

## INTRODUCTION

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Is an atlas a good guide to patterns of intellectual development? Can maps show conceptual currents as well as oceanic ones?

This was the first reaction of the late Barry Turner—one of the authors of this volume, and to whom it is dedicated—when one of us asked him to reflect on the existence and quiddity of a European way of doing social and organizational research. Many scholars would probably share Turner's skepticism about the usefulness of geographic determinism for understanding intellectual traditions. Yet when we put the same question to a Scandinavian colleague, his response was candid.

The field of organizational studies can be described as structured by themes, methodological choices or epistemological positions. Why on earth should nationalities matter in the age of the global village? Yet, if you asked me to define my scholarly identity, I would first tell you I'm in the field of organization studies, then I would probably add that I'm a Swedish scholar. Perhaps if I had to introduce myself to Americans, I would say I'm a European scholar in that field.

The above comment highlights a problematic connection that we had to face from the very moment that we started entertaining the idea of exploring the peculiarities of Europeans' perspectives and work on organization studies. The connection comes from the observation that scholars in every discipline tend to define their identity (**who** they are) in terms of places (**where** they are). That is, when asked to define their identity, scholars will probably mention an

academic field (a **metaphorical** territory); then, they will probably mention the place where they have been educated and/or live and work (a **physical** territory). This natural inclination to define oneself in terms of metaphorical and physical fields might come from the intuition that every place is a culture-bearing milieu, and, as such, it is the first clue of probable similarities and differences.

However, in the relatively new field of organization studies, the connection between physical place and identity is more problematic. Within the international community of organizational scholars, our experience shows that the continental identity ("you Europeans" and "we Americans" or vice-versa) is generally used as a meaningful label (to allude to peculiar ways of being and doing) only within **private** settings such as personal correspondence, informal contacts and conversations. In contrast, within those settings which could be defined as **public** such as journals, books, and academic conferences, the same labels are not generally used by organizational scholars as explicit criteria for differentiating, interpreting and classifying the knowledge produced and those who produce it.

Behind this contradiction there may be a sort of taboo among organizational scholars: although most sociologists and anthropologists accept as a basic assumption the idea that knowledge is "culture-bound," organizational scholars do not seem to want to say it openly. To emphasize one's identity in terms of a geographic place in public settings would clash with the belief in the universality of knowledge and the connected myths of positivism ("there is one objective reality accessible to everybody") and cosmopolitanism ("we are all citizens of the world and can share meanings and understandings beyond any borders"). One might speculate that while traditional sociologists are free to be more skeptical of such myths, organizational scholars see these ideas as essential to their claim that organizational scholarship is valid in and useful to modern organizations operating across national boundaries.

Whether or not such speculation is well founded, it seems obvious that the connected myths of universality, positivism, and cosmopolitanism are finding new support in the growing opportunities offered by the communications technologies. The diffusion of satellites and fax machines, the decline of long-distance telephone rates, and the exponential growth of the internet in recent years have made the "global village" metaphor a reality. If we are all members of the same "village," and sharing the same worldwide "culture," then to define ourselves or our knowledge in terms of geographic or cultural locations no longer makes sense.

At the same time, these myths are also under assault from scholars of organizations and even natural scientists who are joining the broader and much older debate among social scientists about epistemological assumptions. Organizational scholars join sociologists and anthropologists in questioning the assumption that there exists "objective" truth in the social sciences (see

among others, Astley 1985; Cooper and Burrell 1988; Hassard and Parker 1993; Marsden 1993; Miner 1990), while physicists are discovering that light behaves differently depending on how it is being observed.

In light of these opposing epistemological forces, the time seems right to openly discuss the tendency of organizational scholars to avoid publicly placing too much emphasis on the geographic rootedness of ideas. The purpose of this volume has been to bring this issue to the surface through an exploration of the nature of and the reasons for the existing differences between European and American approaches to organization studies.

Based on our contention that these differences are taken for granted in private settings, the first step of our exploration was to make explicit the most diffused stereotypes that we ourselves use more or less unconsciously. From the inception of this book project, we attempted a peculiarly reflexive process, where the editors and the authors were at the same time data and interpreters of it. Samuel Bacharach and Bryan Mundell started reflective and informal conversations with their American colleagues. The most recurrent preconceptions expressed in these conversations were accepted as the image that Americans have of European organizational scholars. On the other side of the Atlantic, Pasquale Gagliardi set about a parallel process with European colleagues, interviewing about a dozen scholars of different European nationalities. The traits which those Europeans tended to consider distinctive of their own approach (particularly when they compared themselves to Americans) were accepted as the European "self-image."

It is important to state that in these preliminary explorations, we were neither looking for nor finding documented opinions or proven assertions. Rather, we were dealing with collective and generally stereotyped images. When the Americans were speaking of Europeans, their views were independent of familiarity with specific authors and works. When the Europeans were speaking of themselves, their views were often disjointed from their own particular approaches. The stereotypical nature of the images may account for the recurrence of certain traits and the relative homogeneity of the opinions.

Notwithstanding the convergence of the two images—the European profile according to the Americans and the European self-profile—into stereotypes, our initial inquiries raised more questions than answers, especially regarding how these images had been shaped. Do the existing images and preconceptions of what it means to be a European scholar in organization studies reflect (or affect?) substantively different approaches in our field? When and to what extent can a supposed or real trait be considered distinctively European? How do we account for the fact that every trait attributed to (or self-attributed by) European authors can easily be found on the other side of the ocean? Is it a matter of fundamental differences, different accentuations, or more or less frequent use of the same approaches?

In light of these questions, we decided to continue our exploration of the topic by inviting a number of European scholars to co-author a volume specifically designed to concretely investigate the peculiarities of a European perspective. The following letter was sent out to a diverse group of European scholars.

Dear Colleague:

This letter is written in the hope that you would be interested in contributing a chapter to a volume that we are currently putting together tentatively entitled *Studies of Organizations: The European Tradition*.

Most of us would agree that in sociology, there is a chasm between the European and American intellectual traditions. It is in the study of organizations that this chasm is most apparent. The distinct traditions are apparent when we compare such European journals as the *Sociologie du Travail* and *Organization Studies* with American journals such as *Administrative Science Quarterly*, and *The Academy of Management Review*.

We are all aware of the implicit but almost never verbalized epistemological differences. For example, some would maintain that European studies of organizations are embedded in a more general intellectual context (e.g., Marxism, structuralism, post-modernism, etc.). Others would maintain that the European emphasis on work and labor is neglected in the American tradition. Many also assume that the European tradition is somehow more cultural, more historical, and less statistically quantitative than the American tradition. The implicit differences abound, be they epistemological, theoretical, or methodological.

Whether this is a self-perpetuating myth or a concrete reality, since the sixties, there has been an implicit if not explicit acceptance of this chasm. Although the differences between European and American studies of organizations have been taken for granted (almost institutionalized), the parameters of these differences have for the most part been unspecified. Despite its obvious potential, a dialogue directed at these differences has not happened, except for occasional conferences and individual contacts.

It is in this context that we have begun a dialogue on how to explicitly accentuate (or at minimum demythologize) the existence or non-existence of these dichotomies. After almost a year of discussion, we have decided that the best way to do this is by beginning a process of explicit exchange. The first step in the process should be an attempt to clearly specify the European contributions to organizational theory and research. We have therefore decided to put together a volume entitled *Studies of Organizations: The European Tradition*. We invite you to contribute a chapter to this volume.

Because of the thematic rubric of this volume, we do not want to constrain you to a particular topic or form. Your contribution could take the form of a review of a familiar topic, line of research, or tradition. Indeed, your chapter could serve as a vehicle for bringing together previous research or theoretical concerns.

As the first stage in this process, we would be interested in receiving a few paragraphs from you with some ideas which you might consider focusing on in a chapter. We would of course react to these ideas in a developmental manner, trying to integrate them into the context of the other chapters we will be considering. The form this final integration would take will obviously depend upon the nature of the contributions. Please note that we view this process as developmental; the editors will be closely involved in assisting the contributors with critiques and facilitating dialogue between contributors when appropriate.

Chapters should range from 35 to 50 double-spaced pages. The volume itself will be published as a hard-covered book by JAI Press as part of the annual series *Research in the Sociology of Organizations*. Currently in its tenth year of publication, recent volumes of this annual have focused on thematic issues. Among recent themes explored were participation, organizations and the professions, organizational demography, and collective bargaining and organizational theory.

Because of its unique nature, the volume we are writing you about is more ambitious than some of these previous efforts. Therefore if a problem develops that we receive too many high quality chapters, then Professor Bacharach (as the series editor) is committed to publishing more than one volume if necessary. In addition, following the completion of *Studies of Organizations: The European Tradition*, work will begin on a second volume entitled *Studies of Organizations: The American Tradition*.

We believe that this is a unique and exciting opportunity, and we would hope that this volume (in combination with the next volume on the American tradition) could either bring to the forefront the substantive differences between European and American traditions, or else assist in demythologizing such differences. We hope that you will be equally excited, and agree to participate in this collective effort.

If you are interested, please send us a few paragraphs outlining your ideas for a potential chapter by the second week in October. A full timetable will be developed after we receive the preliminary outlines. In any event, we would appreciate it if you would let us know your opinion on and reaction to the overall project and the ideas we mentioned at the beginning of this letter.

Please address your response to Professor Bacharach at 369 Ives Hall, School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14850. If you prefer, the fax number is 607-255-9833.

In response to our invitation, we received more than a collection of abstracts and papers. Many invited authors reacted to the above letter by beginning a dialogue about the issues that we had raised, and occasionally this dialogue was independent of the chapter that they wrote or did not write. With some of the authors, the developmental process was intense and exciting, not devoid of tension. Through that process, it became possible to acknowledge and to

compare the diversity of judgments not only between editors and authors, but also—interestingly enough—between the American editors and the European editor. We realized that our expectations affected our opinions, and our mutual stereotypes determined our expectations. In short, this stage was an important and enriching part of the reflective process that we had initiated.

At the end, we had nine chapters, written by European scholars of different nationalities and backgrounds. Countries represented by residence or background of the authors include Austria, England, France, Italy, Germany, Poland, Scotland, and Sweden. Before we present the authors and their chapters, it is important to tell the readers why we consider these chapters particularly significant, and why we preferred to explore the topic by asking a number of scholars to produce a specific chapter, rather than collecting and analyzing the “objective” features of a statistically representative sample of European writings.

The reason for our choice was that we conceived our entire project as an inquiry into the sociology of knowledge. We were especially interested in exploring the mechanisms through which knowledge is produced. In particular, we were interested in highlighting the ways in which self-perceptions, images, and labels of scholarly identity affect the nature and the form of intellectual products in the field of organization studies.

With this in mind, our problem was not so much to identify the “objective” differences between American and European scholars, as it was to understand if and how European scholars consciously or unconsciously shape their discourse according to their perceived “continental” identity, particularly when they are invited or supposed to compare themselves with their American counterparts. The assumption behind this approach is that the so-called “scientific” discourse, in spite of all our ambition toward universality and cold objectivity, is shaped both by our worries or concerns, and by the audience it is addressed to.

Implicitly, our letter of invitation was asking the authors to “represent” the distinctive European way of doing organization research and theory, to “play the role” so to speak, of the “true” or “typical” European scholar. Some authors directly addressed the issues raised in our letter, others ignored them, but all of their chapters are concrete answers to the central question: how and what do Europeans write when asked to represent their continent in a collection of works about organization studies?

From this point of view, each chapter is meaningful. It either expresses or conceals, but in either case embodies the author’s idea of what it means to “speculate as Europeans.” We can sensibly say that the authors might have emphasized and/or showed off those aspects which they think are consistent with their self-image. In a sense, the authors speak on behalf of a community of scholars that they feel a part of. What they say is therefore not only what they think, but also, at least in part, what they are socially supposed to say.

Within the perspective of the sociology of knowledge, we cannot interpret the “spoken” without knowing who is the “speaker” in terms of where he or she comes from. For this reason, we asked the authors of the nine chapters to write their biographical statement for this volume in a way that is rather different from the pattern usually followed for edited collections. Instead of asking the authors to list their present institutional affiliations, their current research interests, and their recent publications, we asked them to emphasize their academic socialization into the world of ideas, identifying key places, key people, and key schools of thought that influenced their intellectual development. This is what they sent us, along with a few sentences describing the topic of their chapter.<sup>1</sup>

### Stewart Clegg

I gained admission to Aston University in 1966 where I found Colin Fletcher’s ideas exciting and specialized in Sociology. There I tried to make sense out of social action theory, phenomenology, ethnomethodology, interactionism, and Don Martindale’s book on *The Nature and Types of Sociological Theory*. A philosophy tutor named Mike Hall introduced me to ordinary language philosophy, and before long I was making linkages between Wittgenstein, Garfinkel, Schutz, and the British Weberians such as John Rex and Alan Dawe. After a year of full-time research, I discovered David Silverman, which connected with Weber and my other interests.

Because of my interests in power, the presence of David Hickson of the Aston Group, and my family roots nearby, I chose to do my Ph.D at Bradford. At Bradford, Arthur McCullough and Ad Teulings influenced me with their ideas. Other influences at that time included: David Silverman, Alan Blum, and Peter McHugh all at Goldsmiths; Alan Dawe’s “Two sociologies,” Zygmunt Bauman, and David Dunkerley (whom I later worked with) all at Leeds University.

After leaving Bradford, I was fortunate that David Hickson used his influence to secure me a Post-Doctoral Research Fellowship with EGOS (European Group for Organization Studies). In 1976, I took a job in Australia, and I have been here ever since, except for an interregnum in Scotland in the early 1990s. In Australia I extended my basic reading in politics, organizations, and social theory into wider but cognate areas by working with people like Geoff Dow, Paul Boreham, Mike Emmison, and John Western at the University of Queensland, and Winton Higgons from Macquarie University. These were my lifelines in the 1980s as I moved from Griffith University in Brisbane to the University of New England in Armidale.

I had one other lifeline and that was the work of APROS (Asian and Pacific Researchers in Organizations Studies) that I helped to found on the EGOS model in the early 1980s. Through this I developed a good working relationship with Gordon Redding from Hong Kong University, who helped me broaden my knowledge to include some Asian components. The other significant thing was being fortunate enough to return to Australia in 1993 and join the faculty of Business and Technology at the University of Western Sydney Macarthur.

If what is meant by the phrase “The European Tradition” in organizational sociology is the impact of the major European social theorists (e.g., Weber, Marx, Durkheim, etc.), then tracing the direct and indirect intellectual impact of the ideas of one of those theorists is a natural place to begin our exploration. In his chapter, entitled “Of Values and Occasional Irony: Max Weber in the Context of the Sociology of Organization,” Clegg builds a convincing case that Max Weber’s legacy has been selectively developed by organizational theorists on both sides of the Atlantic, due to the fact that Weber’s work on the bureaucratic ideal type resonated well with values rooted in the Marxian and Durkheimian assumption that the modernist application of general principles of reason would gradually obliterate cultural and social differences. Clegg finishes his chapter with a call for the further development and use of Weber’s true legacy—his interpretive method of studying the cultural foundations of organizations.

#### Anna Grandori

I was trained in Economics at Bocconi University and in Business Administration at the Harvard Business School. Early in my studies, I was fascinated by the efforts of Herbert Simon to establish the foundations of organization science at the border between economics and the behavioural cognitive sciences. For that reason I focused on the theme of decision making. At Harvard, I was deeply influenced by the particularly instructive work of Howard Raiffa and his group on negotiation analysis. Another related area of my concern has always been that of cognition in scientific work itself, covering the philosophy of science and the methodology of research.

More recently, my ideas and research have developed in strict connection with the debate among European scholars, thanks to my involvement in EGOS (European Group for Organization Studies), to my role as co-editor of *Organization Studies*, and to my intense participation as co-director (with Richard Whitley, Manchester Business School) of the four year Research Programme “European Management and Organizations in Transition” supported by the European Science Foundation and aiming at integrating European research in the field.

My latest book (*L’Organizzazione delle Attivita’ Economiche*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 1995) is an effort at a unitary exposition of the discipline of organization, based, in particular, on an integration between the traditional body of organization studies and the contributions of organizational economists.

In her chapter entitled “Models of Pluralistic Organization: The Contributions of European Decisionmaking Research,” Grandori uses the evolution of European theories of decisionmaking to illustrate how European values such as individualism, subjectivism, and pluralism became manifest in particular thematic and methodological choices in a particular stream of

theories of organization. For example, Grandori claims that “in European studies, the organization is taken as problematic and in need of justification rather than the particularistic interests,” which is consistent with a conception of organizations as fragile, continuously negotiated, and based on legitimate interests related through a social contract. Although Grandori admits that this view is not exclusively European, she differs from Clegg in focusing on common European characteristics in an area of study, rather than what Europeans and Americans have both taken from their common intellectual heritage.

#### Michel Crozier

Michel Crozier is 72. He neither looks nor acts it, and furthermore he doesn’t really want to hear about it. Nevertheless, when we asked him how, for at least the past three decades, he lands on practically every “Who’s Who” list in the social sciences, he explained that it was a series of propitious opportunities. On the surface at least, Michel Crozier would seem to be the least likely candidate to become a famous sociologist in France. He did not attend the venerable Ecole Normale like most of his illustrious peers. Instead, after completing a program at a good French business school and writing a first thesis in law and public administration, he seized the opportunity of a French government grant to spend fourteen months studying American unions, even though America was highly unpopular for most prominent French intellectuals in those days. “I loved conducting those 600 interviews with local union officials,” he recalls. “Furthermore I suddenly began to fathom the mechanisms, through the American union ethos, of bringing about change in society.” It was only while writing up the results of his American field work into what was to be published in 1949, *Usines et Syndicats*, that he realized that he possessed not only the skills but a pattern of thinking which corresponded to something known as sociology.

How did he get from American trade unions to studies in French bureaucracy? “I guess I was at that time a sort of non-conformist Marxist. I wrote articles for Jean Paul Sartre’s journal *Les Temps Modernes*. But since I needed to earn a living, in 1952, I applied and was hired for a CNRS job, with a project concerning why white collar workers, who should have been class conscious, were not. While working on what was to become *The World of the Office Worker*, it became clear to me that organizational behavior could not be explained by the accepted shibboleth of the class struggle but rather by the functioning of organizations.

His career picked up momentum after the publication of his still popular classic, *The Bureaucratic Phenomenon*. He shakes his head in dismay at what he takes to be an astonishing misapprehension on the part of most readers of his magnum opus, which has been read by many as a culturalist critique of France, although his clearly defined purpose (he says!) was to explain what he considered to be universal behavior in organizations. This is what he did later, together with Erhard Friedberg, when they published *Actors and Systems*.

Of course in Crozier’s case the term sociologist denotes something more than your basic observer of society. During his forty-one years in the CNRS, he

founded a major research center for the Sociology of Organizations as well as an innovative graduate program in sociology which recently celebrated its twentieth birthday. In what he refers to as his “retirement,” he is presently spending big chunks of his time consulting on public and private organizations in a firm owned by one of his former students. In March, 1995, he published yet another book, *La Crise de l'Intelligence: Essai sur l'Impuissance des Elites a' se Reformer* in which he claims that he no longer believes what he said about his country in his 1970 study *The Stalled Society*. “It is not the society that is at fault today in France,” he claims, “but the mode of reasoning of its elites is obsolete.”

### Erhard Friedberg

How does someone like Erhard Friedberg, a 53 year old Austrian passport-holder, explain his lifelong career in French sociology? “Oddly enough it was a wonderful Jesuit priest who was my teacher in an American high school where I spent a year when I was seventeen who brought sociology into my life.” Vienna is still never very far away, for he can go from the ecstatic to the scathing in practically the same breath. “I was captivated by the work of David Riesman and loathed *The Organization Man* by Whyte.” While regretfully acknowledging that his family convinced him not to become a historian upon his return to Vienna because, they claimed, he would never earn a decent living, he did subsequently dutifully spend one year studying business in Vienna but found it too boring to continue. The way out was going to Paris to learn French. “Originally I came to France when I was twenty for six months.” Friedberg says he never returned to live in Austria because he liked what he was doing in Paris, and besides, he confided, there was “April in Paris,” and then May, 1968.

While studying at the Paris Institute of Political Science, he recalls that he greatly enjoyed the courses in political theory and profited enormously from the Institute’s championship of the history of political ideas. He read both Jean Paul Sartre and Michel Crozier and found them quite similar. After his post-graduate studies still at the Institute, Crozier offered him a job, and Friedberg, in turn, had found a calling. His likes and dislikes? He generally dislikes explanations that are embedded in determinism and culturalism. He likes dialectical thinking, or as he so aptly puts it, “I am sensitive to the contradictory nature of social life.” His philosophy of teaching can be summed up by getting his students to think in a different mode of reasoning, as well as come to grips with the intricacies, the mechanisms, and contradictions of social interaction. “For organization is not merely a form,” he believes, “but a process at the heart of human action.”

Erhard Friedberg is Director of the Center for the Sociology of Organizations, a CNRS research laboratory, and Director of the PhD program in sociology of the Paris Institute of Political Science. His books include *Actors and Systems* with Michel Crozier and his latest book *Le Pouvoir et la Regle* (currently in translation).

Like Grandori, Crozier and Friedberg make explicit the role of European values in the process of theory-building in their chapter entitled “Organizations

and Collective Action: Our Contribution to Organizational Analysis.” Whereas Grandori focuses on the values that have gone into that stream of organizational theories that includes those of these authors, Crozier and Friedberg themselves go beyond the roots of their theory to also discuss the values that have affected the way that their theoretical work has been received after publication on both sides of the Atlantic during different decades. Their remarks on the relationship between conceptual frameworks and the cultural “action” contexts in which they are applied are themes that are explored in other chapters in the volume.

### Giuseppe Bonazzi

I read philosophy in the fifties and defended a dissertation on John Dewey’s thought. At that time my commitment to the left prompted me to study working class conditions, and since then my field of competence has been the sociology of industry, work and organization. My trajectory gradually brought me from the youthful certainties of a Marxist stance to the mature uncertainties of a post-Weberian approach. The first hybridization of my Marxist convictions occurred in the sixties during my stay at the University of Minnesota, where I met Don Martindale and Arnold Rose. Martindale taught me that understanding sociology requires a historic and pluralistic approach, and Rose introduced me to the first streams of a critical sociology.

Back in Italy, I conducted empirical research in Fiat plants, where I tried to measure attitudes of commitment versus alienation in a sample of workers. My results were published and provoked much discussion in Italy where they appeared heretical to both the Marxists and the empirical sociologists. In the seventies, I got involved in the debate on “overcoming Taylorism” and grew closer to the socio-technical approach.

However, some years later, I felt bored with this debate, which was endlessly revolving on itself, so I started to study a different topic—the processes of scapegoating in complex organizations. That approach brought me closer to soft approaches and qualitative methodology. In the eighties, I wrote *A History of Organizational Thought*, and this task forced me to retrace my intellectual biography. As any reader of my book can note, Weber, Simon, Thompson, and the neo-institutionalist school have become my main references.

Lately, the impact of the Japanese model on Italian industry has induced me to return to Fiat for more empirical research on the way in which management obtains consensus from the workers in this new context. Technological changes and the demise of adversarial relations have made Fiat plants unrecognizable with respect to what I had studied thirty years before. Nonetheless, I believe that a subtle thread connects this research to that of my youth: the need to understand the material and symbolic conditions that make sense out of human work.

Whereas both Clegg and Grandori confine themselves to the theoretical level, Bonazzi expands on Crozier and Friedberg’s discussion of the connections

between theory and praxis. "Discovering the Japanese Model: Cognitive Processes in European and American Sociology" is focused on how different national scientific communities have received and interpreted Japanese theories and practices of production.

Bonazzi starts by putting the Japanese model in the context of the general theoretical debate on post-Fordism, but then argues that the route to post-Fordist production systems depends on the role of local culture, the attitudes of scholars toward management and labor, and way that the local production system treats the existence of slack in human creativity, raw material, and machinery. Although Bonazzi makes comparisons across European countries, his most insightful remarks are addressed at the differences between American and European approaches.

Overall, Bonazzi's work is based on the premise from the sociology of knowledge that in order to understand the adoption of a certain set of ideas, one must understand both the sources of those ideas and the places where they are being adopted. Bonazzi deals in a general sense with the relationship between ideas and actions, and more specifically with the travel of ideas to new action-contexts.

### Mark Ebers

Cultural diversity has been a recurrent theme and a considerable enrichment in the socialization of Mark Ebers. Born to an English mother and a German father, he married a Pole whose parents were from Austria and Lithuania. Other family ties extend to the United States, where his son is married to an ethnic Chinese from Vietnam, and to Sweden, home to his sister-in-law's family.

His academic socialization began at Hamburg University, Germany, where Ebers graduated in Business Administration, Economics, and Sociology. With Alfred Kieser as his academic advisor, in his doctoral studies at Mannheim University, Germany, Ebers was exposed to a heavy dose of organization theory and epistemology. At first, contingency theory and the work of Max Weber figured prominently within his studies. Then analyses of organizational cultures and organizational economics contributed further diversity.

Consequently, Ebers was and still is happy to serve on the Editorial Board of a journal that thrives on and indeed establishes both cultural and scientific diversity, namely *Organization Studies*. A one-year post-doctoral fellowship at Harvard University provided immense intellectual stimulation and strengthened Ebers' pragmatic outlook on the world of business and international politics. At the time, he was conducting a large-scale empirical study on the organizational design of international governmental organizations that applied organizational economics theories. Currently Ebers holds the chair for Management and Organization at the Faculty of Economics, Business and the Social Sciences of Augsburg University, Germany.

Ebers' chapter entitled "The Framing of Organizational Cultures" picks up where Bonazzi left off. Whereas Bonazzi gives us a specific empirical example of how the environmental context is crucial, Ebers examines how it is that the culture of an organization comes to be integrated within the context in which it operates. Ebers explains this by paraphrasing Marx, pointing out that organization "members construct and sustain their cultures, but they do not construct and sustain them as they choose." In effect, Ebers offers us a framework in order to understand the cultural mechanisms operating to create contextual effects.

### Barbara Czarniawska

In terms of formal education, I hold an M.A. in social psychology (University of Warsaw, 1970), a Ph.D in economics (Warsaw School of Economics, 1976) and a title of docent in Management (Stockholm School of Economics, 1986). What might indicate a certain volatility in disciplinary terms actually indicates perseverance in search of a discipline which would be able to describe and interpret what competent adult people do for the most part of their lives. Although my formal education ended a while ago, I am still collecting new experiences (in anthropology and literary theory, for example) under the same premises. After all, formal education is only loosely coupled (thank you, Professor Weick!) to the search for wisdom.

Although institutions played an important but hard-to-define influencing role, I should also acknowledge the influence of people—both factual and authorial mentors. I should start with Professor Edward Grygo, my high school teacher of Polish, who taught me that all that is written in letters is literature and should be treated as such; the late Professor Maria Blicharska who taught me the beauty of the English language; and Professor Janusz Beksiak, my advisor, who taught me to think, to theorize, and to construct books (the final responsibility for all of these is, alas, entirely mine).

Other people arranged some extraordinary encounters which changed my life: Professor Walter Goldberg, on a visit to Poland in 1976, brought me a copy of Glaser and Strauss' *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. Professor Lotte Bailyn, my Sloan School faculty contact during my ACLS fellowship in 1981-82, introduced me to Rosalie Wax's *Doing Field Research* and the wondrous experience of reading a professional book until the small hours of the morning. Professor Nils Brunsson first presented me to the forgotten world of Thurman Arnold and then to the latter-day institutionalists.

There are currently several other people to whom I am indebted (although not all are aware of it), including Bronwyn Davies, Bruno Latour, Donald McCloskey, and Richard Rorty. This is, however, only a beginning: I wonder, really, with what right do I write my name in the author's place? Well, the fact is that ideas travel around.

### Bernward Joerges

Childhood experiences led me into the study of psychology, the experimental version, where we were taught a strong positivist-empirical programme and a deep mistrust of psychoanalysis, theology, Marxism, and the like.

After receiving my diploma from Tübingen University I drifted into interdisciplinary institutions where I have remained for most of my life, moving laterally rather than upwards. The main topics that have preoccupied me include: international cooperation and development; planning and architecture; consumption and the environment; technology in everyday life; the dynamics of large technical systems; now and then a little study of science; lately back to urban studies and studies of urbanism. All of these came with the label “sociology of . . .” because labels are needed, and a profession is a resource.

Although my early mentors were psychologists and philosophers—I would like to mention Wilhelm Witte and especially Ernst E. Boesch and Max Bense—I chose sociology as the label for my Ph.D, Habilitation, and Professor Diplomas. After studies and early work at universities in Bonn, Bombay, Saarbrücken, and Stuttgart, I anchored myself in Berlin where I do research at the Wissenschaftszentrum and teach at the Technical University. From here I venture here and there, physically and spiritually, often to Lund where my favourite co-author resides.

In their chapter entitled “The Winds of Organizational Change: How Ideas Translate into Objects and Actions,” Czarniawska and Joerges bring to the surface a recurring theme in this volume—the connection between ideas and action (see especially the chapters by Crozier and Friedberg and Bonazzi). However, along with the chapters by Brunsson and Cooper and Law, Czarniawska and Joerges move the focus to the mechanisms by which ideas are transformed into action. They explain how culture operates as a medium through which ideas are translated into action locally, travel via fashion-like processes, and are then institutionalized globally. It should be obvious that an exploration and mapping of the interrelationships between ideas and locations is consistent with the theme of this volume.

### Nils Brunsson

I graduated from the Gothenburg School of Economics in Sweden in 1969, where Albert Danielsson’s lectures inspired me to start a research career. He combined management with epistemological issues, which I also discussed at seminars led by Hakan Tornebohm at the Theory of Science Department at Gothenburg University. I wrote my thesis under the supervision of Sten Jonsson at Gothenburg University and Igor Ansoff at the European Institute for Advanced Studies in Management (ELASM) in Brussels, Belgium. The thesis dealt with problems of product development, but with a focus on organizational decisionmaking (as with many later projects). Here the work of and my contacts with James March have been a crucial source of inspiration.

After the dissertation, I focused on control problems, in particular in local governments, where political leadership is a crucial aspect. I published a number of books on these issues in the late seventies and early eighties. More recently, I have carried out research on organizations’ dependence on wider societal institutions. This work has been much inspired by my contacts with John Meyer and his work on organizations and general institutional theory. I have treated issues such as how organizations handle inconsistent norms, administrative reforms, and the market institution. Most of my work on administrative reforms has been done in collaboration with Johan P. Olsen. My present interests include the role of formal rationality in organizations as well as standardization of management.

I have served at the faculty of Gothenburg University, Uppsala University, and the Stockholm School of Economics. Since 1985, I have held a chair in Management at the Stockholm School of Economics. Since the early eighties, I have served as the head of the Department of Public Management there, and the collaboration with past and present colleagues there has been very important for my research. Since 1992, I have been the chairman of the Stockholm Center for Organizational Research (SCORE). Recently I have also been a research fellow at ELASM in Brussels. I have also spent much time at Stanford University in the United States.

Brunsson’s chapter seemed a natural one to follow “The Winds of Organizational Change,” as he deals with the after-effects of slow-moving actions being caught up in a whirlwind of ideas that are driven by fickle processes of fashion. More generally, in “Ideas and Actions: Justification and Hypocrisy as Alternatives to Control,” Brunsson explores the mechanisms by which the people in organizations cognitively deal with the incommensurability of the domains of ideas and actions. In the great Scandinavian tradition, Brunsson argues that rational models of organizational control are inadequate to describe the process by which human beings reconcile inconsistent thoughts and actions. He suggests that models of organizational control should be supplemented with models of hypocrisy and justification. We believe that our American readers will find this particularly interesting, as the assumption of rational control is deeply ingrained in the subtext of most of our theories.

### Robert Cooper

I have come to view my work as a continuous reflection on the problem of **attention**: the degree of intellectual **care** one applies to the task of understanding, how one attends to the complexities and nuances in a field of vision. I see two distinct strategies of attention: the focused and the unfocused. Focused attention divides and categorizes, locates “things” in simple spaces, and linearizes its subject matter. Unfocused attention is scattered, flexible and undivided. Increasingly, my intellectual strategy has to do with the nature and dynamics of unfocused attention and how to express it. In other words, how do we begin to do justice



to processes of complexity, chance, chaos, information, and transformation, and not reduce them to mere academic ciphers? A first step might be (following the mathematician Anatol Rapoport) to distinguish between a generalized **organization theory** and a **theory of organizations**. Organization theory deals with organized complexity, with the emergence of precariously-poised structures, with orderings and disorderings—in short, with reiterated acts of organizing. The theory of organizations deals with organizations as specific, empirical objects that have to be understood in their economic, political, and social contexts. Organization theory addresses the question of organization as a general logic applicable to systems of any kind, while the theory of organizations confines itself to the study of formal organizations as circumscribed entities with identifiable purposes. The language of the former is rigorously diffuse and thus lends itself more happily to a strategy of unfocused attention; the latter “knows” by an accumulative specification of its objects, and thus follows a strategy of focused attention.

So I've been drawn to those thinkers whose work has addressed precisely these issues of complexity and transformation: the philosopher A.N. Whitehead on the logic of process, the anthropologist Gregory Bateson on the cybernetics of difference, the historian of science Michel Serres on the equivalence of literature, science, and philosophy, the philosopher of science Gaston Bachelard on science and representation, and the philosopher Martin Heidegger on language and technology. These, among others, have been and remain the Big Five sources in my own attempts to think through the nature of organization as a general process, and more specifically, as a sociotechnical accomplishment. Taken together, the work of such writers adds up to a philosophy of systems as “intersecting multiplicities” (Serres) in which “everything is everywhere at all times” (Whitehead). Key terms here are transformation, becoming, movement, part-whole, re-presentation, etc. The computerized communication technologies (e.g., hypertext) amplify these features and work to dissolve the traditional conception of social systems and organizations as bounded structures made up of people, technologies, products, and environments. The exigencies of our late-modern world vigorously reject such easy partitionings; they blur boundaries, hybridize chart categories, contemporize organization and disorganization, to produce Serres' multiplicities that intersect. This is where unfocused attention finds its pedigree, for it's precise about the imprecise, it's singularly multiple, it thrills to the hybrid, it loves the animus of motion, and reveres the unfinished and infinite.

Robert Cooper is Professor of Social Theory and Organization and Director of the Centre for Social Theory and Technology at Keele University, United Kingdom.

### John Law

I write in the sociology of science and technology, the sociology of organizations, and social theory, and I'm interested in social ordering and materiality. My current work, which is on representation, on projects that are both “technological” and modern, and on spatiality, reflects collaborations not

only with Robert Cooper but also with Annemarie Mol of the University of Limburg in the Netherlands and Michel Callon of the Ecole des Mines de Paris in France.

Any story about my intellectual resources would have to cite at least four:

First, **empirical semiotics**, particularly as refracted through the prism of actor-network theory. This emphasizes both the precarious and (more controversially) the materially heterogeneous character of sociality, and assumes that the distinction between human and non-human is a relational effect rather than something given in the order of things.

Second, **poststructuralism**. This also suggests that subjects and objects are achievements or effects, but tends to assume more strongly than actor-network theory that they are also decentered. Again in contrast with actor-network theory, it understands heterogeneity as deferred otherness—as that which cannot be assimilated.

Third, there is a radical concern with **partiality**, found in parts of cultural studies, feminism, and in those parts of science, technology, and society that have been most influenced by poststructuralist feminist writing. This leads both to concern with a politics of similarity rather than identity, and to the possibility of a form of politics that works upon the ontological.

Finally, there are the traditions of **empirical work** in science, technology, and society. Like this note, much work in contemporary social theory is very abstract. However, in my work I much prefer to make theoretical argument through the complexities of empirical materials. This enriches theory, but it also respecifies it. Instead of imagining that theoretical abstraction can, as it were, move without effort between different contexts, it relocates thinking as a practical activity which deals with heterogeneity in a world where there is no distinction in the order of things between that which is said to be general and that which is “limited” to specificity.

John Law is Professor of Sociology and a member of the Centre for Social Theory and Technology at Keele University, United Kingdom.

In “Organisation: Distal and Proximal Views,” Cooper and Law also confront the basic tension between thought and action, but they do it by questioning fundamental epistemological assumptions. After criticizing sociologists for giving preference to what is assumed to already exist as organizations, Cooper and Law develop a proximal theory to describe what is constantly in the process of becoming organized. They suggest that proximal organizing is what happens at the boundaries of heterogeneous elements that include human beings, other living creatures, material objects and forces, and ideas about how to combine these elements in new and different ways. Their deep analysis of the relationship between ideas, objects, and actions connecting them are illustrated with several colorful stories about the practice of science in various eras.

Remember that this volume starts with Clegg's description of the Weberian tradition of ideal typical bureaucracies, where uncertainly and humanity is

squeezed out as nature is homogenized. Cooper and Law have taken us to the opposite extreme by building a theory based on the heterogeneity of material elements encountered by humans on their various life journeys. The last chapter in this volume deals with Barry Turner's remarkable life-journey through our particular empirical referent—the academic field of organization studies.

### Barry Turner

Note that we did not ask Barry Turner to send us a biographical statement, as his chapter tries to make sense of the European tradition of organization studies by tracing a personal trajectory through it, taking as his primary focus his own socialization as a scholar. Thus, the reader will find Turner's detailed biography in his chapter. Turner seemed fully aware that any discourse cannot be fully interpreted independently of our personal and cultural history and he investigated the strength of the connection between idea patterns and geographical locations through an autobiographical approach.

After having “met” the authors and hopefully seen some connections between their life stories and the subjects of their chapters, we invite you, the reader, to join us in this reflective process. We want to emphasize that this project has been conceived as an open process where we, our ideas, the authors and their chapters are at the same time data and interpreters, and this volume documents the process. If this book is a symphony, it is unfinished; we invite you the reader to join the process and add your reflections and ideas to it. Our ambition is to raise the issue, to see the book discussed and the issue dealt with explicitly in future publications, book reviews, etc.

As part of this openness, we have chosen not to describe the stereotypical images that our preliminary inquiries had generated. We would hope that you would read the chapters with your own set of implicit or explicit images of what the European tradition in organization studies is all about. We will have considered this project a success if reading this volume will stimulate you to reflect on the connection between continental geographic location and scholarly ideas. To aid you in that reflection, we suggest that you try to interpret the nine chapters included in this volume according to the following analytical guide:

1. What do these different chapters seem to share? Can you find recurrent themes, traits, stances, or even methodologies beyond those briefly identified above?
2. To what extent do you find, in each chapter, the characteristics that your own stereotypical images attribute to European theorizing?

3. Behind the objective characteristics of the chapters, how does each author explicitly or implicitly interpret his or her own European-ness? What does it seem to mean for each author to represent a European scholar?

*Samuel B. Bacharach*, Cornell University  
*Pasquale Gagliardi*, ISTUD  
*Bryan Mundell*, Cornell University

### NOTES

1. The authors are presented in the order that their chapters appear in the volume.

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