

THE EMERALD HANDBOOK OF
MANAGEMENT AND
ORGANIZATION INQUIRY

THE EMERALD HANDBOOK OF MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION INQUIRY

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

We, the editors, dedicate this book to the wonderful people who attended the Standing Conference for Management and Organization Inquiry, which we affectionately called “sc’MOI” which in French means, “it is me.” We were a community of scholars in search of critical inquiry, at a time when the regular mainstream academy did not do that sort of thing. We pushed the limits of critical inquiry to its limits. We were rebellious, often roasting the conference invited speakers. We danced, laughed, and had fun doing inquiry. Each year there were books or special issues of journals about the topics we explored. We appreciate all the wonderful board members and participants in all the sc’MOI sessions. We would like to make a special dedication to Professor Abbass Alkhafargi, who in the early years gave us a home for sc’MOI inside the International Academy of Business Disciplines conference. We were welcomed there, and emerged as our own independent conference.

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PREFACE

This *Handbook* is based on 25 years of the critical and important presentations of participants in the *Standing Conference for Management and Organizational Inquiry* (sc'MOI). Our collection of chapter authors have amassed a history of our many critiques of the “business-as-usual” narrative known far and wide as “managerialism.” A short list of the top 10 themes of managerialism:

- (1) Efficiency of Taylorism;
- (2) Total Quality Management (TQM);
- (3) Globalization as one more round of (neo)colonialism;
- (4) Technological Progress Narrative;
- (5) Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as ridiculous;
- (6) Corporate Ethics (another *nonsequitor*);
- (7) Sustainable Future as illusion;
- (8) Social Constructivism ignores both sociology and construction;
- (9) Grounded Theory (which has no ground and no theory); and
- (10) Action Research (recently versions have no action and no theory).

We wanted some space for more radical critique of managerialism. Managerialism is all the ways of doing managing and organizing that defend, reword, and legitimate “business-as-usual.” For a while we put our faith in critical postmodern approaches, but that turned out to be short lived. We, as editors, realize that the *Sixth Extinction* is now inevitable (Boje, *in press*), and realize that managerialism of our academy, and management praxis (defined as *theory plus method in practice*) has a death-grip on business-as-usual.

The Anthropocene has been declared an official subdivision of geological time, an epoch, by the Union of Geological Sciences. The Anthropocene Epoch is a way of dating anthropogenic climate change, but there is not much agreement. For sc'MOI we focused on the impact of the Industrial Revolution, the steam engine burning coal, and then other kinds of fossil fuel – as kicking off unprecedented anthropogenic changes in the climate that impact species life on the planet. For 25 years we hoped sc'MOI inquiries into managing and organizing would bring about more sustainable praxis. We decided to stop meeting when it turned out that the financial situation of our international colleagues no longer afforded them travel budgets to attend. In our final meetings, we had some inkling that sustainable management and organization is a fantastic myth, a way of pretending to do something while the Titanic takes on water, a kind of rearranging of the deck chairs. All the reduce-reuse-recycle (3R) ignore the

obvious: we continue to use fossil fuel energy even though we have passed peak oil and gas, passed peak water, and are about to pass peak food therefore all these peaks mean that on the other side of the hump, it will cost more and waste more to get at these resources. Any sensible civilization would read the apologetic grand narratives of progress in “Carboniferous Capitalism” (Mumford, 1934), such as, *there is no alternative to fossil fuel, there will be a technological fix to the coming energy crisis, we can all transition to solar energy and drive electric cars, or we can all build Earthships and live off-grid growing aquaponics*. Unfortunately, wind energy is only 1.1% and photovoltaic only 0.06% of what the fossil fuel economy is supplying (Malm, 2016, p. 368). The electric cars will be affordable by the rich, and last we looked the Earthships are as expensive as McMansions in Taos, New Mexico.

We know from antenarrative (forecaring for the future) that we have to actually make space and time to care for the future, in order, to get off the path of “*business-as-usual*.” What we at sc’MOI in its closing session observed was the death-grip of managerialism on the organizations. We know how to make them more efficient, but cannot steer them away from a short-term, quarterly return mindset. It takes a long temporal horizon, to understand how we are depleting resources that the future generations, our children’s grandchildren, and soon just our grandchildren, will be experiencing the consequences of our decisions about living in Carboniferous Capitalism.

We continue to meet in Las Cruces, as the “Quantum Storytelling Conference” (davidboje.com/quantum for info). We are hoping, once more, that storytelling can be a way to address the dominant narratives of managerialism with any number of counternarratives. However, we also look to the antenarratives that are forecaring for a continuation of “business-as-usual” and ways many counternarratives are more illusions, and hope for some antenarratives that take civilization along a path that is lifestyles living within the planetary limits, in living stories, finding balance with the rights of other species, plants, and animals, rivers and mountains too, to coexist.

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