



Logics of Organization Theory: Audiences, Codes, and Ecologies by Michael T. Hannan; László Pólos; Glenn R. Carroll

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negative effects brought on by violence. We seek an affective turn that celebrates feeling, and free bodies, bodies seeking their day in a sun that shines on life after the apocalypse.

These are the promises and the hopes contained in the brilliant chapters in this important new book. A call to arms, *The Affective Turn*, as Michael Hardt argues in his urgent foreword, is an invitation to critical social scientists and informed citizens alike to interrupt history. Clough and her co-authors show us how to use our interpretive methods and models of truth, power, and knowledge to disrupt history as it operates behind our backs. Such interventions call for an interruption of history itself. This is what critical theory is supposed to do.

Logics of Organization Theory: Audiences, Codes, and Ecologies, by **Michael T. Hannan**, **László Pólos**, and **Glenn R. Carroll**. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007. 384pp. \$29.95 paper. ISBN: 9780691134505.

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Logics of Organization Theory embraces the daunting task of redefining, revisiting, and repositioning thirty years of research in population ecology and related theories. It accomplishes the task by utilizing formal and fuzzy logics, and by capitalizing on a series of previously published articles. For a reader interested in the evolutionary conception of organizational change, the book offers a fascinating introspection. The dominant impression remains of a living reflection attending to a theory under construction that recognizes past unsuccessful attempts and keeps its core tenets intact.

The first chapter puts at the forefront of the new ecological analysis new methods (non-monotonic and fuzzy logics) and paves the way for a general and integrative program of research. In Part 1, "Audiences, Producers, and Codes," a wealth of innovative notions are defined and logically articulated (codes, clusters, labels, grades of membership, types, categories, forms, and populations). Part 2, "Nonmonotonic Reasoning: Age Dependence," recasts in two chapters the essence of

prior published works that present a non-monotonic logic (chapter 6) and its application to age dependence (Chapter 7). Part 3, "Ecological niches," consists of three chapters that unify previous works on niches (definition, fitness, overlaps, and resource partitioning). The last part of the book presents a cogent and coherent reformulation of early structural inertia arguments and recent ecological themes (e.g., intra-organizational intricacy, opacity, and asperity), and establishes the microfoundations of organizational ecology.

Readers may find disconcerting the wealth of new terms, definitions, and logical formulation. Once past the bar, three major innovations appear of particular interest. First, the introduction of audiences as a core concept of the theory characterizes the linguistic turn or at least the new foundation of organizational ecology. Audiences are required to determine the presence of clusters or forms. Second, Hannan, Pólos, and Carroll succeed in overcoming the limiting strictness of concept definition used in prior versions of their theory. Dynamic and fuzzy logics help break down the former ironed-cage notions of form, population, inertia, and the age or density dependence. These logics are instrumental in revitalizing the theoretical arguments. Third, the ambition of composing a *grand* theory is timely, refreshing, and worth emulating.

Four inherent characteristics of the new ecological analysis would benefit from further discussion. First, while the authors reintroduce society into their conceptualization, the underlying sociological reasons for a reality to be categorized one way or another are missing. The book insists on the plurality of labels, schemata and candidate types, and the processes through which audiences winnow the abnormal terms from the adequate types. However, frequently producers generate simple types from *ex ante* overhanging or recognized positions, thus exchanging resources within and across audiences' segments. The issue of historicity in legitimacy accounts and measures remains a pending issue for ecologists despite the already accomplished progress regarding legitimacy emergence. Progressive acceptance through extensional consensus clarifies the legitimation process but less so the legitimacy content—legitimacy emergence being bypassed by legitimacy devolution from high-status renowned producers (e.g., Rao, Minin, Durand 2003).

Second, communication within the audience segments is repeatedly acknowledged as the basis of transformation of labeled sets into classes, types into categories, and concepts into forms. One needs to clarify this communication process, describe it, and understand it. Prior ecological works presumed that the classification task was incumbent to the observer, raising questions about the validity, existence, and durability of the categories and forms (e.g., Durand 2006). Undoubtedly, the formalization of diverse audiences' comparative categorization proposed in the book represents a major reconceptualization, but the societal hierarchies, verticalities, and conflicts need to be part of the communication basis.

Third, although the fourth part of the book deals with organizational change, loyal to the core assumptions of ecology theory, the organizations and their spokespersons do not seem able to influence the evolution of the fields, industries, or populations. Organizations hardly possess intentions, governance characteristics, or market and non-market resources to do better than adapt a multi-meaning multi-audience reality, to wit to shape, carve, and influence the very selection criteria that rule the fields where they operate.

Finally, more than the possibility of categorization, the ontological nature of forms and population is a question looming around the entire population ecology story, old and new style. Yesterday imposed by the ecologist as erudite observer, today forms and populations are "decentralized" to audiences. This displacement fills a caveat of the former version of population ecology. The next question worth investigation nevertheless lies in the epistemological nature and ontological status of concepts, categories, forms, and populations. Does the linguistic turn of organizational ecology open the Pandora's box for a neo-constructivism, a post-realism about forms and populations? Organizational ecologists have long avoided the too-human considerations of politics and ideologies. However, the decentralization of categorization processes, the evanescence of group membership, and the importance given to (social and cultural) codes imply that beliefs, causal associations, and discursive elaboration are to integrate the newly refounded ecological corpus.

Overall, I applaud the conceptual details, thorough definitions, and meticulous demon-

strations of this book. Readers of the book will appreciate differently this new theorization of known themes, from full acceptance to some resistance. One may regret certain minimal or backhanded references to extant literature (in particular on social categorization, status construction, and organizational identity). One may reject premises (having a more political theory of legitimacy, a more controversial social positioning of audiences, and a more classificatory argument of audiences' habitus). But everyone can make up their mind by reading and appreciating the conceptual qualities of this book.

References

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Rethinking Expertise, by **Harry Collins** and **Robert Evans**. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2007. 159pp. \$37.50 cloth. ISBN: 0226113604.

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Harry Collins and Robert Evans, two sociologists at Cardiff University in Wales, defend science against those who argue that it has no special epistemological warrant. They assert instead that "we ought to prefer the judgments of those [usually scientists and technologists] who 'know what they are talking about'" (p. 2). A naïve reader may think this stance self-evident. But sociologists of science, rooted in Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962) and postmodern criticism, have over the past few decades become skeptical of science as an especially good way of producing knowledge. This has been a valuable corrective to the myth of the scientist as wise, objective and all-knowing, but some sociologists—I think more in Britain than the United States—have pushed to the extreme of denying science any privileged knowledge at all. They hold, for example, that lay opinions about the efficacy and safety of fluoridation, global warming, or the connection between childhood vaccines and autism, are as trust-