

ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP: A GUIDE FOR ORGANIZATIONAL AND SOCIAL RESEARCH, ANDREW H. VAN DE VEN. OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, OXFORD, UK, 2007; PP 330.

Van de Ven's book is obviously a labour of love, based on thirty years teaching and field experience. It focuses on the concept of engaged scholarship, a participatory approach where researchers and non-researchers work together to develop new knowledge about complex problems. It is primarily directed towards academic staff and doctoral students who wish to learn how to engage with diverse stakeholders to undertake applied research that crosses disciplinary boundaries, providing rigorous and relevant outcomes of a quality that is both academically defined and socially accountable.

The messages relayed here mirror similar arguments expressed by Michael Gibbons and others in *The New Production of Knowledge: The Dynamics of Science and Research in Contemporary Societies* (1994) whose concept of 'Mode 2' research identifies universities as one stakeholder among many knowledge producers in a new, more fluid and interdependent approach. In company with Gibbons and other illustrious thinkers in this area such as Ernest Boyer in *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* (1990) and 'The scholarship of engagement' in *The Journal of Public Service and Outreach* (1996), Van de Ven's discussion on engaged scholarship has the potential to considerably broaden contemporary concepts of scholarship within the academy.

Such an approach looks to strengthen the oftentimes-tenuous links between theory and practice. In itself this aim should be important enough to warrant serious attention not only from academics, but also from government policy makers, private sector interests and those working in not-for-profit agencies. Practitioners have much to gain by using theory to inform their actions, while in a self-reinforcing process practical applications can provide important feedback and direction to ongoing processes of theory building. As Van de Ven argues (p. 35), 'Scholarship that engages both researchers and practitioners can provide an exceedingly productive and challenging environment; it not only fosters the creation of knowledge for science and practice, but it may dissolve the theory-practice gap.'

Van de Ven uses the 'diamond model', comprising problem formulation, theory building, research design and problem solving to

illustrate the process orientation through which engaged scholarship is conceptualised, implemented and reviewed. The first two chapters provide an introductory foundation required for understanding application of the 'diamond model' of engaged scholarship. Once readers have a grounding in the concept, Chapters 3 to 7 then describe the practical application of the model. The final two chapters provide more detailed discussion on engaged scholarship including that stemming from the author's own experiences.

This is a well written book that provides an informative and accessible guide for researchers with an interest in developing their understanding on how they might work collaboratively with those outside academia. While the book is grounded in management and organisational studies it provides broad direction for those working in other areas of social science.

MICHAEL CUTHILL
UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND