor had taken a photograph of the damage, but still loaded the equipment on the transportation. Interestingly, the interpretation and selection that was done had to be imposed on the contractor in order to receive reimbursement.

As the final part of the sense making/organizing recipe, retention ties together the bracketed event. Retention reorders inputs and interpretations which may – or may not – be used in the future (Weick, 1979: 208). Retention is thus simply the process of creating cause maps. Based on the example that has been used, an evidence of retention would be if the project manager used the same approach in a similar situation.

Loose coupling explains how the bracketing is dependent on the environment of which it is a part, and how it is interpreted by the actors. Consequently, it explains how a certain part of the organizing is directly influenced by the ecological change while other parts of the organizing are not. This loose coupling allows the organization to continue to exist, as it is possible that events are maintained within the boundaries of the firm but are as yet still un-influenced by other actions. Each episode of enactment-selection-retention is, in this sense, a loosely coupled activity in relation to other activities that continue un-altered in spite of the need for interpretation (Weick, 1976, 1979: 236). Returning to the example, each deviation that occurred (including the damaged equipment) underwent a sequence of becoming loosely coupled. The loose coupling enabled the deviations to be managed without interference from other activities. Once the situation was under control and could be reintegrated into the overall activities, the activities were re-associated. Paradoxically, the loose coupling among the events was thus necessary in order to maintain control (Hällgren, 2009).

The above indicates that organizing is a matter of constantly re-writing the history through attempts to understand what happened in the past and transform this understanding to fit the present situation. Following a traditional viewpoint, organizations are assumed to manage the organizing/sense making recipe by talking to themselves without human involvement (Weick, 1979: 134).

A Contemporary take on "The Social Psychology Of Organizing"

It is more than 31 years ago since "The Social Psychology of Organizing" was published. Organizations continue to be organizations even though the knowledge about them changes. However, change also means that the book needs a slight update with contemporary research and understandings to reflect how structure and individuals relate to each other now. The book could also be criticized for being too systemic and lacking in empirical evidence. Still, the book is as contemporary as it was then. Researchers maintain an interest in what is done and said and pay attention to the micro details of what is done. The book should therefore be a mandatory book for any student of organizations and how organizing is achieved. Weick focused on how and why people act, because "one of the ironies in organizational analysis is that managers are described as 'all business', 'doers', 'people of action', yet no one seems to understand much about the fine grain of their acting" (Weick, 1979: 147). Attention was paid to a similar argument in the last decade, where the basic argument remains intact; what people do remains unclear. One rising interest in 'what is done and said' has been named "The Practice Turn in Social Sciences" (Schatzki et al, 2001). This turn has spread to broad fields like Knowing-in-action (Gherardi, 2006), Strategy (Whittington, 2006) and Project management (Hällgren & Söderholm, 2010), to name but a few. The practice turn is therefore a late contributor to the same end (understanding practice) as Weick.

Essentially, the Practice Turn focuses on "the detailed processes and practices which constitute the day-to-day activities of organizational life and which relate to [organizational] outcomes" (Johnson et al., 2003: 3). To explain practice one has to understand the social situated context of which the practice is an inherent part (Schatzki, 2005: 468). The situational dependency can be further elaborated upon through three concepts that meet in episodes of practice: *praxis* – the situated doings, for example drawing blueprints; *practices* – the norms, values and rules that are drawn on when acting, for example to the blueprint applicable ISO-standards; and *practitioners* – the ones doing or saying something, for example the project engineer responsible for the blueprint. The episodes of practice depict the social event in which these three concepts meet, for example meetings, blueprint creation or structuring of the project. (Hendry and Seidl, 2003; Whittington, 2006)

The practice turn – meet Karl E. Weick

The essence of the discussed book is found in the aforementioned "How can I know what I think until I see what I say?" The recipe brackets and breaks up activities into episodes. However, this bracketing process is not an outcome of organizing but a sensitizing device that influences what is bracketed (Weick, 1979: 166). This could also be described as how the situated praxis shapes and is shaped by the practices of the practitioners and how these concepts merge in episodes of practice. Similar to Weick (1979), Hendry and Seidl (2003) argue that this process of practice can be divided into streams of interrelated episodes. These episodes are parts of the activities that are singled out from other organizing processes and could include meetings, planning sessions and away days, as well as particular forms of practice, for example a deviation management practice. Similar to Weick (1976:132), Hendry and Seidl (2003) suggest that process can be described as a process of coupling. Thus, the concept of practice could be described as an intertwined process of enactment, selection and retention.

Turning to Strategy-as-Practice[35] in particular, the references to Weick and the 1979 book either focus on organizing or to the 1993 article on heedfulness aboard carriers[36]. A possible reason for this could be that Weick's concept of organizing is centered in the group and that it in part disregards the individual. Following that reality is co-created in both approaches, although there is a considerable overlap which should not be forgotten in future developments. The connection is further accentuated in the argument below:

> Organizing is like a grammar in the sense that it is a systematic account of some rules and conventions by which sets of interlocked behaviors are assembled to form social processes that are intelligible to actors. It is also a grammar in the sense that it consists of rules for forming variables and causal linkages into meaningful structures (later called cause maps) that summarize the recent recipients of the people who are organized. The grammar consists of recipes for getting things done when one person alone can't do them and recipes for interpreting what has been done
>
> *(Weick, 1979: 3–4)*

In practice-based research, the person is not necessarily at the center, although research often starts with a person (the practitioner) being transformed into a practice (*of the people who are organized*). Again, situated praxis (*recipes for getting things done*) is essential to both arguments. In addition, practices play an important role (*rules and conventions…*). A few attempts have been made to merge the two, e.g. Bengtsson et al (2007), who argues from a work-based approach that some patterns can be explained by merging the two.

The main contribution from the integration of the two streams does not lie in the particular concepts per se, but in the added explanatory value to both fields. Weick contributes to the practice turn by emphasizing the systematic values of organizing by breaking down the process of organizing into stable sub-assemblies. The assemblies are achieved by actions rather than decisions (decisions follow actions) in reoccurring interlocked cycles, emphasizing the meaning and micro perspective of the practice. Weick also provides an argument as to why groups larger than nine provide no new information about how an organization functions, which allows for small groups to explain a lot. Small groups are typically the focal point of the practice turn. By evoking and paying attention to the "The Social Psychology of Organizing", practice-based research may also benefit from the systematization that the framework represents and the rigor in which the process is explained. The practice turn then contributes to Weick by re-emphasizing the value of practice and how artifacts like plans and maps may guide actions (see for example the story about the soldiers being lost in the Pyrenees who use a map over the Alps to find their way [Weick, 1995:54]). The practice turn may also give Weick a more contemporary language that is adapted to the present knowing of organizing. Finally, the practice turn adds to the understanding of organizing by providing a link between Weick's groups and the individuals and their actions. See Table 1 for a conceptual comparison between the practice approach and Weick.

For my own research, the idea of loosely coupled episodes of practice is essential. It connotes that deviations are defined according to certain patterns of practice and that deviations require actions to be solved. The idea allowed me to explain how projects could be relatively unaffected by deviations that would be expected to have significant impact on the activities (see Table 1). On the one hand, this description of the organizing process is chaotic. On the other hand, breaking down the organizing process is less abstract. Breaking down the general process into stable and non-stable assemblies explains how the organizations can remain under such conditions and thus one can "discover that it really is organized" (Weick, 1979: 53, 110). By following Weick I was able to describe and explain how a project is organized and how it remains intact despite conflicting demands.

Weick's concept	Practice based concept	Empirical example
Ecological change *An event that initiates equivocality and provides a context that needs interpretation*	***n/a*** *Is not necessarily triggered, rather a methodological choice/interest*	*Damaged in a construction project*
Bracketing *The act of defining actions in relation to other actions*	***Episode*** *A set of actions that are distinguishable in relation to other activities*	*Defining the damaged equipment as damaged and in need of replacement, separating it from "normal activities"*
Enactment *People acting and co-creating the environment through their actions, functioning as antennas*	***Praxis*** *Situated doings and sayings of individuals, conducted to work out the present situation*	*Calling sub-contractor to find out about the situation*
Selection *Based on findings from the enactment phase, suitable actions and interpretations are chosen from already present cause maps*	***Practices*** *Norms, rules, traditions that are drawn on while acting*	*The interpretation of who was to blame for the damaged equipment was done through the information gathering*
Retention *Concluding whether the previous actions and selections have had the right effect and if so, reaffirming their applicability*	***Practice*** *Generally acknowledged as "this is how we do it"*	*The same procedure can be assumed to be used in the future*
Loose coupling *Assumes that practice is loosely coupled, meaning that some parts are influenced immediately and others resist change, at the same time.*		*The damaged equipment contributed to a control panel being temporarily installed as a dummy and later on replaced*

Table 15.1 Organizing and practice concepts

Some reflections

The purpose of this chapter has been to reflect on the "The Social Psychology of Organizing" (Weick, 1979). Ecological change, bracketing, enactment, selection, retention and loose coupling are identified as particularly important concepts for the understanding of the organizing concept in particular. By comparing these concepts to the practice approach, arguments and concepts, including episodes, praxis, practices and practitioners (Whittington, 2006), this paper has contributed to re-emphasizing what is done rather than what is in order to understand organizations. The explanatory value added to both areas in terms of linking contemporariness and earlier developments and the recognition of commonness in concepts and application suggests that marrying the two may be rewarding.

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18 Authors

Karin Holmblad Brunsson is associate professor at Uppsala University and Jönköping International Business School. In her book, *The Notion of General Management* (2007), she explored the impact of Henri Fayol's management recommendations. Her present interest is on perceptions of management, the organization society and sustainability.

Hervé Corvellec is Professor of Management at the Department of Service Management, Campus Helsingborg, Lund University. He is interested in business ethics and the organization of infrastructure services such as power supply, public transportation and waste management.

Barbara Czarniawska holds a Chair in Management Studies at GRI, School of Business, Economics and Law at University of Gothenburg, Sweden. She takes a feminist and constructionist perspective on organizing, recently exploring the connections between popular culture and the practice of management and the organization of news production. She is interested in methodology, especially in techniques of fieldwork and in the application of narratology to organization studies.

Daniel Ericsson received his PhD from the Stockholm School of Economics and is now an associate professor at Linnaéus University and visiting professor at Malmö University. He is particularly interested in understanding how creativity is constructed and organised in society and in different ways of rewriting management.

Charlotte Holgersson is researcher at the Department of Industrial Economics and Management, Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) and a member of the research group Fosfor. Her research is located within the field of organization studies and gender studies. She explores the complexities of gender ordering processes in organizations, in particular issues of management, change and sexuality.

Markus Hällgren is professor at the Umeå School of Business and Economics and guest researcher at Uppsala University. His primary research interest is projects-as-practice and organisation theory applied to temporary organisations. Within this framework he is currently studying everyday decision making and temporary organizing in extreme environments, such as emergency room operations and high-altitude mountaineering expeditions.

Tommy Jensen is professor at Stockholm Business School, Stockholm University. His research interests are in the areas of organization theory, sociology and moral philosophy, with a focus on the intersection between ”private” and ”public” spheres and the social and environmental dilemmas that this intersection give rise to.

Ulla Johansson is the Torsten and Wanja Söderberg Professor Emerita of Design Management and founder of the Business & Design Lab, a cooperation between the School of Design and Crafts and the School of Business, Economics and Law at Gothenburg University, Sweden. Her research areas include "design management" and "art & management" including "artistic interventions", "responsibility and organizations", "gender and organizations" and "irony and organizations". She is actively involved in the Swedish, Scandinavian and European networks for design and design management research.

Markus Kallifatides is Matts Carlgren associate professor of management at the Stockholm School of Economics. He is Director of the Center for Governance and Management Studies and pursues socio-economic research on strategic management in corporations, corporate governance and the role of corporations in global society.

Marcus Lindahl is professor at the Division of Industrial Engineering & Management, Department of Engineering Sciences, Uppsala University. (Sweden). His research is focused on technology & organizing, the social collective in management and the dynamics of unorthodox economic behaviour.

Rolf A. Lundin is professor of Business Administration at Jönköping International Business School. He now works for the Media Management and Transformation Centre at the School, where he focuses his research on projectification and temporary organizations of relevance for the media sector.

Alf Rehn is Chair of Organization and Management at Åbo Akademi University, Finland. His (research) interests include frivolity, debauchery, drunkenness and transgression.

Johan Sandström is professor of Business Administration at Industrial Environmental Management, Luleå University of Technology. His research interests are in the areas of business ethics, corporate sustainability and dirty work.

Alexander Styhre is Chair of Organization Theory and Management, Dept. of Business Administration, School of Business, Economics and Law, University of Gothenburg. Styhre's research addresses a variety of topics including institutional changes in the economy and on the firm level, knowledge-intensive work, and innovation.

Elisabeth Sundin is Professor in Business Administration and one of the research leaders at the Helix Vinn Excellence Centre, University of Linköping. Her main research areas are intra- and interorganizational relations and changes. Nowadays she takes her starting point in the changes in the public sector and their entrepreneurial and gendered dimensions. She is also very concerned about the future of the social sciences.

Anna Wahl is Professor in Gender, Organization and Management at KTH, Royal Institute of Technology. She is head of the research group Fosfor, Feminist organization studies. Her research interests are in the field of gender studies related to organizational change and in developing methods for disseminating knowledge from gender research.

Tim Wilson is Guest Researcher at the Umeå School of Business and Economics where he offers a PhD course in academic writing and works with faculty and staff with their writing and publication efforts. This work led to an honorary doctorate in economics from the university in 2013. His research interests are in things Swedish in the general areas of business services, project organizations and management, international business and regional development.

Jill Woodilla is an affiliated researcher with the Business & Design Lab, and an honorary visiting professor at the School of Business, Economics and Law, both at the University of Gothenburg. Her ironic perspective provides her with a critical view of the multiple realities of any situation. Her current research interests include design management, design thinking by managers and opportunities for the confluence of art, design and organization.

Ulla Eriksson-Zetterquist is professor and director of Gothenburg Research Institute, School of Business, Economics and Law, University of Gothenburg. Her research interests concern organizing, especially gender, intersectionality, technology and risk.

19 Endnotes

1. http://www.quotationspage.com/quotes.php3 (Letter to Robert Hooke, February 5, 1675). Downloaded 28-05-2009.
2. http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/George_Santayana (The Life of Reason, Vol 1, 1905). Downloaded 12-08-2009.
3. Responsible teachers on the course were Nils Wåhlin and Tommy Jensen.
4. Organization studies is an interdisciplinary field, comprising scholars from numerous disciplines including what we in Sweden refer to as business and administration, management, business studies etc. Although the majority of the contributors would probably place themselves in a certain discipline, and thereby use terms like business and administration, management, business studies etc., this book aims to present giants in the interdisciplinary field of organization studies. Consequently, the giants' disciplinary homestead can, at least potentially, belong to any university faculty; it all boils down to the individual contributor's choice of giant.
5. Coprophilia is a fetish in which human faecal matter is made into an object of desire. Directly translated it means «the love of shit», and in practice involves a sense of satisfaction from either talking about or playing with the same. In more extreme cases, such as in *coprophagia*, this may also involve the willing ingestion of faecal matter. What can we say? People are strange.
6. On this note, I would also direct the interested reader to Hanna Arendt's "Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil" (1963/1994), Christopher R Browning's "Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland" (1998), Stanley Milgram's "Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View" (1974/2005) and Harald Welzer's Täter: Wie aus ganz normalen Menschen Massenmörder warden (2005).
7. There is a tendency to think of Drucker as being American. That is not totally true. He was born in Austria and devotes about a third of his memoirs/autobiography to his life there – in particular, his exposure to people who affected his approach to education, academics, business, culture and life in general. His formal education was in Germany where he earned a PhD in international law and trade, and his early business experience came through banking/investment positions that he held in England. He brought that background to his writing.
8. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* (2009). Special issue: A tribute to Peter Drucker, 37 (1).
9. Too much should not be read into the term "consultant" as it is used here. U.S. professors frequently consult on a part-time basis. Basically, the workplace serves as a laboratory for the individual's knowledge and skills. It thus is encouraged or at least condoned by business departments and universities. My particular experience happened to primarily be in high tech small businesses through Small Business Institutes at several universities.

10. See Wilson, T.L. (2009). On the shoulders of giants: Lindblom on decision-making. *Global CEO*, (March) 9–13. Wilson, T.L. (2009). On the shoulders of giants: Kuhn on paradigm shifts. *Global CEO*, (July) 9–12. Wilson, T.L. (2009). On the shoulders of giants: Lawrence and Lorsch on effective organizations. *Global CEO*, (September) 11–15. Wilson, T.L. (2009). On the shoulders of giants: Simon on complexity and intuition. *Global CEO*, (November) 9–13. Wilson, T.L. (2010). On the shoulders of giants: March on samples of one or fewer. *Global CEO*, (January) 9–13.
11. The following of Drucker has reached a near cult like status. The Peter Drucker Society of Austria held its first global conference on November 19–20 with a list of distinguished speakers. This conference was part of "Drucker 100" that included workshops such as the Drucker Centennial Events at the Drucker Institute in Claremont and the Drucker Centennial Global Conference Korea. (www.druckersociety.at/index.php/09-global-forum/background – downloaded 3/5/2010)
12. As an exercise as a guest lecturer for the PhD course on the classics taught at USBE in 2007, to which we refer to in the introduction, I determined a Gunning fog index (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gunning_fog_index downloaded 3/5/2010) for a sample of paragraphs taken from *The Practice of Management*. It was 8+, an indication that it would take only eight plus years of total education in order to understand the text. Consequently, it is an extremely readable text.
13. The terms "slide rule" and "cash register" may have little meaning for younger readers. Note the original publication date of this text. The author graduated from a respected engineering school in 1965 and remembers both slide rules and cash registers well.
14. An earlier version of this article was published in *le Libellio d'Aegis*, Vol. 5, No. 4, pp. 13–20.

15. Here social constructionist refers to the belief that we collectively, as human beings, construct our world and to how we perceive it. This view is derived from Berger and Luckman's (1966) *The Social Construction of Reality*. This view is usually seen as being in opposition to a system theory that takes its inspiration from biology.
16. I'm grateful for the financial support from the *Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research*.
17. To be fair it has to be acknowledged that there are critical researchers both in organisational studies, leadership and entrepreneurship. However, I have chosen to simplify my statements in order to make my arguments clear. I return to this at the end of the chapter.
18. There is an ongoing discussion about the definitions of sex and gender which I will not go into here.
19. This chapter is partly based on my earlier text "My forgotten predecessors", Czarniawska 2009c.
20. I decided to rely primarily on a recent work by Masarczyk (2008).
21. Or her husband, had she been married.
22. The Polish surnames in an adjective form change with gender: Maria Ossowska, Stanisław Ossowski, the married couple Ossowscy.
23. Another date has been quoted as 1925, which seems unlikely to me.
24. (http://www.forumakad.pl/archiwum/2005/03/26-gwiazy_i_meteory.htm, accessed 2/3/2010, translation BC). Sex was obviously one of the important topics in the discussion about bourgeois morality, while war came across in another of her topics: chivalrous ethos.
25. It needs to be added that in Polish "science" does not have the Anglo-Saxon association with natural sciences but is closer to the Swedish "lära".
26. The editor's introduction again concentrated on the importance of Stanisław Ossowski's thoughts, although Maria was the first author; although it could have been an expression of respect due to the fact that Stanisław had recently died.
27. Abduction is a method of logical inference introduced by the US pragmatist Charles Sanders Peirce, which comes prior to induction and deduction, and which in colloquial language is called "a hunch". For a good description of abduction see Eco and Sebeok (1988).
28. The English translator made a mistake here: in the Polish text it says "in the first drafts".
29. It was reprinted in 1992 as *The paragon of a democrat: Virtues and values*.
30. Here I follow John Wilkingson and Purcell Weaver's English translation of the Treatise (1969). For the record, Mats Rosengren (2004) compares the term with the Swedish 'gillande'.

31. Most management and organisation studies on argumentation refer to Stephen Toulmin's (1958) data-warrant-claim model of argument structure. This model has been used to analyse decision options (Locks, 1985; Mitroff, Mason, & Barabba, 1982), decision support systems (Sillince, 1996; Yearwood & Stranieri, 2006), decision-making in complex environments (Brønn, 1998), and to criticise the Balanced Scorecard (Nørreklit, 2003). It has also been brought into use to assess beliefs (Benson, Curley, & Smith, 1995), explore trust (Kim & Benbasat, 2009), estimate customers' trust (Kim & Benbasat, 2009), formalise argumentation (Bui, Bodart, & Ma, 1997), evaluate the level of argumentation rationality (Werder, 1999) and to understand inductive reasoning (Ketokivi & Mantere, 2010). At times, Toulmin's model is used in combination with other theoretical approaches, such as pragma-dialectic and rhetoric (Sillince, 2000) or story telling (Gold, Holman, & Thorpe, 2002).
32. Few organisation studies scholars refer to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1958). Onkila (2009) analyses how companies present their corporate environmental management. Carter and Jackson (2004) make general use of the Treatise to advocate a need to adopt one's arguments to the audience when dealing with management knowledge diffusion. Sillince mentions the Treatise occasionally, for example to present rules for an effective argumentation (2002), reminds that argumentation implies logic and rhetoric (2000), and lays "the foundations of an organizational theory of argumentation" (1999: 796). Kornprobst (2007) refers en passant to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca when studying how states come to select norms. I make a more systematic use of the Treatise to study the development of infrastructure projects (2001a, 2001b), how organisations produce arguments (2006), argumentation in the wind-power sector (2007), or risk communication in environmental impact assessments (2008).
33. http://scholar.google.com/scholar?cites=18418617104651775524&hl=sv&as_sdt=2000 accessed 2010-03-08
34. See also for example the special issue in "Organization Studies" (2006, vol.27, issue 11)
35. Strategy-as-Practice is a developed and coherent field that utilizes an explicit practice based approach (www.sasp.org)
36. Making a very generic search on Google Scholar using the search "Strategy as practice" or "Strategy-as-practice" or "Weick 1979" gives 228 hits. Going through a few of the top hits leaves Weick cited together with other classic authors such as March, Simon etc., without going into any detail of how "organizing" is built up, the role of the sense making recipe (enactment, selection, retention) and so on.