

## Book Review

**Ilaria Boncori, *Researching and Writing Differently*, Bristol: Bristol University Press, 2022.**

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The book *Researching and Writing Differently* developed by Professor Ilaria Boncori, emerges as a safe harbor amid the turbulent seas often navigated by academics when it comes to conducting and writing research. The work reveals alternative pathways for academic research and writing, broadening horizons beyond the well-known neoliberal models, which are usually dominated by ideals of measurement and performance.

Boncori is currently a Professor of Organizational Behaviour and Human Resource Management at the Essex Business School, UK. She is Co-Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Culture and Organization*, Associate Editor of *Management Learning*, *Tamara: Journal for Critical Organizational Inquiry*, as well as a member of the editorial board of *Organization*. Her research interests are focused on discussions of social (in)justice at the intersections of identity, race, body, gender, and sexuality within organizing processes. She engages with qualitative methods (especially narrative and arts-based approaches), autoethnography, photo-ethnography, semi-structured interviews, and secondary analysis of texts such as films, exploring multiple concepts and contexts. Notably, on the theme of writing, she has recently published a seminal article on Embodied Writing (Boncori et al., 2024), further reinforcing her commitment to alternative epistemological approaches (Brewis et al., 2019).

The book is structured in three parts: Part I – Researching and writing differently today; Part II – Daring to research and write differently; and Part III – Researching and writing differently: methods and processes.

In the first part, Boncori critically interrogates neoliberal models (Boncori, Sicca and Bizjak, 2020), asserting that these models have reconfigured the nature of academic work and identities, often with disastrous consequences. The now well-established "path to success" for academics—publishing in high-impact journals, teaching to garner positive student evaluations, securing research grants, and maintaining active networking (both offline and online)—generates metrics that influence what is deemed "valuable" as writing and research. These patterns, as Boncori incisively reveals, not only establish norms but also propagate stigmas. In the second part, Boncori underscores that she does not advocate that all research should be written differently, but rather that there must be spaces where such writing can be developed, presented, and valued. Her use of the term "differently" explicitly signals an opposition to, or a parallel with, more traditional forms of conducting research and academic work, drawing upon feminist perspectives to do so. This is a central point in Boncori's epistemological and methodological proposal: writing differently entails not only different styles but also different modes of knowing and being in research. The concept of Embodied

Writing (Boncori et al., 2024) is emblematic of this shift, advocating for writing that acknowledges the researcher's body, emotions, and positionality, thereby challenging Cartesian dualisms that have historically shaped academic knowledge production. In the third part of the book, Boncori proposes epistemological approaches and methods that compose what she terms the "Writing Differently agenda." This proposal involves not only rethinking theory and content differently but also adopting specific research methods and alternative ways of presenting and publishing academic work. The challenge is to shift research styles that confront traditional, patriarchal, and "objective" ways of writing about organizations (Boncori and Smith, 2019).

The embrace of slow scholarship reading slowly, with the body, in contact with the emotions that the text provokes is crucial here. This shift moves beyond methodological technicalities, engaging with ethical and political dimensions of knowledge production. The act of writing differently is also an act of resistance: it resists the homogenizing forces of neoliberal academia, creating room for plurality, affect, and authenticity. Furthermore, Boncori's insistence on finding "our people" (seeking out groups, communities, conferences, and workshops for affective engagement with peers) is a political call for an ethics of care within academic communities. This resonates with Robson Cruz's (2020) reflections on academic writing blockages and the search for writing with comfort and meaning. Cruz (2020) suggests that academic writing need not suppress the writer's poetic and artistic vein, aligning with Boncori's advocacy for a more embodied and compassionate scholarly practice.

In conclusion, *Researching and Writing Differently* is a courageous and necessary contribution to Critical Management and Organization Studies. Boncori not only theorizes about writing differently but embodies this practice through her own scholarly work, challenging researchers to rethink not only how they write but also why and for whom they write. Her work offers valuable guidance for scholars seeking to navigate the tensions between institutional demands and personal, embodied scholarship. The book is thus an invitation: to resist, to create, and to care for ourselves, our communities, and the knowledge we produce.

## Reference list

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