

Advances in Organization Studies



Robert Perey

Ecological Imaginaries Reframing Organisation

Series Editor: Stewart R. Clegg

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Ecological Imaginaries Reframing Organisation

Humanity faces an ecological crisis of its own creation. The many facets of this crisis include: human induced climate change, reduction in biodiversity in a broad range of ecosystems, increasing rate of species extinctions, and the impacts on social systems that span equity of access to food and water, human rights, and the well-being of individuals and societies. This ecological crisis is widely acknowledged and there have been many attempts at organisational and societal levels to redress its negative impacts – yet despite the widespread effort little progress seems to be made.

The research focus for this book was organisational enactment of sustainability. The findings highlight barriers concerned with meaning construction that view nature as an excluded other. The proposition of this book is that successful adoption of sustainability, at all scales, needs new narratives to facilitate the emergence of meanings of sustainability conducive to the inclusion of nature and argues for the need to create a new social imaginary to support ecological sustainability.

This book provides the frame of metabolic organisation – a different conceptual foundation to the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, environmental and social – to stimulate the creation of new ecological imaginaries.

Metabolic organisation is defined as a multi-scalar systemic framework comprising of three interdependent concepts – metabolism, values and enmeshment – and brings together three distinct strands of theory – social and biological metabolism, value theory and ecological theories.

This book will interest scholars and students of Sustainability, Management and Organisational Studies, Human Geography, Sociology, Ecology, Ecological Economics and Cultural Studies, and will also provide policy makers and practitioners with a new lens to view enactment of sustainability differently.



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ADVANCES IN ORGANIZATION STUDIES



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Advances in Organization Studies

Series Editor

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The series *Advances in Organization Studies* is a channel for cutting edge theoretical and empirical works of high quality that contributes to the field of organizational studies. The series welcomes thought-provoking ideas, new perspectives and neglected topics from researchers within a wide range of disciplines and geographical locations.

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Acknowledgements

This book has had a long gestation and its undertaking involved many friends, colleagues and trips into the Bush (Watson 2014). It is both a culmination of reflecting on my concern about our relationship(s) with nature and a foundation for further research on new opportunities that emerged during my investigation.

My conscious relationship with nature started well before my early school years. Even though I was born and grew up in the heart of a city, I was fortunate that urban planning at that time allowed corridors of bushland to extend deeply into high density residential areas. Our house bordered native bushland and I can still remember the wildflowers, the profusion of frogs covering the ground at the onset of winter rains, and the ability to get lost in these corridors of bush as we explored the nooks and crannies of this landscape.

All this bushland is now gone, replaced by bricks, concrete, asphalt and plants appealing to European sensibilities. This transformation did not take long, ten perhaps fifteen years after my family moved into this house on the edge of the bush, and during its progress I remember numerous occasions when I noted the symbolic changes to this landscape: the annual decrease in frogs and then their absence, the less dramatic but equally final demise of the native plants, and the beautification of a nearby swamp into a manageable and far less dangerous inner city park featuring a lake. What also changed, with this transformation of the bush into a civilised urban landscape, was the nature of the relationships between neighbours. People became more self-centred and less concerned about the well-being of others; the quality of neighbourliness changed.

These early years are the foundation for the research informing this book, shaping my concerns that our modern lifestyles are destroying the source of our well-being: our relationship with nature, or in Australian vernacular, the Bush.

Over this formative period, and particularly for the duration of this research project, my family and friends have probably had to endure the hardest of times as I cloistered myself away on many occasions, often emerging briefly to question them on a problem I was struggling with and then again withdrawing after they had offered their considered views. I am glad they all took this in their stride and for the most part with good humour.

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Robert Perey

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