

Contents

Part I Organizational Knowledge

1 Organization as Conceptual Distinction	3
1.1 Organizational Goals	5
1.1.1 External Complexity: The Social Environment of Goals	5
1.1.2 Internal Complexity: Diversity of Goals	7
1.1.3 Summary	8
1.2 Organizational Structure	9
1.2.1 Rationalized Concepts: Organization as “Institution”	9
1.2.2 Socialized Concepts: Organization as “Practice”	12
1.2.3 Summary	16
1.3 A Philosophical View: Organizing as Open-Ended Mode of World-Construction	17
1.3.1 “Copernican Revolution” and Methods of World-Construction	17
1.3.2 “Conditio Humana” as the Origin of World-Construction	21
1.3.3 Organizing as a Mode of World-Construction	24
1.3.4 Summary	26
1.4 Conclusion	28
2 The Relevance of Organizational Knowledge	31
2.1 A Strong Sense of Knowledge in Social Fields	31
2.1.1 Interdependence of Ontology and Knowledge: Theory (Giddens and Bourdieu)	32
2.1.2 Interdependence of Ontology and Knowledge: Examples	34
2.1.3 Interdependence of Ontology and Knowledge: Entry Point of a Strong View	36

2.2	A Strong Sense of Knowledge in Organizations	37
2.2.1	Data – Information – Knowledge	37
2.2.2	Syntactic – Semantic – Pragmatic	38
2.2.3	Representation – Meaning – Action	41
2.2.4	Strong, but not too Strong: The Pitfall of Holistic Constructivism	44
2.3	Managing Flow: Implicit and Explicit Knowledge	45
2.4	Knowledge as Organizational Resource of Individual and Collective Distinction-Making	47
2.4.1	Representation: Knowledge as Commodified Resource . . .	48
2.4.2	Meaning: Knowledge as Individualized Resource	48
2.4.3	Action: Knowledge as Processual Resource	49
2.5	Conclusion	52
3	The Application of Organizational Knowledge	55
3.1	Rationalized Concepts: Organizational Knowledge as “Theory”	56
3.1.1	Knowledge as Generalized Theory	56
3.1.2	Max Weber: Organizing and Scientific Rationality	58
3.1.3	Theory in Action: Rationalized Organizational Knowledge Applied	59
3.2	The Gap Between Organizational Knowledge and Practice	61
3.2.1	Personalization	62
3.2.2	Justification	64
3.2.3	Application	64
3.3	Socialized Concepts: Organizational Knowledge as “Narrative”	67
3.3.1	Knowledge as Contextualized Narrative	67
3.3.2	Narratives in Action: Socialized Organizational Knowledge Applied	68
3.4	Conclusion	70
4	The Creation of Organizational Knowledge	73
4.1	The Complete View: No Application Without Creation	73
4.2	The Creation of “Theories of Action”	73
4.2.1	Theories of Action as Organizational Knowledge	73
4.2.2	Double Loop Learning	75
4.3	Hallmarks of Knowledge Creation: Contingency, Controversies and “Black-Boxing”	77
4.3.1	ANT, Science and Technology	78
4.3.2	Being and Becoming: The Dialectical Nature of Knowledge Creation	80
4.3.3	Black-Boxing and Epistemological Closure in Organizations	82
4.4	Creation of Propositional Knowledge: Blueprints and Routines	85

4.5	Creation of Narrative Knowledge: Plots and Stories	88
4.6	Conclusion	91
5	From a Theory of Organizational Knowledge to an Organizational Epistemology	93
5.1	The Epistemological Gap and Underdetermination	93
5.2	Description vs. Normativity	95
5.3	The Need for Normative Distinctiveness	97
5.4	Towards an Organizational Epistemology	100
5.4.1	Starting Point and Desideratum of an “Organizational Epistemology”	100
5.4.2	Summarized Research Questions	102
5.4.3	Research Hypotheses	102
5.4.4	Summary	104

Part II Epistemology

6	Rationalistic Epistemology	107
6.1	Terminology	109
6.2	Debates Within Rationalistic Epistemology	109
6.2.1	Internalistic Evidentialism vs. Externalist Reliabilism	109
6.2.2	Foundationalism vs. Coherentism	110
6.3	“Gettier Problems”: The Knowledge Gap in Rationalistic Epistemology	111
6.4	The Origin of Gettier Problems 1: Open-Endedness of Context	112
6.5	“Inescapability” of Gettier Problems: Consequences and Non-consequences	115
6.6	The Origin of Gettier Problems 2: Open-Endedness of Concepts	116
6.7	Normativity Connecting Epistemology and Science	121
7	Social Epistemology	123
7.1	The Rational-Social Dichotomy	123
7.1.1	The Rational Approach	123
7.1.2	The Social Approach	124
7.1.3	Towards a Third Approach: Dissolving the Dichotomy	126
7.2	The Underdetermination Problem: Insufficiencies of the Rationalized Approach	126
7.2.1	Underdetermination: The Epistemic Gap at the Core of Science	126
7.2.2	Underdetermination: The Rationalists View	129
7.2.3	Underdetermination: The Scientific Practice View	129
7.2.4	Underdetermination: The Philosophical View	130

7.3	“Map Making”: Community-Dependent Aims and Standards in Knowledge Creation	132
7.4	Social Norms for Knowledge Creation	135
7.5	Enabling: Critical Discursive Interaction	136
7.5.1	Venues and Uptake of Criticism (First and Second Feature of Critical Discursive Interaction)	136
7.5.2	Public Standards (Third Feature of Critical Discursive Interaction)	137
7.5.3	Tempered Equality (Fourth Feature of Critical Discursive Interaction)	137
7.6	Constraining: “Acceptability” and “Confirmation”	138
7.7	Reflecting: Double Looped Knowledge Creation	141
7.8	Excursus: Local and General Epistemology	144
7.9	Summary: Social Epistemology Bridging the Dichotomy Between Rational and Social	146
7.10	The Shift to Non-scientific Contexts	147
7.10.1	“Every Group Is Among Other Things a Cognitive Community”	147
7.10.2	The Shift to Organizations	149

Part III Organizational Epistemology

8	The Normative Issue at Organizational Knowledge	153
8.1	Knowledge as Cornerstone of Organizational Practice	153
8.2	The Epistemic Gap and Underdetermination at the Core of the Organization	154
8.3	The Normative Epistemological Reaction to the Gap	157
9	Epistemological Criteria for Organizational Knowledge	159
9.1	Locating Epistemology in Organizations	159
9.2	First Guideline: <i>Enable!</i>	160
9.2.1	Inclusion	161
9.2.2	Critical Multi-perspectivity	162
9.2.3	Transparent Standards	163
9.2.4	Summary: Critical Discursive Interaction at Organizations	163
9.3	Second Guideline: <i>Constrain!</i>	164
9.3.1	From Content to Distinction	166
9.3.2	Acceptance and Confirmation: Constraining the Domain of Knowledge Creation	166
9.3.3	Acceptance and Confirmation: Constraining Knowledge Creation Itself	167
9.3.4	The Interplay Between Enabling and Constraining	168

- 9.4 Third Guideline: *Reflect!* 169
 - 9.4.1 Does Reflection Lead to Relativism? 171
 - 9.4.2 Measures of Reflection 174
- 9.5 Summary 175
- 10 Organizational Epistemology Applied: Seven-Eleven Japan 177
 - 10.1 Description Use-Case 177
 - 10.1.1 The Company 177
 - 10.1.2 Item-by-Item Management 177
 - 10.1.3 Meetings Culture 180
 - 10.2 The Theory of Organizational Knowledge Applied to the SEJ Use-Case 181
 - 10.2.1 Item-Management as Distinction-Making on Three Levels 181
 - 10.2.2 Creating and Applying Organizational Knowledge at SEJ 182
 - 10.2.3 Looped Knowledge Creation and Application 183
 - 10.3 Organizational Epistemology Applied to SEJ Use-Case 184
 - 10.3.1 “Enabling” at SEJ 185
 - 10.3.2 “Constraining” at SEJ 188
 - 10.3.3 “Reflecting” at SEJ 193
 - 10.4 Summary and Future Research 195
- 11 Summary: A New Vocabulary for a Normative Theory of Organizational Knowledge 197
 - 11.1 Organizational Knowledge 197
 - 11.1.1 The Origin of Organizing 197
 - 11.1.2 Organizational Concepts: “Rationalized” and “Socialized” 198
 - 11.1.3 Organizational Knowledge: “Rationalized” and “Socialized” 199
 - 11.1.4 Organizational Distinction Making: Representation, Meaning, and Action 200
 - 11.1.5 Organizational Knowledge Creation 202
 - 11.1.6 The Constitutional Gap of Organizational Knowledge Creation 203
 - 11.1.7 Organizational Knowledge: A Theoretical Toolkit 205
 - 11.2 Organizational Epistemology 207
 - 11.2.1 Normative Distinctiveness 207
 - 11.2.2 The Return of Philosophy in Knowledge Management: Rationalistic and Social Epistemology 209
 - 11.2.3 Epistemological Guidelines for Organizational Knowledge Creation 211
 - 11.2.4 Organizational Epistemology: A Theoretical Toolkit 214

11.3	Concluding Reflections and Future Research	216
11.3.1	Philosophy, Epistemology, and Knowledge Management	216
11.3.2	Suggestions for Future Research	217
	Bibliography	221