

Introduction

The studies which make up Part Two are little more than sketches of the possibilities of analysis. They were designed to point to a phenomenon or, rather, a collection of phenomena which might be thematised as the separation of the organisational and the calculative aspects of entrepreneurial decision making. In part, what makes these studies preliminary is their dependence upon ethnographic and anecdotal materials and evidence. Without our intervention to tell the story, collect the details, lay out the background, the sociological points being made would float, so to speak, above the surface of the materials. There need not be any systematic and necessary relation between them. This dis-articulation between evidence, resources, materials which were presented and the sociological points which they are said to instantiate is fairly typical of much ethnographic research reporting. It does not make such research weak, let alone poor, merely preliminary. Indeed, we would argue that some of the very best sociological work to-day is preliminary in precisely this sense.

It is now time, though, to attempt to step beyond preliminaries. To bring this about, two things have to happen. First and most important, the analytic focus of our studies has to sharpen. At the same time, the depth to which analysis aspires has to increase. Sharper, deeper analyses are the mark of progress. Second, and only marginally less important, to attain this sharpening and deepening, we will have to concentrate more and more on the detail of examples and instances, and hence on the materials which provide them. Instead of a reliance upon excerpts of fieldnotes, recalled moments and stories, our analysis will now begin from data of the actual events themselves and will seek to locate any observations or findings which are made in those data. This data will comprise transcripts of tape recorded meetings, sheets of notes and calculations, and the like. The activities and modes of reasoning which we will discuss are found to be displayed in the social organisation exhibited by such materials.

The general theme for this Part is the social organisation of calculation. We will draw this out in a number of ways. First we will look at calculation and calculability as a member's problem. We mean by this phrase that the achievement and display of 'proper calculation' is something which often concerns those involved in business life on a daily basis. We will explore this (a) through an analysis of the notions of 'profitability' and 'loss' in the context of the viability of projects and particular sites; and (b) through the examination of the routine work which goes into making a system of calculability operate. Second, we will look at calculability in relation to the fixing of prices and the variety of ways that calculative rationalities interweave with other rationalities in the context of negotiations over prices. Third, and finally, we turn to calculation within a division of labour. Here we explore the nature of information systems and their rationales and the ways in which daily life and competent work within a division of labour requires the management of the requirements of each. In all three aspects, we shall see that in the lifeworld of business, calculation and organisation are not so much segregated as harmonised in and through the motifs of competent practical action.