UNDERSTANDING MANAGEMENT CRITICALLY

1 RAISING CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN MANAGEMENT STUDIES

Learning Objectives

In this chapter, we encourage you to begin a sustained reflection on:

- how far you believe individual responsibility for universal and planetary well-being extends;
- whether management students (as potential and actual managers) have a specific duty to consider responsibilities beyond compliance with employer directives;
- whether ethical considerations can be compartmentalised, i.e., whether we can claim to hold personal values that we cannot uphold in our employment context;
- whether it is necessary or even possible to attempt to influence institutional values in some way to bring greater integrity between our worldviews and the values applied in the organisations we must engage with.

CRITICAL CONCEPTS

Consciousness (-raising), *legitimacy*, *authority* and *power* are central ideas in critical management studies (CMS). We introduce notions of *exploitation*, *compliance*, *domestication*, *subjectification* and *subjugation* so that throughout the book we can build up a progressive understanding of how such dynamics may be woven into the prevailing *institutional logics of capitalism*. We introduce the concepts of *hegemonic influence*, *transformation* and *emancipation* that are central to the concerns of *critical theorists* in contemporary organisational studies. Key to understanding the powerful influences we experience as the *system* is to comprehend the types of entities humans create and use to generate and sustain *social order*. The study of such entities is called *ontology*. The justification (or purported proof) of their existence is called *epistemology*. This chapter begins an ontological and epistemological enquiry into *capitalism* – a set of beliefs and practices that we present as an *ideology* and that, for radical critics, may be better thought of as a *dogma*.

All social systems of organisation are fabrications of the human mind. They are made up of a network of related concepts and values that are woven together as their institutional logics. Increasing awareness of our part in the fabrication and maintenance of the systems through which we organise ourselves is a necessary step in the shaping of an ethical life, a life of integrity that draws together our values in actions across the many spheres of our lives. Understanding our own logics is a proactive step towards shaping an integrated ethical life as student, teacher, manager, parent or citizen.

Artists and artisans, musicians and spiritual leaders, inventors and investors are all working to influence the way we human beings see ourselves and our place in the universe. So, too, are scholars in management studies. We, too, focus on how we individuals intuit or rationalise our way of being in (or through) what Husserl (1936) calls our 'lifeworld'. We are interested in the growing neoliberal reasoning we employ to justify our action or inaction. In this book, we will examine not only how this rationality is so prominent in contemporary organisational and management reasoning, but in so many spheres of our daily life. Our focus is on our common participation in the dynamics of the form of human organisation being intensified globally. This focus requires us to examine beliefs, values and attitudes, as well as systems and organisational processes in action. This focus requires us to grow in self-awareness. It requires us to become conscious of who we are and who we might yet become.

In keeping with the traditions of critical management studies (CMS), in this book we take as our task to detect and expose situations and processes of marginalisation, exclusion, exploitation and other harms to people and planet with the intent of contributing to their transformation. This task may be quite straightforward when we uncover explicitly corrupt behaviour. In such cases, we can use the law or various social and political pressures to achieve change. It is much more challenging, however, to detect the more subtle ways in which harm comes about. It is challenging to understand our own complicity with, tolerance of, or subjugation to harmful systemic influences and their outcomes for ourselves and others. This may be, in part, because any system may both reward and punish. There may be risks attached to being openly critical of any system of organisation we may rely on for our personal security. Exclusion from any personally significant system of organisation may be painful and perhaps even dangerous. It takes courage and stamina to explore the dynamics of systemic exclusion, exploitation and alienation in our own lives and the lives of others.

In the history of human thought, there has been much debate and little agreement on what a good society is. There is perhaps some traction in the idea that organised human activity must certainly not detract from human or planetary well-being. In this book, we encourage rigorous engagement in the shaping, protection and enhancement of this well-being for people the world over and for the planet that we must all share for our own immediate survival and for the thriving of our children and theirs. Such engagement with universal intergenerational well-being, however, is mindful not to privilege people unjustly or unwisely over other living species. Such mindfulness calls for an

enlarged critical consciousness. Contributing to the enlargement of our critical consciousness and the engagement of our conscience in the organisation of our humanity is the stuff of this book. We invite you to join us in our enquiries and we hope to inspire you to some transformational action!

WHY A MORE CRITICAL MANAGEMENT STUDIES?

The first two decades of the twenty-first century may be remembered for widespread protests by ordinary people against what they perceive to be the leaders and the systems that have not served them well and, in many cases, are believed to have harmed them directly or indirectly. Examples of such protests include the spring uprisings against despotic rulers in the Middle East and Africa and the uprisings by the people of Greece, Spain, Italy and Ireland against the austerity measures imposed on them by powerful external institutions. Growing perceptions in the United States that the decisions of a small group of elite were being made at the expense of the many became the flashpoint that fuelled the Occupy Wall Street Movement. This expression of discontent with the financially powerful soon spread to major cities around the world. Investment bankers, who appeared to be reaping vast profits, and seemingly overpaid executives in large corporations became the focus of attention. These protests and uprisings, however, are not the first and only expressions of frustration with the management of political, social, economic and environmental aspects of our common humanity. Nor can all frustration and tension be attributed to the same causes.

While each wave of protest to various forms of organisation has its unique and complex triggers, background and aspirations, the growing discontent now expressed in many parts of the world about the generation and distribution of wealth and the opportunity to flourish has generated both violent and non-violent action in many forms. In this book, we focus on the tension and discontent that we suggest are systemic in the form of development being intensified globally. Such tension and discontent warrant close attention from managers of corporations and from medium or small-scale enterprises. They warrant attention also from the future managers who will be mandated to manage aspects of the system of trade and exchange in all its dimensions: how raw materials are accessed, how the most attractive labour forces can be secured for the least cost, how the consumption of products and services can be maximised, and how the most competitive advantage can be negotiated for their organisation within given legal constraints.

The system of trade and exchange we are concerned with in this book is generally known as *capitalism*. The reach and strength of this system is growing the world over. It is frequently referred to as (economic) globalisation and is discussed more fully in Chapter 3. In this book, we examine the *prevailing institutional logics* that support and entwine the ideas that sustain the purported

need for growth and the many political and social innovations that are generated from this form of logic and underpin its embedding and intensification globally.

INSTITUTIONAL LOGICS

Institutional logics are 'taken-for-granted' beliefs that guide behaviour through legitimated identities, organisational forms and strategic behaviours (Thornton and Ocasio, 2008). We are interested in how such logics are involved in human *domestication*; that is, in the *disciplining* of populations as pliable *subjects* ready to obey market signals with regard to the prevailing *ideology* (Kockel, 2012), which more critical analysts might call a *dogma*. Butler (2011: 212) draws on Rose (1998) to explain *subjectification* as processes whereby 'forces outside of us come to determine the way we intimately relate to ourselves and so constitute us as subjects.' Of particular concern to us in this book is the seemingly naturalised and dominating institutional logic of the contemporary corporate capitalist *ideology* that is often uncritically reinforced in business education. Growing agitation with the prevailing ideology, however, is amplifying. There is an increasingly widespread association of this ideology with the exploitation of people and planet, with the mal-distribution of benefits, and with significant risk to the environment generated by the associated economic growth mentality.

The prevailing institutional logics informs identity formation and actions from the executives in the corporate boardrooms to economic and social policy-makers, and to the countless functionaries trained in our business schools. While Wang and colleagues (2011) depict this system as a system of greed, it may be better represented as a system of trade and exchange fuelled by fear as alternative systems of survival are increasingly diminished. Its institutional logics are encroaching deeply into our sense of self and the possibilities we may recognise as open to us. We question the intrusion of this logic on almost all aspects of human and planetary life.

The intensification of the institutional logics that sustain global capitalism warrants the critical attention of each of us as we are required to engage with it to feed our families, care for our health, educate our children, and care for our elderly and frail. Our engagement with this prevailing economic system consumes our time in finding and keeping employment. Many people are required to risk life and limb for access to the raw materials and the political and social organisation that will protect and intensify this system. We are each increasingly required to shape ourselves in its service. There seems little of human life that is now unaffected by this system of production and consumption. Despite some heavy costs, it has been almost universally legitimised (Bishop et al., 2011). When exposed, the recognition of such costs certainly invites a response. Part of our quest in this book is to invite you to explore whether you believe that such responses are robust enough to generate systemic

change to the costs of such globalisation or whether they would be more accurately thought of as clever acts of system-protecting, population-placating window-dressing or public relations (PR).

The legitimacy of the capitalist system is undoubtedly under pressure. In our view, however, the system remains remarkably pervasive and persuasive. It may be that the protests and resistance that are now so explicit merely serve to strengthen its muscle! Is it a system 'for good'? Its advocates would claim so. In this book, we will examine their claims more closely because the globalisation of capitalism has been increasingly linked to some disturbing social and environmental outcomes. Among the many metaphors we have used to draw attention to the destructive outcomes of this system is an 'out-of-control juggernaut' (Steingard and Fitzgibbons, 1995) and a 'dance of death' (Humphries, 2010). These may seem extreme images of a system that we have been taught to accept as the best and perhaps only way we can organise people and planet in the creation and distribution of what each human being and the planet needs in order to live. We are all involved in this system. In this book, therefore, we assume that we all have a responsibility to assess it and its impacts.

Once, critics of the system we call capitalism were labeled as nay-sayers, destroyers, and perhaps as communists. They are labels intended to be reviled. Today, however, a much wider range of critics are turning their thoughts to the most macro and most micro of issues within which we must try to make sense of our everyday enactment of prevailing institutional logics. Many corporate and state leaders are now willing to consider that there may be a link between the intensification of this system of ideas in practice and the growing disparities between rich and poor, exacerbating environmental degradation related to our lifestyles and the increased social instability that comes with such mass alienation. There are now a number of calls for a re-visioning of capitalism; that is, for a greater attention to social (as contrasted with corporate) capitalism (Sennett, 2006), to shared values (Porter and Kramer, 2011) and to the rights and responsibilities of stakeholders (Russo and Perrini, 2010). Perhaps amongst the most radical of all such calls for internal adjustment of the ideology is the notion of 'conscious capitalism' promoted by Coates (2013) and Mackey and Sisodia (Mackey, 2011, 2013a, b and c; Mackey and Sisodia, 2013a and b).

Some critics suggest that Earth herself is calling us to caution. The work of Hart (2010) is one example. Another can be seen in the address to the Pacific Forum by the United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in September 2011. He stated: 'With waves rising ever higher … the oceans are … sending a signal that something is seriously wrong with our current model of economic development.' It is becoming increasingly, though not universally, agreed that intensifying floods, forest fires and droughts the world over are attributable to human activity. Regardless of the varied beliefs about the root causes of each concern, water tables are drying up or becoming too polluted for consumption; oceans are acidifying rapidly, deforming and depleting the food chain; and toxins in water, soil and air hold implications for the human immune system that affect rich and poor alike. Responses to these outcomes of the system are

generating increasingly violent resistance to particular actions by some governments and to the very legitimacy of corporate activity in many parts of the world.

Perhaps because of the lack of agreement about the extent to which the system can be associated with the specific social and environmental concerns under scrutiny, who should be held accountable and where the price of remedies should be borne are up for debate. In many cases, the interests of investors or stockholders seem to be able to claim favourable priority and legitimacy when the costs of remedies are to be attributed. After all, if their investments are not protected (or maximised), specific companies, complete industries and maybe even whole nations may be destroyed. Or so we are asked to believe. The growth of the economy, through the actions of its avatar, 'the market', has drawn us all into believing in 'the market' as the (only) legitimate place through which to meet all social and political ideals. We will return to this point in Chapter 3. Fabricating the legitimacy of systems of human organisation is a complex process and such legitimacy is all the more robust the more natural it can be made to seem.

LEGITIMACY

A central element of *legitimacy* is the meeting of a society's norms and values in the meaning we attribute to actions. Who shapes this legitimacy? Legitimacy implies that consent is granted by the governed (Warren, 2003). Organisational legitimacy is explained in the literature as an ongoing process, an activity that is continuously recreated through social enactment achieved and maintained through social dialogue and corporate communication (Suchman, 1995; Tilling, 2004; Tregidga et al., 2007). However, who is participating in the creation of legitimacy? Whose voices can be heard?

Historically, capitalism might have been attractive to a number of people as a means to lessen the grip of tribal leaders and feudal lords of all kinds. It might have been viewed as a force that might weaken papal clout in the Middle Ages. These powerful medieval institutions certainly had to grapple with new sets of ideas that placed both economic and conceptual opportunities into the hands of a much broader swathe of the population than had formerly been the case. In its early formation, the entrepreneurial and opportunistic spirit could be harnessed to the interests of European empires by providing a conduit connecting several seemingly disparate elements of the powerful. The elite of that time soon learned to protect their long-term interests by skilful assimilation of the most threatening of the newcomers. They opened the institutional logic of the day just enough to let in the new merchants and traders. Royalty, the Church, adventurers, scientists, preachers and investors all had a significant hand in creating the rhetoric and the practice that allowed for the extraction of wealth from many parts of the world and its consolidation in the coffers of individuals and the

governments of Europe. Crafting legitimacy for these exploitative ventures was another matter. This task of crafting legitimacy for the processes of wealth creation and distribution remains to this very day. Legitimacy, however, is strongly linked to organisational reputation, a concept actively attended to by public relations specialists and spin doctors of various kinds.

Deephouse and Carter (2005: 330–3) highlight two key differences between legitimacy and organisational reputation:

(i) organizational legitimacy involves the adherence to the expectations of social norms and values;

(ii) organizational reputation concerns perceptions about an organization in comparison with other organizations to determine their relative standing.

Golant and Sillince (2007) suggest that individuals assess the value of an organisation according to the contribution of the organisation to their well-being within a set of given norms and expectations. The cognitive dimension of legitimacy, they suggest, refers to the way in which emphasis is placed on the idea that organisations and their operations and structures are made to appear part of the natural order within a given social context. Similarly, Lange and colleagues (2010) comment that there are three possible dimensions that can be attributed to organisational reputation: (i) being known, (ii) being known for something, and (iii) a generalised sense of favourability. It seems that so long as the populace can be led to believe that an organisation will (eventually) serve them, they are willing to overlook all kinds of aberrations of expressed ethics and tolerate in themselves all kinds of abrogation of responsibilities. Instrumental ethics prevail.

A feature shared by organisational legitimacy and reputation is that both are social achievements. It is this socially fabricated, therefore negotiated, condoned or contested aspect of both organisational legitimacy and reputation that we revisit time and again in this book. It is the socially fabricated dynamics of such achievements that invite us to look very closely at the ideas and values that are so entwined in these dynamics that they may have become invisible to the naked eye, so to speak. We posit in this book that each and every one of us is somehow implicated in the construction and legitimation of our way of being, in the prioritisation of the economic over all other considerations, and in the good and the harmful outcomes of the system by which we organise our humanity and our relationship with Earth.

Managers and students of management are not only generally implicated as persons, citizens, parents and playmates, but specifically so in their willingness to enact the directives of owners. Is this enactment merely a matter of 'following orders'? This question underlies many of the discussions and exercises we would like you to engage with in decisions about what representations of the world you accept as true or righteous and are willing to enact as just. Whose voices prevail in the decisions that are taken? In the prevailing institutional logics, only owners can mandate managers to take actions. There

is some traction in the idea that the interests of investors or stockholders must take much greater account of the interests of stakeholders who are in a better position to express the need to respect shared value (Porter and Kramer, 2011). Stakeholders are demanding accountability beyond traditional firm responsibilities (Scherer and Palazzo, 2011). With increased scrutiny and more active stakeholders in a dynamic global marketplace, managers are urged to take action (or not) depending not just upon the regulatory framework of various regimes but also on the way they understand (or misunderstand) each person who is affected by the situation. It is an attractive theory that has spawned a number of very creative partnerships. Stakeholder theories invite an examination of the legitimacy of managers to act on behalf of the interests of others. Stakeholder influence, though, appears to remain constrained by the ultimate control of the owners.

Public–private partnerships (PPPs) between corporations and/or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and governments are seen as the future for development. The government, civil society and stakeholders of various kinds, we are led to believe, would be the representatives of the people in these partnerships. Their wishes will be enacted by managers as their agents. Thus, the governed agree to allow corporations certain powers to act and trust that their managers will bear in mind their responsibilities not only to shareholders but to all stakeholders. Writing at a time when growth in the hopes expressed in stakeholder theories was gaining some reinvigorated interest, Andrew Weiss (1995) points to significant weaknesses in stakeholder theory as a conceptual framework capable of balancing investor/stockholder power. More recent authors call for global attention to sustainability as a framework through which to address social and environmental concerns, but, even here, the conversations are taking a more critical turn. As we will show in subsequent chapters, even the most enlightened of corporations are finding it difficult to track all aspects of their supply chain.

SUSTAINABILITY

A focus on *sustainability* as a remedy for social and environmental problems has come under challenge from a number of researchers. Landrum and colleagues (2013), for example, propose that the growing interest in corporate social responsibility, when considered individually, is inadequate as an integral strategy (2013: 7) necessary for the personal and systemic transformation needed for short- and long-term sustainability (2013: 1). Sizoo (2010) points to the common practice of companies attaching themselves to calls for greater attention to sustainability projects through charitable donations to environmental causes, while engaging in blatant environmental abuses. Shell's forging of a partnership agreement with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is given as a case in point by Steiner (2011). Critics point to the

need for a radical rethinking of the underpinnings of enlightenment and liberal thought and our economic motivations and systems. It requires us to be more critically conscious of the economic priorities of contemporary capitalism and their consequences. Landrum et al. (2013) propose that successful companies in an era of 'conscious capitalism' (2013: 7) will be able to overcome the current impasse in the unification of the economic with ethical, ecological, 'and mind–body–soul considerations as organisations face the sustainability challenge' (2013: 1).

We agree with Landrum et al. (2013), but only to a certain degree and with some significant concerns that we will raise in the chapters that follow. We suggest that their analysis may not be robust enough to provide checks on corporate interests in the reshaping of the individual and collective consciousness. Their recommendation that the most significant transformations must occur and radiate from a transformed individual in the internal and external stakeholders may be a necessary change, but one not without risk of corporate co-option. We agree, however, that a relational ethics of responsibility for social, economic and environmental justice is required to respond to the pressing issues facing humanity. The United Nations is leading a number of initiatives to achieve such transitions, and we will examine some of these in various parts of this book.

UNITING NATIONS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

Saul (1997) argues that we are a dangerously unconscious civilisation, a society addicted to ideologies through which we reduce ourselves and others to the state of 'subject' or even 'serf'. He argues that, in its corporate form, the prevailing rationality requires people to deny or undermine the significance of citizenship beyond corporate interests. Corporate interests are seductively disguised as naturalised self-interest. The assumption is that, if each human being pursues self-interest within the boundaries of the law, this will result in the best outcomes for all. Critics of this ideology suggest that desirable outcomes have yet to be evident in the lives of most human beings and that the embrace of this ideology intensifies false hope in individual salvation and encourages an abdication of responsibility for the common good. The received wisdom is that 'economics' is at the heart of everything and everything flows therefrom. The effect of this ideology, argues Saul (1997), is passivity and conformity in the areas that matter, and opportunities and rejoicing in non-conformity in areas that do not matter that much. How can we begin to attend to matters that are not prominent in our consciousness or conscience? What do contemporary examples aimed at *consciousness-raising* bring to the legitimation, justification, concern, challenge and transformation of the system we call the globalisation of capitalism?

The beginning of such discussions can be seen in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and the Global Compact (GC), the Earth Charter, the Rio Plus forums, the meetings of powerful nations at Davos, the influence of the World Social Forum, the Global Ethic Foundation and similar organisations intending to have an impact on values and practices. Of growing influence on management education is the leadership of the United Nations through their initiative to promote Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME), a vision fully described by Muff and colleagues (2013). These organisations are attempts to influence the development of ethical principles and guidelines for creating processes of human organisation that endorse and incarnate principles of justice and environmental responsibility necessary for human survival.

Authors as varied as Joseph Stiglitz (2010), Richard Branson (2011) and Graeme Maxton (2011) provide very readable summaries of the concerns now expressed by many and articulated so vividly by those participating in the uprisings of the people. While many may express similar concerns, their analysis of causes, and thus the sensible remedies, are not all the same. We will explore such challenges and the associated remedies throughout this book.

Beyond these global endeavours to guide human practice, how actively do you think individuals and communities engage in the endorsement or discipline of the capitalist system? Are all equally able to influence its governance? Those who initiated the protests against globalisation of corporate capitalism in Seattle in 1999 signalled their frustration and their anger at 'the system'. Subsequent protests and movements have become ever more heavily policed, but it appears that such policing of dissent cannot repress growing unrest and intentions to change the way we live – the way we produce and consume commodities and how we dispose of our waste. In this regard, we will discuss the Occupy Wall Street Movement and other such organisations that express and enact dissent with regard to the prevailing institutional logics.

The possibilities of sharing strategies, of calls to upcoming events, of promoting new production and consumption ideas and new distribution opportunities are all made more accessible through the general availability of the Internet and various social media. Our companion webpages for this chapter illustrate how much information (and potential action) is only the click of an icon away. It may seem ironic that the technologies so useful for activating protest against the very system that produced them are technologies that corrupt and disrupt as well as make the speed and reach of communication more intense than ever before in human history. These electronic gadgets may have been manufactured under the very conditions that many who use them are expressing concerns about. Those concerns may focus on the suspect methods of mineral extraction for the key components of our mobile phones and iPods or the manufacturing processes that are harmful to workers, their families, communities and even the planet.

BLOOD-SOAKED PHONES

Valuable minerals are being extracted in hand-worked mines sometimes so deep that the miners stay there for days on end to make the trip down worthwhile. Men and young boys work slave-like in extremely dangerous, often life-taking, conditions for the base minerals essential to the electronics industries. Through the illegal extraction of these valuable minerals in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), for example, natural resources are being exploited, armed groups are financed, women are raped, and millions of innocent lives have been lost so that global corporates can bring gains to markets (Monbiot, 2013). Is the DRC the only place where such exploitations occur in the extraction of the ingredients of production? The companion webpages which supports all chapters in this book provide many leads for you to explore this question more deeply.

Just who has the right or the duty to control the means of life is a big question. Western ideas vest such rights and duties in the concept of (legalised) ownership. Privatisation of the means and proceeds of production is a fundamental act of faith in the prevailing institutional logic of capitalism. It is often portrayed as a necessary means to greater efficiency and a more just (user-pay) system of distribution. Water is a good example. Allocating ownership rights to springs, lakes, rivers and so on is deemed to be the fairest and most efficient way to govern water access and use. Yet, converting the source of life to a commodity to be traded and managed through the very markets we are expressing concerns about in this book has layers of problems if universal access to water is necessary for all living creatures. The work of Vandana Shiva is an example we find compelling for the integration and expression of the concerns we canvass in this book. As early as 2002, she proposed or prophesied that we will see wars over access to water just as we are now having wars over access to oil and minerals of all kinds (Shiva, 2002).

Regardless of warnings about impending violence and distress made by writers and activists, the privatisation of water is still being promoted as the best means to secure access to water, ensure the viability of industries and thus protect the investors' interests (see Hodges, 2012). This includes all of us whose pensions and thus assumed future well-being are directly or indirectly invested in everything from public utilities to privately owned hedge funds. And, of course, such investors create jobs, do they not? But what happens when people cannot afford to buy the water they need or have to choose between paying for water, heat, food or medical care? These concerns bring us very close to home. There will not be a country in the so-called developed world that does not struggle with these issues. Despite the havoc in the regions where this system has been long established (i.e., in the so-called developed nations), we are willing to insist that the so-called less developed countries follow the logic that is generating these difficulties. Ironic?

Paradoxical? Evil? Assessment of the morality as well as the efficiency and effectiveness of this logic is a responsibility we must each accept by virtue of our participation in it.

Critical management scholars focus on the processes of production, distribution and disposal of goods and services, and all the human and environmental relationships that are involved. It seems, however, that none but the very extremes of the free-market prophets have a confident vision for a pragmatic response to the issues of concern. They (want us to) believe that driving their battleship harder through current turbulence will somehow keep their ship on course. Some are willing to kill for this belief and, according to critics, such as Chomsky and Herman (1979) and Pilger (2007), will fuel and fund wars to ensure access to raw materials, water, land and labour. Others may close their eyes to, deflect their attention from, or diminish the significance of less visible, systemically related deaths, injury and destruction. Jobs are offered and withdrawn regardless of the effects on families, communities and even nation-states. For those who believe in the principles of neo-liberal development of the world, 'the market', a social fabrication which we will examine much more closely as the book progresses, will provide remedies through the logic of supply and demand. Advocates of this form of reasoning urge the rest of us to get better at demanding the supply of less destructive goods and services and their ethical and sustainable production, distribution and disposal. We take a closer look at this statement of faith in Chapter 7.

Those who believe that systemic issues cannot be addressed by 'the market' (alone) are willing to support greater political influence in shaping the conditions of trade and exchange, investment and spending, consumption and saving. There are global organisations at work to try to influence such changes. We will introduce some of these organisations in Chapter 3. There is also some controversy over what goods and services might be permitted to be offered through unpaid, community-generated activity. Social enterprise is attracting many people for whom the blatant pursuit of profit is abhorrent or who see a market opportunity personally to influence the direction of social and environmental organisation and outcomes. The growth and popularity of farmers' markets, the slow food movement, corporate responsibility (CR) activities within firms, and the marketing of fair trade and sustainable products to serve as fundraisers are just some examples of the growing interest in a more just and sustainable form of human organisation. These activities, however, are still situated within a macro-context in which managers must manage in their large or small organisations, government departments, small businesses, or contractual arrangements. How each of us responds to, lives with, resists or attempts to change these macro conditions are the micro conditions that together provide the outcomes we are witness to. Unchallenged, they will continue to harm our loved ones well into yet unborn generations. Can managers make a difference to this situation – or do they just follow orders? What, in this complex context, might we consider 'good management'?

MANAGERS: AMORAL FUNCTIONARIES OR RESPONSIVE MORAL BEINGS?

It has long been the view that managers implement the vision and direction of owners. Managers are required to implement policy; they are expected to ensure that the activities undertaken, big or small, local or global, meet the aspirations of the owners. These owners may be clearly visible or only obliquely known through the more amorphous directorship of corporations, trusts and other legal fictions by which ownership responsibilities are diffused through a myriad of shareholders. Much organisation is driven by what we choose to call a 'factory model of production', despite much rhetoric about employee empowerment and purported emphasis on self-directed career trajectories that provide the freedom for people to work flexibly and creatively to meet their wider life desires. This is so even in the now corporately moulded public sector. Public universities are a good example of this. Researchers, the creative force in state universities, are increasingly managed as factory staff (Willmott, 2011). The 'outputs' are graduates and research papers. Factories for the production of graduates must compete with each other for grants and fee-paying students. In a more radical example, the creation of private prisons is worth a thought. A market for prisoners assumes a growing demand. Statistical indicators suggest such a demand is indeed growing and investors are taking note. Is a market-driven orientation to criminal production and containment a sensible or even just human enterprise?

PROFITING FROM MISERY

Capitalism is promoted as an economic system that respects and enables individual liberty. It is said to reward those who invest their talents and make smart choices. Empirically, it has proved to create material wealth but this wealth has accumulated in the control of a relatively small percentage of the global population. As economic wealth concentrates in the bank accounts of fewer people, as downward pressures on middle incomes bite, as the social services that enhance the common good become increasingly accessible only by 'user pay', as philanthropic organisations are unable to meet the demands they are called on to meet, as individuals are seduced by consumer-driven identities, more desperate people turn to criminal acts to meet their needs. Debtors prisons are on the rise. Private prisons are devised to profit from the incarceration and containment of people. They are a growth industry. Even those courageous enough to protest the injustice of the system of production and distribution under scrutiny in this book can find themselves at risk of incarceration – as many leaders of justice movements can testify. You will meet some of these people in this book. What might happen to a portion of the student population, indebted with student loans, unable to access a job and having no income to repay their debts?

(*See articles at*: www.corpwatch.org/article.php?id=15784; retrieved 2 September 2013; and www.alternet.org/why-student-loans-are-even-bigger-sham-you-know; retrieved 2 September 2013).

The idea that our pursuit of an education may bind us into a systemic vice-like grip may seem far from the potential concerns of a student doing a business degree in an excellent university in Europe or the US. Yet, think again what might be learned from these examples and apply them to the administration of universities and their staff and students. To sustain their institutions, universities organise loans for students that saddle them with debt which many will find well-nigh impossible to repay and may land some of them in the proposed low-security, privately owned debtors' prisons. Student prisoners, like refugee prisoners, become the means for profit-making. The conditions of that profit-making become an issue of efficiency decided on financial returns, not on the morality of the enterprise deeply considered. Staff in universities, prisons, hospitals and charities are pressed to do more with less. Much the same might be said for large health systems, churches, schools, museums and art galleries.

Putting aside the complex issues of discerning culpability in criminal behaviour, many ordinary people may be more at risk of imprisonment than those who are hardened and intentional perpetrators of evil. Inadequate or fragile access to the means of a livelihood, the ever greater need to purchase the means of survival from 'the market', and the ever intensifying pressure to use credit to meet immediate survival needs is one line of enquiry you could pursue. There are many less obvious examples of the potential to reap profit from the frailties of others. The corralling of indigenous peoples, refugees, the frail and variously disabled, and the clinically diagnosed as insane or those judicially determined as criminal, is proving to be a goldmine for many entrepreneurs. This logic increasingly applies to local government and to whole nations. All seem to function more like the corporations once associated only with industrial mass production. Their researchers, doctors, artists, clergy and governors are managed by institutional logics that seem to pay little regard to the moral, creative and spiritual impulses that are the hallmarks of those with such professional or creative vocations. The cleaners and caretakers of their offices, homes and dependants are required to negotiate their contracts under ever greater competition and live with the same or perhaps intensified vulnerabilities.

A uniform economic rationality appears to rule all as if the production of cans of beans, the healing of the sick or the education of students is one and the same. Coordinating the activities of scholars was once a shared task of peers: teamwork. Over time, management was skilfully delegated to administrators with the idea that this would be more efficient and would allow researchers and teachers to get on with their scholarly work. Once separated from their self-organisation, together with the intensification of drone-like centrally devised and controlled templates, staff can be disciplined 'from afar' by faceless bureaucrats under the guise of 'self-management'. This provides an example of increased responsibility and diminishing resources not unique to academics employed in public universities. Principals of schools have been reframed as CEOs; public relations officers who manage the media releases for states and corporations appear to serve political or investor interests rather than provide accurate information to citizens. Police organisations the world

over are monitoring and controlling populations at the direction of the state – states that are increasingly beholden to the might and power of corporate potential for investment or the threat of their divestment. This can and does at times put managers into situations of conflict: conflicts of interest, conflicts of moral and practical assessment, conflicts of ethical integrity.

REPORT, COLLUDE OR BEAR SILENT WITNESS

Chris is working in a privately owned hospital that prides itself on its dementia care. Of late, the 'shifts' have been increased from 7 to 10 hours each. On this day, three out of seven staff called in sick. No replacements were found. Chris tried hard both to feed and toilet all the patients in need. One fell off the toilet. When Chris explained this in an incident report, the manager was furious. Disclosing the fall, let alone the shortage of staffing that explained the fall, would surely affect the quality rating, the attraction of investors, and thus risk everyone's jobs. Best for all if the incident report is not filed – or is it? Is this a good way to ensure that institutions of care act with integrity?

In the outcomes of conflicts of interest, managers may have privileged witness. Managers may also have significant influence. For example, in Chapter 9 we illustrate this point with a reflection on the actions of the deputy chief coroner in Cairo, Magda Helal. During the uprising in Egypt in October 2011, at some risk to herself, Magda spoke out to international media as the bodies she was examining were victims of assassins. She asked that these assassins be identified. This might be a question we could also ask of the real causes of death of the homeless boys of Rio de Janeiro, the rascals of Papua New Guinea, the employees burned or crushed in unsafe factories, or the countless un(re)marked deaths due to starvation, untreated illnesses of the poor and their lack of access to viable incomes. We could also ask this question of the deaths from workplace injuries, poisonings or stress, whether these manifest as slow or rapid deaths. So, too, we could ask the same question of alienation, despair and disheartenment manifest in the suicides of those who see no future, no respectable way to care for themselves or their dependants.

Managers have their part to play in the witness, exposure and transformation of what is 'unjust', however this notion of (in)justice is to be defined. To believe otherwise is to consign managers, administrators and professionals to a category of functionaries whose mindless compliance would not meet any notion of human agency and responsibility, a level of compliance dangerous in even the most regimented and loyal of armies. It would be to concede to a contemporary acceptance of what Hannah Arendt so aptly noted as the 'banality of evil'. Arendt attended the trial of Adolph Eichmann, accused of crimes against the Jewish people, crimes against humanity and war crimes (Assy, 1998). Her

observations of Eichmann as an apparently 'unremarkable' character has generated much discussion. He did not seem particularly evil – as a kind of normal *but unthinking* man.

> The banality of evil which appeared through Eichmann made evident how superficial the phenomenon of evil could show its face [to be]. The evil could spread out as fungus under the surface, by a mass of citizens that did not reflect on events, did not ask for significance, nor made a dialogue with themselves about their own deeds. Arendt says: The greatest evildoers are those who don't remember because *they [have] never given the matter a thought*; nothing can keep them back because *without remembrance they are without roots*. (Assy, 1998)

The fascist regime of Nazi Germany was achieved through the millions of tiny decisions made by each person in 'the system'. While each little activity examined alone may diminish and dismiss culpability, when systemically woven together as they are, they allowed for a system that maimed and killed – just as, it seems, the justification of corporate profits appears to do in some of the cases we will examine in this book. Who is responsible? Arendt draws our attention to the apparent lack of capacity to think for, and in dialogue with, oneself (Assy, 1998).

MAKING DIFFICULT MANAGEMENT CHOICES: WHO OR WHAT ARE WE RESPONSIBLE FOR?

The pressure on the principal of Midtown Primary School to cut the cost of running her school seems relentless. Already she had grown classes beyond what she thought was responsible practice. Many of the activities once deemed essential for a good education had been eliminated. Now she needed to reduce the cost of the cleaning and caretaking of the campus. A group of eight loyal employees had together, for many years, taken great pride in understanding the diverse needs of each teacher, and were motivated by the joy of teachers and students coming to a spotless class each day. They ensured that the toilets were not health hazards, and had kept the grounds beautiful and safe. Each member of this team and their families were as well known to the principal as they were to the teaching staff and their families. On hearing that the principal was being urged to contract out their services to a privately owned cleaning company, the cleaners got together. They offered to form themselves into a 'collective' and to bid for the contract. They searched for efficiency gains that would not compromise the quality of their service, and put together a proposal guaranteed to ensure all dimensions of the caretaking of the school would be met by them collectively. What issues might arise for the principal?

Today, management studies are at an interesting crossroads where a paradox appears to have developed. Perhaps the paradox was always there but is now more out in the open. The legitimacy of managers and the power they have in society are under greater scrutiny. At the same time, the spread of Western

management techniques, education and training have infused management practice to a broader range of influences, both geographically and socially. Some of this 'management as control' has been reduced to mere monitoring of template compliance, an idea drawn from the work of Foucault, who we meet again in Chapter 2 and whose ideas we extend in Chapters 4 and 5. There we illustrate how this idea works in practice. There, too, we will see how some theorists moved the discussion of systems to discussions of discourses. By examining such discourses, it becomes possible to see how what were once processes of visible management control may have become so infused in who we are as much as what we do that such overt control is no longer required. Grey (1999: 577), for example, suggests that human life has become:

> something to be managed, and other forms of meaning or being in the world become marginalised, thus truncating the variety of human experience, while promoting a form of experience which … is disciplinary, degrading and confining. This is not primarily because self-management is about the internalization of management control … [but because] self-management [as it is being embedded in the prevailing institutional logic] entails a way of apprehending what it is to be human in managerial terms, and in that sense represents a diminution of the multiplicity of human potentials through the invocation of the one dimensional discourse of management … The capacity of self-management to yield labour control is a second order effect …

A simpler way of saying this is that once the discipline is internalised, the control of the asylum can be handed to the inmates. The inmates are so conditioned, drugged or demotivated that they will do what is desired by their controllers without too much overt or visible pressure. We explore this idea of mind control as the influence of power on the very formation of our identity further in Chapter 2. Jürgen Habermas (1987: 259) summarises this dynamic as the 'colonization of our life world'. The important contribution managers make to this dynamic is sometimes called *managerialism*. It refers to a way of managing that (i) preserves managers' personal interests, or (ii) the obligation of managers to meet pre-set outcomes, over and above all other interests. The two are usually entwined in a tight connection between performance requirements and rewards. Compliance is generally but not always secured through their service to the system or what they hope to extract from it. Concern about the colonising effect of such compliance is drawn to our attention by Deetz (1992). It is sharpened by Willmott's (2011) example of the contemporary management of academics in the subtle pressures on the substance of their scholarship, their vehicles of dissemination, and the processes of their organisation. Academics, he argues, appear to be increasingly corralled in corporate mentalities, and managed through a factory model of production, with all the nuances of instrumental control and output maximisation. Academics and students, employers and employees in all kinds of enterprises, seem to be increasingly treated as a plastic substance to be moulded to state or corporate value. This book rests on the premise that the extent to which a critical consciousness and conscience remain alive in the human spirit will determine the extent of this subjugation or its creative transformation into ways of being that enhance dignity and respect for

others, for self, and for Earth on whom we all must rely. In this regard, we can take direction from Alvesson (2002) who invites the study of identity (re)formation, an issue we take up in Chapters 5 and 6.

Alvesson (2002: 638) recommends the study of theories that understand the processes of organisation to be 'fluid, unstable and reflexive … present[ing] opportunities for micro-emancipation as well as openings for "new" forms of subordination and oppression'. The more fluid social theories are of interest to us, not only for their potential to expose exploitative assumptions about human fixtures or malleability, but more particularly as potential streams of thought to enhance human emancipation as a more sophisticated notion than the neo-liberal market notion of freedom. Managers are central characters in the trajectories of our human organisation. The way each person understands their part in any situation will to a large extent be affected by their socialisation and education. It is for this reason that we invite the radical elaboration of management education beyond technical competencies into the broadest critical studies into context and self. We hope to contribute to the enlivening of a critical consciousness and conscience so that the decisions made are informed with wisdom not formulaic compliance. The aspiration for greater wisdom and responsibility in the organisation and management of human affairs is growing. A number of influential organisations are attempting to address the need to transform the ways we organise our human being. Such transformations will require the critical examination of long and deeply held truths.

TRUTH TELLING AND TELLING TRUTHS

In this book, we invite reflection on the cumulative diminishing of espoused values of human dignity, of ourselves as ethical beings in the daily decisions we make – as employers, employees, producers, consumers, parents and citizens. The close relationship between sport, art, health, technology, military action, moral reasoning, news-generating media, the state and the corporations with vested interests must alert us to the need for the greater integration of our thoughts about these seeming discrete realms of operation. The recruitment of impoverished young people to become the cannon fodder for any regime, the loss and injury to military and civilian people in the preservation or extension of territorial or resource control, the recruitment and control of people for the myriad modes of commodity production and service delivery, and the resistance of regimes to care properly for those who are disabled, fragile or made vulnerable are radical examples. They are examples administered by countless well-functioning managers, team leaders and a myriad of empowered employees. This is so, too, of the police teams clearing the streets of 'Occupiers', the managers who oversee production processes that harm and even kill, and those organisations who outplace to uncertain and perhaps unsafe circumstances the

employees who have served them well, and who have, through their loyalty or compliance, been made dependent on their wages for their very lives.

New empires are not achieved only on the battlefield. From the production of goods and services, such as the mobile phone, to the military drones that can destroy targets without the need for a human pilot, all are connected in a web of power and control. To see the links between the fun we can have playing a game on our phones, the convenience of instant communication, and the seemingly harmless constant upgrading of our gadgets, to the manufacture and use of 'drones controlled from a distance' is what we aim to do in this book. It is not so much the creation of the gadgets and services that we call into question. It is their mode of production and distribution in the context of a (perhaps distorted) ideology of neo-liberal-style profit maximisation that concerns us in this book.

NEO-LIBERALISM: FROM THEORY TO DOGMA

Neo-liberalism is generated from a number of ideas about the assumed nature of human beings. These ideas are expressed in classic philosophical, political and economic assumptions about the functions of the state and markets in the achievement of desirable social outcomes. For example, from a selective reading of Adam Smith's early work, it is widely assumed that social well-being is best achieved by self-interested individuals making well-informed employment and consumption choices freely within the marketplace. The marketplace is deemed an avenue for human emancipation. Any government interference in the free flow of markets, argue modern proponents of this idea, denies people liberty and freedom and thus will ultimately result in an overall reduction in human social well-being.

While the early ideas of neo-liberalism can be located in European ideas about individual freedom, entitlements and property rights, they were taken up in specific ways in what was to become America, 'the Land of the Free'. The emergent 'American model' for development may come under challenge by ideals of a more controlled form of capitalism at times, but nevertheless it is still the model within which China, India, Russia and the rest of the world are competing for a higher ranking in the league table of dominating economies.

Critiquing the extent to which neo-liberal theories have infused our very sense of self requires us to stretch our minds from the most macro to the most micro of realms and back – and every position in between. In this book, we do this by beginning to challenge the very language through which we shape our understanding, organise our activities and assess our relationships with each other and with Earth. We suggest that the shape of social actions, including those of trade and exchange and the social relationships that support them, are an expression of our human imagination. The normalisation of these actions and relationships, so that they can be perceived as legitimate and taken for granted as reasonable, is in fact an amazing human achievement. Some ideas become so well entrenched in our thinking that they come to be experienced as

natural, as real and as truth (Clegg, 2011: 195). We move easily from theory to dogma. Colignon (1989) warns against oversimplifying complex social behaviour as real things, and calls this a process of 'holistic reification'. We will incrementally unpack this view in subsequent chapters of this book.

The reconfiguration of people as objects such as 'labour units' or 'resources' is an example of important reifications that together support and enable systems of trade and exchange that are the brainchildren of capitalist-orientated economists, policy-makers and employers. These ideas reach their zenith in the prevailing neo-liberal expression the world over. Not only are people frequently thought of in this reified way by those who want to harness their energies and creativity, but increasingly so by the people themselves. It becomes good sense to seek ways to drive down their value and thus their cost. That is, what we come to see as significant and true (our conscious and unconscious awareness) takes on a market orientation. In extreme examples, human beings are encouraged to see themselves as mini-enterprises that reflect the capitalist values of competitive individualism and to adhere to a deluded faith in meritocracy as an explanation for unequal (but supposedly fair) market outcomes. To what extent we are groomed to see ourselves in this way will be further discussed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

Although the distinction between the individual and the collective is recognised in this process of oversimplification, the individual is collapsed into the collective through the notion of the organisation as a naturally occurring system. While it is not inherently wrong to simplify our understanding, Colignon (1989) cautions against misleading representations that oversimplify certain characteristics when trying to understand very complex interactions and/or relationships. In this book, we take a great interest in what established oversimplifications might be hiding. We take the view that the way we define our world and act on our ideas might be considered one of the most creative powers of the human species. We enact our ideas and values. We might choose to join the Occupy Movement and be branded as heroes or rebels. We may be named 'a manager' and expect to have 'authority'. What meanings are invested in these words? We may like or dislike rules and regulation or respect them as necessary for order and security. These rules and regulations, ideas about order and security, and the legitimate ways of achieving these, are all examples of meaning and sense-making. This process may be unique to humans. It is hard to think of an elephant telling a lie. Truth making appears to be a uniquely human capacity.

MANUFACTURING TRUTH: REIFICATIONS – HANDY GRAMMATICAL SHORT CUTS OR TRICKY LITTLE TROJAN HORSES?

Truth telling is a tricky matter at any time. It is generally thought of as the right thing to do. This is particularly so in information about the way we organise society. 'Society', however, is a mythical beast! It may be better thought of as

one of a number of conceptual constructs with which humans populate their reasoning. 'Society' is an excellent example of such a construct. We invest this construct (i.e., the concept 'society') with values that are manifest in all kinds of policies and practices. The values become incarnated in their out-working by people in a mostly unconscious way. The construct appears to become material. We can now use it to explain, organise and discipline behaviours in its service. This construct has found its way into our common sense and can be used to maintain a specific set of social relationships.

All 'societies' are conceptually constituted with other facilitating entities, such as families, communities, organisations and so on. The idea of 'society' (and its constituent entities) is made (seemingly) material through our very enacting of the invested relationships. It is a noun that refers to the way we group people. The concept might be more accurately thought of as an action, a decision regarding grouping, rather than a noun. It is a concept that we use to guide us in deciding who is to be considered as inside or outside our consideration. This idea helps us understand who has authority and entitlements and who does not. It is an idea through which we can reinforce our feelings of belonging or exclusion and thus our sense of identity. Real as this 'society' may feel to us, it is none the less a very different kind of entity from, for example, a chair or a tree. 'Society' is an idea. Precisely because it is a figment of our imagination, 'it' is what we call a fictive entity or social fabrication, a mental construct into which we can invest our values and through which we can organise our collective existence. Such mental constructs are wide open to manipulation. Examining what we take for granted when we talk about 'society' and its kin concepts is a powerful way that critical theorists can expose some of the more subtle constraints on our freedom and alert us to the watering down of our capacity to be responsible for change to the things than may disturb us.

In much common conversation, 'society' as an organising principle is now frequently reduced to another such social fabrication: 'the economy'. These concepts ('society' and 'the economy', along with their kin concepts of 'democracy', 'capitalism', 'the organisation', 'the family' and 'justice'), are so well established in our taken-for-granted mind maps that many personal sacrifices may be asked for and given in support of their protection. 'Jobs' and 'employment' are *entities* of the same kind. They are 'ideas' about how work is to be organised. To explore the transmutation of 'idea' to 'thing in the world' is a task of *ontology*. Fictive entities or social fabrications refer to 'ideas' made seemingly material by our collective enactment, embodiment or manifestation of those ideas in practice. In the prevailing institutional logics, the notion that employment is the only legitimate means to access a livelihood is a pervasive idea (see Figure 1.1). This idea is tightly woven into the common understanding of the supposed path to freedom. For many people, however, jobs and employment are rarely the means to liberation. In subsequent chapters, we will examine how jobs and employment may be better understood as a harness to a system of arrangements that often exploits and even kills. The vehicle of this exploitation is the depersonalised 'market', a character in the neo-liberal story of reality that we will meet again and again in this book.

Figure 1.1 'The most dishonest words in American politics: "Right to Work"'

Source: www.alternet.org/labor/right-work-unions-collective-bargaining. Photo credit: Flickr © 7 June 2013.

The impact of our jobs or lack of them on our lives is linked to the wider ideas we discuss in this book. All are influenced to some degree by the macro-principles used to shape the forms of capitalism and democracy being intensified the world over. These principles may reach also into the seemingly more personal decisions that we use to guide our relationships with others, to use our purchasing power, to navigate life's broader opportunities and, as we discuss in Chapters 5 and 6, perhaps even to shape our very identity. These principles offer a set of values we are asked to take as a given 'truth' and we are exhorted to live them as such: to work hard, be loyal and the rewards will be fairly distributed through the out-workings of 'the market' (perhaps now the most powerful character in the family of fictive entities). But truth telling is a complex matter. It is linked to the idea of legitimacy and our ideas about organisational reputation and the way these two constructs reinforce each other.

CORPORATIONS: THE CONTEMPORARY FLAGSHIPS OF THE EVER MORPHING EMPIRE

Korten (2001), in *When Corporations Rule the World*, and Hertz (2001) in *The Silent Takeover*, discuss multinational corporations (MNCs) as having a hegemonic influence on the organisation of people and processes in the shaping of the global

economy. Korten (2001) argues that by the end of the twentieth century approximately 70 per cent of global trade was controlled by just 500 corporations. Hertz (2001) shows how corporations manipulate and pressure governments. They argue that the MNCs' biggest success has been in homogenising a global, neo-liberal or free-market ideology that supports the capitalist aspirations. In *The New Rulers of the World*, John Pilger (2003) reports on the lives of hundreds of people, mostly women and children, living in slums with open sewers and unsafe disease-prone water. Many of the children were malnourished. His documentary shows how multinational corporations and the governments, and the myriad of institutions that back them, rule millions of people throughout the world. Their combined influence determines both the availability and conditions of employment for these people and can also make decisions at a global or local level that might eliminate their meagre jobs and livelihoods altogether.

Taking the analyses of Pilger as a starting point, we consider the darker side of the form of globalisation being intensified the world over. We see connections between the plight of exploited workers the world over and the attempts of the Ogoni people to restore their environment damaged by the Royal Dutch Shell company (Boele et al., 2001). Royal Dutch Shell has been a signatory to the UN Global Compact since the year 2000. Follow their story on the web all the way to the court decisions about their ongoing liabilities to the region. In 2013, the collapse of a factory in Bangladesh producing apparel for many well-known corporations was attributed to substandard building codes (Burke, 2013; Butler, 2013). It may be useful to explore how many of the investing companies in this location are Global Compact signatories and how far they are willing to accept responsibility and provide restitution.

The shift of Myanmar (Burma) towards democracy and, with it, the opening of opportunities for international corporations, and vice versa, invites us to think more deeply about the very principles of profit maximisation and economic growth associated with market liberalism. Together, these forces have infused much Western-style logic well beyond what might be considered the shaping and implementation of rules designed for the practical functioning of trade and exchange. Political unrest is not good for business – unless one's business is the control of political unrest. As we write this book, media attention has focused on the accusation of the cleansing of the Rohingya Muslim minority from the Rakhine State by Buddhist and Myanmar authorities. This unrest is closely watched by *The Economist* (2013), a clear indication of corporate interests in the region.

The claims of critics such as Korten, Hertz, Pilger and others stand as a marked contradiction to the claims by advocates of prevailing forms of capitalism that this is the most effective, efficient and just system for global economic growth, and, accordingly, for the assurance of national and individual wealth and well-being. Pilger writes that we are all being hoodwinked. Echoing Hardt and Negri (2000), the global system, he argues, is not about emancipation; it is about empire. Its façades cover the enduring struggle of people for their freedom. He offers his work as an antidote to authorised versions of contemporary history 'that censor by omission and impose double standards … [and as] a

contribution to what Vandana Shiva calls "an insurrection of subjugated knowledge"' (Pilger, 2007: 13). Pilger (2005) takes this idea further into an analysis of the media in global influence. Colonial assumptions, he argues, have not changed: 'to sustain them millions of people remain invisible and expendable …' (Pilger, 2007: 13). With what critical thinking skills can we assess Pilger's views? This book will provide many concepts you can use as lenses to examine opinions such as this, and to come to your own conclusions.

TALK BOX

Corralling people into reservations has been one way to clear lands for corporate access to minerals, oil reserves, water, timber and so on to serve investment interests. 'Enclosure' of land in the UK is an example described in 'The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil' (www.youtube.com/watch?v=sb3qbFcLYZc). Land enclosure for conversion to private property or leasehold opportunities as a legal entity today still drive people away from their homes and livelihoods. The forest dwellers of India and Indonesia or the Sami people in northern Scandinavia provide contemporary examples. For some, this (re)moving was engineered as 'punishment' for 'resistance', most notably in the United States (see 'We Shall Remain' at: www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/weshallremain/). Less dramatic are the countless small-holder farmers taxed off their land. Greece is a good example. Some such displaced people have been seduced into believing that new opportunities are awaiting them (or their children) in reservations or in sometimes dangerous urban labour markets.

Today, the form of removal may be undertaken in openly violent ways or be subversively seductive and draw us all into accepting what will be 'for the best'. For example, 'less than a dollar a day' is a phrase often used to gain public consent to the movement of indigenous people, forest and savannah dwellers, and river people into reservations with or without services to 'help them integrate into the modern world' where they can earn incomes and own property. Closer to home, small farms are sold up for more efficient agri-businesses, small businesses are pressured out of existence by super-stores, and families are forced from homes by opportunistic bankers or through the downstream effects of austerity measures imposed by those saving the global economy. What is wrong with this picture? Examine closely some of the cases made visible by Corpwatch (www.corpwatch.org/article.php?id=15674).

Tricky Questions ?

- Why critical management studies (CMS)?
- What is it to enlarge our critical consciousness?
- Who are the stakeholders in the capitalist system? Are all equally served by it? Are all equally powerful in terms of influence?

- How is the legitimacy of corporate behaviour established and maintained?
- How are organisational legitimacy and good public relations (PR) related?
- Can managers make a difference or do they just follow orders?
- Is one human life more valuable than another?
- How important is it that consumers understand fully all the dimensions of a supply chain?
- Are the United Nations-led programmes, devised to strengthen ethical corporate behaviour, robust enough to counter consumer demand for ever more and cheaper consumer items?

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