

Editorial Issue 4.1

Sensemaking and Senseimposing

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These articles are about the currencies of sensemaking. Currency has a double meaning. First it means value in interpersonal or interorganizational exchange. For example, stories are the primary sensemaking currency in exchanges. Secondly, currency means currents, as in flows that pull swimmers, boats and debris where the current takes it.

Gephart, Cohen and Topal study sensemaking in by community residents concerned with broad band computer networks. They analyze town meetings by recording and transcribing the discussions. They identify collective identities constructed in those meetings, and posit a Habermasian analysis.

Truty and Truty think organizations should take time to understand and care for employees. Their sensemaking currency is stories told by 28 people separated from their job during a downsizing. The authors each pose a counterview of what sense is made.

Carr and Lapp study sensemaking using psychoanalysis of group dynamics. They focus on Alford's death instinct theory. They look at sensemaking of acting out dramas of missing leaders using a psychodynamic script. When leaders die what sense do people make of it.

Biberman and Coetzer look at senseimposing, how spirituality is used and misused as a form of addiction. They then look at more healthy ways spiritual practices have been used in organizations.

Eriksen, Van Echo, Harmel, Kane, Curran, Gustafson and Shults look at sensemaking and senseimposing in the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. The ways male cadets (& officers) senseimpose is attempted-to-be-modified by alternative ways of sensemaking about gender within the organization. These are micro-processes of changes in the currencies of sensemaking and senseimposing.

Finally Robin Matthews looks at how senseimposing can be a loss of identity in modern Kronos capitalism. Senseimposing devours other ways of making sense. He argues for mysticism and deconstruction, something I have not seen danced together.

What these articles suggest is the micro-politics of senseimposing and sensemaking. There is a loss of sense, a manipulation of the currencies. The interplay of senseimposing and sensemaking has economic value in exchange relationships and it is part of the flow-currency, the stuff of gossip, rumor, and the like.

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