

Introduction

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In the first version of this *Handbook* we stated our intentions to provide a map for researchers to navigate their way around organization studies. In so doing, we used various criteria to help us decide which subjects to include in the volume: both old and new, mainstream and peripheral, normal and 'contra' science, and from established authors and relative newcomers. We hoped that the original edition would be a reaffirmation of the dominant streams of thought in organization studies as well as a celebration of some newer modes of inquiry (Clegg and Hardy 1996a). We also wanted to stimulate conversations within and between the different approaches to organization studies. In fact, we conceptualized organization studies as a series of multiple, overlapping conversations that reflect, reproduce and refute earlier conversations:

Our approach is to conceptualize organization studies as a series of conversations, in particular those of organization studies researchers who help to constitute organizations through terms derived from paradigms, methods and assumptions, themselves derived from earlier conversations (Clegg and Hardy 1996b: 3).

In this regard, our objectives have not changed in this second edition – we still wish to provide an overview of research in organization studies, using the metaphor of conversations to guide our selection of topics and ground our introduction to them.

Our interest in academic conversations is widely shared. Controversy and disagreement have played helpful roles in academic circles for centuries and, while it may not always appear so, such conversations have represented important contributions to the development of organization studies. Recently, however, some researchers have expressed concern that debates in our field have become too heated,

such that people may have stopped listening and, hence, stopped learning from each other. This frustration has led to calls for more measured, respectful conversations, as in the 1999 special issue of the *Academy of Management Review* devoted to theory development, whose subtitle was 'Moving from Shrill Monologues to (Relatively) Tame Dialogues', in an essay by Calás and Smircich (1999) calling upon their colleagues to write in friendship, and in Weick's (1999) call for reflective conversation. We hope that the contributions to this Handbook reflect these calls, demonstrating respectful and reflective (if not always tame) dialogues.

In this introductory chapter we, therefore, review the conversations that constitute this *Handbook* and reflect on some of the themes that characterize them. In so doing, we provide a way of making sense of the book although, of course, at the outset we must acknowledge that the contents of this book are the product of the judgements of its editors and authors and, as such, they represent partial and personal accounts of the field. Nevertheless, we hope that most scholars in organization studies would agree that this book contains useful insights about important topics that yield interesting information and ideas regarding the nature of organizations and organizing.

The Production and Consumption of Knowledge

This *Handbook* is a text. More specifically, it is a scientific text, and as such it might be seen as an attempt to produce scientific knowledge. The process through which scientific knowledge is produced differs according to the assumptions of the researcher in question. The traditional model – the scientific method – consists of the following:

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... observation and description of specific aspects of a phenomenon or group of phenomena (e.g. processes, behaviours) in terms of a general model or theory, the formulation of a hypothesis to predict the existence of other phenomena or to predict quantitatively results of new observations (e.g. a causal or mathematical relation), the performance of experimental study are systematic observation and statistical analyses to test (sic.) the predictions, and the interpretation of empirical results to confirm, reject, or revise the theory (Cacioppo et al. 2004: 215).

This model involves what Kaplan (1964) termed 'reconstructed logic' – an idealization of scientific practice that is especially significant because it is widely taught to students and is taken for granted view of how science takes place. The scientific method – or some variation of it – is well recognized within organization and management theory, where many researchers have embarked on building knowledge through objectivist and positivist research. In fact, it was 'actively promoted by mainstream organizational scholars, mostly located in elite business schools, who aimed to build an organization science ... [and] develop a standardized approach to organizational analysis' (Lounsbury 2003: 296).

In contrast, a very different view of knowledge production has been inspired by sociological research that developed a set of empirically grounded models of scientific production, and showed more clearly the social and discursive aspects of this knowledge production. Early researchers (e.g. Barnes 1974) argued that scientific knowledge could be understood in the same way as any other area of culture. Subsequent researchers used a variety of means to show the social processes through which scientific problems were closed, how concepts were established, and how methodologies were institutionalized (Latour and Woolgar 1979; Knorr Cetina 1981a, b; Pinch 1985; Callon 1986; Latour 1987; 1988; Woolgar 1988).

The view of knowledge as socially constructed is not new in organization and management theory (e.g. Brown and Duguid 1991; 2001; Tsoukas 1996). Twenty years ago, Astley (1985: 497) argued that the knowledge of administrative science was 'the product of social definition', reinforced by institutional mechanisms that invest it 'with the stamp of scientific authenticity'. Challenging the idea that our knowledge of organizations is the unmediated product of empirical observation, he suggested instead that it results from linguistic conventions – in Wittgenstein's

terms, language games (Astley and Zammuto 1992; Mauws and Phillips 1995). In other words, the language used to conduct and report research does not merely describe the phenomena under study, it helps to bring those phenomena into being: researchers 'see the world through the lenses of social theories, and social theories are built borrowing actors' categories and meanings' (Ferraro et al. 2005: 8).

Researchers adhering to this view are more attentive to the institutional, social and political processes that influence the production of knowledge (Calás and Smircich 1999), and the various linguistic and discursive techniques that allow researchers to make knowledge claims (e.g. Knights 1992; Harley and Hardy 2004; Harley et al. 2004). They are also interested in how consumption affects scientific knowledge (Hassard and Keleman 2002): consumption can occur in many different ways – and in shaping how knowledge is received, also shapes what is taken to be knowledge. Without consumption, knowledge does not exist – knowledge is generated 'only when singled out for attention by those who find it "meaningful"' (Hassard and Keleman 2002: 237).

Different chapters in this *Handbook* reflect both models described above, as well as a variety of positions located somewhere between the two; as editors, however, we tend to engage in research more in keeping with the latter. Consequently, we view this *Handbook* as an artifact – a highly institutionalized genre, especially compared to 10 years ago – with which producers and consumers engage to produce 'knowledge' about organizational studies (cf. Hardy et al. 2005). As editors, we are in both the production and the consumption business – having been among the first to read the chapters that constitute the *Handbook* and in writing an introduction that helps to make sense of it for other consumers. Given our empathy for social constructionist views of knowledge, we acknowledge that we use those sense-making devices that will help to direct, encourage or motivate other consumers to make a *particular* kind of sense of the *Handbook*. Accordingly, we focus on providing a guide that emphasizes the *Handbook's* status as both a discursive object and a scientific object: we examine how the chapters produce knowledge by engaging with scientific and other discourses in different ways.

In referring to discourse, we define it as collections of texts and statements that 'provide a language for talking about a topic and a way of producing a particular kind of knowledge about a topic' (du Gay

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1996: 43). To the extent that discourses are useful for particular groups, they can be seen as cultural resources (Gergen 2001) that help to bring about particular understandings and practices (Hall 2001). A change in discourse does not just change the way in how people talk about the social world, it also changes the way in which they understand and experience it, as well as who can act upon it and how they can act upon it (Harley and Hardy 2004). Thus, we are interested in the different ways in which the texts that comprise the *Handbook* draw on discourse to make knowledge claims and to promote particular research practices, i.e. the discursive strategies through which the chapters shape the production and consumption of knowledge about organizations.

The Handbook: A Consumer's Guide

This *Handbook* consists of 30 chapters, divided into two sections. The chapters in the first section explore different ways of theorizing the field of organization studies; the chapters in the second sector explore specific issues in the field. Many of the chapters appeared in the first edition of the *Handbook* and have been substantially revised by the original authors. Some chapters are entirely new, as we saw opportunities to present emerging areas of research in this edition. Some chapters and authors that featured in the original version do not appear here for a variety of reasons. Some subjects have been 'spun off' to constitute their own handbook; some authors had moved on to new ventures and did not wish to revisit their chapters; and some subjects seemed less current than they did 10 years ago. In the remainder of this section, we introduce the chapters, not in the order in which they appear but, in what we hope is an interesting set of categories that describe some of the discursive strategies evident in these texts. Of course, these categories are neither mutually exclusive nor exhaustive and, while we only consider each chapter in relation to a single theme, we acknowledge that chapters might easily be associated with more than one and other scholars, both authors and consumers, might well disagree with our classification.

Discursive Consolidation

The first discursive strategy we discuss is one that focuses on working within a well-defined, convergent

scientific discourse to consolidate and enrich concepts, relationships and findings that are already relatively well established. In many ways, this discursive strategy follows in the tradition of what Kuhn (1970) refers to as 'normal science'. This strategy is an important one because the potential for a scientific discourse to influence practice and policy depends on its structure and coherence: the more there is convergence within the discourse and the fewer the alternative discourses, the more powerful the discourse is likely to be (Phillips et al. 2004). As others have shown, drawing on a small number of well established discourses is an effective way to make a text 'stick', by which we mean that they fix meanings so that they appear solid and become taken-for-granted, while alternative meanings are more likely to be viewed with suspicion (Harley and Hardy 2004).

In the *Handbook*, an exemplar of this strategy is described in the chapter by Neale et al. on 'Social Cognition, Behavioural Decision Theory, and the Psychological Links to Micro and Macro Organizational Behaviour', which shows how particular research practices – mainly associated with the discipline of psychology and in the form of carefully controlled laboratory settings – has produced a widely shared view among those conducting research in the area regarding the significance of findings, as well as the particular puzzles which require further research. As a result, while not dismissing the intellectual debates that occur, it can be argued that a substantial body of agreed-upon knowledge on cognition and decision-making has been developed. In this light, it is interesting to note how the authors draw on a relatively small set of discursive resources – journals and topics from within the accepted, dominant discourse. As scholars work with this body of knowledge, not only do appropriate research practices become widely enacted, but the gaps in the body of knowledge become evident to members of the academic community. Thus, science 'progresses' as knowledge gaps are collectively constructed and researchers agree on the ways and means to fill them, e.g. the view that the role of affect or emotions has been ignored has provided the basis for a new sub-topic for inquiry. Thus, as the agreed-upon body of knowledge has become more established, it has been applied to other areas of study, such as organization decision-making, leadership and group decision-making. These new areas remain linked to the original discourse – some discursive 'stretch' may occur to accommodate

the new areas, but alternative or incompatible discourses do not emerge. Thus, a relatively convergent discourse is associated with a coherent body of knowledge through a process seemingly consistent with that which is commonly referred to as normal science.

Similar consolidation can be seen in the analysis of change advanced by Greenwood and Hinings in their chapter entitled 'Radical Organizational Change'. While these authors do not have the luxury of a powerful discursive resource such as psychology at their disposal, they nonetheless draw together different streams of research on organizational change in a convergent manner, i.e. to demonstrate agreement concerning what we know and do not know about this area. The authors argue that, as recently as the 1970s, change was not considered to be especially problematic. Rather, organizations were presumed to adapt in order to survive. By the middle of the 1980s, however, the environments of organizations had changed so much that change was a central concern and, further, the nature of the change was such that focus shifted from individual organizations to inter-organizational relationships and other aspects of organization environments. By drawing on three well-established theories of change – the punctuated equilibrium model, the neo-institutional approach and work on continuity and change – the authors are able to claim significant progression in the field. In this way, the authors' strategy, by drawing on the change theories summarized in the chapter, helps to consolidate the discourse of organizational change as characterized by broad agreement on such matters as the difficulty of achieving organizational change, key processes involved in the emergence of new organizational forms, the processes by which change unfolds and the importance of field-level processes.

Parry and Bryman's examination of 'Leadership in Organizations' shows how the discourse of leadership in organization studies has progressed through several stages, each associated with a shift in emphasis toward different explanatory factors. They suggest a progression of five stages, beginning with the trait approach that they argue dominated leadership research until the late 1940s, the style approach which was dominant until the late 1960s, the contingency approach (from the late 1960s to the early 1980s), the new leadership approach and, most recently, the post-charismatic approach. Parry and Bryman suggest that it is dynamic conceptualizations and

theories of leadership have highlighted new areas for study. For example, one of the more significant changes highlighted by Parry and Bryman sees a shift from a focus on entities to a focus on processes. The authors demonstrate how this process orientation evolved from the focus on individuals through several stages including a focus on context and now the 'new leadership approach' which treats leadership as being distributed rather than being centred in an individual. This focus on the distributed nature of leadership has, in turn, helped to surface concerns the 'dark' side of leadership which has, in the past, often been ignored. As a result, we see a new discourse of 'post-charismatic' or 'post-transformational' leadership emerging. Despite the changes, these different phases of leadership research remain tightly connected to each other, as the larger discourse of leadership is consolidated by relatively convergent studies. The discourse of leadership in organization studies is highly sedimented, with new theories incorporating concepts and relationships from previous theories, rather than replacing them wholesale.

Borrowing Discourse

A second set of discursive strategies in organization studies venture further a field and emphasize connecting to different discourses. These strategies explore multiple discourses and the ways these discourses can be connected to each other. Much of what constitutes knowledge in organization studies today was, at some earlier point in its history, anchored in research and writing from other disciplines, such as sociology, psychology, economics or political science. This tradition of borrowing continues to be an important source of intellectual resources in modern organization studies. In fact, almost every chapter in this book leverages important ideas from other disciplines, although we have highlighted two particular chapters to show some differences in patterns of borrowing. In some areas of inquiry, the borrowing might be described as relatively distant – concepts originally borrowed from a host discipline have since become fully enmeshed in organization studies. In other cases, we see what we describe as heavy borrowing, where the ideas and assumptions of the parent discipline continue to direct organizational inquiries: the organizational application appears more or less to be a sub-discipline of its parent discipline.

The chapter on 'Organizational Economics: Understanding the Relationship between Organizations and Economic Analysis' is a prime example of this latter case. Barney and Hesterly call their chapter 'organizational economics' rather than something like the economics of organizations. The fact that 'economics' is the noun and 'organizational' is the qualifier seems to suggest that this topic could easily be a sub-topic in economics rather than a part of organization studies. The heaviness of the borrowing is reflected further in the terms and assumptions employed by the theorists. Key elements such as transactions costs, opportunism, as well as the strong reliance on economists in the reference list suggest that economics is playing a hegemonic role in the analysis. In other words, the discourse of economics rivals organizational discourse in dominating this chapter, and economics journals feature heavily in the references, adding legitimacy to knowledge claims.

In contrast, Baum and Shipilov's chapter on 'Ecological Approaches to Organizations' is an example of how borrowed concepts, ideas and metaphors have made a successful transition into the discourse of organization studies. What is especially interesting here is that, for decades, students of organizations had focused on how organizations adapt to different environments, but things changed dramatically when Hannan and Freeman (1977) asked a different question: why are there so many different kinds of organizations? To answer this question they and colleagues turned to an established body of thought from the natural sciences – ecology. Much like economics, this body of thought provided a set of concepts that could be transferred to organization analysis and readily quantified. As a result, sophisticated quantitative tools could be applied to matters of concern to students of organizations. Whereas organization economics continues to draw heavily from the discourse of economics, population ecology has developed its own, largely separate, discourse in organizational studies – the texts on which these authors draw are primarily from organizational journals and by organization scholars, not ecologists – the original discourse is no longer necessary in making knowledge claims.

Comparing Discourses

Despite the differences in the degree of borrowing noted above, both chapters are similar in that they

draw on other, highly consistent discourses to reinforce their knowledge claims. A somewhat different inter-discursive strategy involves juxtaposing different discourses that are not normally thought of as compatible. It involves examining two sets of texts and conversations in order to understand each more clearly and to explore the relationship between them. For example in the chapter on 'Complexity Science and Organization Studies', Maguire et al. illustrate how the use of ideas and concepts, which have been developed for other purposes, generate valuable new insights when used to reflect on organizational processes because they offer new ways of talking – and thinking – about familiar objects. Such inter-discursivity creates new knowledge through its potential to develop exciting new ways of understanding the world of organizations as, for example, work on metaphors (Morgan 1986) and reframing (Bolman and Deal 1997) has already shown. It is worth noting that, in the early days of population ecology, the juxtaposition of ecology and organizations was a similar example of positioning two distinct discourses and, over time, a new hybrid discourse – population ecology – evolved. So one question regarding the place of complexity science is whether it has the potential to create a new organizational discourse, as indicated in the chapter on population ecology, or whether it will continue to be subordinated to its origins, as in the case of organizational economics? Interestingly, complexity science found its way into the discourse of organization studies some decades ago with the interest in general systems theory but, at the time, did not appear to 'take'. Given the scope of this chapter, perhaps contemporary complexity science will follow the example of population ecology and create not only new knowledge, but a new discourse.

A new discourse – and associated body of knowledge – is the very aim of the chapter on 'Meso Organizational Behaviour: Comments on the Third Paradigm' by Smith et al. In showing how psychology and sociology have separately emphasized the micro and macro, they provide the detailed histories of how knowledge about the individual and the organizational context has developed. They then review the work of scholars who sought to bridge these two discourses to put the individual in context. For these authors, the proper perspective for organizational studies is a new 'paradigm' – that of the meso-level which bridges micro and macro. By juxtaposing psychology and sociology and carefully

comparing them, the authors' discursive strategy shows the overlaps and points out that continued separation comes with costs. Thus, something new is required – neither the contextualization of the individual, nor the individualization of the organizational will do. A new hybrid discourse is required, much like population ecology. At the same time, it is important to note that this inter-discursivity is firmly framed within the parameters of traditional scientific discourse and, when the practices advocated by the authors are explored, there are similarities with the chapter by Neale et al.

A somewhat similar strategy is employed by Alvesson and Deetz in their consideration of the relationship between critical theory and postmodernism in the chapter entitled 'Critical Theory and Postmodernism Approaches to Organizational Studies'. These two approaches have at times been pronounced irreconcilable and at other times confused for each other. Their analysis of both approaches enables them to uncover mutually supporting themes and ideas. The authors tell us that, often, academic debate pushes advocates of different approaches into entrenched camps, making it difficult for them to benefit from each other. In such contexts, it is very easy for members of each camp to not comprehend fully what is going on in the other camp. In the heat of debate, neither side takes the time to do the careful study that would be necessary to understand and benefit from the ideas of the other. Alvesson and Deetz demonstrate how careful scholarship can permit synthesis of such seemingly competing perspectives and thereby contribute to some widely shared goals of all members of the organization studies community such as strengthening marginalized voices. This strategy, as exemplified by Alvesson and Deetz, has a powerful potential to form the foundation for future interdiscursive conversations. In contrast to the previous chapter, the authors do not situate their chapter within scientific discourse. Far from it: they explicitly hope to challenge scientific discourse by showing the advantages of building knowledge based on the dismantlement of boundaries between two alternative discourses – critical theory and postmodernism.

Discourse of Interrogation

This set of chapters adopts a discursive strategy that is focused more explicitly on interrogating the changing nature of theory and research in organization

studies. The fact that the discourse of interrogation is present in this *Handbook* will not come as a surprise to readers – genres that focus on reviewing the field are often associated with critique as well as overview. In fact, critique has been a theme promoted heavily in both this and the earlier version of the *Handbook*. The following chapters show how different phases in a field's history and different perspectives to act as lenses to view the achievements – and perhaps more importantly, the deficiencies – of earlier phases of study or alternative approaches. In this regard, interrogation is embedded in the collective – if disjointed – trajectory of research and is an important means whereby knowledge is developed. In contrast to consolidating strategies, which focus to build new knowledge by plugging (agreed upon) gaps and linking developments in a convergent discourse; the discourse of interrogation aims at showing how discursive change and divergence can *expose* gaps that then form a basis for conversation and debate designed to probe those gaps further. Thus, knowledge develops in a far more contested and contestable manner – and, in fact, as result of such contestation.

In 'Organizational Culture: Beyond Struggles for Intellectual Dominance', Martin et al. also employ a discourse of interrogation to show how the treatment of culture in contemporary organization studies was rooted in attempts to comprehend popular and apparently successful organizational practices. When academics initially became involved they, too, were interested in organization culture because of its association with organizational success. However, academic interest developed in the form of particular perspectives which then became subject for interrogation from academics using other perspectives. For example, early research produced an academic literature that emphasized integration. Subsequent interrogation of the integration perspective revealed a series of biases and limitations as the perspective itself became a subject for academic debate and a stimulus for the development of other perspectives – such as differentiation and fragmentation – that in turn became new objects for analysis and debate. As with other topics that have become part of organization studies, this analysis and debate incorporated ideas and perspectives that were popular in the field more generally such as: postmodernism, qualitative vs quantitative methodologies and possible managerial bias. The resulting debates often took on a warlike tone, as diverse

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academics competed to make their perspective dominant or – using the authors' metaphor – to become 'king of the mountain'. However, at the end of the chapter, the authors propose abandoning the king of the mountain metaphor to one of conversation to avoid repeating the earlier, strident conflicts.

Hardy and Clegg's chapter 'Some Dare Call It Power' also adopts a discourse of interrogation – in two ways. First, they show how different developments and new directions in the work on power have been used to interrogate earlier approaches and the assumptions on which they are based. Secondly, they point out that the study of power itself is a mode of interrogation, particularly of the functionalist orientation of the majority of the management literature. By understanding power, researchers, even those of different denominations, converge in their interest in exploring the often hidden ways in which management and organizational practices dominate and control. In this way, the authors ground their discussion in the work of early theorists such as Karl Marx and Max Weber, showing how each provided contrasting orientations that contribute to tensions in sociological thought that continue today. They discuss the ways in which organizations control individuals, from the strictures of the total institution to the apparently rational nature of hierarchy. They then juxtapose some of the different perspectives that exist within the literature – critical views such as those of labour process theory and in work on the dimensions of power; managerial approaches related to the use of critical resources to defeat conflict and ways of managing meaning; and finally the ideas of disciplinary power and end of sovereignty most commonly associated with Foucault. Different approaches have been used to interrogate each other and Foucault's work, in particular, has laid down a series of challenges to critical theorists and managerial theorists alike. These interrogations and counter-interrogations continue around a series of issues, e.g. agency, resistance and reflexivity. These authors continue to see interrogation and counter-interrogation as a fruitful way to develop knowledge, in contrast to the culture chapter, which calls for the end – or at least a muting – of the discourse of interrogation.

Lawrence and Suddaby interrogate the discourse of institutionalism in organization studies in their chapter on 'Institutions and Institutional Work'. They argue that institutional perspectives focus on the relationships among organizations and the fields

in which they operate. Institutional research has produced a huge literature in organization studies that provides robust accounts of the processes through which institutions govern action. Lawrence and Suddaby suggest, however, that institutionalism in organization studies has taken a different turn over the past 10–15 years that emphasizes the role of actors in effecting, transforming and maintaining institutions and fields – practices which the authors refer to as 'institutional work'. Lawrence and Suddaby construct an image of institutional work by drawing on key texts that have highlighted agency in institutional theory and concepts from the sociology of practice. Then, by investigating a relatively small but highly influential body of texts – empirical institutional research in three major journals over the past 15 years – they investigate the degree to which we understand the practices associated with creating, maintaining, disrupting institutions, which together describe a life-cycle of institutional work. In speculating on future research, the authors draw from other discourses to prove a wide range of approaches, including discourse analysis, actor network theory and semiotics. As the authors note, these are more than methodologies since each involves different theoretical and empirical traditions with the potential for developing new knowledge regarding institutions.

Gagliardi's chapter: 'Exploring the Aesthetic Side of Organizational Life' interrogates the tendency to view organizations as 'nothing other than a graphic and summary representation of a set of socio-professional roles and of relations between these roles'. Instead, he argues that organizations are contexts that cultivate our senses, especially through the artifacts with which contemporary organizations are strewn. Gagliardi first interrogates a history of the field in which the aesthetics have been largely ignored. He then interrogates the idea that artifacts are a secondary and accessory aspect of the cultural system, which was the assumption of much of the research on culture that gave rise to this field of study. He argues that the extent to which the aesthetics of organization is taking shape as a field of inquiry within organizational studies is largely a result of its willingness to challenge these assumptions. He then develops further the idea of the aesthetic to propose conceptual frameworks, language and categories appropriate to the analysis and interpretation of the sensate life of the corporate landscape. In so doing, he makes a case for a new

discourse of aesthetics, by interrogating – and ultimately severing links with – the cultural discourse in which it was originally embedded.

The final chapter that employs a strategy of discursive interrogation is Miller and Wilson's review of 'Perspectives on Organizational Decision-Making'. In this chapter, the authors examine the history of the study of decision-making in organizations. Their history of decision-making begins with early approaches that focused on the rationality of decision-making and the degree to which it occurred incrementally or in large strides. Such studies of decision-making were subsequently challenged by the shift in focus to power through the work of organizational scholars such as Pettigrew. A strong processual tradition then emerged, primarily in Britain, which built on both cognitive and political images of organizational decision-making. Most recently, the study of organizational decision-making has been challenged by insights from intellectual currents from outside of management. Drawing on chaos theory, decision-making scholars have examined high-velocity environments (Eisenhardt 1989) and the metaphor of jazz (Hatch 1999); while the sociology of practice, a stream of research has illuminated the practices of 'strategizing' (Wilson and Jarzabkowski 2004). In this way, as with the other chapters in this section, new developments are used to interrogate the existing knowledge. The authors conclude by suggesting that the field of strategy may offer possibilities for theoretical advancement and different ways of making sense of managerial interaction in spite of – or perhaps because of – ontological and epistemological differences.

Investigating Organization Studies as a Discourse

Another discursive strategy is that of investigating organization studies itself as a discourse. Three chapters do so by systematically analysing the field from a historical perspective. Reed's chapter on 'Organizational Theorizing: A Historically Contested Terrain' explores the history of organization studies, arguing its roots extend to 19th century thinkers, such as Saint-Simon, and to the societal transformations that accompanies the industrial revolution. Reed argues that the early roots of organization studies were associated with a celebratory air – modern organizations and organization studies

would bring the victory of rationality and science over irrationality and myth. However, in looking at modern day organization studies, Reed finds not a triumph of rationality but a clash of rationalities. By the late 20th century the meta-narratives of the past that promised collective order and individual freedom from rational organizations had not materialized. In fact, contemporary students of organizations function under conditions where these traditional beliefs have been severely challenged. One result is that fragmentation and discontinuity are the dominant features of the field. Reed argues, in this context, that what is taken as knowledge emerges through the dynamic interaction of social context and ideas. Consequently, modern organization studies are a contested terrain with different languages, approaches and philosophies struggling for recognition and acceptance. Reed adopts a view of theory making as an historically located intellectual activity which is directed at assembling and mobilizing ideational material and institutional resources to legitimate knowledge claims and the political projects that follow from them.

A second chapter that examines organization studies as a discourse is Turner's examination of 'The Philosophy of the Social Sciences in Organization Studies'. In this chapter, Turner, like Reed, adopts an historical perspective on organization studies, but from the perspective of the ongoing relationship between organization studies and the philosophies of science and of social science. A significant benefit of this discursive strategy is that it provides us with a simultaneously broader and deeper view of organization studies. As a discourse, Turner shows the identification of organization studies with a series of dominant metaphors, each with roots in the sciences and the philosophy of science. More than that, however, Turner also shows the interplay of philosophical and scientific ideas with the practical problems and experiences that shaped the political economy of research along the way. As just one example, Turner notes the interaction in the 1930s of the machine and organism metaphors for organization, with the Hawthorne experiments, some major industrial accidents, the money of Standard Oil, and the intellectual climate of Harvard University. The intersection of these various elements led to the emergence of new concepts and relationships – new knowledge – associated with the discourse of organization studies, oriented around the idea of the organization as a large,

complex organism which, while not amenable to the straightforward fixes of the machine, was susceptible to therapeutic intervention by managers.

In their chapter on 'Representation and Reflexivity', Clegg and Hardy also take an historical perspective on organization studies, particularly the 10 year history since the first edition of the *Handbook* (Clegg et al. 1996). They are especially interested in what the era of post-9/11, globalization, corporate scandals and virtualization (among others) means for organization studies. They remind us of the status of organizations as empirical objects which have changed in form and substance in recent years, matching that to a renewed interest in research that explores the processual aspects of organizations as they are brought into being, rather than seeing them as reified, solidified structures. They remind us of the various intellectual battles that have characterized the field, such as the paradigm wars, that will never be won, but which carve out intellectual space for alternative approaches; as well as pointing to new battles and new relationships between some of those alternative approaches, such as critical theory and post-modernism. Finally, they remind us of the importance – and difficulties – of reflecting on the field of organization studies. In this way, these authors emphasize the fragility of what passes for knowledge in the organization studies.

Investigating the Discourse of Organization Studies

Whereas the previous set of chapters explored organization studies as a discourse – a structured collection of meaningful texts – the next set explores the discourse of organization studies – the modes of language we employ in our descriptions and theorizing of organizational life. In discourse analytic terms, this approach takes a more micro-orientation, paying attention to particular linguistic practices, rather than the overall structure of the field.

The first chapter that investigates the discourse of organization studies is Sillince's examination of 'The Effect of Rhetoric on Competitive Advantage'. Sillince examines both the discourse of organization studies and the discourse of organization, as he examines the role of rhetoric in the social construction of knowledge as a strategic asset for firms. His analysis highlights important dynamics in the discourse of organization studies by showing the

sharp-edged boundaries still existing between areas such as strategic management and the study of language and rhetoric in organizations. Specifically, Sillince's examination of 'comparative advantage' reveals the consequences of using terms without sensitivity to their entailments. We tend to take for granted that an organization's competitive advantage is a direct function of the resources it controls and the products it produces. Sillince's rhetorical analysis reveals that, by taking this for granted, at least two potentially important questions have often gone unasked. Specifically, we tend not to address either what determines value or what is a resource. Sillince's analysis enables him to bring a new lens to the subject, thereby revealing that the value of the firm's resources is problematic, contestable and socially constructed. Furthermore, this new lens opens our eyes to important processes about value, competitive advantage and resources that students of organizations have often ignored as a result of simply buying into the assumptions of the economists.

The second chapter that takes this approach is Putnam and Boys' 'Revisiting Metaphors of Organizational Communication'. The study of communication in and around organizations is a huge and complex domain that is carried out within a range of institutional homes including business schools, sociology departments and schools of communication studies which, in turn, reflect and contribute to the diversity of terminology, conceptualizations, methodologies and topics of interest that marks the field. Putnam and Boys take on this diversity by examining the metaphors that underpin different sets of research on and theories of organizational communication. This chapter shows that the use of metaphor as a unifying device can organize complex arenas of social inquiry by constructing sets of resonances across what might be seen as disparate studies and theories. At the same time, different metaphors produce different kinds of knowledge through the way in which they frame thinking and practice in the research community. Putnam and Boys propose eight metaphors to organize and understand research on organizational communication: conduit, information processing, performance, discourse, symbol, voice and contradiction. For each metaphor, Putnam and Boys define its central features and review the organizational communication research that employs it, showing the different types of knowledge that each produces.

[AQ3]

Examining the Practice of Organization Studies

Discourses can be understood as 'structured collections of meaningful texts' (Phillips et al. 2004: 636) that bring particular practices into being (Fairclough 1992; Phillips and Hardy 1997). According to this view, organizations are seen as 'locally organized' and 'interactionally achieved' (Boden 1994: 1); and bundles of 'practices and material arrangements' (Schatzki 2005: 474), chains of conversational activity (Collins 1981) or 'bodily expressed reactions' (Shotter 2005: 115). Organization emerges in the interactive exchanges of its members who are recognized as such because they display the practices of its community (Robichaud et al. 2004). Whether a practice is meaningful or not – and whether it has organizational consequences – depends on the larger discourses in which it is situated. Thus, academic organizations comprise the practices that constitute research which, in turn, are given meaning by the discourses in which they are situated. A number of chapters focus their attention on various aspects of academic practices and the way in which they produce knowledge.

The first chapter that focuses on the discursive practices of organization studies is Stablein's examination of 'Data in Organization Studies'. In this chapter, Stablein addresses the thorny issue of what counts as data in organization studies, and the practices through which we produce data. On the subject of what counts as data, Stablein provides a useful and philosophically grounded perspective of data as 'representations' about our ideas about empirical 'reality'. While all data are representation, Stablein warns that not all representations are data. Stablein argues for a 'two-way correspondence' model of data, which suggests that for a representation to count as data it must not only involve the conceptualization of some facet of the empirical world into a symbolic system, but also allow the mapping of that symbolic system to the original empirical phenomenon of interest. Stablein offers a useful set of examples to illustrate this point, and then goes on to discuss several kinds of data in organization studies. Rather than focusing on the well-worn and largely pointless distinction between qualitative and quantitative data, Stablein categorizes data in terms of the practices through which it is collected – surveys, experiments, ethnography, case studies, archival research and the examination of discourse. This

typology provides an insightful look into both the data and the data practices of organization studies.

Another chapter that focuses on the practices of organization studies is Eden and Huxham's discussion of 'Researching Organizations Using Action Research'. This chapter provides a set of characteristics that define what they refer to as 'research-oriented action research', and outline its requirements in terms of methods, outputs and validity. As with many other authors in the *Handbook*, Eden and Huxham initially take an historical perspective providing an outline of where action research has come from, how it has developed and the varieties of research practice associated with the term. What connects the different versions of action research, they argue, is that, in contrast to other research approaches, action researchers are directly involved with organizational members on issues of importance to those members and about which they intend to take action. By involvement, Eden and Huxham mean that the researcher is not only observing the process, but is also engaged in practices associated with acting as a facilitator or consultant. Organizational members are, therefore, not only research subjects, but also clients of the action researcher. Thus, action research springs from the intersection of two different domains and involves a conjoining of the discourse and practices of practical action with those of organizational research. This dual status can have drawbacks: the legitimacy of action research is sometimes considered suspect both as practical action and as research. Eden and Huxham provide action researchers with their own discourse in the form of a coherent set of guidelines for judging the status of their practices.

The third chapter that addresses the practices of organization studies can be seen as extending some of the concerns of action research to address the issue of organization studies as a set of practices producing research 'that matters'. Flyvbjerg argues that organizational research needs, if it is to matter, to move away from the aim of emulating the natural sciences and address problems that matter to the communities in which we live, as well as engage in dialogue with those communities regarding the results of our research. To achieve these aims, Flyvbjerg presents a mode of what he refers to as 'phronetic' research, which has as its aim the production of knowledge that is neither universalistic in the sense of epistemic, scientific knowledge, nor artful, as in technique or craft. The term phronetic

comes from the Greek, 'phronesis,' which translates to something like 'prudence' or 'practical common sense'. A phronetic approach to organizational research, argues Flyvbjerg, would be especially concerned with issues of values and of power, with an approach that emphasizes the concrete, the practical and the ethical. Flyvbjerg's chapter makes an important and, potentially, radical contribution to organization studies. By focusing on organization studies as a set of situated practices, Flyvbjerg is able to construct a coherent and compelling alternative to our dominant modes of inquiry.

Discourses of Instability

Organization studies is an empirical science, intimately connected to the practices, processes, structures and outcomes of the organizational world. As such, an important feature of its discourse is the set of connections made between theories and concepts and the empirical reality to which they point. In developing theories or concepts, therefore, a potentially powerful discursive strategy is to highlight changes that have occurred in the organizational world and to show how they demand new ways of writing about organizations and organizational processes. Consequently, the subject matter of organization studies is closely linked to the affairs of the real world, while many of the concepts that command the attention of organizational researchers have their roots in discussions of everyday lay world affairs. As changes occur in the real world, academic treatment of these imported concepts also changes. As these chapters show, research in organization studies is revised and refocused as real-world conditions change. Thus, the following chapters take their motivation from the changing nature of the empirical world and, by evoking it, authors are able to make sense of the different ways in which knowledge is produced within a field of study.

The first such chapter is Dougherty's chapter on 'Organizing for Innovation in the 21st Century'. As the title suggests, this chapter takes the position that innovation is a dynamic process because of the new problems and environmental challenges faced by organizations. Specifically, Dougherty proposes that innovative organizations of the 21st century must employ simple principles of design, which will be very different from the bureaucratic principles of the past. Although organizations will still need to achieve appropriate levels of differentiation,

integration and control, doing so will require quite different mindsets and approaches. In some ways, Dougherty's observations resemble Langton's (1984) account of the changes in managerial mindset introduced by Wedgwood when he operationalized bureaucracy as an organizational form that far outstripped other organizations of its time in responding to environmental contingencies. Although Wedgwood did it as a practitioner and Dougherty is doing as a theorist, both are demonstrating the need to conceive of organizations in fundamentally new ways to cope with the problems of their respective times. The term 'organization' continues to be applied, but the qualitative features to which it refers are dramatically different.

A second chapter that argues for a changing world and, hence, the need for new concepts and theories is McGrath's chapter, 'Beyond Contingency: From Structure to Structuring in the Design of the Contemporary Organization'. McGrath observes how the concept of organization structure has been at the core of organization theory. Early on, this focus on structure was associated with the idea of finding the one best way to design an organization. However, as organization theory emerged it was agreed that there was no one best way to structure, because the appropriate structure was contingent upon the nature of the organization's environment, technology and so forth. This contingency perspective, while being a major step away from essentializing the organization, tended to view environment as a sort of an entity. Although McGrath recognizes that not all students of organization structure today would agree that we need to move beyond a contingency theory of structure, she points to some important reasons to do so, as a result of recent changes affecting how organizations need to behave. Among other things, we need to think differently about what constitutes 'fit'. Given the variety of responses that organizations need to make, an effective organization will not have just one structure because it needs to be able to change itself into multiple forms – to be ambidextrous. Similarly, conceiving organizations as entities bounded from other organizations and from the environment may be highly misleading: the concept of structure needs to become subordinate to the concept of 'structuring'.

Parker and Clegg's chapter on 'Globalization' reveals another domain in which changing conditions are argued to lead to a reshuffling of academic discussions, debates, concepts and theories. One

illustration Parker and Clegg provide is the extraordinary growth in the use of the term 'global' in the academic business press between 1995 and 2004. Drawing on a wide range of sources and perspectives, Parker and Clegg argue that the phenomenon of globalization can be understood as a complex set of interconnections that cut across a series of domains – the natural environment, economics, the political and legal domain, culture and business practices. For each of these domains, Parker and Clegg chart the changes that are occurring and the debates surrounding those changes. Replete with 'real life' business and societal examples, these authors show how the tendency toward oversimplification in the field has led to dichotomies that can have significant effects for individuals around the world. The complexity and instability of globalization demands insights from other disciplines such as international relations, political economy, anthropology, sociology, cultural studies, economic geography and economic history. Expanding on the limited functional knowledge of international business is the only way it can keep up with a changing world.

The final chapter that takes on a discourse of instability is Porter and Powell's examination of 'Networks and Organizations'. These authors argue that, although the concept of social networks can be traced back to the work of Simmel and Merton, the growth in the concept's importance and usage can be linked to certain changes in contemporary society, including the decline of the vertically integrated firm, globalization, the increased importance of extra-organizational resources including knowledge, and the co-ordination requirements that stem from multi-site, geographically dispersed operations. Porter and Powell provide a valuable examination of networks and organizations by considering the role that networks play at different stages of the organizational life cycle. For each of new, growing and mature ventures, they summarize the key impacts of organizational networks, as well as considering what questions are prompted by the relevant research. Thus, differences in how different types of organizations utilize networks and how networks are utilized differently throughout the life cycle of their development creates demands for new knowledge that keeps up with these differences. Further it demands the use of different methodologies, such as ethnographies or longitudinal databases that afford the opportunity to study emergence and

dynamics and how changes over time in network structure can influence both markets and politics.

Discourses of Concern

A number of chapters develop what we refer to as a discourse of concern, by which we mean they approach topics in organization studies from a perspective that highlights both the moral and social dangers associated with organizations, and the potential for organizations and organization studies to improve the well-being of individuals, communities and societies, especially less powerful and marginalized members.

Frost et al.'s chapter 'Seeing Organizations Differently: Three Lenses on Compassion' explores an important new topic in organization studies. Their exploration of compassion not only provides a powerful look at the dynamics of this phenomenon, but also challenges many of taken-for-granted understandings of organizations as social systems. The authors argue that the desire to understand organizations as rational, calculating systems is not only a managerial bias, but also a deeply ingrained aspect of organization studies. Their exploration of suffering and compassion in organizations provides a counter to that desire – this chapter opens the door to what the authors refer to as the 'humane and virtuous aspects of organizational life'. The authors locate the concept of compassion in what for organization studies are non-traditional discourses, such as religion, philosophy and medicine. This provides both a strong underpinning for the concept as an addition to our field, and a bridge to important but overlooked areas for inspiration and intellectual borrowing. While emphasizing a discourse of concern, the authors embed their discussion in three distinct approaches to organization studies – interpersonal work, narrative and organizing – each of which offers important insight into the dynamics of compassion and provides interesting possibilities for research. The authors treat each perspective as a lens on compassion, showing critical aspects of the phenomenon and connecting to important organization studies traditions.

Fineman's chapter on 'Emotion and Organizing' also engages with discourses of concern. Fineman argues that, although emotion-oriented research has become much more prevalent and accepted in organizations studies, emotionality in organizations

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is still seen as potentially dangerous and so often silenced. This chapter explores many of the twists and turns associated with emotions in organizations and organization studies, the benefits and positive outcomes that can be associated with an appreciation and understanding of emotion, and the potentially painful and depleting consequences of organizational processes and research agendas that might leverage, exploit or suppress the emotions of individuals. Fineman begins the chapter with a discussion of emotional labour and the effects of individuals having to express particular emotions – and suppress others. He points out that emotional *work*, the effort of crafting and negotiating our appearance on different social stages, sustains the emotional hypocrisy that makes social order possible and, at the same time, creates pressures for individuals. He provides a critique of one of the latest areas of interest in this field of research – emotional intelligence. While it has caught the mood of the times, it emphasizes the instrumental control of emotions. It paints a picture of us in control – rather than victims of – our emotions, but it is clear that only certain emotions are acceptable; those that are productive and predominantly productive for organizations rather than individuals. He also examines how some of the major organizational changes that employees are currently experiencing in the outsourced, global, virtual world have emotional consequences, as well as the spectacular orchestration of mass emotions. Throughout the chapter, the emotional experiences of individuals – presented in their own words – are paramount.

The concern of Jermier et al. is the degradation of the natural environment – what they describe as ‘one of the most urgent problems of our time’. In ‘Beyond the New Corporate Environmentalism: Green Politics and Critical-Reflective Organizational Systems’, these authors explore a topic that is driven by concern for the welfare of humanity as well as the rest of the planet’s inhabitants. The natural environment and environmentalism are important topics for organization studies: the pollution of the environment is done by organizations (including corporations, but also public and voluntary sector organizations) and by individuals through organized processes in their work and leisure activities. The preservation of the natural environment is also an organizational phenomenon, with environmental NGOs, governmental ministries and corporate departments all involved, as well as large, complex interorganizational

networks connecting many of those players. The authors of this chapter argue that a new ideological framework has recently developed, which stresses the role of businesses as leaders in addressing environmental issues – what the authors refer to as the ‘new corporate environmentalism’. In order to examine this ideological development, the authors use the lens of critical theory (see Alvesson and Deetz in this volume). The authors argue that critical theory provides an appropriate and insightful lens because of its ability to highlight the political nature of the new corporate environmentalism, and to provide an intellectual foundation that supports a subversive position on an issue of grave importance.

Nkomo and Stewart’s chapter on ‘Diverse Identities in Organizations’ examines an area of research that is concerned both with human welfare and the instrumental implications of diversity in organizations. The authors show that organization studies has only relatively recently begun to pay attention to issues of diversity, with early assumptions of the field based on an homogeneous, raceless, gender-less workforce. Only with the civil unrest of the 1960s in the US and Europe did organizational researchers begin to seriously incorporate diversity into their research agenda, and even then with an agenda dominated by the process of assimilation. Two early responses from the research community focused on what Nkomo and Stewart refer to as ‘prejudice-reduction strategies’ and organizational response to equal opportunity legislation. Over time, this orientation was revised. The changes were captured in an early 1990s *Harvard Business Review* article that placed a positive value on diversity. The authors provide an insightful summary of research on diversity from five perspectives: social identity theory; embedded intergroup relations theory; demography; racioethnicity and gender; and postmodern and critical perspectives. For each of these perspectives, they examine how diversity is defined and measured, whose standpoint defined diversity, what level of analysis is employed, and what effects of diversity are highlighted. Through this systematic examination of diversity in organizations, Nkomo and Stewart focus our attention on key research issues and problems that require attention if we are to advance our understanding of this aspect of organizational life.

‘From the “Woman’s Point of View” Ten Years Later: Towards a Feminist Organization Studies’ by Calás and Smircich shows that inquiry in this field

originated from an interest in challenging the status quo because of the mistreatment of a particular group of people, i.e. women. Despite stating the chapter is not intended to suggest ways of organizing or managing from feminist perspectives, it opens with a review of conditions of women around the world, and uses stories of Cheryl and Vera throughout to illustrate how theories illuminate – or fail to illuminate – different aspects of gender, especially different forms of subordination of women as a fundamental problem. As the authors state, feminist theoretical perspectives are critical of the status quo and therefore always political, although the degree of critique and the nature of the politics differ. As a result, the impact of different approaches on women and on research may vary widely. Accordingly, the chapter examines a range of theories – from Liberal Feminist Theory to Transnational/(Post)Colonial theories – to show the different knowledges and effects that they produce. As theorizing has developed, new approaches have been employed to uncover limitations in traditional critiques, expose gaps in knowledge, and relate more directly to the concerns of women. Each theoretical tendency gives alternative accounts of gender issues, frames ‘problems’ differently and proposes different courses of action as solutions. In this regard, the chapter melds discourses of concern and of interrogation. However, at the end of the chapter, the authors return firmly to the discourse of concern when they advocate a version of feminist organization studies that starts from ‘a position in which gender relations, and its intersectionalities with other systems of social inequality, is the root organizing principle of contemporary capitalism’. Only in this way, argue Calás and Smircich, can we work towards an equitable and just world.

Conclusion

Reflecting on the process through which we consider the major topics in organization studies today, we can see that both production and consumption play important roles. On the one hand, it is very clear that members of field have been producing – there are many insightful organizations, manuscripts and creative ideas in literature. Interestingly, while we have stated our predilection for challenging the canons and production methods of normal science, we would not deny that this approach has been

responsible for generating important knowledge in the field, as much as more constructionist approaches. In both cases, as these scholars have gone about their work, the consumption process has also played an important role. First, in producing texts, these authors are also consuming other texts and, in addition, reaffirming existing discourse, challenging it or trying to create new discourses. In addition, as editors, we have been among the first consumers of these chapters and have orchestrated them into the production that constitutes this introduction.

It goes without saying that the consumption process is reflected in this book. The contents of the volume reflect the things that we find interesting and meaningful. We have the privilege of embedding our choices in a publication that may influence what others consume. In this regard, this book could be treated as a sort of consumers guide. On the other hand, while cognizant of the fact that the myriad boundaries laid down in and around the *Handbook* – not least in this introduction – will not only constrain and direct consumers, they may frustrate and even enrage them. The important thing, from our point of view, is not whether readers agree or disagree so much as they *engage*. Only in that way can the *Handbook* generate the ongoing conversations that we hope to engender.

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