

**ALL ACADEMY SYMPOSIA  
Conference Symposia Abstracts**

ALFRED D. CHANDLER, JR. - REFLECTIONS THE QUESTIONS HE  
ASKED - CONTRIBUTIONS TO QUESTIONS WE ASK

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When Alfred D. Chandler's died in mid-2007, the academic community lost a titan. This panel of distinguished scholars will reflect on the questions he asked, the answers he formulated from his extensive research, and the current questions his work poses for the Academy and community beyond. The backgrounds of the panelists explore Chandler's influence on a broad array of fields as well as the practitioner community. The design encourages audience discussion and input. The outcome is to spark additional research questions for the Twenty-First Century.

**Keywords: Chandler, business history, paradigm shifts**

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ARE WE ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS ABOUT ORGANIZATIONAL  
DECISION MAKING?

**Chair:** Hodgkinson, Gerard P.; U. of Leeds; [moc2008@lubs.leeds.ac.uk](mailto:moc2008@lubs.leeds.ac.uk)

50 years on from March and Simon's (1958) classic treatise on organizational decision making, this symposium examines the extent to which organizational decision researchers have contributed enduring knowledge capable of addressing the pressing issues facing contemporary organizations and their

managers. Recent years have witnessed a succession of calls for greater engagement between academics and practitioners to create knowledge that is both scholarly and relevant to the problems of organizational stakeholders. Presenters in this symposium will debate this prescription. Some will argue that scholarship that prioritizes rigor and relevance is fundamentally misguided, others that recent organizational decision making research already exemplifies this approach, and yet others that we have been approaching the issue in the wrong way and asking the wrong sorts of questions. William Starbuck will commence the session by providing an overview of the enduring and nascent themes that have dominated the field of organizational decision making from its inception to the present day. Starbuck will argue that as social scientists, we have a duty to pursue research that makes a wider contribution to society than scholarship per se. Next, Alfred Kieser will advance the argument that this is a fundamentally misguided proposition. Kieser contends that decision researchers, organizational decision makers, and consultants offering services to decision makers each inhabit distinct social systems, with their own agendas and requirements. Hence, research that seeks to be both excellent by the academic criteria and relevant to other stakeholders is flawed in its conception. Following this, Gerard Hodgkinson and Mark Healey will illustrate how a design science approach to organizational decision making research can generate practical insights from fundamental social science theory and research. Two final speakers will then present challenges to the mainstream orthodoxy of organizational decision-making research. Steven Floyd will argue for an anthropological and sociological approach to studying strategic decision processes that goes beyond conventional psychological perspectives. Finally, Kathleen Sutcliffe will argue that conventional research has asked the wrong questions about the problem of information overload in organizations, arguing for an interpretive perspective on this problem.

**Keywords: Decision making, Cognition, Rationality**

**Why Academics Should Try to Improve Their World: Better Decisions, Better Organizations, and Better Theories about Them**

*Starbuck, William H.; U. of Oregon; [starbuck@uoregon.edu](mailto:starbuck@uoregon.edu)*

**Are We Asking Questions that Relate to Practitioners' Problems and Do Our Answers Support Their Decisions?**

*Kieser, Alfred; Mannheim U.; [kieser@bwl.uni-mannheim.de](mailto:kieser@bwl.uni-mannheim.de)*

**What Questions Would a Science of Design Pose of Organizational Decision Research?**

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*Healey, Mark P.; U. of Leeds; [busmph@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:busmph@leeds.ac.uk)*

**New Questions about Strategy Making from a Practice Perspective**

*Floyd, Steven W; U. of St. Gallen; [steven.floyd@unisg.ch](mailto:steven.floyd@unisg.ch)*

**Information Overload Revisited**

*Sutcliffe, Kathleen M.; U. of Michigan, Ann Arbor; [ksutclif@umich.edu](mailto:ksutclif@umich.edu)*

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## CHANGING THE QUESTIONS WE ASK: NEW DIRECTIONS IN THE MEANING OF WORK

**Chair:** Rosso, Brent; U. of Michigan; [brosso@umich.edu](mailto:brosso@umich.edu)

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**Chair:** Wrzesniewski, Amy; Yale U.; [amy.wrzesniewski@yale.edu](mailto:amy.wrzesniewski@yale.edu)

What is the meaning of work? Most of the phenomena organizational scholars care deeply about are entrenched within the world of work. Yet, we often overlook the different kinds of meanings that individuals make of their work, and the power that these meanings have to fundamentally shape how employees approach, enact, experience, and react to their work. Indeed, the meaning of work implicitly underlies many of the most important questions we ask as a field. In this All-Academy symposium, we bring together a diverse group of scholars who have shaped the study of the meaning of work through their own unique perspectives on the topic (e.g., economic, spiritual, historical, contextual, etc.). Prompted by generative discussion questions, our panelists will engage with the audience to analyze the current state of the questions we ask with regard to meaning of, at, and through work, and identify where seeds of future promise lie. Although a scientific understanding of the meaning of work has intrigued scholars for decades, there remain many questions to be asked and answered in this area of study. Our hope is that this session will create vibrant dialogue in the field about the meaning of work and how it affects the variables we care about, while inviting a broader range of organizational scholars to consider the meaning of work in their own research.

**Keywords:** None

### **Economic Considerations and the Meaning of Work**

*Brief, Arthur P.; U. of Utah; [Arthur.Brief@business.utah.edu](mailto:Arthur.Brief@business.utah.edu)*

### **Work as a Neoclassical Calling and the Dual Edges of Deeply Meaningful Work**

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*Thompson, Jeffery A.; Brigham Young U.; [jeff\\_thompson@byu.edu](mailto:jeff_thompson@byu.edu)*

### **Religion and Spirituality and the Meaning of Work**

*Sandelands, Lloyd; U. of Michigan, Ann Arbor; [lsandel@umich.edu](mailto:lsandel@umich.edu)*

### **Primacy of the Work Domain**

*Harpaz, Itzhak; U. of Haifa; [iharpaz@gsb.haifa.ac.il](mailto:iharpaz@gsb.haifa.ac.il)*

### **Meaning Making in Change Processes in Organizations**

*Sonenshein, Scott; Rice U.; [scotts@rice.edu](mailto:scotts@rice.edu)*

### **Organizational Influences on the Meaning of Work**

*Pratt, Michael; Boston College; [Michael.Pratt.1@bc.edu](mailto:Michael.Pratt.1@bc.edu)*

### **A Relational Lens on the Meaning of Work**

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HIDDEN CONFLICTS IN ORGANIZATIONS REVISITED: HOW  
SCHOLARS' QUESTIONS EVOLVE

**Chair:** Putnam, Linda L.; U. of California, Santa Barbara;  
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In this symposium we explore how the research questions a group of scholars posed in a symposium in the 1988 AOM meeting in Anaheim have evolved over the past 20 years. The point of departure for the original symposium was the virtual collapse of research on conflict in organizations after very important earlier work on the topic. Interest in this topic had been subsumed by interest in negotiation, which for the most part paid little explicit attention to organizational contexts. But it was clear to the symposium organizers (Deborah Kolb and Jean Bartunek) that conflict was embedded in the routine and mundane activities of workplaces. Thus, several scholars, almost all of whom are participating in the present symposium, participated in a symposium on “cultural contexts of organizational conflict” at the Anaheim meeting. The session was successful enough that it produced an edited book on “Hidden Conflict in Organizations” that is still in print. In the 2008 symposium the participating scholars have revisited their work of twenty years ago by exploring the research questions that originally guided them, and how these questions have evolved. They also explore how changes in societal cultural contexts and their own career development have affected their research questions. The symposium provides guidance on how scholarly questions about important phenomena evolve over time as well as the implications of this evolution.

**Keywords:** conflict, questions, culture

**Some Reflections on “Drinking Our Troubles Away”**

*Van Maanen, John; Massachusetts Institute of Technology; [jvm@mit.edu](mailto:jvm@mit.edu)*

**Women’s Peacemaking Work and the Problem of Claiming Value**

*Kolb, Deborah M; Simmons School of Management;*

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**From Studying Up to Studying Down, Across, and With**

*Morrill, Calvin; U. of California, Irvine; [calvin@uci.edu](mailto:calvin@uci.edu)*

**The Role of Hidden Conflict in Organizational Change**

*Bartunek, Jean M.; Boston College; [bartunek@bc.edu](mailto:bartunek@bc.edu)*

**Theory and Biography: Explaining an Evolving Research Agenda**

*Friedman, Ray; Vanderbilt U.; [ray.friedman@owen.vanderbilt.edu](mailto:ray.friedman@owen.vanderbilt.edu)*

**Conflicts Between Feminist Theory and the Practicalities of Reducing Gender Inequality**

*Martin, Joanne; Stanford U.; [martin\\_joanne@gsb.stanford.edu](mailto:martin_joanne@gsb.stanford.edu)*

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INTELLECTUAL SHAMANS: ASKING QUESTIONS TO TRY TO HEAL

## THE WORLD

**Chair:** Waddock, Sandra; Boston College; [waddock@bc.edu](mailto:waddock@bc.edu)

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**Participant:** Mirvis, Philip H.; Center for Corporate Citizenship; [pmirv@aol.com](mailto:pmirv@aol.com)

Intellectual shamans bridge new territories and can see the world in unusual ways. Shamans are healers who see beyond the ordinary to what might be done to heal the tribe, individual, organization, society. Intellectual shamanism allows for asking important questions that can bring significant positive change. Five scholars will share about their own intellectual shamanic journeys. Ed Freeman, known for developing the stakeholder concept, will discuss how a diverse set of shamans can help management theory take on its fundamental moral obligations to make capitalism better. David Cooperrider, known for developing appreciative inquiry, will share his awareness that awe moves us forward, arguing we live in the worlds our questions create, where inquiry moves beyond the edge of the known into the experience of mystery that changes our lives. Phil Mirvis, known for his consciousness raising work with executives, will demonstrate through vivid photography how leaders, spiritual teachers, and facilitators served a shamanic function as healers in journeys with a community of business people. Bob Giacalone, known for his innovative approaches to ethics, will focus on worldview storytelling: approaches to ethics and social responsibility focus on two competing, intricately connected stories that serve as ethical guideposts to our lives and organizations. Nancy Adler, who has brought her artistry to the academy, will use stories her mother taught her question, "Where do we stand and how do we remain rooted?" Organizer/moderator Sandra Waddock will share insights from work on "difference makers" who have built a responsibility infrastructure intended to improve the world.

**Keywords: None**

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## MANAGEMENT EDUCATION: LESSONS FROM THE PAST, HOPES FOR THE FUTURE

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**Discussant:** Knudsen, Thorbjørn; SDU; [tok@sam.sdu.dk](mailto:tok@sam.sdu.dk)

The role of business schools in management education has been debated since business schools first emerged a century ago. Recently, a number of constituencies have entered the debate about the mission, the history and the future (ir)relevance of American Business Education. This debate is not new. Questions such as, 'what is the appropriate balance between basic and applied research', 'what is the role of the social sciences in business school education' and 'how do we educate good managers for the future' have occupied the minds of researchers, businessmen, and university administrators for decades. This panel discusses some of the themes relevant to the past and future of management education and business schools.

**Keywords: Management Education, Business Schools, Rigor and Relevance**

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MANAGING WITH PASSION: A DIALOGUE IN TANGO & ART

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All the questions that organizational scholars have asked deal with making organizations more rational, productive, and humane, in an instrumental way. They have ignored aesthetic inquiry, sensory embodied and tacit knowledge that can make organizations more passionate, artistic, beautiful and happy. In our age of reason, "passion" is suspect, denounced as being dangerous, irrational, crazy and extremist. Yet, ironically, no great human feat was ever accomplished without passion. And, great leaders, successful entrepreneurs, and politicians have always been passionate about their causes and companies. Passion refers to holistic and intense intellectual, physical, and emotional engagement of goals. This symposium is designed for audiences to witness and experience passion in an embodied way, and explore its relevance to managing and organizing. We will use Argentine Tango and Visual Arts to achieve an embodied understanding of passion, and for learning managerial skills of improvisation, leader/followership,

teamwork, and communication. Through aesthetics of physical space, music, painting, and dance we hope to convey passion as a form of knowing about managerial and leadership issues. Participants and commentators will engage the audience on passion in organizations, including the role of arts-based processes for supporting that passion, parallels between the questions that great artists ask and the questions that good leaders, entrepreneurs and managers need to ask today. They will provoke a discussion on asking different questions about organizations and organizing. Audience can explore relationships between Tango/painting and organizationally relevant inquiry. We will offer a 30-minute beginner lesson in Tango. Tango dancers are invited to contact the organizer for a possible role in the dance.

**Keywords: None**

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MARKET FORMATION AND CONSTRUCTION PROCESSES: WHAT WE  
KNOW AND THE QUESTIONS WE ASK

**Moderator:** Santos, Filipe Manuel Simoes Dos; INSEAD;  
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The purpose of this symposium is to review the state of our knowledge about a novel area of inquiry looking at the processes of market formation, construction and change. This research stream rejects the traditional assumptions that markets and opportunities are predetermined structures just out there waiting to be discovered and exploited. Rather, it considers markets as socially constructed and imbued with meaning that is negotiated among stakeholders, enabling proactive actors to create and shape the markets around them. If this is the case, then some of the key questions to ask are: What are the processes through which new markets emerge and get defined? What are the roles of entrepreneurs and organizations in shaping new markets? What strategies are effective in which situations and how do market actors navigate the constraints and possibilities afforded by the environment? How does the emergence of new markets relate to the process of industry evolution and what are the causal links in this process? The panel brings together five scholars who have been researching these themes for the last 10 years. The panelists will summarize in brief remarks the key findings from their research, creating opportunity for ample discussion among the panelists and with audience participants to integrate views and develop new insights. Symposium participants will take away a clear

understanding of the frontiers of knowledge in this exciting field as well as ideas for future work.

**Keywords: Market Construction, Industry Architectures, Opportunity creation**

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OPPOSITE DAY: HOW CAN I KNOW WHAT TO ASK UNTIL I SEE  
WHAT THEY SAY?

**Organizer:** Grant, Adam M.; U. of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; [agrant@unc.edu](mailto:agrant@unc.edu)

“Opposite Day” offers a forum for distinguished scholars to illuminate the process of developing ideas that depart from established thinking. More than three decades ago, Murray Davis reminded us that interesting research opposes accepted wisdom. Since then, organizational scholars have enacted this advice by presenting theories and studies that focus on challenging conventional knowledge. However, the process through which scholars develop these interesting “opposite” ideas remains mysterious to many members of our profession. Inspired by the “questions we ask” theme for this year’s meeting, presenters will re-construct their own past opposites, providing a window into how they generated interesting ideas. They will also offer advice for pre-constructing new opposites, stimulating the audience’s thinking about how to explore and discover fresh reversals.

**Keywords: None**

**Opposite Day: How Can I Know What to Ask Until I See What They Say?**

*Grant, Adam M.; U. of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; [agrant@unc.edu](mailto:agrant@unc.edu)*

**The Answers We Find: How Interesting Answers Provoke Better Questions**

*Maitlis, Sally; U. of British Columbia; [sally.maitlis@sauder.ubc.ca](mailto:sally.maitlis@sauder.ubc.ca)*

**Departures from Conventional Wisdom: Where’s the Next Opposite Effect?**

*Johns, Gary; Concordia U.; [gjohns@jmsb.concordia.ca](mailto:gjohns@jmsb.concordia.ca)*

**Pre-Constructing Opposites: Normative Triangulation**

*Donaldson, Thomas J.; U. of Pennsylvania; [donaldst@wharton.upenn.edu](mailto:donaldst@wharton.upenn.edu)*

**Explaining the Unexplainable**

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**Grappling with Opposite Days**

*Chatman, Jennifer A.; U. of California, Berkeley; [chatman@haas.berkeley.edu](mailto:chatman@haas.berkeley.edu)*

**The Co-Existence of Competing Values and Practices**

*Erez, Miriam; Technion-Israel Institute of Technology;  
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**Separating Trust and Distrust: Embracing the Theoretical and Methodological Challenges**

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*Bies, Robert; Georgetown U.; [biesr@georgetown.edu](mailto:biesr@georgetown.edu)*



## **Speaking Up in Organizational Hierarchies**

*Milliken, Frances J.; New York U.; [fmillike@stern.nyu.edu](mailto:fmillike@stern.nyu.edu)*

## **The Perils of Purity: Escaping the Boundaries of Disciplinary Research**

*Kilduff, Martin J.; U. of Cambridge; [mjkilduff@gmail.com](mailto:mjkilduff@gmail.com)*

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QUESTIONING TENURE: DOES THE ACADEMIC CAREER SYSTEM  
DISCONNECT US FROM MANAGEMENT PRACTICE AND LABOR  
MARKET REALITY?

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To learn and develop as professionals, we need periodically to question our assumptions about the structures and systems in which we live and work. At least some of the questions we ask should address the usually unquestioned rules of the “game” we have chosen to “play”. Thus this symposium is designed to question the career system on which many, if not most, academic lives are based. Questions we will explore include: Where did the tenure system come from? What does it accomplish? What are its costs (financial, structural, intellectual, human)? Does the tenure system make us better able to produce good research? Does it improve our ability to teach, or to influence practice? Are there parallels to the tenure system in the business world and if so, should we question them too? Finally, are there academic institutions succeeding without a tenure system? If so, what are some alternative models? In addition to a diverse group of faculty including one dean and several non-US participants, the panel will include a senior executive from a professional services firm who will address the partnership career system, an important business parallel to the tenure system. The symposium format will include a series of short “buzz groups” (quick, in-place discussions) among the audience on certain key questions, with each “buzz group” to be followed by remarks of 5-10 minutes by one of the panel members on the same topic, and brief Q&A in response.

**Keywords:** None

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QUESTIONS WE ASK DISNEY SMILE FACTORY

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**Participant:** Gardner, Carolyn; Kutztown U.; [carolyn.gardner@mac.com](mailto:carolyn.gardner@mac.com)

**Participant:** Brannen, Mary Yoko; San Jose State U.; [brannen\\_m@cob.sjsu.edu](mailto:brannen_m@cob.sjsu.edu)

Noted students of Disney are brought together in this symposium to reflect upon questions Disney has asked (or not asked) of several audiences. Questions these audiences have asked of Disney, and whether or not any of this questioning has made a difference in Disney organizational practices. Disney is caught in a new bind, having to replicate itself globally, while changing itself to be competitive with other theme park, hotel, and movie experiences. What do these results mean for our role as business scholars in making this world a better place? Given the return of Academy of Management meetings to the Anaheim location, home of Disney, it is appropriate we offer a showcase symposium panel of noted Disney scholars to reflect upon questions they have asked of Disney, and how Disney has responded or not. Since our last reunion, Disney has gone on to evolve in different directions, particularly offshore through internationalization and globalization. Van Maanen has asked why Disney is a 'smile factory,' a site of emotional labor production? Brannen and Boje have questioned the semiotic and postmodern narrative aspects of Disney storytelling and theatrics? Gardner has questioned the spread of Disneyfication to other industries. There is some evidence that Disney goes on making the same mistakes despite our scholar's questions. On a global scale, Disney praises itself as being "The Happiest Place on Earth." But the French at Disneyland Paris haven't been smiling much. Neither are factory workers in Disney's merchandise plants in mainland China.

**Keywords: Labor Process, Globalization, Internationalization**

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#### QUESTIONS WE SHOULD ASK IN INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT?

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This symposium aims to engage its audience in metatheoretical conversations about the status of knowledge in International Management (IM). Such conversations are long overdue in a field of inquiry marked by a conspicuous absence of demographic and epistemic diversity, a consequently narrow trajectory for theory development, and limited reflexivity on the political and ethical agendas served by its knowledge. The symposium takes as its point of departure an AMR Special Topic Forum on critique and new directions in IM to be published in 2008. It is designed around active audience participation and aims to generate new and different questions, as well as fresh research insights in this field. To this end, it includes short introductory presentations, roundtable debates and an open discussion forum.

**Keywords:** None

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#### SHARED DECISION-MAKING IN SINGULAR EVENTS

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**Discussant:** Carroll, John S.; Massachusetts Institute of Technology;  
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Are team decisions different during extreme, one-of-a-kind events? How do conditions of time pressure, ill-defined goals, and access to varying levels of expertise and technology affect team cognition, regulatory processes, and ultimately, decision-making? Under what conditions do the strengths of studying singular events outweigh the limitations of trying to generalize from them? Questions such as these are critical for understanding how to prepare individuals to collectively survive unanticipated crises but they have not been addressed in the literature. Building on three exemplars, our session explores emergent shared decision-making during changing conditions and in high-stakes events. Specifically, we examine team decision-making in the aftermath of a wilderness aviation disaster in Montana, during a Navy SEAL rescue mission in Afghanistan, and during the Vincennes shutdown incident. Our session addresses important questions about the shared cognitive and perceptual processes involved in crisis events. Case exemplars help to engage audience participation in a thought-provoking, interactive session.

**Keywords:** None

**Shared decision-making in a wilderness aviation accident**

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**Learning from the mission on Takur Ghar Mountain, Afghanistan:  
Coordinating action and cognition in teams**

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*Self, Nate; The Praevius Group; [nate\\_self@praeviousgroup.com](mailto:nate_self@praeviousgroup.com)*

**Breakdown of common ground during the Vincennes shutdown incident**

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SUSTAINABILITY: THE QUESTIONS WE MUST ASK - BUT ARE  
AFRAID TO LOOK AT AND ACT ON

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**Presenter:** *Srikantia, Param; Baldwin Wallace College; [psrikant@bw.edu](mailto:psrikant@bw.edu)*

**Presenter:** *Kucinich, Elizabeth; Consultant; [elizabethkucinich@gmail.com](mailto:elizabethkucinich@gmail.com)*

This symposium will examine, as well as facilitate the discussion of, several highly important questions related to the work of radical change for the creation of a sustainable global society. Taking a discovery perspective our aim is to enable scholars to play a more relevant role at the forefront of the sustainability agenda. We will focus on the following core questions: • What are the necessary elements for creating long-term environmental sustainability? • What is at risk for the current business infrastructure, as we know it, if sustainability is not addressed and achieved? • Why is it so hard for organizational scholars to play a relevant role in the redesign and creation of sustainable systems? • Why is the work of organizational researchers on sustainability systematically ignored by practitioners? From an action perspective we will address the following questions: • What do we know about the behaviors, and cognitive processes, that make real systemic change possible? • What are the most important questions that we need to ask - and answer - to address current and future sustainability challenges facing the human race on planet Earth? • What do we need to do next? The presenters will conclude with their reflections on the following: - The elements needed for the creation of effective systemic change processes; - The unseen hand of the monetary system in the environmental debate; - How we can change ourselves as sustainability change agents; - The questions we need to ask to arrive at long-term inner and outer sustainability.

**Keywords:** environmental sustainability, internal awareness, questioning processes for change

**Management as Sustainable Design: Six Design Parameters for Sustainable Organizing**

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**Challenging Ourselves as Sustainability Change Agents**

*Egri, Carolyn P.; Simon Fraser U.; [egri@sfu.ca](mailto:egri@sfu.ca)*

**The Mystery of the Monetary System: The Unseen Hand in the Environmental Debate**

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*Kucinich, Elizabeth; Consultant; [elizabethkucinich@gmail.com](mailto:elizabethkucinich@gmail.com)*

**Towards a Deep Structure and Process of Sustainability: Inner and Outer Questioning**

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THE DYNAMICS OF INDUSTRY ARCHITECTURE: NEW QUESTIONS  
TO ASK IN THE INTERSECTIONS OF DISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

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In this symposium, we hope to stimulate interest in taking a broader view of “industries” or “organizational populations” than has characterized most research thus far. While these concepts have been the basis of much fruitful research, they tend to distort the view of activity fields involving a multiplicity of heterogeneous actor types. The concept of “industry architecture” offers a broadening of the field of view beyond the conventional economic idea of an industry, but retains a basic focus on the social arrangements that support the provision of some particular final product or service, or class of such. The dynamics of industry architectures embraces the process of evolutionary change as well. This concept directs attention to the evolving patterns in which labor is divided between different types of industry participants, and the associated set of “rules and roles” that emerge. There has recently been a resurgence of research effort, from various disciplinary perspectives, that throws new light on these structures and their dynamics. Through this symposium, we will draw on this research to focus on the evolution of sectors, and on the changing “rules and roles” within them. Research on these topics will help us understand the processes of change in industries and organizational fields, how new competitors emerge, why ‘unwritten rules’ are often updated, and how new “roles” in sectors appear and develop.

**Keywords:** Industry architecture, rules and roles, institutional environment

**Building Architectural Advantage in the US Motion Picture Industry: Lew Wasserman and the Music Corporation of America.**

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*Gurses, Kerem; IESE Business School; [kgurses@iese.edu](mailto:kgurses@iese.edu)*

**Institutional effects of regulation and standardization on the evolution of the U.S. organic food value chain**

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THE PRESENCE OF SOMETHING OR THE ABSENCE OF NOTHING:  
SHARPENING THE QUESTIONS WE ASK IN MANAGEMENT  
RESEARCH

**Organizer:** *Edwards, Jeffrey R.; U. of North Carolina; [jredwards@unc.edu](mailto:jredwards@unc.edu)*

As management researchers, we face a paradox concerning how the strength of our research designs affect tests of our theories. In hard sciences, stronger research designs produce stronger tests of theories, increasing the risk of falsification. This occurs because theories in the hard sciences predict point values, and as research designs become stronger (e.g., sample sizes increase), estimates of point values have tighter confidence intervals, which increases the likelihood that hypotheses will be rejected. In management research, stronger research designs weaken tests of theories, reducing the risk of falsification. This paradox occurs because management theories usually express predictions not as point values, but as directional values (e.g., a positive or negative relationship between two variables), which are tested against a null value. As research designs become stronger, the confidence interval around the null value shrinks, and the probability of supporting the predicted effect approaches .50. The cause of this problem is not statistical but rather theoretical, because if a theory merely predict directional relationships, then a wide range of estimates constitute support for the theory. However, if management theories are reformed to yield stronger hypotheses, ones that predict the presence of something rather than absence of nothing, then tests of these theories can become more stringent, and the questions we ask can become more meaningful. In this symposium, leading scholars from BPS, HR, OMT, and OB consider whether and how the precision of management theories can be increased, thereby strengthening theory testing and accelerating progress in management research.

**Keywords:** None

**The Presence of Something or the Absence of Nothing: Sharpening the Questions We Ask in Management Research**

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**Theory and Research in Strategic Management**

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*Certo, S. Travis; Arizona State U.; [tcerto@asu.edu](mailto:tcerto@asu.edu)*

**Theory and Point Estimates in HR Research: Glorious Past, Uncertain**

## Future

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### Toward More Precise Theories of Organizations?

Davis, Gerald F; U. of Michigan, Ann Arbor; [gfdavis@umich.edu](mailto:gfdavis@umich.edu)

### Theory Pruning: Strategies for Reducing our Dense Theoretical Landscape

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## THE PRODUCTIVITY DILEMMA REVISITED: DISCIPLINED PROCESSES AND INNOVATION AT TOYOTA

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In this symposium, we look to Toyota for clues about how to resolve the long-standing tension between exploitation and exploration. Toyota has become one of the world's most successful business organizations by combining unprecedented efficiency and precision with continuous learning and innovation. The entire organization exhibits an almost obsessive devotion to standardization, routinization, and the elimination of waste. Yet at the same time, the organization possesses a robust capability for selectively and systematically shaking itself out of established routines and creating opportunities for experimentation and learning. Organization theorists have long recognized that process improvement, while a boon to productivity in the short term, often leads to inertia and inflexibility, thereby undermining performance in the long term. Toyota seems to elude this "productivity dilemma" as its highly refined processes provide a robust foundation for innovation. Extensive research on Toyota has uncovered a variety of unique strategies and routines that enable the organization to sustain exploration in the midst of intense exploitation. These strategies and routines have profound implications for those, whether in academia or in business, who face an apparent tradeoff between exploiting old knowledge and striking out in search of new knowledge.

**Keywords: None**

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## THE QUESTIONS WE ASK - ESCAPING THE ECONOMISTIC PARADIGM.

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Challenges for management in the 21st century are numerous. Environmental degradation, social inequity, declining stakeholder trust and low employee commitment are just some of the many problems that pose a serious threat to 'business' as usual. The questions we ask seem to provide only partial answers to these issues as most researchers are hostage to an economic paradigm (see most articulate criticism by Ghoshal 2005). In this symposium, the panelists will discuss an alternative paradigm- humanism- to see if the questions we ask through a different lens can help us to better contribute to the solution of the current crises. To start the session Dr. Michael Pirson will introduce the subject examining the consequences of economicism and current deficiencies of 'business as usual'. Dr. Domenec Mele will provide an overview of humanism as an alternative concept for business. Dr. Kim Cameron will talk about the approach of Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS) and outline findings which often escape an economic understanding of human-beings. Finally, Dr. Paul Lawrence will introduce a Darwinian theory of human beings, which can serve as an integrative basis to rethink human nature. After the presentations Dr. Henry Mintzberg, Dr. George Enderle and Dr. Omar Aktouf will discuss the contributions with regard to the potential to reframe the questions we ask. Following that, participants will be able to participate in the discussion in a question and answer format. Overall, the conveners intend to contribute to the formulation of new questions, which aim at the creation of a more human-centered business system.

**Keywords: Paradigms, Humanism, Economicism**

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THE QUESTIONS WE ASK AND WHY THEY GET US INTO TROUBLE!

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Do the questions academics and practitioners ask shape the knowledge they create? What are the issues underlying the questions they respectively ask? How do they ask questions? These points are critical to a practice that academics and practitioners share in common. It is a Re-Search practice, one that this symposium will seek to illustrate. The objective is to explore the ways we discover knowledge through research. We may think that research is the prerogative of academics as they scientifically examine a range of management issues. Business Practitioners however, are just as immersed in re-search, albeit the focus tends to be on the specific organizational agenda they are working on, the particular issue at hand, the effectiveness of the decision they have to make. For all the differences that the respective search of each community may entail, the common issue remains that it is the very questions asked that lead to the knowledge that informs their actions. This symposium will engage academics and business practitioners in a joint reflective exercise that invites them individually and collectively to take account of the questions they ask and the challenges these questions entail. It creates a unique opportunity to illustrate how we can co-create knowledge for action. We will do this by identifying and developing questions that could usefully serve collaborative research that makes a difference.

**Keywords: Practice, Theory, Knowledge, Critical Reflection**

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THE QUESTIONS WE DON'T ASK: LIMITATIONS AND LESSONS FROM  
INSTITUTIONAL THEORY

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Inspired by this year's theme "The Questions We Ask", and in particular the invitation to explore "questions we dare not ask," this symposium assembles a diverse panel of renowned institutional scholars to address questions ranging from: "What questions do institutional theorists avoid asking and why?" to "What can organization and management researchers learn from the experiences and insights of institutional scholars?" The symposium will foster a dialog between the panelists and the audience, centered around five provocative propositions. The

discussant will lead a final round of dialog synthesizing the conversations sparked by the five propositions.

**Keywords: Institutional Theory and Change, Multi-level Theorizing, Sociology of Knowledge**

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WHAT SHAPES THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DECISION MAKING DURING  
CRISES AND HAZARDOUS SITUATIONS?

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This symposium expresses a belief that research should meet the twin imperatives of scholarly rigor and social usefulness. The need for relevant research is all too evident from the various high profile decision fiascos that continue to dog public service and business organizations. From the Enron debacle to the multi-agency mishandling of the 9/11 crisis and the recent floods of New Orleans, organizations have repeatedly failed to heed the lessons of earlier events. They adopt decision processes that perpetuate errors of judgment and miscommunication, leading them into inappropriate courses of action and escalating commitments to failing strategies. We draw two sets of inferences from such events. Firstly, decision makers in practical situations can benefit from academic research. At a minimum, decision makers can gain insights by observing academic debates about how to interpret events. Decision makers may also find useful some of the prescriptions that academics have extracted from their observations. Secondly, academic researchers can benefit from considering the practical implications of their studies. Such reflections help researchers to identify contingencies that differentiate situations and to frame analyses in variables that have practical meanings. Academic researchers may also be able to contribute to better decisions that produce a better world. Thus, this symposium aims both to provide an up-to-the-minute overview of substantive advances and ongoing debates, and to do so in ways that will enable decision makers to benefit from the scientific studies. Ilan Vertinsky will initiate discussion by discussing the consequences of “fit” between decision processes and different types of crises. He will propose that various crises require good performance on different dimensions, and he identifies organizational properties that support good performance on each dimension. Weakness of the appropriate organizational properties causes organizations to respond pathologically. Next, Zur Shapira will analyze the decision problems confronting an official who must decide whether to evacuate a county in preparation for possible hurricane damage. Several government officials have to make these decisions every year. Shapira argues that these officials find themselves in lose-lose situations. When their decisions turn out to have been correct, they get little or no credit. But events are very likely to make their choices wrong, in which case, they receive

much blame and criticism. Michal Tamuz will describe how hospital administrators say they react when following significant events in which patients were actually or nearly harmed. Interviews with over 300 administrators show that their reactions depend on legal, political, and professional considerations. Finally, Karlene Roberts argues that use of engineering risk-assessment models causes people to make erroneous decisions about situations that involve risk. The key deficiency of these models, she says, is that they omit important parts of the systems they purport to describe and so they miscalculate the risks.

**Keywords: decision making, risk and hazard, environmental influences**

**Crisis Decision Making: Crisis Types, Management and Consequences**

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**The Complexity of Calling for an Evacuation in the Face of a Threat of a Hurricane's Landfall in One's County**

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**High-Stakes Decision Making: When Things Go Wrong in Hospitals**

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**Analytic Failures in Decision Making in Complex Interactive Systems**

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