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Andreas Metzner-Szigeth (ed.)

Zukunftsfähige Entwicklung und generative Organisationskulturen: – Wie wir Systeme anders wahrnehmen und Veränderung gestalten können, [Sustainable development and generative organisational cultures: How we may perceive systems differently and design change], Munich, Oekom, 2018, pp. 256

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This edited volume situates itself in the large, if not immense, domain of sustainability research and asks how change might be initiated, especially with respect to artistic interventions in organisational/entrepreneurial settings. It also focuses on a specific aspect of sustainability, namely creating novel and durable arrangements for addressing the pressing challenges of our times, by dividing the term sustainability into two components: renewability in terms of conserving resources (“Nachhaltigkeit”) and future viability in terms of creating enduring solutions (“Zukunftsfähigkeit”). In a nutshell, the book traces the possibilities of artistic interventions in order to create durable organisational changes with respect to sustainability goals such as health, equality or energy. It does so by zooming into this subject area through 15 chapters from 17 contributors. The first part of the book outlines the future viability of current societies on a broader scale. The second part questions in how far “generative organisational cultures” hold promising futures. The third part then collects examples where interventions from art or psychology have initiated dura-

ble changes in organisational cultures.

The narrative that frames the whole volume is that we currently live in a time of great challenges and necessary transformations, under pressing conditions of complexity and uncertainty for which established organisational solutions from management and consulting do not yield the desired results. Therefore, interventions from alternative domains are needed and organisational cultures that may cope with such conditions need to be developed. While this is certainly true, it is also a fairly standard exposition of problem and solution that we find in organisation, management or sustainability studies. The main thrust of the book subsequently lies in the practical application of artistic and other interventions and a managerial perspective on organisational culture. I point this out so prospective readers know what to expect and because the volume does not position itself specifically by drawing on or contributing to STS. Nevertheless, there are several connections that may be made and I will go through some of them while discussing the chapters in more detail.

As the editor of the volume, Andreas Metzner-Szigeth structured the book through a series of iterations that guide the reading of the book. The first iteration (chapter 1) figures as the introduction to the entire volume by sketching out how sustainable developments, generative organisational cultures and artistic interventions come together in the grand challenges and transformations of our time. According to Metzner-Szigeth, a key element to accomplish this task is to switch from reflective thinking to experimental action. This insight sits well with STS critiques of rationalistic modes of planning and an emphasis for situated modes of engagement. It also resonates with general pragmatist and praxeological perspectives on the need to focus on practice and practices rather than plans and principles.

The second iteration (chapter 2) unpacks the term sustainable development in order to distinguish the different interpretations it affords. Metzner-Szigeth argues for a move away from a simple understanding of renewable resource conservation towards a more complex issue of creating enduring solutions that are viable for future developments. In short, such an understanding requires a systemic understanding, creative solutions for complex problems, an openness to the unknown, an awareness for change, an orientation to serve life and not profit, the willingness to break up patterns, to change regulative ideas, and to create sensibilities for engaging in conflicts. The three chapters that follow take up this impulse in different ways. Armin Grundwald reflects on the difficulties of providing strategic knowledge for sustainable developments at the intersection of science and society (chapter 3). He points out that this kind of strategic knowledge is necessarily partial, preliminary, and subject to conflicting valuations. The chapter offers a systematic review of the multiple elements of the strategic knowledge for sustainable development and sketches out an integrative framework that acknowledges the narrow lim-

its within which it can be used for managing transformations. He concludes that this constellation provides strategic scientific knowledge only for experimental political action in which the societal and sustainable effects must be continuously monitored and evaluated. The following chapter by Michael Schwarz and Jürgen Howaldt discusses the potential of social innovation for sustainable developments. They emphasise that social innovations are indispensable for sustainable transformations and, similar to Grunwald, highlight the experimental, yet directed nature of social innovations. Unlike processes of undirected social change, social innovations require in depth praxeological social scientific knowledge of social practices to be more successful. Chapter 3 and 4 thus carefully take stock of the problems and promises of scientific knowledge for initiating and maintaining sustainable developments in more or less experimental forms of engagement. The last chapter in this section argues from a different angle. Michael Nippa and Dodo zu Knyphausen-Aufseß lay out the possible contributions from strategic management to sustainable developments. Their focus is on strategic, hence long term, management and adaptable organisational cultures as a combination of intentional and emergent decision processes. They critically engage mainstream economics as being too narrowly focused on profit from a micro perspective, while disregarding far-reaching problems such as climate change. I feel this chapter is somehow misplaced in this section, since it targets the issue of organisational culture in the next section much more than overarching societal issues. Chapters 3 and 4 are suited much better to serve as an exposition to the intricate problems of achieving sustainable societies.

The second part of the book on generative organisational cultures is again headed by an iteration from Andreas Metzner-Szigeth (chapter 6, 3rd iteration). In very brief terms, this section shifts the emphasis from experimental and emergent modes of engagement to questions how organisations might accommodate such changes. It focuses on issues of communication, coordination and cooperation within organisations. In my reading, it is also an attempt to push the concept of “generative organisational cultures” within the academic debate on sustainability as well as in applied domains. It builds on the distinction between pathological, bureaucratic and generative organisational cultures in organisational safety research and emphasises the need for open and flexible interaction within organisations to cope with dynamic environments. In chapter 7, Sonja A. Sackmann thus calls upon the executive personnel to lead the way in creating generative organisational cultures. Interestingly, this call is countered in the following chapter by Thomas Behrends, who argues that organisational cultures are too often conceived in terms of executive management. Rather, culture is ever-present in all parts of an organisation and innovative (or generative) organisational cultures emerge from the interaction of a sensibility for external and internal tensions, a sufficient amount of organisational slack and loosely coupled organisational struc-

tures. Thus, different configurations of organisational cultures may provide innovative or generative potential. Like in the first section, I feel that the last chapter in this section does not follow suit with the previous chapters. Christian Geßner, Verena Timmer, and Axel Kölle pose the question how suitability certifications might affect the development of organisations. They report on a certification standard they themselves developed and which has been applied in over 40 German organisations. However, the question how standardisation relates with generative organisational cultures is barely addressed. Out of the chapters in this section, I find that Thomas Behrends provides the most analytical approach to the relations of organisational cultures and sustainable developments, while the other contributions focus more on implementation and application. Personally, I favour the former, but this is matter of professional interest.

The third part of the book then closes in on concrete examples of initiating organisational change by artistic or psychological interventions. In the fourth iteration (chapter 10), Metzner-Szigeth calls for unconventional interventions as alternatives to established modes of consulting. Especially artistic interventions have the potential to disrupt and stir up organisational routines and to go beyond rationalisation and optimisation. Hildegard Kurt (chapter 11) develops a novel “muse of sustainability” based on the work of Joseph Beuys. It seeks to overcome bureaucratic and hierarchical structures by empowering all employees or team members to contribute to a common endeavour. Ursula Bertram and Werner Preißing (chapter 12) trace the desire of companies to tap into the creative potential of art by referring to a remarkable collaboration between a Swiss pesticide manufacturer and two artists in the design of a fly trap, eventually leading to an award winning product. A different angle is taken by Georg Müller-Christ and Romy Gerhard (chapter 13), who use the psychological concept of system constellation to uncover invisible organisational cultures and to facilitate, for instance, the successful construction of a hotel building or the (less successful) reorganisation of a regional bank. Ariane Berthoin Antal comes back to artistic intervention in chapter 14. She reports on an eight-year research program conducted at the WZB Berlin Social Science Center. Interestingly, she points out that it is not only economic enterprises who may have troubles with artistic interventions, but that academic management studies also have strong reservations against perceiving art as a fruitful intervention for executive management.

The last chapter and fifth iteration by Andreas Metzner-Szigeth closes the volume by revisiting the central arguments and providing some guiding ideas for the future. He situates the book within a larger trend towards more open organisational cultures and sees it as one element in the quest for a sustainable future. His main claim remains the call to re-think established routines of problem solving for being able to address the grand challenges and transformations faced by current societies.

In sum, I have mixed feelings towards this book. It resonates well

with two central concerns of STS, namely the issues of experimentation and cooperation. It also provides interesting insights into the manifold intersections between society, science, art, management studies and the economy. However, it does not relate any of these lines of thought explicitly to STS research, nor did it intend to do so. So STS readers who are interested in similar issues will have to draw their own conclusions. And, at least to my taste, the volume is biased towards an applied design/management/consulting perspective that falls short of a more analytic discussion and wider references to likeminded discourses in STS and beyond. Again, I see that this was not the aim of the book and while I acknowledge the need for such interventions, it is at the same time what limits its potential insights for me.

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J. Swan, S. Newell and D. Nicolini, (eds.)

Mobilizing Knowledge in Healthcare. Challenges for Management and Organization, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 288

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The divide between knowing and doing is a central concern in organizational and policymaking debate. In the healthcare sector, where formalized clinical knowledge has become the cornerstone of the Evidence Based Medicine, filling the gap between research evidences and mundane practices is the object of several policy-led initiatives. From the perspective of organizational scholars this gap and the difficulties in addressing it is a fascinating matter of concern. The book edited by Swan, Newell and Nicolini does not attempt to provide a conclusive answer to this issue. Rather, editors acknowledge that aiming for a grand unified theory or a recipe of knowledge translation would be pointless. Instead of attempting at describing how knowledge translation *should be done*, the book proposes several empirically-grounded analysis on *how it is done* in a domain where several working practices and knowledge domains intersect and overlap.

The overarching theme of all essays is the rejection of the model of linear transfer of knowledge in favour of its ‘mobilization’ which requires a shift, to put it with the words of the editors, from “accumulation and transfer of never-ending quantities of new evidence, [to] connections between people, ideas, and practices”. The analysis of mobilization requires to be aware of the challenges of the overlapping of organizational, inter-