
Book Review

Reviewed by John K. Sakellaris

E-mail: jsakel@central.ntua.gr

Complex Knowledge Studies in Organizational Epistemology
by: Haridimos Tsoukas
Published 2005
by Oxford University Press
Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP, UK, 414pp
ISBN: 978-0-19-927558-8

This book of Haridimos Tsoukas printed in 2005 and reprinted in 2009 represents according to my humble opinion a very important contribution in applied systemic studies. Professor Haridimos Tsoukas has authored almost one hundred papers published in renown international academic journals, which can be characterised as belonging in the managerial and social sciences, he has authored four books and he is co-editor of other six. However, I find this book the most suitable to be presented in a journal like *International Journal of Applied Systemic Studies*.

Due to the fact that my book presentation must not overcome a certain length described by the publishing policy of this journal concerning book presentations only the contents of this book will be given and some further information on them. The book begins with a small introduction. The main body of the book is divided in three parts:

- 1 Towards a knowledge-based view of organisations and their environments
 - The tyranny of light: the temptations and the paradoxes of information society
 - David and Goliath in the risk society: making sense of the conflict between shell and Greenpeace in the North Sea
 - Forms of knowledge and forms of life in organised contexts
 - The firm as a distributed knowledge system: a constructionist approach
 - What is organisational knowledge?
 - Do we really understand tacit knowledge?

Earlier versions of these chapters were published before elsewhere. Chapter five is co-authored by Efi Vladimirov.

- 2 Organisation as chaosmos: coping with organisational complexity
 - Understanding social reforms: a conceptual analysis
 - On organisational becoming: rethinking organisational change
 - Chaos, complexity and organisation theory
 - Complex thinking, complex practice: the case for a narrative approach to organisational complexity

- What is organisational foresight and how can it be developed?
- Noisy organisations: uncertainty, complexity, narrativity.

Chapter seven was first published elsewhere and is co-authored by Demetrios B. Papoulias. It was awarded the Operational Research Society President's Medal for Best Paper in 1996. Chapter eight was first published elsewhere and is co-authored by Robert Chia. An earlier version of chapter nine was published elsewhere. Chapter ten was first published elsewhere and is co – authored by Mary Jo Hatch. Chapter 11 draws heavily on another work of H. Tsoukas and J. Shepherd published elsewhere. Chapter 12 is previously unpublished.

3 Meta-knowledge: towards a complex epistemology of management research

- Refining common sense: types of knowledge in management studies
- The practice theory: a knowledge-based view of theory development in organisation studies
- The conduct strategy research: meta-theoretical issues
- New times, fresh challenges: reflections on the past and the future of organisation theory.

An earlier version of chapter 13 was first published elsewhere. Chapter 14 draws heavily on another work of H. Tsoukas and C. Knudsen, published elsewhere. An earlier version of chapter 15 was first published elsewhere and is co-authored by Christian Knudsen. Chapter 16 was first published elsewhere.

It must be mentioned, that all chapters are documented by abundant and exhaustive references. As it is apparent, the book is mainly composed of works already published or slightly modified versions of published works. However, its publication must be welcome, given that this work gives a panorama of Professor Haridimos Tsoukas thought on the subject: complex knowledge. According to my humble opinion, a small conclusion section would summarise perfectly the outstanding work of Professor Haridimos Tsoukas presented in this book. May Professor Haridimos Tsoukas give us the opportunity to read in the future many other interesting books authored by him as interesting as the book presented here.