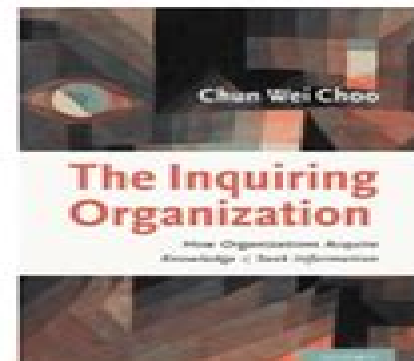


Chun Wei Choo, **The Inquiring Organization: How Organizations Acquire Knowledge and Seek Information**, 2016, New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 232 pp., \$55.00 (hardcover).

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Eighteen years ago, Chun Wei Choo (1998) published the current book's prequel, *The Knowing Organization*, in which Choo provides a holistic account of how organizations use information, engage in sense-making activities, create knowledge, and make decisions. In the current book, the "knowing" narrative is intentionally substituted by its more active counterpart, *The Inquiring Organization: How Organizations Acquire Knowledge and Seek Information* shows Choo's latest effort in moving toward a normative view of organizational learning as motivational, social, and epistemically rational. The book draws on extensive documentation on pragmatism, social epistemology, and virtue epistemology, which buttresses the theorization of organizational information behavior, coupled with an incisive analysis of the epistemic consequences resulted from the contemporary landscape of new media. Through Choo's copious citation of authoritative literature, careful alignment of different typologies, as well as lucid and smooth writing style, the value of the book is manifest to a wide array of readers.



With the exception of the first chapter, which gives a synopsis of each chapter's content, the book is divided in two parts of almost equal length. Part I, "Organizational Epistemology," consists of chapters 2 through 5; Part II, "Organizational Information Behavior," includes chapters 6 through 9. Notwithstanding the seeming independence, the two parts are tightly connected. While Part I introduces classical theories of knowledge, Part II concretizes the abstract by contextualizing the theories in specific organizational settings. Choo's endeavor in seamlessly interweaving the two parts is effective, making the theories and examples go hand in hand without sacrificing a clear structure.

Chapter 2 begins with defining knowledge as "justified true belief" (p. 27). Choo employs three metaphors to explain the three corresponding theories of belief justification. "The pyramid" metaphor refers to foundationalism, in which basic and self-justifying beliefs support derivative beliefs. Hence, the stability and security of the foundational and taken-for-granted beliefs do not depend on the derivative beliefs. The perspective is seen in research traditions such as leadership cultures, theory of action, and dominant logic. In contrast, "the raft" is comparable to coherentism. Our body of knowledge is thus likened to a free-floating raft, each plank of which is a belief that is coherent with others and keeps them in place. A hybrid of the pyramid and the raft, "foundherentism" ("the crossword puzzle"), takes seriously the evidence of experience—the clue for each space in the puzzle—and preserves the system of beliefs—the filled part of the puzzle. Foundationalism, coherentism, and foundherentism specify a set of premises of organizational learning.

# Inquiring Organization Organizations Knowledge Information

**E Durkheim**



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