Proceedings of the 6th Organizations, Artifacts & Practices (OAP) workshop

“MATERIALITY AND INSTITUTIONS IN MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION STUDIES”

22nd June-24th June 2016, Lisbon
Nova School of Business & Economics

EDITORS

Eva BOXENBAUM (PSL-Mines ParisTech & CBS)  François-Xavier DE VAUJANY (PSL-Université Paris-Dauphine)
Bernard LECA (ESSEC)  Nathalie MITEV (King’s College London)
Miguel PINA E CUNHA (Nova School of Business and Economics)
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Organizing Committee of OAP 2016

Sofia Amaral Vala (Nova School of Business & Economics), Miguel Pina e Cunha (Nova School of Business & Economics), Christine Vicens (DRM, PSL-Université Paris-Dauphine), Sébastien Lorenzini (DRM, PSL-Université Paris-Dauphine), Nathalie Mitev (DRM, PSL-Université Paris-Dauphine and King’s College London), François-Xavier de Vaujany (DRM, PSL-Université Paris-Dauphine), Florence Parent (DRM, PSL-Université Paris-Dauphine), Tarani Merriweather Woodson (DRM, PSL-Université Paris-Dauphine).

For more information about OAP : workshopoap@gmail.com or http://workshopoap.dauphine.fr or @workshopoap
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WELCOME

We are delighted to welcome you to the sixth OAP workshop! After Paris in 2011 and 2012, London in 2013, Roma in 2014 and Sydney in 2015, it is a pleasure to now meet in Lisbon, for a new series of exciting presentations and debates on organizations, artefacts and practices.

This year’s theme is again a challenging one. Institutions, institutionalizations, legitimation processes have undergone radical changes over the last decades. With the increasing use of digital technologies, the ongoing transformation of work and workplaces (including an entrepreneurial trend) and the shifting of work boundaries (private-professional spheres, producers-consumers spheres...), the modalities of emergence and transformation of institutions (their temporalization and spatialization) are changing.

OAP 2016 will be focused on the theoretical perspectives and ontologies that inform the (meaning of these) new modalities of institutions and institutional dynamics, and that affect how these changes matter. OAP 2016 engages with numerous neo-institutional, post-discursive, sociomaterial, post-Marxist, processual or phenomenological views, all of which emphasize the visual, material, temporal and spatial dimensions of institutionalization, legitimation or the dynamics of institutional logics.

We are very pleased with the quality of the submissions we received, and with the diversity of disciplines, intellectual traditions and research methods represented in the workshop.

Thank you all for your interest in this project, and for joining us at the Nova School of Business & Economics for these two days. We look forward to meeting you in person, to listening to your presentations and questions, and to engaging with your research.

We hope that you will enjoy the event and gain useful insights from participating in it.

A warm thank you to the researchers of the Centro Interuniversitário de História das Ciências e da Tecnologia who will join us for the meeting of our Standing Group on 22nd June, and to our three inspiring speakers who have kindly accepted to deliver the keynote lectures: Candace Jones, Stewart Clegg and André Spicer. We have no doubt that their presentations will shape debates in all other sessions of the workshop and impact us all. Thank you very much as well to Eduardo Diniz, Marlei Pozzebon, Magda Herchei and Nuno Oliveira who have worked on a special session of OAP on Iberico-American thoughts on technology and artifacts.

In addition, we are thankful to those of you who have agreed to chair sessions and ensure the coordination of exchanges within these sessions. Several other individuals have played a vital role in the organization of the workshop, including Sofia Amaral Vala, Christine Vicens, Sébastien Lorenzini, Tarani Merriweather Woodson and Florence Parent. This event would not have been possible without their precious help. Finally, we are grateful to the French Embassy (in particular Angélique Verrecchia), LUISS, King’s College London University and DRM (PSL-Université Paris-Dauphine) for their support in the organization of our event.

Welcome at the Nova, welcome for the 6th OAP, we hope you will enjoy the experience!

Eva, François, Bernard, Nathalie and Miguel, co-chairs of OAP 2016

http://workshopoap.dauphine.fr
The co-chairs of OAP 2016

Eva BOXENBAUM  
Professor of Management at PSL-Mines ParisTech (CGS) and Copenhagen Business School (CBS). Eva conducts research on innovation in institutionalized contexts. In collaboration with industrial partners and international researchers, she examines how new business practices and technologies emerge, spread and are implemented in organizational practice in different industries and nations. Her work is particularly focused on how entrepreneurial individuals and organizations—who are themselves embedded in the beliefs, norms and rules that prevail in an industry or a nation—can break with established templates and generate innovations that spread and provoke sustained organizational or social change.

François-Xavier DE VAUJANY  
Professor of Management at PSL-Université Paris-Dauphine (DRM). His research is focused on information and communication and their relationships with organization and organizing. He is particularly interested in the processes of legitimation, and their spatial, temporal and political dimensions. His ongoing fieldworks deal with new work practices (e.g. coworking practices, digital nomads, maker movements…), work transformations, how they are communicated and legitimated in organizations and society. He has set up a research network (RGCS) on these topics.

Bernard LECA  
Professor of Management at ESSEC (Paris). He is interested in innovation, valuation, non-market strategies and neo-institutional theory (institutional entrepreneurs, institutional work, change and institutional resilience) and contemporary evolutions of capitalism. The empirical contexts of his research are mainly creative and high tech industries. He is Senior Editor of Organization Studies.
Nathalie Mitev is research associate at PSL-Université Paris-Dauphine (DRM) and visiting senior researcher at the King’s College London. She has been associate professor at the London School of Economics for 16 years. Her research deals with Information Systems Failures, Social Construction of Technology, Actor-Network Theory, History of Technology and Critical research. She has published numerous articles in top-tier journals in MIS or Organization studies fields and has recently co-edited a book entitled "Materiality, Rules and Regulation" (Palgrave) with G.F. Lanzara, A. Mukherjee and F.–X. de Vaujany. She is visiting professor at Muenster University, Grenoble and Poitiers Universities.

Miguel Pina e Cunha is Professor of Organization Studies. His research has been published in journals such as the Academy of Management Review, Applied Psychology: An International Review, Human Relations, Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, Journal of Management Studies, Organization, and Organization Studies, among others. He published or edited several books, including “Organizational Improvisation” (co-edited with K. Kamoche and J.V. Cunha, Routledge, 2002).

Candace Jones is Professor at Edinburgh University. Her research focuses on cultural frameworks, cultural meaning and social structures. She examines vocabularies to locate actors’ logics and cultural meanings within professions and creative industries. She examines how these depend on and shape actors social networks. Her current research projects include how novel practices become legitimated exemplars in a profession, what predicts who becomes an exemplar within the architectural profession, winning Gold Medals and the Pritzker Prize, the sources of inspiration for Pritzker Prize winners, vocabularies and creativity as a competitive resource for architectural firms, vocabularies and logics of action in the medical and architectural professions.
Stewart Clegg

Stewart Clegg is Professor of Management at UTS. He is Research Director of CMOS (Centre for Management and Organisation Studies) Research at UTS, and holds a small number of Visiting Professorships at prestigious European universities and research centres. He is one of the most published and cited authors in the top-tier journals in the Organization Studies field and the only Australian to be recognised by a multi-method ranking, as one of the world’s top-200 “Management Gurus” in What’s the Big Idea? Creating and Capitalizing on the Best New Management Thinking by Thomas H. Davenport, Laurence Prusak, and H. James Wilson (2003), Harvard Business Review Press. Because the central focus of his theoretical work has always been on power relations, he has been able to write on many diverse and ubiquitous topics – because power relations are everywhere! He is the author of two widely used textbooks on Management & Organizations: An Introduction to Theory and Practice (with Martin Kornberger and Tyrone Pitsis) and Strategy: Theory and Practice (with Chris Carter, Martin Kornberger and Jochen Schweitzer), both published by Sage.

Andre Spicer

Andre Spicer is Professor of Organisational Behaviour and founding director of ETHOS: The Centre for Responsible Enterprise at Cass. He is an expert in the areas of Organisational Behaviour, Leadership and Corporate Social Responsibility. Prior to joining Cass, Andre Spicer was a Professor of Organization Studies at the University of Warwick. He has also been a visiting Professor at the University of Innsbruck, University of Paris Dauphine, Lund University, the Central European University, University of St Gallen, Hanken School of Economics and the University of Sydney. Professor Spicer was educated at the University of Otago and holds a PhD from the University of Melbourne. Professor Spicer has done work on organizational power and politics, organisational culture, employee identity, the creation of new organizational forms, space and architecture plays at work and leadership. His work looks at a wide range of settings including knowledge intensive firms, financial institutions, seaports, universities, libraries, media organizations, and new social movements.
# PROGRAM OF THE 6<sup>TH</sup> OAP WORKSHOP

**Day 1, 22<sup>nd</sup> June, Second meeting of the OAP Standing Group, Nova School of Business and Economics**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>16.30-18.00</td>
<td>2nd meeting of OAP Standing Group. In partnership with the Centro Interuniversitário de História das Ciências e da Tecnologia affiliated with Universidade Nova de Lisboa (FTC/UNL) and Universidade de Lisboa (FC/UL).&lt;br&gt;“Materiality turn and ontologies in Management and Organization Studies”</td>
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<td>Informal, interactive discussion about OAP scientific orientations, coordinated by François-Xavier de Vaujany and Nathalie Mitev.&lt;br&gt;Open also to OAP 2016 participants who want to join the debate, please confirm your participation at <a href="mailto:workshopoap@gmail.com">workshopoap@gmail.com</a></td>
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### Three suggested ‘teasers’ for discussion:

- **Typologies and debates about ontologies in MOS.** Can several ontologies be identified (see Renault, 2016), and if so, can they help overcome contemporary dichotomies (entities/process, spatialization/temporalization, discourse/materiality, practice/activity-process…) in MOS debates?
- **Marxist and critical roots for debates about materiality: back to Marx, Feuerbach, material dialectic and historical materialism?** Seminal Marxian concepts and history seem be forgotten in contemporary discussions. Why? What about axiology and politics in contemporary theorizations in MOS?
- **Technology and our digital world: reasons and relevance of this focus for debates about ontologies in MOS.** How to move from the study of ICT-related practices to the (long term) exploration of a new semiosis?
# Day 2, 23\textsuperscript{rd} June, 6\textsuperscript{th} OAP workshop on “Materiality & Institutions”, Nova School of Business and Economics

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<td>ROOM XX</td>
<td>Registration</td>
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<td>9.00-9.45</td>
<td>ROOM XX</td>
<td>Coffee – Morning Tea</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.45-10.00</td>
<td>ROOM CB08.02.005</td>
<td>Welcome talk by representatives of the Nova School of Business and Economics and OAP 2016 co-chairs: Eva Boxenbaum (Copenhagen Business School &amp; Mines ParisTech), Bernard Leca (ESSEC), Miguel Pina e Cunha (Nova), François-Xavier de Vaujany (PSL-Université Paris-Dauphine) and Nathalie Mitev (King’s College London)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.00-10.45</td>
<td>ROOM</td>
<td>Keynote 1: “The Material Basis of Institutions” by Candace Jones (Edinburgh University)</td>
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<td>10.45-11.00</td>
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<td>Questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.00-12.30</td>
<td>ROOM XX</td>
<td>Track 1: Iberico-American thoughts about artifacts and technology (Session chairs: Eduardo Diniz, Fundacao Getulio Vargas Sao Paulo) and Marlei Pozzebon, HEC Montreal</td>
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<td>ROOM XX</td>
<td>Track 2: Institutional logics, identity and materiality in MOS (Session chair: Eva Boxenbaum, CBS &amp; MinesParisTech)</td>
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<td>ROOM XX</td>
<td>Track 3: Legitimacy and legitimation in neo-institutional theories (Session chair: Miguel Pina e Cunha, Nova)</td>
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<td>ROOM 8.04</td>
<td>Track 4: Ontologies and ethics in institutional analysis and beyond (Session chair: Nathalie Mitev, King’s College London)</td>
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<td>Welcome address by Eduardo Diniz and Marlei Pozzebon</td>
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<td>“The OS field and Portuguese and Spanish OS visibility:” by Carolina Turcato (PSL-Université Paris-Dauphine) and Eugenio</td>
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<td>“Alternative organizations and institutional work: Accounting for spatial influences” by Carolina Turcato (PSL-Université Paris-Dauphine) and Eugenio</td>
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<td>“Footsteps in the sand: consequences of conformity in complex institutional environment” by Julien Jourdan (Bocconi University)</td>
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<td>“Transversal institutions: rethinking institutional ontology” by Jeremy Aroles (Manchester University)</td>
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<td>Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.30-14.00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>14.00-14.45</td>
<td>ROOM XX <strong>Keynote 2:</strong> “Inventing a new institution: corporate Capitalism and the East India Company”, Stewart Clegg (UTS)</td>
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<td>14.45-15.00</td>
<td>Questions</td>
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<td>15.00-15.30</td>
<td><strong>Coffee – Afternoon Tea</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>15.30-17.00</td>
<td><strong>ROOM XX</strong>&lt;br&gt;Track 1: Iberico-American thoughts about artifacts and technology (Session chair: Magda Herchei, University College London)</td>
<td><strong>ROOM XX</strong>&lt;br&gt;Track 2: Institutional logics, identity and materiality in MOS (Session chair: Micki Eisenman, Hebrew University)</td>
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<td>“The perception of managers of large companies operating in Brazil about ceremonialism and/or instrumentality in the use of management practices” by Paschoal Tadeu Russo (Fundação Instituto de Pesquisa) and Reinaldo Guerreiro (Universidade de São Paulo)</td>
<td>“Understanding the establishment of management education in Oxford: The role of materiality in institutional change” by Lise Arena and Ali Douai (GREDEG, Université de Nice)</td>
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<tr>
<td>16.00-16.30</td>
<td><strong>“Spatialities and organizing on favelas: an actor-network approach” by Felipe Kaiser Fernandes and Ana Silvia Rocha Ipiranga (Universidade Estadual do Ceará, Fortaleza Center for Social Studies)</strong></td>
<td><strong>“Digital materialities and incompatible institutional logics” by Anna Morgan-Thomas (University of Glasgow), Agostinho Abrunhosa (AESE Business School) and Ignacio Canales (University of Glasgow)</strong></td>
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<td>“Money is Time: how a Brazilian organization has</td>
<td>“The Interpretative Frame: the link between the</td>
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<tr>
<td>17.00</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<td>18.30-20.30</td>
<td><strong>Cocktail at the French embassy.</strong> Welcome address by the French ambassador (Jean-François Blarel) and representatives of Université Paris-Dauphine, PSL research consortium and Nova School of Business and Economics.</td>
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### Day 3, 24th June, OAP workshop, Nova School of Business and Economics

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<tr>
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<th>ROOM</th>
<th>Session</th>
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<tr>
<td>9.00-10.00</td>
<td>ROOM Reception Area Level 8</td>
<td>Coffee – Morning Tea</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.00-10.45</td>
<td>ROOM XX</td>
<td><strong>Keynote 3: “Deinstitutionalising institutional theory”, André Spicer (Cass Business School)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>10.45-11.00</td>
<td>Questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.00-12.30</td>
<td>ROOM XX</td>
<td><strong>Track 1A: Technology and materiality (Session chair: Nuno Oliveira, London School of Economics)</strong></td>
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<td>ROOM XX</td>
<td><strong>Track 2: Institutional logics, identity and materiality in MOS (Session chair: Stefan Haefliger, Cass Business School)</strong></td>
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<td>ROOM XX</td>
<td><strong>Track 3: Legitimacy and legitimation in neo-institutional theories (Session chair: Anna Glaser, Novancia)</strong></td>
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<td>ROOM XX</td>
<td><strong>Track 4: Ontologies and ethics in institutional analysis and beyond (Session chair: Ana Morgan-Thomas, University of Glasgow)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>11.00-12.00</td>
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<td><strong>“The Algorithmic Materiality of Uber – Riding with Uber Drivers” by Stephanie Giamporcaro, George Kuk and Sarah Scotch (Nottingham Business School)</strong></td>
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<td>11.30-12.00</td>
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<td><strong>“Materiality &amp; identity: Jewish figurines and Polish contemporary identity” by Yochanan Altman (Kedge BS), Mark A.P Davies (Heriot-Watt University) and Anita Proszowska (AGH University of Science and Technology in Kraków)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>“Materializing morality: The creation of a new concerned market field” by Nadine Arnold (ENS Cachan, Université Paris-Saclay) and Birthe Soppe (University of Oslo)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>“A critique of the material and process turns in management and organization studies: How to re-introduce History and Politics in the study of work transformations?” by François-Xavier de Vaujany (PSL-Université Paris-Dauphine) and Nathalie Mitev (King’s College London)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>11.30-12.00</td>
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<td><strong>“The Materiality of Spreadsheet Technologies: Energized Spaces and the Infrastructures of Public Management Institutions” by Sara Louise Muhr and Lotte Holck</strong></td>
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<td><strong>“The social materiality of cross-cultural encounters: The case of Danish Police officers in the Greenland police” by Anouck Adrot (PSL-Université Paris-Dauphine)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>“Institutional legitimacy and spaces: A grounded analysis of firefighters’ journey into digitization” by Thijs Willems (Faculty of Social Sciences of the VU University in Brussels)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>“How to manage the dead? Dirty practices and (c)lean management” by Thijs Willems (Faculty of Social Sciences of the VU University in Brussels)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Room XX</td>
<td>Track 1 bis: Technology and materiality (Session chair: Ana Morgan Thomas, University of Glasgow)</td>
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<td>12.00-12.30</td>
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<td>“The space of possibilities: How ICT affords or constrains the spatial practices of organisations. The case of collaborative research in business schools “ by Anouk Mukherjee (PSL-Université Paris-Dauphine)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.30-14.00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>14.00-15.30</td>
<td>ROOM XX</td>
<td>“Investigating the impact of abusive supervision on knowledge sharing &amp; mediating factors” by Amitabh Anand (Neoma BS) and Isabelle Walsh (Skema Business School)</td>
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<td>“Artifacts as learning tools: Evidence from medical practice” by Maria Batista</td>
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<tr>
<td>16.30-17.00</td>
<td>“Risky Heuristics” by Nuno Oliveira (London School of Economics)</td>
<td>Federica De Molli (Università della Svizzera Italiana)</td>
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<td>“Are space planners political actors?” by Eliel Markman (PSL-Université Paris-Dauphine)</td>
<td>“Institutional analysis and materiality: the contribution of the French institutionalist thinking (Lourau, Lapassade and Castoriadis)” by Jean-François Chanlat (PSL-Université Paris-Dauphine)</td>
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<td>“Enhancing cooperation between communities through linked boundary objects: translating falls prevention research evidence into practice” Sara Melo (Queens’ University Belfast) and Simon Bishop (Nottingham University Business School)</td>
<td>E Cunha (Nova School of Business and Economics), Luca Giustiniano (LUISS) and Arménio Rego (Universidade de Aveiro)</td>
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<tr>
<td>15.30-16.00</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>Meeting points at Clube da Esquina and LX Factory</td>
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Abstracts of Day 2 (23rd June)

Session 1: Iberico-American perspectives on technology and artifacts (23rd June 9 AM – 4 PM)

The OS field and Portuguese and Spanish OS visibility: critical reflections from a plurilingual researcher

Jean-François Chanlat (DRM, PSL-Université Paris-Dauphine)

This paper aims at clarifying the relationship between language, thinking and Society for the visibility of the French OS production. It proposes a sociological analysis based on Bourdieu’ field to understand the variation of reception the French OS production have had among the Anglo-Saxon field. The paper aims to underline some key elements, which can explain the differences of reception experienced by the French OS Scientists. The reflexion opted for a general review using Bourdieu' field approach, historical datas, reviews of OS literature, and from Google scholar, Web of Science and major OS Journal datas and provides some evidence about how the visibility of the French OS production is related to translation, cognitive and social resonances, producer place in the scientific network and relationship between the field. It suggests that visibility is the result of a complex set of socio-cognitive schemes, social issues raised, and the place occupied by the researcher in the field. Because of the kind of collected datas, the research results may lack some exhaustivity. Therefore, other researchers are encouraged to add new elements to the propositions. The reflexion includes implications for the development of OS field, the visibility of diverse contributions coming from non-English speaking researchers, notably the French, Spanish and Portugese ones, and for the conversation between different linguistic and social universes. It fulfills an identified need to study how some non-English OS production visibility can be enabled and how dialogue between different traditions can be ameliorated.

References


The Invention of a Carioca Tradition: Craft Beer’s Production and Consumption information

Renato Chaves (University of Santiago) and Marisol Goia (FGV)

This study sheds light on a rather recent phenomenon, simultaneously with economic, social, and cultural features. We refer to the promotion of a beer culture in Brazil by specific institutions and social actors, so as to stimulate the development of a fast growing market in the country: craft beer. In Brazil, craft beer consumption increased an average of 36 per cent per year from 2011 to 2014 (Bouças, 2015). In 2015, craft beers already amounted to 1 per cent of total sales and they may double their share by 2020 (Malta & Bouças, 2015).

Beer industry, as well as the culture that supports it, is neither recent nor incipient in Brazil. In fact, the country is the world’s third largest beer market (Associação Brasileira da Indústria da Cerveja [CervBrasil], 2014) and is home of the world’s largest brewer, with nearly 30% market share after divestitures (Mickle, 2015). Nonetheless, such reality applies only to massproduced beer, a product deemed inferior according to craft beer market’s cultural codes. Having studied the emerging craft beer segment from a consumer preference perspective, Aquilani, Laureti, Poponi, and Secondi (2015) have found that craft beer is perceived to be of higher quality in comparison with massproduced beer due to the raw materials used for brewing as well as its overall quality. Furthermore, there are social and symbolic distinctions in Brazil, since craft beers are much more expensive. Hence, they are an elite article, usually associated with sophistication, refinement, and high gastronomy.

From a supply standpoint, Brazilian craft brewers are positioning their brands in accordance with an invented local tradition (Hobsbawm, 1983) in the industry so as to emphasize a regional personality. Under a business strategy perspective, such tradition invention reminds us of the country of origin effects, according to which consumers use stereotype images as information cues in judging products from different origins (Lotz & Hu, 2001). For instance, a brewery formed by three Rio de Janeiro natives, 3Cariocas, names some of its products after internationally known neighborhoods, e.g. Ipanema, Leblon, and Copacabana. In fact, the former is perceived as a synthesis of the Carioca lifestyle and is usually associated with features such as those regarding a beach culture, informality, spontaneity, bohemia, artistic creativity, freedom, custom transgression, avantgarde, and sophistication (Goia, 2007). Thus, this research attempts to examine, under an anthropological as well as a sociological perspective, institutional dynamics and discourses which aim at promoting a craft beer culture in Rio de Janeiro, consistent with positioning their brands around a typically Carioca identity.

Theoretically, the promotion of a beer culture may be interpreted in light of the creation of the so-called cultural heritage. In this regard, Anthropology offers good contributions when it discusses the similarity between culture and heritage. Both of them are inherited, such as the expression of a nation or a social group, as well as acquired by a conscious, deliberate, constant reconstruction effort. Supported by classic and contemporary anthropological studies, Gonçalves (2005) articulates and synthesizes three fundamental concepts so as to clarify institutional actions, discourses, and strategies in building a heritage: resonance, materiality, and subjectivity. Forging a heritage cannot be the result of a political decision or that of a governmental institution, since the effort of building collective identities and memories is obviously not a guaranteed success. In fact, it can be, in a number of ways, not made a reality whatsoever. Therefore, there must be resonance between that
which such heritage represents and its interest group. Moreover, the importance of culture’s material dimension emerges because social life would not be possible without material objects and body techniques that ensue from them. Objects and techniques are not mere social life’s props, but they can be thought of as the very substance of this social and cultural life. An object is inseparable from social, moral, and religious relations and exists as part of a cultural totality, playing a crucial mediating role. Finally, the notion of subjectivity seeks to explain that heritage is not just external emblems of groups or individuals but an internal, organic expression of their individual and collective consciences.

In sum, relying on information gathered during interviews with brewers from Rio de Janeiro as well as their communication actions through social media, we are able to make sense of these craft brewers’ actions, behaviors, and gestures and how they serve to define a Carioca identity, around which they position their brands.

References


Theorizing social change by the identification of transformative patterns: following the path of GOMA, a collaborative social technology

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The main contribution of this article is to propose a theoretical lens for theorizing social change by focusing on the identification of transformative patterns. We extend recent work published by Martha Feldman (2012) on resourcing theory and change agency, by integrating conceptual ideas that come from social innovation transdisciplinary literature (Moulaert et al., 2013), particularly the South American view on social technologies (Pozzebon, 2015). Feldman (2012) proposes a conceptual lens where actions shape patterns and patterns support actions mediated by artefacts, which are intrinsically connected, forming sociomaterial assemblages. Pozzebon (2015) revisits the concept of social technology by emphasizing its inherently political character. Social innovation processes are seen as political processes of socio-technical reconfiguration – collective, participatory and democratic – by which sociomaterial arrangements are mobilized and reassessed by social groups with the intent to produce social change. Therefore, social technologies address social problems and demands necessarily through a process of social transformation, avoiding instrumental views often put forward by “caring” capitalist thinking of just alleviating the symptoms of deprivation and inequality (Escobar, 2011).

We argue that between actions and outcomes we can find some intermediary steps that help understand how social change might be positively produced. Just recognizing actions, activities, strategies, manoeuvres, tactics and micro-practices is not enough. We should identify and understand what effects their interconnection and imbrication produce on individuals and groups in order to lead to some consequences, intended and non-intended. In order to be able, as social innovation researchers and practitioners, to facilitate the enactment of positive social change, we must identify those transformative patterns that lay between actions and their outcomes. Transformative patterns are related to the mobilization of resources, material and non-material (Feldman, 2012), that support social change. They improve underprivileged individuals and social groups’ ability to create and handle mental, material, social, cultural and symbolic relevant resources (Andersen et al., 2003). Some examples of transformative patterns are the strengthening of individual self-confidence, the development of particular skills, the creation of solidary links with the local community, the enhancement of the ability to mobilize other members around a common goal, etc.

In order to illustrate the explanatory potential of our conceptual model for theorizing social change, we use an empirical illustration coming from one of our recent case studies on social technologies. Therefore, in the first part of this article, we present GOMA, an original experience of a collaborative space that is taking place in the city of Rio de Janeiro. This collective space is transcending the notion of coworking, evolving towards two extended concepts: co-owning and collaborative social technology. In the second part, we provide a theoretical background from collaborative spaces and social technologies literatures and we propose a theoretical lens inspired by sociomaterial readings. In the third part, we apply the theoretical lens to the GOMA case and we discuss the provisional insights and results. This short abstract presents an overview of the case (the first part) and a brief draw of the theoretical lens (second part).
References


The perception of managers of large companies operating in Brazil about ceremonialism and/or instrumentality in the use of management practices

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According to Institutional Theory, an institution is fully institutionalized when it is used unquestionably by successive generations of actors (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Tolbert & Zucker, 1999; Burns & Scapens, 2000). As a result of a social construction process, it is expected that a fully institutionalized institution is able to promote action and influence the organizational actors (Tolbert & Zucker, 1999). However, there is a question about the kind of behavior that is perceived by organizational actors as a result of using these management practices (Bush, 1983, 1987): are they ceremonial (aimed at maintaining the status quo, centered on rites) or instrumental (focused on the causal logic of problem solving)?

Institutional Theory also considers that institutions are subject to two sets of forces (external and internal) that cannot be completely known or controlled, and which can lead to a recursive process of institutionalization as a result of these forces (Burns & Baldvinsdottir, 2005; Machado-da-Silva, Silva, & Crubellate, 2005; Seo & Creed, 2002). Internal forces can be considered the critical forces of the institutionalization process, described by Tolbert and Zucker (1999) as impetus for diffusion, users’ attributes and theorizing activity; and external forces are the isomorphic pressures described by DiMaggio and Powell (1983) and Scott (2001) as normative, mimetic and coercive.

We developed a research construct which sought to exploit the ceremonial x instrumental dichotomy, based on the analytical tool developed by Bush (1983, 1987). Bush (1983) assumes that the set of prescribed behaviors, H, of a given institution contains two subsets: (1) the subset of behaviors, C, and (2) the subset of values, V, which correlates with behavior. In symbols: H = {C, V} (Bush, 1983, p. 39). For him behaviors are dialogic, i.e., ceremonial and instrumental behaviors may be observed simultaneously in the same institution; values are considered dichotomous, i.e., the value that sustains an institution is ceremonial or instrumental; it can never be both simultaneously.

The set of values, V, contains two separate subsets: (1) ceremonially guaranteed values, Vc, and (2) instrumentally guaranteed values, Vi. Ceremonial values are linked by the logic of "sufficient reason" and guaranteed by traditional behavior patterns inserted in the status quo. Instrumental values require the logic of "efficient causes" and are assured by a causal continuity. They provide the basis for the solutions of the organizations’ problems (Bush, 1983, p. 39).

The set of behaviors, C, consists of two subsets and their intersections. The two subsets are: (1) Ceremonial Behavior, Cc; and (2) Instrumental Behavior, Ci. The intersection of the subsets Cc and Ci is Cci, which shows a behavior of ceremonial and instrumental significance, simultaneously. For each C there is an associated V. Hence, Vc may be associated with Cc, Ci or Cci. Once the ceremonially guaranteed values justify the logic of "sufficient reason", they can be used to rationalize any form of behavior. Also, Vi may be associated with Ci or Cci, but not with Cc. As instrumentally assured values incorporate the logic of "efficient causes", they cannot rationalize a behavior of purely ceremonial character (Bush, 1983, pp. 39-40). As a consequence, Bush (1983, pp. 40-41) formulated the set of all possibilities of behavioral patterns, associating them to ceremonial and instrumental values, by dividing them into two subsets: 1) the set of ceremonially guaranteed behavioral patterns; and 2) the set of instrumentally assured behavioral patterns.

To answer the research question, a cross-sectional survey was conducted through an electronic questionnaire with forty questions, which was sent to directors, managers and controllers of 618 non-financial large companies operating in Brazil (gross annual revenue over R$ 300 million), from an estimated total of 1,153 similar organizations. We received 102 valid responses.
Respondents were asked to indicate, from a list of practices, the one most used by their organizations. It was assumed that the most used management practice in large organizations would probably be fully institutionalized. Regardless of the chosen practice, it should be the most used in that organization, and therefore, a fully established practice. Data were statistically analyzed by means of descriptive analysis, structural equation modeling and correspondence analysis. The software employed for data analysis were STATA/SE 13.0 and Smart PLS 2.0.M3. By using the structural equations, adjustments were made in the research model, and the parameters AVE, Cronbach's Alpha, Composed Reliability, Discriminant Validity and R² were tested (Fornel & Larcker, 1981; Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2014; Chin, 1998; Cohen, 1988). The factor loadings of the latent variables related to the usage behavior (CI - Instrumental Behavior) and of values (FC - Knowledge Fund) were obtained. For the variable CI, based on the theory, three categories were defined for three possible distinct behaviors: CI - Instrumental Behavior; CC - Ceremonial Behavior; and CM - Mixed Behavior (simultaneously ceremonial and instrumental); b) for the variable FC, based on the theory, two categories were defined, for two types of possible different values: FC - Ceremonial and FC - Instrumental. Finally, correspondence analysis tests were carried out between them, and between them with other control variables. A random association between value and behavior, with the most used practices and other control variables, such as respondent's role, share capital control, company size, etc., was identified. On the other hand a non-random association between behavior and value was observed. These results show the types of perceived behaviors in the sample of companies analyzed.

As to the result of this research, given the different categories of usage behavior and values observed, we may consider that they reflect the plurality of uses of the most utilized practice in each of the organizations studied. Therefore, even if a practice is fully institutionalized, it doesn’t mean that it will promote the desired changes in the organization. As a by-product, an assessment model of the usage behavior of fully institutionalized practices that may be useful for further research and for maximizing the benefits in the use of management practices by organizations was developed.

References


Spatialities and organizing on favelas: an actor-network approach

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For a considerable time the debate on space in the field of Management of Organization studies (MOS) has not had a central role. The intention of the so-called “spatial turn” movement is to revisit the issue of spaces and materiality in the social sciences (Lefebvre, 1994; Soja, 1989; 1996; Massey, 1994), and how they are reflected in organization studies (Clegg; Kornberger, 2006; Dale; Burrell, 2008). Therefore, different lines of research found themselves committed to addressing the issue of organizational spaces – more specifically, in process epistemology and sociomateriality.

Following this line of reasoning, the Actor-Network Theory (ANT) approach provides a theoretical and methodological strategy to the study on how the relations between human and non-human actors are intertwined on networks, and what their effects are in terms of organization. Initially, ANT studies were focused on the production of knowledge within science and technology laboratories, and were based on ethnographic studies. It has evolved, however, into a study tool in different fields of knowledge.

We looked at a specific favela, or Brazilian slum, as a black box – a generalized impression of that favela as a phenomenon detached from the remainder of society – in an attempt to understand its precarious spaces. The attempt also included questioning the assumptions about precarity, and an organization here is taken as “a seemingly stable entity from the outside, obscuring the precarious social relations that hold it together inside” (Latour, 1987).

Only a few studies have used the Actor-Network Theory to discuss the issue of space, and only with management and organization approaches – in the context of Brazilian favelas, it remains unexplored. Considering this gap in the literature, this research will study primarily the MISMEC-4 Varas organization (4 Varas Community’s Integrated Movement for Mental Health) and the adjacent urban areas on which it acts. The purpose, therefore, is to describe the actor networks that are active in MISMEC and its adjacent urban spaces, and to discuss the effects this organization has on the suburban neighborhood of Pirambu, located in the city of Fortaleza, the capital of the Brazilian state of Ceará.

Throughout the sociomaterial and spatial approach in management and organization research studies there has been a growing influence of the Actor-Network Theory (ANT). One of ANT’s key features is its focus on “following” human and non-human actors, and on how they engage in socio-political activities with a view to pursue a sense of order (Latour, 2005).

The authors argue that in both the pursuit of a sense of organization and the central ideas found within and around an organization there is a grade, or mark, where the fluidity of organizational practices become a “black box”, and people lose sight of human and nonhuman processes in their production (Helms Mills, 2008). The debates on urban assemblages (Farias, 2011) can be considered an attempt to introduce ANT to the study of urban spaces. The way, then, the city is viewed leads to multiple ways of living in, and building, urban spaces.

This proposal stems from the initiative that views cities as dynamic spaces built from social practices and networks. Mol & Law (199) bring a different proposal to the concept of space, one which presupposes a performance-of-proximity and social difference-related topology. In this sense, and considering a topological space logic, the authors distinguish the concepts of (i) regions, as an identifiable, homogeneous set assigned to specific limits or defined territories; (ii) networks, which create regions, and are composed of immutable movables when relating elements; and (iii) fluids –
spaces in which the boundaries of places are unclear and based on unstable connections. Space, then, behaves as a "liquid continuity", and entities may be similar and dissimilar at different locations (Mol & Law, 1994).

In addition to the relevant organizational research on space and organizational dynamics (Clegg and Kornberger 2006, Gagliardi 1990), a methodological procedure of ethnographic inspiration was adopted. To that end, immersions were empirically performed both in the MISMEC - 4 Varas organization (4 Varas Community's Integrated Movement for Mental Health) and in its adjacent urban spaces of activity, in the Pirambu neighborhood.

Empirical ethnographic immersions took place from May 2015 to September 2015. The universe of the favelas has become a more complex and diverse reality of the phenomenon that existed at its inception. Favelas became part of a virtual reality that can be evinced by the many email addresses of NGO's social or national and international assistance programs. It is also worth noting that many of these spaces are integrated with national tourism and the market economy. The favela Rocinha is visited by nearly 2,000 tourists each month (Valladares, 2006).

In this sense, the peripheral space (there must be a clear difference between peripheral and precarious spaces) around the sprawling slum of Pirambu, in Fortaleza, is considered the 7th largest "subnormal cluster" in Brazil, as it encompasses largely populated communities such as Nossa Senhora das Graças, Cristo Redentor, Goiabeiras, Quatro Varas, Terra Prometida, among others. The birth of the Pirambu community began in the 1930s, marked by migratory flows that date back to the early twentieth century. These flows begin to take shape as the rural population spends several years moving away from the fields to the capital during periods of drought, combined with attempts by the Federal Government, especially in the Vargas era, to confine these refugees to concentration camps. Their history, therefore, is marked by housing and space organization struggles, thanks to popular participation.

Since then, a series of processes allowed even the areas destined to urban expansion to persevere and remain linked to the rural logic a little more than half a century since the neighborhood’s inception. Given its prime coastal location, Pirambu carries contrasting urban and rural elements, which at times face contradicting conflicts, and at times live harmoniously within the same space.

The Integrated Movement for Community Mental Health (MISMEC), also known as the "4 Varas Project" was established in 1987, and is located in the Great Pirambu – more specifically in the 4 Varas community. Its purpose, among others, is to promote the development and organization of its territory and surrounding communities through the activities it offers; and to promote studies, discussions, reflections on the socioeconomic and cultural implications brought by the process of exclusion and marginalization of individuals and populations.

Among the key structures in MISMEC's property were three ocas, or native Brazilian houses. The first, in the heart of the land, was used for collective activities – the Integrative Community Therapy; the second, for therapeutic massages; and the third is an inn and a restaurant. Also present are: Farmácia Viva, a community pharmacy that distributes herbal medicines to health centers in the city as part of an agreement with the Fortaleza City Hall, where they are sold to population; gardens for the medicinal plants involved in the preparation of herbal medicines; art workshops; and psychopedagogical centers for children in the community. There were also one office and one conference room. MISMEC also stands for a transit point for 4 Varas residents, as it's located between the community and the beach.

Because until recently the organization did not have walls, and even now its gates rarely find themselves closed (at night), it is also used as a meeting spot, which residents and staff refer to in
interviews as "another place", "a haven" and "here I feel like I'm in Hawaii." Its zen decoration, mixed with a native Brazilian style, makes this green space stand out from the community that grows behind it with overlapping streets and derelict lands, illegal hookups to power or information grids, and lack of sewage treatment and access to clean water. The area also attracts drug dealers from the community, as they use the organization to hide drugs and weapons, and even for social events and weddings. In return, they provide security in the surroundings for employees and “outsiders” – tourists and people who come from other regions.

Despite these controversies, MISMEC represents a relaxing space for institutional actors. Several institutions neighboring it send over employees to perform Integrative Community Therapy (ICT) and other activities, in order to ease tensions. Among them are the community’s Department of Police, FUNCI (Child and Civil Family Foundation), the Emmaus Movement, the CAPs (Psychosocial Care Centers), health centers, and the Cuca Network, a set of cultural complexes called Urban Centers for Culture, Art, Science and Sports; all of which are structures owned by public institutions. They can be characterized as adjacent institutions that are involved, or as a network of actors involved in organizing the neighborhood. Additionally, MISMEC is also a meeting space for projects carried out in the community, such as the Vila do Mar project, which has been approved by the Interamerican Development Bank (IDB) and the Brazilian federal government’s Growth Acceleration Program (PAC), in order to establish points of consensus among associations of residents and fishermen, businessmen and government managers.

The ICT is defined by its creator, the MISMEC founder – a psychiatrist with a PhD from the Federal University of Ceará –, as a "social technology" and an "innovative process" towards the building of supportive social networks that can intervene in the social determinants of health. And, because it was created within MISMEC, it acquired a publicpolicy character in Brazil, and is used throughout the country, and even in other countries. In France, for example, it is used by L’AETCI - A4V, or Association Européenne de Thérapie Communauteaire - Amis de Quatro Varas, where the practice of this therapy is called “espaces d’écoute et parole”.

The oca where ICT is performed is a key point in the property, in addition to its maintenance being the largest source of subsidies for the city government, due to a municipal agreement. In this regard, upon examining the space in which this organization operates, and the community therapy as an organizing practice, different spaces were specified, revealing fluid spaces as well as the practice of community therapy as a mutable mobile (Mol & Law, 1994) made up of multiple orders of value and parallel practices of control. The three topologies are evident, but the performance of the actors network based off MISMEC is characterized as fluid, and enters, approaches and organizes the Pirambu urban spaces into a network. Tourists, drug dealers, researchers, residents and institutional and city, public actors are assembled together in a variety of ways into an organizing process, thereby enacting multiple spaces into an organization.

By developing ANT with a sociomaterial approach, we have sought to point out its ability to chart the hybrid actors that are part of organization spaces, as well as organizing practices, particularly those in a city’s peripheral spaces. The purpose has been to introduce ANT as an alternative method for exploring organizational spaces. The Actor-Network Theory was used to explore the precarious activity in the favela of Pirambu as a black box. In so doing, we identified the so-called Integrated Community Therapy as an organizing practice created and developed at the 4 Varas community, located within the favela; and now that it has acquired its public-policy character in Brazil, it’s expanding nationally and internationally as a mutable mobile in the spaces for regions, networks and fluids proposed by Law & Mol (1994).

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Money is Time: how a Brazilian organization has appropriated the time banking concept to nationally support a chain of local artists and cultural producers

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We present in this paper an investigation of a particular case of time banking in Brazil, the Cubo Card money, created inside the Coletivo Fora do Eixo, an organization of hundreds autonomous local cultural groups. We claim in this paper that this time banking experience contributes decisively to the establishment of a cultural group organized nationwide based on the articulation of many differences among the local groups involved. In our opinion, the Cubo Card case materializes the social interactions and imbrications needed to describe the dynamics related to the materiality of the social and organizational phenomena.

Time banks can be simply described as a way to help someone – and to be helped in return – using an equality system based on time: one hour of help means one unity of time money, whatever is the task involved in such help exchange system. Accountability of this time-credit is usually kept in a ‘bank’, by means of recording transactions in a spreadsheet, for example. As credits and debits are tallied regularly, time banks can provide balance statements to record the flow of goods/services inside a chain of mutual helpers (Boyle, 2003; Collom, 2011; Fraňková et al., 2014).

Time banks operate a particular form of community currency and can be understood as a grassroots tool to promote “social inclusion through community self-help and active citizenship” (Seyfang, 2003). It is primarily guided by currency scheme under the reciprocity principle that emphasizes empowerment and social exchanges in a given community (Blanc, 2011; Seyfang, & Longhurst, 2013; van Kuik, 2009; Lasker et al., 2011).

Boundary work practices enable the creation of junctures that may connect different groups across a variety of differences such as identities, knowledge bases and other issues (Quick & Feldman, 2014). As long as these practices promote collaborative boundary work, they can be useful to understand how chains of equivalence are built through different groups around universal demands that unite them. Creating chains of equivalence involve creating junctures to turn existing boundaries into porous ones (Friman, 2010).

This implies valorization of plurality and empowerment of alternative views. From the perspective of the Political Discourse Theory (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001), boundary work can promote fortification by making a group of groups stronger than they were when isolated (Friman, 2010).

In this paper we are particularly interested in mechanisms that may act as junctures for groups with different demands in a context of a counter hegemonic dispute. We investigate the experience of time banking promoted by Circuito Fora do Eixo (FDE) in Brazil, an association of two hundred autonomous collectives present in all Brazilian states, created to provide collaborative support to local cultural producers and artists (Barcellos & Dellagnelo, 2014). FDE mobilizes around 2,000 people nationwide dedicated exclusively to its cultural activities.

To understand the practices to promote collaborative boundary work and develop chains of equivalence, we investigate the FDE experience in the creation of a time banking project named Cubo Card. This complementary currency based on time has played a key role to create an identity to FDE, besides being critical to keep the cultural groups operating given the lack of financial resources faced in their local activities and the national group as a whole.

Cubo Card was proposed in 2006 in Cuiabá, the capital of the state of Mato Grosso do Sul when a hip hop band was negotiating to use the facilities of a local recording studio kept by one FDE collective in
a poor neighborhood of the city. While they were discussing on how to get money for paying for the
time charged to use studio, electricity power went off and some members of the hip hop band
proposed to make a [illegal] link that would bring power again in exchange of the time in the studio
to make the records.

The lack of financial resources was a routine for the collectives as well as much of the cutural events
promoted by the artistic groups related to FDE, which were based on a system of mutual help. Living
this reality, some FDE members realized the potential to create a system of “time accounting” for
each service or product developed by the collectives. Thus many of the cultural local activities started
to be accounted in hours as a way to create a complementary process for paying the work done.

With Cubo Card, a band could paid in time money services offered by the FDE organization, such as
press assistance, time in studio, rehearsal expenses, pamphlet design, etc, in exchange the band
would be partially paid for playing at the FDE concerts with this very same time money. For FDE, the
system allowed them to hire more bands for their portfolio of concerts, since they would not need to
expend more in payment for the artists. For the band, they could have access to better preparation
conditions that give them a more “professional” concert, otherwise they could not afford.

Exchanges in this time banking is kept by means of a real time accounting spreadsheet, with all
credits and debits related to all services/products used and all people involved in a certain project.
The time banking adoption in different collectives indicate the organizing of a system that would help
these alternative groups to by-pass the big players that set not acceptable prices in the market for
them, and at the same time to create an equivalence for payments along the full production chain.
To close the account, 1 cubo card is equal to 1 real (Brazilian money) and each hour worked is
stipulated to value 50 cubo cards, or R$50. Although cubo card is used nationwide in the whole FDE
community, there are incentives for each collective to create its own time money to better articulate
with local actors.

This time banking system is organized based exclusively on the amount of worked hours, and it is not
dependent of the type or complexity of the work done. A person bringing beer boxes to be sold in a
concert or someone working in a new project to presented to the Ministry of Culture will receive the
same, if they spent the same time doing each ones’ work. In this sense, for the FDE members, it is not
possible to consider the artist as different only because he is the one on the stage. In the words of
one FDE member, “an artist is equal to a bricklayer”.

Cubo card case represents a collaborative boundary work based on a system of mutual helpers that
have standardize the value of different types of work within a large national community made of a
number of local small collectives. This mutual help system acts as a mechanism that reinforces a
chain of equivalence created to foster the notion of equality for groups with different expertises and
mostly excluded from the mainstream cultural ind
ustry in Brazil.

We identify in this case the three practices that enable the creation of junctures (Quick e Feldman,
2014). First, when adopting the Cubo Card, the different groups are translating across their
differences, by creating a common language based on the value of change for each work done.
Second, differences are aligned to stimulate the sharing of different expertise each one contributes
to make the whole system work. Third, this process is decentering differences among participant
groups, which find ways to work without considering distinctions they have as meaningful. Based on
this time banking project, we could describe it as a mechanism that acts strongly as collaborative
boundary work, making the groups establish more porous boundaries, making changes of value
easier for those inside the group and strengthen the identity perception among them.


Session 2: Institutional logics, Identity and Materiality in MOS (23rd June 9 AM – 4 PM)

Alternative organizations and institutional work: Accounting for spatial influences

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Considering social, environmental and institutional concerns in developing countries such as resource scarcity, social inequalities, infrastructural and institutional problems, among others, there is a vast field to be explored and a research locus with highly transformative potential. In order to understand these problems and the transformation possibilities, new approaches are needed, new organizational forms, and new mechanisms must be engendered to address that context looking for changes through the development of new practices, different from those previously created and adopted in developed countries. Therefore, institutional work approach was chosen as an opportunity to analyze in a more comprehensive way and including new theoretical elements. As defined by Lawrence, Suddaby and Leca (2011), institutional work can thus be defined as practices engendered by agents in order to create, maintain or disrupt institutions.

Institutional work is thus conceptualized as "an reintroduction of agency, interests and power to organizational and institutional analysis" (Garud, Hardy, Maguire, 2007). Therefore, it is proposed that actors that are part of organizations can react in different ways facing institutional changes and being able to change or even to create new ones through the development of different practical actions. This dimension is important in order to understand the effectiveness of such practices. That is to say that each practice is always connected to movements and resonances in the community, city, and country contexts, especially considering the focus of the study in understanding spatial transformations.

Therefore spatial approaches are important to understand the problems faced in urban space in developing countries (Moulaert, et al., 2005), because of the focus in understanding urban space changes, it is imperative to understand them in a localized and specific way. Going further, Coenen, Benneworth e Truffer (2011) affirm that most part of the existing literature in transitions have been neglecting the local where they occur as well as the geographic dynamics and configurations. Thus Dover e Lawrence (2015) explored organizations as they effectively act to transform the place, not only being affected by it and using the institutional work approach to develop the core theoretical concept of the paper. They argue that the place is constantly connected with institutions, even if this connection is complex, it is very important to understand institutional work (Dover & Lawrence, 2015). Moreover, the authors contributed by finding three major roles the place can play in relation to institutional work practices that are mediating, containing and complicating it. However we understand the relevance of the study proposed by Dover & Lawrence, we still find a missing question in this literature that deals with new alternative organizational forms and how can we account for the influences of the space they are embedded in?, considering the particular issues that first triggered the emergence of such type of organizations.

Finally, we argue how can we account for the institutional work of alternative organizations by considering the spatial influences? Both from the space to the institutional work and also to the level of the institutional workers’ practices to the space they are acting and transforming. Daskalaki, Hjorth e Mair (2015) analyzed not only economic, but also social changes occurred since the economic world crisis in 2008. To these authors this crisis showed how the collective capacity to organize alternative arrangements to the problems faced during this period was a key mechanism to achieve social transformation. And this transformation means “the co-production and reassembling
of the social through the mobilization of alternatives” (Daskalaki, Hjorth e Mair, 2015, p. 420).

Daskalaki (2014) also described the search for practices that are emerging through urban social collaborative processes, which is conceptualized as urban social events. Such events are characterized as collaborative environments of organizational practices that engage elements with and through particular urban places, the so called “trans-spaces”, that are, in turn, characterized as intersection places that make “new and often inter-scalar connections between different and several times different groups of people, institutions and paradigms” (Daskalaki, 2014, p. 216).

Finally, the argument proposed in this paper assumes that in order to understand the process of creation and disruption of institutions in developing countries' urban space, we must consider not just the influences of the external environment in the creation of alternative organizations but also the resonances these institutional work practices of such alternative organizations will have on the spatial environment and how this would lead to the creation of new spatial configurations.

By considering the institutional work as an effort and purposeful practice, we found that urban social events as described by Daskalaki (2014) could be described as a special type of institutional work that focused specifically in acting upon the environment and the urban context they are embedded in, concerning the problems to be address in this context. Some contributions to the literature are thus developed. The first contribution regards the way by considering the transformations engendered by new alternative organizations to address some type of issue in the space/context they are embedded in and at some moment of time it could, finally, transform the space and thus transform the organization again. The second contribution is about the relevance of the analysis of the interrelationship between practices and spaces, because of the mutual influence and the unexpected outcomes, misunderstandings, lose ends, and a lot more. Moreover, considering spatial approaches, there is a recent theoretical stream that relates the new movements and new organizational forms that are being developed to deal with spatial transformations in a crisis and ever changing economic environment (Daskalaki, Hjorth, Mair, 2015). They concern the importance to address, map, and understand which and how are developed the alternatives to the capitalism model. We also suggest more studies considering spatial approaches and organizational movements, especially when addressing alternative and new organizational models, they are growing and being developed mostly because of spatial influences such as economic crisis and developing countries issues such as environmental, social and institutional weakness.

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The mobile game industry in Finland: the materiality of institutional logics

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Institutional theory enables to contextualize organizational phenomena and allows exploring the ways in which particular organizational arrangements emerge, endure and fade away (Greenwood et al., 2008). While the majority of studies have been focused on organizational environment as the level of analysis (Wooten & Hoffman, 2008), there is considerable promise in a focus on an organizational level of analysis for expanding our knowledge on institutional processes (Greenwood et al., 2008). As argued by Powell and Colyvas (2008) there is, in particular, a need for a richer understanding on how organizational members maintain or transform the institutional forces that guide their practices.

Against this backdrop the purpose of my research is to explore how macro institutional logics are ‘pulled down’ and become entangled in organizations. This research focus is underlined by an interest in materiality and in the qualities of materials. Material elements of artefacts are usually treated generically or kept constant and few studies address the properties and characteristics of materials, and how these influence organisations and work (for exceptions see e.g. Jones & Massa, 2013; Jones, Maoret, Massa & Svejenova, 2012). However, and as Powell and Colyvas (2008) remind us, institutional logics are instantiated by individuals through their tools, technologies and actions.

My research is focused on the mobile game industry in Finland. This small Nordic country has one of the most fast---paced growing and globally successful gaming industries. Recent successes of companies like Rovio (with its Angry Birds games and franchise) and Supercell, nowadays considered as the most valuable gaming company in the world, have attracted massive international investment and propelled this business sector. The roots of the Finnish game industry can be traced back to the 1980s, when the first commercial games were created. By the turn of the millennium, the Finnish game industry was becoming more established: some ten companies were active and the industry was estimated to employ slightly below two hundred people. With the launch of the iPhone in 2007, mobile games became easily and widely accessible. The importance of the App Store and other digital distributors for the Finnish game industry was not evident immediately. However, things changed dramatically in 2010 when Angry Birds was on everyone’s lips. From that moment on an increasing number of companies has been established in Finland. More than half of the total of 260 Finnish game companies currently operating were created in the last two years.

In the last two years I have been following 50 Finnish game companies: tracing their evolution, collecting their discourses and analyzing the means in which these are disseminated. At the same time, and complementarily, I have been developing a micro level approach and studying, with an in----depth approach, several organizations. The collection of empirical material of these case studies has been based on a good access to organizations, where I have been developing observations and interviews.

At this phase of the research two preliminary insights can be stated. First, the influence of the institutional environment on organizational actors was found to be entangled in material artefacts. In the fieldwork, different material artefacts have been identified and are being explored in the translation of institutional logics to the organizational level. These artefacts --- like books, industry related publications and websites, for example --- assumed a prominent role in the processes of
translation of institutional influence. Moreover, these artefacts seem to be actively employed by organizational actors to justify their options. So, these artefacts are involved, at different levels, in the institutionalization of organizational forms and practices in the studied organizations.

Second, digital artefacts and their material properties emerged in the fieldwork as particularly relevant in the translation of institutional logics. I regard digital artifacts as material, following Leonardi’s (2012, p. 29) view on materiality as “the arrangement of an artifact’s physical and/or digital materials into particular forms that endure across differences in place and time.” I’m currently delving into how the qualities of the studied digital artefacts impact their presence in the sociomaterial ensembles related with the translation of institutional logics in the organizations. Additionally, this has been insightful to reflect on how to regard critical realist and relational ontological stances.

In the workshop I intend to delve into these and other insights. As the research process is still ongoing I will be able to present more in--depth results and discuss the implications for current debates, as well as avenues for future inquiries.

References


The Paradox of bundled sustainable institutional logics information

Benoît Roux (Université de Reims) and Julie Bastianutti (Université de Lille)

Purpose of the contribution

Institutional logics are often described as conflicting (Selznick, 1949). Organizations that encompass such institutional logics are called hybrid organizations (Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Brunsson, 1993). The concept of hybrid organization has been applied mainly to explain the coevolution of conflicting logics within social businesses. Social businesses encompass two purposes: one being the commercial and economic logic and the other being the production of social good (Battilana & Dorado, 2010). On the opposite, in this paper we wish to apply the concept of hybrid organization to organizations belonging to the social economy that are defined as such when two institutional logics that we identify as a priori congruent coexist: the production of social good on the one hand and a democratic governance/participative logic on the other hand. We assume that the dynamics of institutional logics that are in principle congruent is key to understand the organizations of the social economy.

Then, our contribution will first look at the multiple logics in hybrid organizations and related organizational and managerial issues with a first focus on antagonistic logics and purposes. We will then address the congruence between institutional logics in the social economy and the apparent fit between the social purpose on the one hand and the democratic governance on the other hand. Our goal is to explore the dynamics of congruent institutional logics. Very little has been written so far about the dynamics of congruent logics. Through the case of cooperatives, and more specifically consumer cooperatives, we aim at exploring this issue. Consumer cooperatives present a couple of specific issues. First it is well known that most of them face a problem regarding the weakness of their members’ engagement. Secondly, those cooperatives are often affected by a governance problem. Nonetheless these two problems do not seem to be a threat to their existence. While the democratic participative logic tends to fade away, another logic appears to replace it, namely the organic food and retail logic in the case of consumers cooperative.

Our contribution seeks to address the following two questions: Why is the democratic logic fading away while the economic/social purpose holds? Why is the democratic participative logic fading away while the organic logic rises? Case Study We studied this specific problem through a multiple case study of 9 consumer cooperatives in France. Each of the consumer cooperative is a member of a larger network of consumer cooperatives in France. For each case, one or several interviews have been conducted and secondary data gathered. The network was created in the middle of the 1980’s by the very consumer cooperatives we studied in order to provide consumers with high quality organic products. These consumer cooperatives’ purpose is to offer organic products carrying a meaning both on the ecological and social grounds. As such, these cooperatives retail products comply with standards well beyond the expectation of the official organic accreditation labels. This purpose is the first institutional logic.

The founders of these cooperatives believed the retail of such high quality products required the involvement and control by the consumers themselves; a consumer cooperative organizational form was then chosen. As a consequence, in these specific consumer cooperatives, organic food and retail is the purpose of the cooperative. The democratic governance of the cooperative refers to how the purpose is achieved. The two logics come along, they supports one each other. They are bundled from the origins.

Our cases show that the democratic logic of participation is being maintained in the discourse. Yet, the participation of the members, i.e. the consumers-members, tends to zero over time. What is very
important is the dominance of the organic logic since it is – in the end – what seems to matter the most for the consumers-members and the ordinary consumers. All in all, the consumers appear to be very pleased with the way the food cooperatives work but they do not feel a necessity to be involved in the governance of their cooperative. Our results show that there is a phenomenon of organizational hypocrisy (Brunsson 1993) regarding the participative logic in our cases. We observed that the democratic and participative logic goes against the interests of the agency and is not necessarily essential to the development of the organic institutional logic. One element of explanation of the dominance and the public display of this logic could be the cultural proximity and the need to increase the legitimacy of the food cooperative. Second, the participation logic is not essential to the business sustainability of the food cooperative that is largely agency-driven; what matters in the end is to bring the idea of sustainability to the customer – which is accomplished through the organic logic and the window-dressing participative logic. Third, we intend to show that these logics are not simply bundled but are organized, ranked and perform a different function within the organisation. We observe a paradox in the way congruent logics are actually ordered – even when they are not conflicting – and used to reinforce the role of the agency. Beyond the hybrid nature of the organizations belonging to the social economy, what is more interesting to observe and explain is the purpose that each logic is addressing. In order to be able to anticipate the evolution of organizations of the social economy, one has to consider the dominant purpose of the organization. We claim that when congruent logics coexist within an organization, two types of institutional logics can be distinguished, the purposive logic and the supportive logic. We argue that the supportive logic generally can be diluted so as to serve the reinforcement of the agency, while not altering the perception by the principals so long as the purposive logic’s is promoted and fulfilled.

References


Understanding the establishment of management education in Oxford: The role of materiality in institutional change

Lise Arena and Ali Douai (GREDEG, Université de Nice)

This paper is concerned with the institutionalisation process of management education in Oxford. It looks at a long-drawn out form of institutional change that is characterised by unexpected sequences and that took place in an inert environment. This institutionalization process covered the period from 1953 – when the Oxford University Business Summer School was first organised – to 2001 – when the Said Business School opened its doors and gave management education the same status as other academic disciplines in Oxford. In the last decade, literature on the history of business education had significantly grown. Essentially, two main approaches can be identified: monographies – actors-centred and highly contextualised (e.g. Engwall, 2009; Wilson, 1992) – and macro-institutional analyses – based on the identification of “national models” of business education (e.g. Pettigrew, Cornuel & Hommel, 2014; Khurana, 2007). Yet, few contributions integrate both levels of analysis and highlight the role of situated action and practices in this type of institutional change.

The aim of this paper is neither to provide an additional and exhaustive monograph, nor to focus on a very specific sequence of actions and on its related micro-practices. Based on the selection and on the analysis of a series of key episodes, this article rather seeks to shed light on the combination of material, discursive and symbolic dimensions of this institutional change process. Although heterogeneous in its nature, the material turn in organization studies agrees on and highlights the role of artefacts, devices, tools, spaces and bodies in organizational dynamics (Orlikowski, 2007; de Vaujany & Mitev, 2013; Leonardi, 2012). Yet, neo-institutional theories (NIT) in organisation studies, like institutional approaches in social sciences more generally, have been reluctant to consider the role of material dimensions in institutionalisation processes and in institutional change (Boxenbaum, Huault & Leca, 2016). NIT have evolved from the predominance of macro-social conception of organisational dynamics to a more actors-centred and micro-analytical approach – that emphasise discursive and symbolic dimensions – of institutional change, while some approaches, e.g. institutional logics, try to reconcile and integrate both perspectives (see. Greenwood et al., 2008; Huault, 2004). Even discursive/symbolic approaches have largely left aside the “artifactual” dimensions of organizational dynamics and institutional change (Jones, Boxenbaum & Anthony, 2013). Some recent neo-institutional studies have stressed the role of materiality in the instantiation of institutionalised practices or institutionalise logics (see, for example, Gawer & Philips, 2013; Raviola & Norbäck, 2013). Artefacts are seen as central in institutionalisation processes and in institutional change, notably through their use by actors engaged in institutional work (see Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006) as well as through their contribution to the construction and diffusion of new social practices. Overall, this article claims that the institutionalization of management education in Oxford, and the related forms of institutional change, cannot be fully pictured without considering and integrating both symbolic and material dimensions of institutional work performed by actors who supported, respectively, the creation or the reproduction of practices.

The article gathers data that had been mainly collected in library archives (Bodleian Library, Oxford), individual interviews with academics who participated in this institutionalization process, internal reports of the University of Oxford (Oxford University Gazette, Oxford Today) and a privately printed book (Graves, 2001). Based on the examination of this unexplored material, three key episodes – that
illustrate a material and discursive assemblage – are selected to provide a better understanding of this institutionalisation process.

The first episode is exemplified by the establishment of Templeton College (as the first Oxford graduate College in management) on the Kennington site in 1983. This period is characterised by the desire of its initiators to design a College transgressing Oxford traditions (e.g. deliberate choice of the site location outside the Oxford centre, very modern architecture and organization of business events – such as residential business programs); The second episode illustrates an in-between period that started in 1991 – when the University of Oxford School of Management Studies was created – to 2001. This episode encountered a series of crises due to the failure of funding and establishing the School on a physical site in Oxford (e.g. temporary installation in the old Radcliffe Infirmary with the transformation of the working hospital in a lecture theatre and a library, diffusion of the Moser Report that expressed the first needs for MBA programs, Oxford Congregation’s rejection of Wafic Said’s 20£ million benefaction). Finally, the third key episode corresponds to the establishment of the current Saïd Business School on the Oxford Rewley Road Railway Station in 2001. The atypical design of the Said Business School replaced a prefabricated listed building – the old wooden London Middland and Scottish station.

Preliminary results lead to three major contributions: First, it evaluates the strategic use of material artefacts in the construction of institutional work. Second, it highlights the combination between both material and symbolic dimensions of actions aiming at legitimate emerging practices in an inert environment. Finally, this article underlines the relevance of the ‘material turn’ in neo-institutional studies: The University of Oxford exemplifies a category of complex organisations (outlined by a large amount of interactions between different entities, of tacit rules, whose identity is largely defined by its physical/spatial characteristics) in which material aspects are structurally constituent of the emergence, reproduction and change of institutionalised practices.

References


Digital materialities and incompatible institutional logics

Anna Morgan-Thomas (University of Glasgow), Agostinho Abrunhosa (AESE Business School) and Ignacio Canales (University of Glasgow)

The last decade has seen growing interest in conflicting institutional logics as enduring and persistent facets of institutional complexity (Greenwood et al., 2011). Multiple organizational settings seem to be defined by schisms where significant contrasts concern varying organizing principles (Reay & Hinings, 2009; Pache & Santos, 2015) and understanding what is legitimate, reasonable or effective (Fincham & Forbes, 2015; Guillen, 2001; Batista et al., 2015). Past research has explored organizational response to this complexity within two broad lines of enquiry. On the one hand, scholarship concerning hybrid organizing shows how the conflicting logics affect the organizational structures and practices (e.g., Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Fincham & Forbes, 2015; Greenwood & Hinings, 1996; Jarzabkowski et al., 2010; Pache & Santos, 2011, 2013). The other line of enquiry focuses on organizational coping with complexity and examines organizational work, strategies and approaches for dealing with complexity (Batista et al., 2015; Lawrence et al., 2011; Kraatz & Block, 2008; McPherson & Saund, 2013; Ocasio et al., 2015; Pache & Santos, 2010).

Although the notion of incompatibility is implicit in the research on conflicting logics, few studies explicitly define and address incompatibility of logics. Frequently, incompatibility is implicitly assumed and simply conveyed with adjectives such as “contested”, “conflicting” or “competing” (Greenwood et al. 2011). Theorizing relies on descriptions of contrasts as reflected by tasks, practices or roles (Reay & Hinings, 2005; Thornton, 2002, 2004). Admittedly, some studies have attempted to add precision to the degree of incompatibility, for example, Pache and Santos (2010) distinguish between conflicting goals or means to suggest that conflicts between goals are particularly challenging. The specificity and sources of conflicting logics has also received some attention and past studies suggest that contrasts between logics may be tempered by ambiguity concerning the conflicting templates (Goodrick & Salancik, 1996; Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). The lack of precision concerning incompatibility of logics, its source, severity and consequences for the organizations is problematic for several reasons. If logics are indeed incompatible then the presence and persistence of a growing number of hybrid organizations represents an inherent paradox (Greenwood et al., 2011). Conversely, if conflicting logics may be successfully combined and reconfigured, as research on hybrid forms suggest (Batista et al., 2015; Pache & Santos, 2015; Reay & Hinings, 2009; Smets et al., 2012), then the whole notion of incompatibility of logics becomes questionable (Greenwood et al., 2011). To resolve these inconsistencies, further research into the incompatibility of logics, its sources and degrees as well as organizational response to these seems urgently needed.

The current study addresses this gap. Specifically, the project intends to explore in detail material sources of and organizational response to multiplicity of logics, some of which are highly incompatible. To address these aims, the study focuses on the introduction of MOOCs in the teaching portfolio of commercial European Business Schools. The setting offers an excellent opportunity for the study of conflicting logics. The organizational field of executive education in Europe is characterized by significant tensions between competing goals and means, including contrasting emphasis on teaching versus research (Thorpe & Rawlinson 2014, Thomas & Peters 2012); emphasis on applied versus theoretical knowledge (Chia & Holt 2014); broad educational goals versus commercialism and market orientation (Schoemaker 2008) to name a few. Unlike the North American model where BSs tend to be appended to Universities, European BSs tend to be stand-alone units thus are more exposed and sensitive to changes in the institutional file (Antunes & Thomas 2007). These organisational operate within a highly specific environment where detailed prescriptions define legitimacy, reputation and rules of behaviour. For example, organization’s status
is highly dependent on its compliance to existing standards (e.g. AACSB; EQUIS, AMBA) and there is limited latitude for discretion in conforming to these criteria (Quinn Trank & Washington, 2009).

The advent of MOOCs potentially significantly disrupts existing organizational templates. EBSs have traditionally embraced “exclusivity” logics where substantial premiums are being extracted from tightly controlling access to business education. The exclusivity logic relies on premium pricing, high quality offer (e.g. low staff:student ratios, innovations in teaching, emphasis on premium faculty). By contrast, the emergence of MOOCs is underpinned by a set of radically contrasting principles involving open access to the teaching provision and unlimited participation (Anderson 2015; Finkle & Masters 2014; Klobas 2014; Tirthali & Ed 2014). The ongoing failure to identify sustainable revenue streams from MOOCs presents a particular challenge to EBS whose business models rely on extracting premiums from students. The study of MOOCS in the context of EBSs thus offers an excellent opportunity to examine conflicting logics.

We argue that in highly complex organizational settings, the incompatibility and the subsequent organizational response is better understood by exploring the material sources of competing logics. Though studies examine sources of logics (Rao et al., 2003; Fincham & Forbes, 2015), the logic evolution has been rarely linked with materiality (Jones et al., 2013). Past research tended to almost exclusively focus on the work of human actors (Lawrence et al., 2013) and material objects, and more specifically technologies, have been largely been overlooked in institutional work (Orlikowski & Barley, 2001), somewhat in spite of their growing prevalence in multiple organizational arenas (Orlikowski, 2007; Zammuto et al., 2007). By focusing on technologies of organizing, the paper offers potential contribution to the field of organizational complexity and technology-in-practice (Orlikowski, 2007; Morgan-Thomas, 2016).
Artifacts can convey institutions (Blanc & Huault, 2014). Or stated differently, actors can transform and manipulate material objects so they reflect and shape “cultural-cognitive, normative and regulative elements that provide stability and meaning to social life” (Scott, 2008: 222). Because it operates by representing the culture, values and symbols associated with a particular institution and/or by being infused with new institutional content, an artifact is named instantiation (Hilpinen, 2011). Through a case study implemented in Denmark and France, the paper studies how actors implement intervention works, such as contemporary adjustments – renovation or extension –, in listed buildings without disrupting their embodied Heritage. A listed building is a protected monument that highlights national pride or memory. In the study, six listed buildings are analysed: three in Denmark and three in France. The listed building’s legitimacy relies on its authenticity whose respect by actors is essential to maintain the institutional protection, as it is the material representation, or instantiation of the Listed-Buildings Institution. However, intervention works to change such an artifact lead to various debates among actors, as the majority of current listed buildings were not originally constructed to last, i.e. to be transmitted to future generations (Choay, 2007). One debate during intervention works tackles the issue of what needs to be or not to be considered in terms of Heritage.

Through a constructivist grounded-theory methodology (Charmaz, 2014) and a Scandinavian Institutionalist lens (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996), the research allows the understanding of how actors succeed in symbolically constructing the instantiation, so they can latter materially work on the artifact in a way it keeps conveying the institution (Monteiro & Nicolini, 2014). Indeed, within neo-institutional theory, current studies only focuses on how the modification of the instantiation can impact or change the institution (Jones, Maoret, Massa & Svejenova, 2012; Raviola & Norbäck, 2013). What is still unknown is nevertheless how an instantiation can be changed while keeping conveying the institution that circumscribed it. In the study, I therefore emphasise that actors need first to design, with the help of the three institutional pillars given by Scott (2013), a shared interpretative frame to select relevant building materials. By doing so, they could thus modify an existing building in regards to what building’s authenticity deserves to be respected. This frame acts in fact as a preliminary step to implement the materialisation of the intangible ideas. The paper is thus focused on the interpretative frame that symbolically links the institution and its instantiation and on how actors design it. More specifically, I explore what constitutes such a frame and what its role is regarding the interrelations that exist between an institution, its artifact carrier and the actors who work on it. Indeed, if the Scandinavian Institutionality literature already explains how actors can translate into practice an intangible idea, the question of the components of such an institutional frame remains overlooked (Cornelissen & Werner, 2014). That is why the dissertation contributes to the neo-institutional literature by arguing that such frame is built by means of the three institutional pillars, which are the components actors play with to know to what extent they can unfold action. Throughout the study, I analyse the practice implemented by a collective of actors who have to tangibly modify an artifact, here a listed building, while keeping its instantiation character coming from the Listed-Buildings Institution. Consequently, to enable such one and only shared material practice, the paper underlines the importance of such an interpretative frame so the actors can share and intertwine their interpretations of the building’s authenticity, i.e. the main leitmotiv on which institution of Listed-Buildings relies and takes its legitimacy from, in order to work towards the same goal. The aim for actors is thus to use the interpretative frame as a way to collectively interpret one specific but essential institutional feature in order to collectively do a practice that fits with it. De facto, I argue that this a posteriori construction of the interpretative frame facilitates collective decision-making, as it acts as a shared and stabilised knowledge resource among actors. And by
extension, I demonstrate and picture how the translation of the interpretative frame into an artifact reinforces the legitimacy of the institution and its taken-for-grantedness.

References


Session 3: Legitimacy and legitimation in neo-institutional theory (23rd June 9 AM – 4 PM)

Footsteps in the sand: consequences of conformity in complex institutional environment

Julien Jourdan (Bocconi University)

Management scholars have been increasingly interested in the challenges arising from complex institutional environments. Recognizing that modern organizations have to address the heterogeneous, often conflicting, external expectations of various stakeholders that impinge on their resource allocation decisions, researchers have explored how organizations respond to complexity (Greenwood, Diaz, Li, and Lorente, 2010; Kraatz and Block, 2008; Lee and Lounsbury, 2015). Dimensions such as legitimacy and urgency (Mitchell, Agle, and Wood; 1997; Eesley and Lenox, 2006), internal politics (Pache and Santos, 2010), resource dependence (Durand and Jourdan, 2012; Wry et al., 2013), identity and strategic goals (Bundy, Shropshire, and Buchholtz (2013) have been argued to affect organizational responses to conflicting external prescriptions (Oliver, 1991).

Much less is known however about the consequences responses to complexity may have for organizations. Of particular interest are material responses (Jones, Boxenbaum, and Anthony, 2013) vs. symbolic practices, discourses—leaving cues of conformity decisions that organizational audiences can observe (product releases, for instance). In strategic management research, external conformity expectations have been typically considered as sources of nuisance to be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Pressures to conform to costly institutional demands (Philippe and Durand, 2011; Ritchie and Melnyk, 2012) are expected to drive firms away from optimal choices (Oliver, 1997), such that firms face a trade-off between the legitimacy advantages of conforming to external expectations (e.g., being socially responsible, environmentally efficient) and the benefits of deviating, such as greater efficiency (Deephouse, 1999) and higher inimitability (Jonsson and Regnér, 2009).

This view relies on the assumptions that players in an industry largely agree on what is legitimate and what is not (consensus), and that each decision to conform to external expectations is made independent of past decisions (Eesley and Lenox, 2006). Yet, these assumptions are unlikely to hold in complex environments. Compliance with expectations of price-driven consumers, for instance, may fail to trigger any positive appreciation from eco-friendly activists. Conformity to the prescriptions of a group of stakeholders (e.g., Wall Street investors) might translate into deviance from others’ expectations (e.g., local communities). In such contexts, firms’ conformity decisions not only have immediate consequences, they also signal to key resource holders where the firm stands in arenas where different sets of rules, or institutional logics coexist (Thornton, Ocasio, and Lounsbury, 2012). Conformity decisions, in return, shape the relationship between the firm and its stakeholders in a path dependent way (Barnett, 2007)—challenging the independence assumption.

In this study, we examine the widespread case where no consensus exists about what is legitimate and what is not, and study how material evidence of past conformity decisions shape survival chances. Survival is a neutral sustainability indicator in that it is not a logic-embedded performance indicator; for instance, firms operating under a market logic may focus on profitability while firms pursuing a professional logic may aim at product excellence, yet they will differ in their ability to survive (Barney, 1986; Oliver, 1997). Our premise is that firms must transact with primary stakeholders—the agents controlling critical resources—to operate and survive (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978:43). In institutionally complex environments, stakeholders face considerable uncertainty.
regarding how the organization will behave, independent of how capable the organization might be (Mishina, Block, and Mannor, 2012). At least two dimensions critical to the firm-stakeholder relationship (Bundy, Shropshire, and Buchholtz, 2013) are uncertain: what the firm is (social identity) and what the objectives it pursues are (goals). Firms’ past resource allocation decisions, we argue, constitute critical material cues stakeholders may use to reduce uncertainty: the more firms have consistently conformed with one of the logics available in the industry, the less uncertain their projected social identity and goals are (Zuckerman, 1999). Because they have established a clear institutional footprint, we expect such organizations to have an advantage over other organizations when transacting resources with stakeholders, increasing their likelihood to survive.

We test these arguments using evidence from the French film industry, a setting particularly appropriate to study how institutional complexity affects organizations. First, the industry is organized around two main institutional logics that are salient to firms and stakeholders, and present conflicting demands to producer firms. An offspring of the Nouvelle Vague movement (New Wave) of the late 1950s, the auteurs logic primarily conceives filmmaking as a form of art and sees aesthetics prowess as the main driver of legitimacy: production firms are legitimate to the extent that their work is recognized and distinguished by an elite group of critics and professional experts. By contrast, the entertainers’ logic emphasizes the hedonic mission of filmmaking and sees popular appreciation (i.e., market success) as the main source of legitimacy: firms are legitimate to the extent that they produce box office hits. Second, the stringent disclosure requirements placed on film producers in France means that data on the industry is unusually detailed and complete.

We combine qualitative evidence on the industry with a unique population dataset including the exhaustive set of 17,707 contracts among firms involved in film production to faithfully trace firm activities and relationships in the industry between 1994 and 2008. Our empirical findings support the view that organizations leaving material evidence of a clear institutional footprint—like footsteps in the sand—enjoy higher survival chances than other organizations, all else being equal. We further find that the survival advantage increases when one logic gains dominance at the industry level. We conclude by discussing how these findings contributes to our understanding of institutional dynamics and organizational competitive advantage.

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Why Bother with Workspace Design? Rethinking Effective Organizational Aesthetic Communication

Micki Eisenman (Hebrew University), Michal Frenkel (Hebrew University) and Varda Wasserman (Open University)

Organizations use tangible design elements with aesthetic features, such as color, texture, shape, ornamentation, and so on to communicate with stakeholders. Such aesthetic communication is conveyed, interpreted, and internalized both in a semiotic way, in that it is a set of signs that signify various meanings, and also through the manipulation of other sensory perceptions, such as the visual, bodily, or the spatial (Ewenstein & Whyte, 2007; Gagliardi, 1996; c.f., Meyer et al., 2013; Strati, 1999).

We scope our interest in aesthetic communication to the design of workspaces, buildings, and office design and we expand extant research in this context. Organization scholars have studied several examples of how organizations use aesthetic communication to convey organizational change (e.g., Dale, 2005; Hancock & Spicer, 2011; Wasserman & Frenkel, 2011; 2015) or to convey and reinforce cultural norms and behaviors (e.g., Fleming, 2005). In these studies, researchers analyzed organizational spaces that were new or which had striking elements of aesthetic design and linked between these elements and the changes management hoped they would convey. Nonetheless, some evidence suggests that receivers do not interpret senders’ intentions correctly or even resist them by countering, disrupting, or subverting them in some way (Fleming, 2005; Wasserman and Frenkel 2011; 2015). These studies suggest that we still do not understand when and how aesthetic communication will lead to interpretations and behaviors that are aligned with message senders’ intentions.

To address this issue, we develop a framework for understanding when aesthetic communication is effective, defining effective as an intersubjective interpretation that is aligned with message senders’ intentions and perceiving it in the context of three possible outcomes: effective, partially effective, or actively resisted. The argument we present is that workspaces house the constitutive processes through which aesthetic communication shapes and is shaped by joint processes of interpretation. It explains the relationship between interacting in proximity to visible, tangible aesthetic elements and the emergence and enactment of intersubjective interpretations of these elements as signifiers in a semiotic system. We explain the relevance of processes of emotional contagion to intersubjectivity. Also, we emphasize the temporality and contextuality of these dynamics. On the basis of understanding the formation of intersubjective interpretations in workspaces, our framework draws ideas from theories of communication to detail how common symbolic metaphors, polysemy and multimodality render aesthetic communication potentially inconsistent. We explain how these inconsistencies lead to processing that ultimately reduces the likelihood that receivers will form effective intersubjective interpretations.

Importantly, our analysis stays close to the aesthetic elements inherent in aesthetic communication. Furthermore, we highlight the importance of understanding aesthetic communication, a process that is inherently subjective and which aims to elicit emotions and bodily reactions, inherently individual responses, as an intersubjective form of communication. Arguably, making this link is important toward understanding how a form meant to elicit such personal, tacit responses, can lead to organizational change, an overall collective outcome. Additionally, we tie these outcomes to explaining how members of an organization can resist aesthetic communication. This approach highlights the uniqueness of aesthetic communication as a form of organizational communication and advances our understanding of not only aesthetic communication, but also of the visual and material turns in organization studies more generally.
Moreover, we extend ideas that examine how senders and receivers interact in settings that co-locate them with aesthetic elements over time. By so doing, this paper advances how we understand the constitutive aspects of aesthetic communication (Ashcraft et al., 2009). In particular, the idea that communication is enduring highlights the importance of having the space and time to engage in ongoing and reciprocal processes of negotiation and interpretation. Specifically, aesthetic communication leads to emotional and bodily reactions that are the foundation for collective emotionality. The enduring aspect of aesthetic communication suggests these reactions may be reinforced with each interaction in the aesthetic design, such as walking through a space or working in it. This endurance creates an ongoing constitution of organizational life.

Furthermore, the endurance of aesthetic communication may offer receivers the opportunity to express resistance aesthetically and verbally and to organize around it, making it a more potent form of resistance and one ultimately able to cause senders to re-design their messages. Arguably, when resistance is conveyed in aesthetic forms, other members of the organization can interpret it not only in semiotic and analytical ways, but also, in emotional and sometimes even bodily ways. As such, individual forms of resistance have the potential to amass into more intersubjective and collectively manifested responses that enjoy the same taken-for-granted status to which managerial messages aspire.

Resistance is important because many studies about organizational aesthetics focused on the inherent power in this communicative form, power based on its ability to communicate in a tacit, sensory way that is perceived as natural and taken-for-granted. Importantly, the paper distinguishes between aesthetic communication as powerful and as effective. Indeed, extant scholarship has identified the potential of aesthetic communication as a powerful tool for control and identity regulation (e.g., Galgliardi, 1996; Strati, 1999). We build on these ideas, but we perceive powerful as the ability of organizational aesthetics to construct identities, behaviors, emotions, norms, etc. At the same time, we perceive effective as an outcome-oriented representation of senders’ abilities to control receivers’ interpretations such that they align with senders’ intentions. We add to this conversation by focusing on the interpretative flexibility of aesthetic elements. Specifically, we explore what characterizes aesthetic communication such that it is both potentially powerful, yet also often ineffective and emphasize the importance of understanding when the potential power of aesthetic communication will have the effect message senders intend.

References


Beyond legitimacy and legitimation as a social judgment: A Merleau-Pontian view

François-Xavier de Vaujany (PSL-Université Paris-Dauphine)

Legitimacy and legitimation of organizational activities remains a key stake for managers and organizations. Surprisingly, most research about legitimation - as a process – remains largely discursive, ideational, intellectualist, judgmental and interpretive. Ultimately, legitimacy is in the eyes of the beholders. Materiality, but also spatiality, temporality and embodiment remain absent from the description. This is epitomized by Bitektine (2011) conceptualization of legitimation, which he describes as the “process of legitimacy judgment formation”. By means of a deep literature review of neo-institutional studies, he identified five stages in the process (Bitektine, 2011: 159):

- Perception by an audience;
- Classification (managerial versus technical legitimacy) and scrutiny (about the legitimacy types: consequential, procedural, structural, personal, linkage);
- Analytical processing (cognitive judgment or sociopolitical judgment);
- Benefit diffusion (inducement);
- Compliance mechanism (normative versus regulative legitimacy).

Basically, three core elements are involved in the process of legitimacy judgment formation: “the evaluating audience’s perceptions of an organization or entire class of organizations (1), judgment/evaluation based on these perceptions (2), and behavioral response (acceptance, support, avoidance, sanctions, etc.) based on these judgments (3)” (pp. 159-160). Legitimacy is conceptualized here as something that can be (almost instantaneously) told, shared, computed and intellectualized. It remains quite symbolic and discursive. The spatiality and materiality is not relevant by itself, until it is involved in the judgmental process of a human being: who judges, beyond sensations and feelings, with a transcendental capability.

In contrast, some scholars have recently emphasized the materiality (Jones, Boxenbaum and Anthony, 2013), spatiality (Profitt and Zahn, 2006) and historicity (de Vaujany and Vaast, 2014, 2016) of the process of legitimation, particularly in contexts where organizational members draw on various institutional logics to legitimate their activities (Varländer, de Vaujany and Vaast, 2014). They suggest that it can judge as much as he or she judges, or that the process of judgment a manager will be involved in, implies a lot of material mediations. Some promoters of institutional logics have thus recently suggested that legitimacy can be implemented by an assemblage of material and human entities making the logic meaningful for those involved in it (see Jones et al, 2013; de Vaujany, Varländer and Vaast, 2014). Logics are more than mere symbols, icons and symbolic artifacts likely to recall them. They are spaces, practices, embodied rules, postures, movements, places, instruments, constituting and performing them.

Following the invitation for a more spatialized, materialized and temporalized research about legitimation, a first set of research studies emphasize the materiality and historicity of legitimation (Profitt and Zahn, 2006; de Vaujany and Vaast, 2014) or something sometimes very closely related to legitimation, the process of identification (Wasserman and Frenkel, 2011). In line with Lefebvre’s (1991) Marxist phenomenology, researchers have conceptualized dual, although imbricated processes (both mental and physical) at stake in legitimation. Spatial practices are described as at the heart of the “lived” space, the one experienced by individuals in the space of domination as ‘conceived’ by some dominant stakeholders and then ‘perceived’ by its inhabitants. To free themselves, individuals will circumvent some parts of the space, complete bricolage, and re-appropriate space in a way that will produce emancipation. Of course, this can be far from the legitimacy claims produced by dominant stakeholders. Legitimation itself remains close to the social
judgment described by Bitektine (2011). Basically, if a potential for legitimacy is seen as processual, judgment itself is out of the loop and almost instantaneous. Legitimation appears in the end as the continuous judgment by specific stakeholders about the social acceptability of an organization, a set of organizational activities, or some other stakeholders of the organization.

In contrast, we will suggest here a phenomenological view of legitimation which will be a different phenomenological way to answer the call for more materiality, spatiality and temporality for the description of legitimation. By means of Merleau-Ponty (1942, 1945, 1964), we will suggest that legitimation is in the bodies and embodiment of the beholders. Merleau-Ponty provides a very interesting phenomenological critique of ‘judgment’ (which will be particularly crucial for our deconstruction of legitimacy). Judgment is not an intellectual move, beyond sensations and feelings. The philosopher is particularly skeptical about an intellectualist thesis defending this view: “Judgement is often introduced by what is missing from sensations in order to make possible a perception. A sensation is not supposed to be a real element of consciousness (...) Intellectualism lives from the refutation of empiricism and judgment has often for function to cancel the possible dispersion of sensations. Reflexive analysis is established by pushing realist and empirist thesis to their end-point, and by showing through absurdity the anti-thesis.” (p 56). Merleau-Ponty defends a more experiential view of judgment, as an embodied, always interconnected (to things and other people’s experience) view of judgment. He states: “Between sensations and judgement, common experience makes a clear distinction. Judgment is for that a stance, it aims at knowing something valuable for my-self at all times of my life and for the other existing or possible spirits; sensation, conversely, is subject to appearance. It is beyond possession and any search for truth. This distinction vanishes in the context of intellectualism, as judgment is everywhere where pure feeling is not, which means everywhere.” (p 58).

From a Merleau-Pontian perspective, legitimation is an embodied, shared movement, not the result of an external social judgement (as described by Bitektine, 2011). It is an endogenous process, a co-construction, a crossed-feeling between actors and all the artifacts melted into their embodiment. In a way, it is before, and even beyond, language (see Merleau-Ponty, 1964’s pre-objective or pre-reflexive stages).

References:


Out of the wood: Legitimizing the solid body electric guitar

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The aim of this study is to spotlight the material underpinnings of both institutional work and institutional logics. By analyzing the evolution of the electric guitar from the disregarded tinkering efforts of its inventors in the 1930s, over its marketing in the 1950s, to its booming success in the 1960s, I hope to contribute twofold. First, by drawing on Hargadon and Douglas (2001), I highlight by means of an in-depth case study on the emergence of the industry not only how the specific design characteristics of the six-stringed artifact necessitated respectively adapted institutional work to gain both recognition and legitimacy, but also how the matter itself was instrumentalized to cue and to chorus the electric guitar to dominant social institutions and their values and norms. Second, by tracking the differences in construction and modification over time, I highlight how institutional complexity and shifts in institutional logics are both reflected and instantiated in the materiality of the artifacts. In a similar vein as Gawer and Nelson (2013), I suggest that focusing on the material artifact can enrich the institutional analysis as it enables to bridge the different levels of analysis of institutional work (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006) and institutional logics (Ocasio & Thornton, 1999).

Besides an investigation of the emergence of the field including also the fruitless efforts to establish the solid body electric guitar (see Figure 1 & 2), I complement the empirical analysis with a comparative case study of the two, nowadays dominant, manufacturers, namely Fender and Gibson.

Gibson was the incumbent of the acoustic guitar industry having turned electric in 1952. Fender had offered the first mass marketed solid body electric guitar in 1950. Gibson embodied all skillful handicrafts of the luthier tradition into their first solid body electric guitars and oriented their designs towards familiar shapes of electrified acoustic archtop guitars (see Figure 3 & 4). Fender approached manufacturing with any reference to the luthier traditions but an engineering logic reflected for instance in the modular construction (see Figure 5). Thereby Fender disregarded all handicrafts like bindings, inlays, or glued fretboards, and all conventions, like the usage of resonant exotic woods, violin-like arched tops, glued on necks, and initially even the stabilization of neck truss rods (a steel bar within the neck which prevents a neck to bow under the tension of the strings). Fenders first electric guitar consisted of a piece of ash wood as a body, two pickups, and a detachable, screwed-on, one-piece maple neck (see Figure 6). Moreover its shape was lacking skeumorphs, design characteristics that comfort the consumer by making semiotic reference to familiar objects and was scorned as a snow shovel and canoe paddle when it was first presented at a music trade show in 1950. Instead of referring to related or proximate social institutions, Fender borrowed legitimacy from the U.S. American popular culture, its belief in technical progress and cultural confidence of superiority prevailing in the 1950s. In particular, Fender drew heavily on the automobile industry as manifested for instance in the naming of guitars, the guitars body shapes, and the use of the same colors for the finish as Ford (see Figure 7). Put differently, the setting allows contrasting two distinct, yet equally successful approaches to anchor almost diametrical interpretations of the electric guitar simultaneously in one shared, emerging market category.

Apart from these two competing logics inscribed into the field from the very beginning, explicitly craftsmanship versus electric engineering, the field gained further institutional complexity (Greenwood et al., 2011) when both manufacturers were bought by diversified conglomerates in the mid 1960s. Under corporate management the dominant logic emphasized growth and sales, resulting for instance in expansions and reorganizations of the production sites, lower R&D efforts, and
deskilling of the artisans. Moreover, both organizations changed materials and production methods, and introduced modifications in the design and construction of their front men guitar models.

For instance, to increase the advertising effect, the Fender Stratocaster got straight after the takeover a bigger headstock equipped with increasingly bigger decals saying “Fender Stratocaster” in bigger characters (see Figure 8). The pickups (basically coils, i.e. magnets enwinded with copper wire, picking-up the frequencies of a vibrating metal string) were downgraded to facilitate the production. Not only were the magnets substituted from Alnico 5 to less costly magnetic compounds, but also equally long magnet pole-pieces replaced the previously staggered ones, which used to harmonize the different frequencies and string gauges. Fenders guitar necks were from the late 1960s screwed with a three-point attachment, which intended to further facilitate the production by disposing the fine adjustment to the customer.

The setting is extremely well documented and enables an empirically rich analysis on how material and discursive dimensions interrelate and interact in legitimizing an innovative artifact.

References


Let the institutional image guide the client! When organizations wish to be legitimate

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Organizations need to be legitimate to survive (Ashforth and Gibbs, 1990; Elsbach, 1994; Suchman, 1995; Besharov and Smith, 2014). They need therefore to demonstrate that their acts are in line with the norms. However institutional theory stresses the co-existence of multiple institutional logics in a field (D’Aunno and al., 2000; Lounsbury and Boxembaum, 2013; Thornton, 2002, 2012; Battilana and Dorado, 2010). Organizations send messages and signs towards institutional logics which are clear in a given organizational field. Legitimacy could be linked to these logics (Suchman, 1995; Friedland and Alford, 1991). But this communication regards their central, distinctive and permanent features of identity (Albert and Whetten, 1985); then the messages and signs form a part of organizational image (Alvesson, 1990; Gioia, Schultz and Corley, 2000).

In literature, we have little understanding of how an organization can be legitimate within the framework of their own singularity. That’s the reason why we discuss about institutional image, i.e “organizational image rooted into institutional logics for external audiences in the field (competitors, suppliers, consumers, institutions...)”. We postulate that organizations wish to be perceived legitimate though image but image has to be linked with their proper identity (Hatch and al., 1997; Abratt, 1989). We would like to understand why organizations decide to refer to specific norms and values.

In an institutional perspective organizations mimic others in a field to be legitimate (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983), while all of them are different from each other’s (Larson and Reitter, 1979). According to Suchman (1995), legitimacy is “a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions”. Their performance is better than illegitimate organizations (Kondra and Hinings, 1998). Institutional pressures highlight why organizations have similar behaviors and practices. Homogenization process is related to institutions structured by cognitive, normative and regulative forces; they stabilize the environment and then the social forms they also give the opportunity for changing (Scott, 2001; Farjoun, 2002). Nevertheless, Oliver (1991) explains that organization reacts to institutional pressures (compromising strategy, avoiding strategy, manipulating strategy...). When organization changes of strategy, its values and practices could be different from the initial institutional ones.

Organization sometimes creates new norms. Kondra and Hinings (1998) develop this theme. They suggest that some organizations called Renegades are very different from norms but they are more efficient. Others organizations are offering the opportunity to choose between two sets of institutional principles. According to D’Aunno and al. (2000), Staw and Epstein (2000) and others, institutions could impulse changes when they legitimate the difference between organizations. Washington and Ventresca (2004) explain that “institutional mechanisms support changes in organizational strategies in ways that contrast with the standard interpretation of institutional “iron cages that pressure organizations to conform” . Institutions permit to change and to legitimate creative action (Ford, 1996).

When organizations communicate their organizational identity, they should to take into consideration audiences (Alvesson, 1990; Zuckerman, 1999; Abratt, 1989). The interface image represents the point of contact between the various stakeholders and the company. Several definitions of organizational image exist (Gioia and al., 2000). In this case, we focus on image which
permits to give a strategic and legitimate position towards main external audiences (Zuckerman, 1999, Phillips and Zuckerman, 2001). Institutional image is an organizational choice of managers to be recognized and lawful (Ashforth and Mael, 1996). Managers should notice what are the institutional expectations and norms. Then, they root organizational image into institutional logics to protect themselves (Elsbach, 1994). Why do managers choose to communicate through a specific logic? We argue that organizational features (and then strategic decisions) give one explanation. That’s why we have listed factors used by scholars in literature and in studies with institutional theory (specifically DiMaggio and Powell’s (1988) article). We distinguish professional features and economical ones. The first ones describe traits of a specific profession. The latter ones explain how rare resources are allocated in a company.

First of all we define industrial design. According to Verganti (2008), several interpretations of design tend to be as broad as possible. In 1961 Thomas Maldonado saw design as the process that coordinates all factors contributing to a product, from its consumption (functional, symbolic and cultural factors) to its production and distribution. In reference to “Design Management Journal”, Verganti (2008) adds “interpretations of design often tend to be very close to “product development” and sometimes its interpretation are close to market research or creativity and even branding”. In addition, since 1989, a famous magazine named Design Management Journal highlights managerialist logic in USA which one came later little and little in France. The website states: “DMI increased its international presence with the establishment of the European International Conference on Design Management in 1997, and with an increasing number of international Review authors and DMI members.” Moreover in prior works we put forward the co-existence of three institutional logics (Szostak, 2006; Durand, Szostak, Jourdan and Thornton, 2013): · modernism, · formalism and · managerialism.

In literature design roots come from exact sciences, sciences of spirit and art, and commercial sciences (Flamand, 2006; Berends, Reymen, Stultiens and Peutz, 2011). While functionalist and formalist are the traditional logics (see conceptual model in Candi, 2010), we consider that managerialism refers more to the current concerns of firms. One of reasons could be the positive impact of design management on the performance (Chiva and Alegre, 2009). Three sets of norms and values in industrial design field offer therefore to design agencies the choice to communicate their own institutional image. Secondly eight hypotheses (see below) have been suggested and tested. A conditional logit model is studied for that. Individual i who is towards J choices non-ordered chooses j. Utility model follows logistic function. We distinguish the 3 institutional images for design agencies. Three logit models are tested; it is a binary choice; the specific image is chosen or not (Greene, 2003). We present then correlation matrix and 6 logit models for testing hypotheses. All details are written in the final paper. Eight hypotheses are formulated and tested according to empirical observations and design.
Materiality of spatial strategies and spatial tactics: the shopfloor as a hybrid space

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Research in Management and Organisation Studies (MOS) currently experiences a ‘material turn’ (Ashcraft, Kuhn, & Cooren, 2009; de Vaujany, Hussenot, & Chanlat, 2015; Leonardi, 2011; Orlikowski & Scott, 2008, 2015; Pinch & Swedberg, 2008). In MOS, this literature has mixed materiality and aesthetics (Strati, 2008), materiality and performativity (Tyler & Cohen, 2010), materiality and leadership (Ropo, Salovaara, Sauer, & De Paoli, 2015), or materiality and neo-institutionalism (Blanc & Huault, 2014; Gond & Boxenbaum, 2013; Lawrence, Leca, & Zilber, 2013). Even if some of those works studied some buildings (de Vaujany & Vaast, 2014; Gastelaars, 2010; Gieryn, 2002; Girin, 2004; Hillier, Hanson, & Peponis, 1984; Markus, 1993), “overall, management and organization scholarship has done little to theorize the materiality of physical sites, perpetuating a container metaphor or treating place in ideational terms” (Ashcraft et al., 2009, p. 30). Then, within the material turn, a subturn, recently called the ‘spatial turn’ in MOS (Dale & Burrell, 2008; Kornberger & Clegg, 2004; S. Taylor & Spicer, 2007; van Marrewijk & Yanow, 2010; Warf & Arias, 2009), argues that “materiality communicates and shapes the spaces and places around us construct us as we construct them” (Dale & Burrell, 2008, p.1). This article will focus on what matters here, that is to say the process of the ‘production of space’ – not space itself (Lefebvre, 1974) - and of how people make sense of the space they are in (Hall, 1966).

The growing literature on spatial and social practices in organisations has highlighted the importance of organisational spaces as constituted and transformed through day-to-day activities (Clegg & Kornberger, 2006), focusing on the impact of space on organizational processes (Kornberger & Clegg, 2004; S. Taylor & Spicer, 2007) and employee performance (Kristensen, 2004; Myerson & Ross, 2003, 2006). Most of this research deals with office settings where employees are among each other and not disturbed by customers. However, Bitner (1992, p. 57), focusing on service organisations (i.e. restaurants, hotels, hospitals, retail stores, etc.), underlines that “in service organisations the same physical setting that communicates with and influences customers may affect employees of the firm”. The various characteristics of the physical setting might though not influence the two parties in the same manner; something that has a positive impact on the ones might have a negative impact on the others. Already twenty years ago, Bitner (1992, pp. 57-58) criticized that academic research stays highly departmentalized as the “customer is left out of the [organisational behaviour] research stream, [...], just as the employee typically is ignored in the limited atmospherics research in marketing”.

In this article, we try to contribute bridging this gap – that since then not much research has tried to – by focusing on interpersonal service setting (Bitner, 1992), or what we call a “hybrid space setting”, i.e. a space where different spatial practices confront each other and where these different spatial practices might enter in conflict. Our research context is a retailer that operates globally. We wish to investigate how the different spatial practices (de Certeau, 1984) confront each other and how these confrontations materialize itself in a constant change and modification of the physical space and its artifacts (e.g. employees’ spatial tactics on the shop floor to improve their personal margins vs. architects’ spatial strategies to increase sales by improving customer experience).

Since hybrid spaces are not yet well explored, a qualitative case study was considered to be particularly appropriate. More specifically, we investigate the case of a global furniture retailer that is well-known for its space design and for the major shopping experience it offers. This case setting offers a unique opportunity to examine a dynamic phenomenon of organizational space strategy and spatial practices. Moreover we consider this furniture retailer, being a reference in its sector, as an
“extreme” case study (Flyvbjerg, 2006) in which key theoretical concepts and relations of interest were visible (Eisenhardt, 1989).

This paper draws from a double advantage: first, we were able to access a global furniture retailer, well-known for its shop floor design, with data over three years. Second, our research team is composed out of marketing and organisational specialists, which contributes to adopting a strong inter-disciplinary approach for analysing this hybrid space setting. One of the article’s authors was working as national shopping experience manager of the studied company in France, during three years.

The primary data were collected in form of reports and analysis. As a matter of fact, the national shopping experience manager’s function consists of managing and analysing a customer satisfaction survey in each store, but also carrying out shopping experience audits in many stores. In our case, the shopping experience manager has audited about thirty stores, over three years, mostly in France, but also a few stores in Italy (with similar strategies). Each audit lasts two days (one day of observation and one formal audit day) for a given function (a store is generally audited during a whole week, in order for the main functions – those in direct contact to the customer, such as Customer, Sales, Architecture or Logistics – to be covered). The Customer audit is carried out through the assessment of the shopping experience in the store.

The audit includes a lot of observations of the store and the staff, many informal interviews with employees, middle managers and store managers. The primary data contained also visual data, including schemes to better apprehend the “structured” approach this furniture retailer uses to increase the performance of the client space. The importance of visual data has been forcefully advocated for in organizational research (Meyer, Höllerer, Jancsary, & van Leeuwen, 2013; S. S. Taylor & Hansen, 2005).

We mentioned earlier the high value of space, in the retail industry but most certainly in other industries as well, opening the door to occupational tactics. We have seen the creation of tensions within different organizations and also within different functions, through two episodes, internal audits (with the examples of the store shortcuts and contradictory “mandatories” for different functions during internal audits) and staff summer vacation, pacified by negotiation of space. These tensions about space division open the door to space for negotiations as well as to negotiations for space. We have thus witnessed how a space strategy, designed by architects at the global headquarter level, can turn into a spatial tactic enacted by the store team, at the store level. Figure 7 summarises the different negotiations that happen in the store area.

Thanks to a qualitative case study, we show how, through three levels of organisations (headquarter, branch office and store), a very organized, formal, “tidy” concept answering well defined strategies of spaces turn into a set of improvised and negotiated tactics of space strategies “on the spot”. We contribute to the organisational space literature in MOS and marketing research by analysing a case of hybrid space through both the lens of organisation and customer occupations. More precisely, we contribute to the literature of the interpersonal service setting and the “hybrid spaces” thanks to a better understanding of the transformation of spatial design that is a result of conflicting views. This reconciliation of points of views allows us addressing the very material, symbolic, and spatial contours of organisational life in one particular setting.

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Transversal institutions: rethinking institutional ontology

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While for the regular visitor, museums are perceived as arenas of silence and concord, it is an impression of cacophony and of inaudible polyvocality that governs the first experiences of the researcher. The key question lies in how to make sense— not through an all-encompassing grand narrative— of all these voices, how to disentangle the complex and polymorphic sounds, noises and resonances that run freely in the museum. A brief overview of the activities of the museum reveals its engagement in a multitude of programs, amongst which children education, environmental matters, academic lectures, etc. In other words, the museum is at the confluence of a variety of responsibilities, structures and logics. While the depiction of museums as cultural institutions seems consensual, there is a marked ambiguity surrounding the ‘mode of existence’ (cf. Latour, 2013) of museums, as witnessed through the various dialectics underlying their daily routines— nature/culture, modernity/tradition, knowledge/practice, education/profit, etc. Drawing on an ongoing study of an ethnology museum, this paper attempts to explore how museums, as established institutions, negotiate their own ontological ambiguities. Rather than abruptly questioning the ontology of the museum, this paper ventures on the grounds of experience as a mean of apprehending the underlying complexity and fluidity of museums. More precisely, this entails developing two sensibilities, one towards the auditory signs—the many voices one hears in the museum—and the other towards the linguistic signs—the various modes of enunciation. This involves exploring the assembling of museums through the scrutiny of the various practices of inscribing, vocalising and producing that coalesce within the museum.

Such a stance relies on operating a shift from a focus on being towards an engagement with the notion of becoming. The turn towards processes in the management literature has had a resounding impact on the ways in which ideas of ontology have been conceptualized (Hernes, 2007). Rather than relying on fixed notions of identity and being, a growing body of literature has sought to engage with the idea of becoming as a way of keying further into the minutiae of organizational worlds (Aroles and McLean, 2016). Aligned with this turn towards practices, materiality and ideas of becoming, this paper seeks to explore the ontological ambiguity surrounding contemporary institutions through a focus on museums. The concept of transversality seems particularly appropriate when dealing with this ontological ambiguity. Deleuze (2008) explains that “it is transversality that permits us, in the train, not to unify the viewpoints of a landscape, but to bring them into communication according to the landscape’s own dimension” (2008: 108). If we get back to the case of the museum, the different images and voices articulate the museum differently, resulting in a vacillation or destabilization of the ontology of the museum. This may give the impression that the museum is many things at the same time (e.g. cultural institution, profit-making organization, etc.) that is to say, a sort of meta-assemble of various contingencies, practices and strategies. Rather, we suggest understanding these voices as signs of inscription into specific planes of action and of organization. Put differently, it is not that a museum is simultaneously a variety of entities but rather that it ceaselessly moves along different planes of organisation; it is continuously discontinuous in its ontological Search. In that sense, the image of the museum as a multiple entity cannot be held. Therefore, this paper suggests that transversality is that which allows the museum to be-come different (that is to say that allows the museum to be-come inscribed onto different platforms), in other words, that transversality is the modus operandi of museums. This entails moving away from the multiplicity of being(s) – museums
as multiple entities – in favour of the transversality of becoming(s) – museums as navigating through viewpoints.

References


Some Notes on the Powers of Objects

Richard Hull (University of Central Lancashire)

“... although throughout this book you read about the deprivations of the city child, you see through
the eyes of the photographers how children colonise every last inch of left-over urban space for their
own purposes, how ingeniously they seize every opportunity for pleasure. The words spell
deprivation but the pictures spell joy” (Ward, 1978, page 210)

In thus summing up his classic study, The Child in the City, Colin Ward baldly states the absolute
equivocality of this work: throughout, in his approach to both the city and to the children who dwell
there, he refuses to adopt any easy definition or characterisation. “A child is ... well, a child is what
you recognise as a child, and I am going to be equally evasive in defining the city” (op cit, page vii,
original ellipsis). And yet the book is a remarkable achievement in explicating both the deprivations
of city life and the possibilities for renewal, for something better for both children and cities – and
that of course is why it is a classic study.

Forty years earlier Walter Benjamin also wrote about cities – Naples, Moscow, Berlin and Paris – and
he too adopted such an equivocal approach. Or rather, as Caygill (1998) notes, a speculative
approach to ‘the experience of the city’: “a development and intensification of the speculative
concept of experience informing his philosophical, critical and aesthetic writings” (Caygill, 1998, page
118). Through this approach Benjamin was able to develop accounts of those cities that again
refused any a priori praise or condemnation, any easy definitions and characterisations, but which
also demonstrated both the ‘decaying of experience’ within those cities, and the nascent, lingering
possibilities for renewal and joy. So for instance he describes aspects of Naples in terms of their
‘transition’ and ‘porosity’, two linked categories that together mark transitivity, ambiguity, “the
scope to become a theatre of new, unforeseen constellations. The stamp of the definitive is avoided”
(Benjamin, 1924, as quoted in Caygill 1998, page 122). But this ambiguity is also seen as partly the
condition for poverty, violence and the Camorra, and thus Benjamin avoids the temptations of
nostalgic romanticism.

Gillian Rose also had a deep interest in cities and architecture, seeing in both of them a particularly
vivid illustration and (often necessary) element of the ways in which “a community negotiates its
relation to itself and to other communities” (Rose, 1988, page 237). In the course of a number of
dual approach: firstly a critique of both critical-rationalist and post-modern/deconstructive critiques
of the city and architecture; and secondly the deployment of archetypal cities as representing
competing themes in social and political thought (see especially the essay ‘Athens and Jerusalem: a
attention to real cities that is situated within their political and historical context but without
privileging that context, without elevating the context to grand, determinant, historical forces.

Each of these authors has, in different ways, firstly adopted a speculative, equivocal approach to
their understandings and descriptions of cities, but secondly accepted the requirement to come to
some forms of judgement about cities. They have each recognised that existing frameworks for such
understanding and description are either too formalised, too rationalistic, too laden with
unjustifiable a priori judgements and categories, or they are too flexible and elastic to be of any use
for developing practical-critical judgements. In this paper I will suggest that we can adopt a similar
approach to Objects in general, whether they be cities, guns or roses, or institutions.
Formalising this in a different way, I want to suggest that it is necessary to pass judgements on Objects whilst working in a damaged courtroom. My reasons for this formulation are firstly to keep the focus of attention on the character of judgements, and especially upon the politics of judgement, rather than being side-tracked by discussions of Objects, artefacts or institutions in the modern world. Secondly, it is to deny the possibility that we have or can invent the ‘perfect courtroom’. Consequently, it is thirdly to suggest that I would prefer to have ways of recognising that the courtroom is damaged but necessary, rather than pretending that we have, or can build, a perfect courtroom, a perfect form of judgement.

The paper proceeds to examine one element of improving our judgements about Objects, namely the development of categories of Objects. This starts by reformulating three existing sets of attributes, Performance, Ownership and Description. Combinations of Performance and Ownership are cast together as Power-Object Relations, and three types of such Relations are described – Sovereign, Middling and Neglected (or Abject – Tyler, 2013). Description is cast in a revision of Caygill’s (1998) reading of the works of Walter Benjamin. Finally these categories are applied to a number of examples including genetically modified crops, nuclear power stations and co-operatively owned enterprises.

References


When technology derails: Train drivers put to the test of an unpredictable material agency

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The growth in size of corporations has led organizations to rethink control mechanisms and invest massively in information systems and technological artefacts to manage these achievements (Bauman & Lyon, 2013; de Vaujany et al., 2015). These control artefacts are delegated some power by managers and designers in order to enforce certain rules (Latour, 1992). Yet, once involved in situations, they often influence human actions beyond their intended functionalities, through unintended potentialities for actions related to their material properties. On the one hand, artefacts can be thought as a medium that empowers actors to do things they would not be able to do otherwise (e.g. the most basic tools in human history). On the other hand, technology is becoming increasingly essential and powerful in ordering humans’ work and behaviour (Zuboff, 1989). This leads to an inversion where humans need to adjust themselves and their work pace to non-human requirements rather than the other way around (Czarniawska, 2011). This research focuses on the social actor’s reaction to the constraints of technologies in the achievement of mundane tasks.

Because it deals with the role of humans and technologies in mundane practices, the sociomaterial approach (Orlikowski, 2007) appears a promising stream of research to tackle the issue of managerial control of social actors exerted through material artefacts. Sociomateriality indeed reflects on issues such as “material agency”, “performativity”, whilst at the same time trying to overcome the traditional divide when studying technological artefacts, i.e. between technological determinism and social constructivism. However these research have paid less attention to the role of human actors in shaping sociomaterial practices and to the consequences for human actors of the growing prevalence of non-human actors (e.g. Orlikowski, 2007 and Scott and Orlikowski, 2009). This topic has been more central to the analysis of organizational phenomenon by Leonardi (2011, 2012, 2013), with a clearer conceptualization of practice as an imbrication of distinct agencies, human and material: human representations and intentions influence use (Leonardi, 2009; Vaast & Walsham, 2005), whilst material properties of technological artefacts influence both representations and action (Leonardi, 2011, 2012; Vaast & Walsham, 2005). In this paper, we wish to apply the sociomaterial approach to control artefacts, i.e. artefacts dedicated to monitoring of employee’s behaviour and preventing inappropriate conduct.

Humans deal with technologies’ power through trials. To this end, we analyse the moment of encounter of material and human agency as a trial. A trial can be defined as a specific class of demanding situations where an individual is confronted to someone or something. An important property is that all trials are trials of strength (Latour, 1988) because they are confrontation where actors – whether human or nonhuman – show what they are capable of. Another important property of trials is that their outcome is always uncertain. Everything can happen and it is only at the end of the trial that this uncertainty will be removed. The trial’s outcome also provides an assessment or disclosure of something (Ronell, 2005) such as strength, skills, speed, truth, etc. (as in the ‘trial of greatness’ of ‘trial of merit’ of Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006) that is (at least temporarily) attached to the winner of the trial. At the end of the trial, knowledge is produced about what actors are capable of (a capability which was previously uncertain). In other words, a trial is “a situation in which uncertainty arises about the agency of parties at stake” (Muniesa and Linhardt, 2011: 551).

This concept is useful to explore further the situations where actors perceive an artefact or technology as a constraint but cannot modify it (because its material features are long stabilized
and/or because their management do not perceive the situation as a problematic discrepant event that must lead to a change in the current technology). These situations are confrontation between human and material agency. There is an uncertainty regarding who will “win” the confrontation as well as regarding the nature and the extent of these agencies. Thus, it seems a promising concept to study power relationships between human and artefacts: what a human actor can or cannot do as well as the extent to which he can influence or deal with an artefact in order to reach his goals.

This research is part of a four-year case study led in the French National Railway Company, (SNCF) focusing on a population of train drivers. Trying to understand the influence of material artefacts on practice led us to select an occupation that would both enable us to study sequences of social interaction between members of the occupational community (Van Maanen & Barley, 1984), and individual enactment of the shared sociomaterial practices in the main occupational activity, that of train driving. Our research deals with a specific control artefact: the KVB (i.e. a beacon speed control. This artefact gathers information from beacons positioned on the tracks, indicating the state of the traffic signs ahead and the maximum speed authorized. Connected to the on-board driving system, the KVB checks the current speed of the train against its perception of the authorized speed. If the train’s speed is slightly exceeding authorized speed, the KVB will beep in order to warn the train driver. If the train’s speed exceeds the authorized speed in a way that could lead to a loss of control of the train driver, the KVB will automatically shut down the engine, brake and put the train to a stop.

This artefact constitutes an extreme-case of a control artefact, for three reasons:

- It exerts a direct influence on the train driving practice, by being able to take control of the engine (both power and brakes);
- It is a very rigid technology (vs. flexible): any change to the system would require both changes in on-board systems and on the tens of thousands of transmitting beacons on the tracks;
- It deals with a critical aspect of train driving, i.e. the respect of speed limits and thus the safety of circulations.

Data on KVB’s perceptions by train drivers, and its influence on the professional practice of train driving, was collected through semi-structured interviews and non-participant observation within the driver’s compartment. Interviews dealt primarily with the description by train drivers of their work, and how they used the different artefacts at their disposal, or represented the other devices that monitor their driving.

The adductive research strategy we employed involved iterative processes wherein data and theory were considered jointly in order to arrive at a satisfactorily plausible analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Struck by the strong emotional reactions of train drivers and their portrayal of the KVB as an opponent in a specific set of situations where the KVB’s reactions prove to be hard to predict, we began to analyse these situations as confrontation and we then turned abductively to the literature on trials to help our theory building. Through continued reading and discussion between the authors of this paper, we identified three distinct dynamics within the trial that we labelled ‘submission’, ‘resistance’ and ‘towards emancipation’. Those findings are still being investigated and will be presented in our full paper.

This research offers two main implications for the understanding of power relationships in sociomaterial imbrications. First, we argue that the concept of trial is relevant to analyse the power relations entwined in sociomaterial imbrications and especially the confrontation of human with non-human actors such as technologies or artefacts. Second, we show that organizational members are not (entirely) passive in front of non-alterable technologies which are perceived as a constraint. Our findings show that actors can engage in a form of (individual and micro) ordinary and informal
resistance (Collinson, 2000; Zanoni and Janssens, 2007) to the specific and situated material agency perceived as a constraint. It allows them to win back some room for manoeuvre in order to achieve their goal. Confronted to an impossible change of the technology, organizational members can put to the test its flexibility in order to uncover its material agency and to undermine the power of its arbitrariness to regulate their conduct.

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The heart is a hand grenade – plastic figurations of bodies at war

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Apocalypse Now (1979), Platoon (1986), Black Hawk Down (2001)…. Making a list of iconic war films provides a first indication of how deeply images and narratives of war are ingrained in popular culture. One could go so far as to argue that the movie screen is a particularly privileged site for grappling with war and its consequences (Koppes & Black 1990). Whether offering glorifications or condemnations or, as is more often the case, nuanced interpretations of the individual as well as social concerns of warfare, these films offer civilians an opportunity to glimpse into ‘the heart of darkness’, to become affectively and cognitively involved in events and experiences too distant from their own lifeworlds for unaided imagination, let alone interpretation.

While often telling a seemingly universal story of the journey ‘there and back again’ – from being a civilian through being trained as a soldier, to going into combat and, finally, returning home – war films are subject to changes in political climate, cinematographic trends, national differences, etc. Thus, there are significant differences between individual films or groups of films that may provide us with important clues as to how particular acts and institutions of war are predominantly interpreted and evaluated in particular socio-cultural contexts at particular times in history.

Such a group of films seems to be emerging about the coalition forces’ involvement in Afghanistan. The American production Restrepo (2010), the Danish Armadillo (2010), and the British Kajaki (2014) are all extremely close up and personal films that follow individual soldiers in painstakingly real detail. Two of these are, in fact, documentaries while the third, Kajaki, is a feature film based on a true story. Another common trait is that these films are loyal to the portrayed subjects, the individual soldiers, but offer no explicit ethical or political evaluation of the acts of war and no direct commentary on the merits of the institution of the army. If anything, the message one is left with is that the sacrifices of the soldiers are meaningless; that their pain and suffering have no higher purpose, that nothing vindicates, justifies, not even explains their wounds, traumas and, ultimately, deaths. Finally, these two features are brought together or, perhaps more precisely, carried through – by a close scrutiny of the soldiers’ bodies as they bodies – literally and figuratively – become other. Other to themselves as they are trained for and enter into combat. Other to society as they do what they are asked to. The act of killing, here, becomes both the final inclusion and the ultimately exclusion. That which makes the soldier, but also sets him or her apart, that which renders him or her (an)other.

This paper will seek to unfold the moment of becoming----through---destruction as central to the identity of not only individual soldiers, but of the institution of the army and of warfare as such. In doing so we will seek to bring three streams of literature – institutionalist theory, military sociology and cultural studies – together in a common ‘turn’ to the body. More specifically, these literatures are turning away from a previous tendency to over---emphasize the power of discourse, which incurred a neglect of the ‘materiality of the bodies’. The aim now is to (re---)assert the performative power of matter over mind (cf Butler 1993, Barad 2003). While we find this conceptual ambition to be both timely and useful, we caution against forgetting about discourse altogether. Rather, we advocate an approach that is fully sensitive to the co---productions of materialities and discourses and may account for the ways in which they are performatively related (Cederström & Spicer 2014).
To this end, we introduce the notion of plasticity as an ‘essentially material’ figure (Malabou 2010: 45). That is, plasticity as an ability to give form to human encounters with the world, but also as that which forms the human subjects, and, finally, that which blows up form. As Catherine Malabou explains, “plasticity is clearly placed between two polar extremes, with the sensible figure that is the taking shape in form (sculpture or plastic object) on the one side and the destruction of all form (explosion) on the other” (Malabou 2010: 87). In philosophical terms what Malabou offers is a reworking of relations of sameness and difference, stability and change, which places these relations squarely within the realm of form and does not rely on any external power for an explanation of their dynamics.

The duality – rather than the dichotomy – of making and breaking, we will argue, is central to the relationship between the individual soldiers, the institution of the army, and the countries they serve as configured in recent cinematic renderings of the war in Afghanistan. The poster for Armadillo clearly indicates what is at stake as it features a heart that is also (or has become) a hand grenade. This figurative merger of body and weapon is viscerally enacted in and through the story of the soldiers, whose tour in Afghanistan the film documents. As we will seek to demonstrate in the full paper, the material and the figurative transformations of the soldiers become one and the same: shame, destruction and death meet pleasure, procreation, and life in one devastatingly excessive (speech) act.

References


What makes a social practice? Being, knowing, doing ...and leading

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Several decades of work on social practices still leaves open questions regarding their existence and functions within an organizational context. This essay unravels what we term the "inherent logic" of social practice – being, knowing, doing - to depict its meaning and the mainspring of its conservation seen in an organizational context. We argue that the understanding of social practice in the literature on organization and management studies limits itself to an internal perspective and we demonstrate that a contextualization of the "inherent logics" of social practice should be the natural next step in advancing theory and empirical research. We open up for a contested coexistence of social practices in organization and thereby show that the conservation of social practice protrudes another element belonging to its inherent logic, namely leading. Our propositions develop leadership in distributed and adaptive organisations that respond to innovation and competitive challenges with wisdom, care, and fluidity.

Social practices are not possible to think away in contemporary organization theory. They engulf forms of working and living, provide meaning and direction, afford safety and routine, and engender collective standards and instil ambitions. Without them, organizations seem like empty shells likened to long abandoned and decaying factories photographed by Timm Suess (see http://timmsuess.com/). One can only imagine the contrast, - how they were like and how likeable they were - back then when they pulsed with the rhythmic noise of practicing craftsmen toiling in concert to produce their wares. As organization scholars, we are seduced by this "hyper-reality" of social practices: how much more lively they appear than the empty shell of the "organization" housing them. It is not surprising, then, that we are also often prepared to leave our functionalist understanding of organizations behind in order to turn to social practices and embrace their unfolding dynamics. Yet, as we complete our "practice turn" and redirect our academic glance, it is also all too easy to oversee that social practices necessitate organization structure and function, and vice versa (Giddens, 1984; Whittington, 2006). At least, as a function of producing some form of collective good the social practice inspires quality in work and a narrative in the individual's working life (MacIntyre, 1984). In this essay, we critically examine what depicts a social practice from a rather unusual viewpoint of leadership. The “practice turn” in organization studies understands organizational processes and phenomena as manifestations of underlying practices of work (e.g. Brown and Duguid, 1991; Schatzki et al., 2001). For example, in organization and management research this perspective has been particularly abound in the field of „strategy- practice“ (Jarzabkowski, 2004; Golsorkhi et al., 2010; Whittington, 2006). Accordingly, organizational activities are manifest by „strategizing“, i.e. the practising of strategy making in organizations, examining the underlying organizational activities of the work that is being accomplished. The „practice turn“, however, also offers another perspective on organizations. Next to the distinct types of "practising" as in "conducting work," it offers a renewed view on the social entities that constitute the organization enabling and conducting the work. Here the focus is not only on the type of practising that is being done, but also on who or what entities conduct the practicing and how the interplay of these entities might affect organizational dynamics and work in a broader organizational context. While the first glance at social practices directs our attention to its internal learning and dynamics, a contextualized view on the social practice reveals its conserving side in the organization protecting its ways of doing, being and knowing for the production of what itself defines as its internal goods. Innovation across practice boundaries has been shown to be a rather difficult process due to the cognitive, social and epistemological idiosyncrasy of the social practice (Ferlie et al.,
2005; Swan et al., 2002). Thus, the informal organization may produce resistance to change enacted by ingrained work routines and practices (Zietsma and Lawrence, 2010). However, as Gherardi and Perrotta (2010) point out, “a practice is always temporary and open to further renegotiations” (p. 611). Precisely this vulnerability of practices may elevate the efforts by practitioners to conserve status quo, protect their identity and way of conducting work, in particular when confronted with external pressure towards change and re-negotiation. The conserving function of the informal organization is upheld by the entities emerging within the „practice turn“, - the social practices in organizations (Brown and Duguid, 1991; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Social practices are composed of practitioners who share an identity, historically and socially contextualized, which enables them to individually and collectively conduct work and thereby establish a collective meaning-making of that work (Brown and Duguid, 1991; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Thus, the reach of social practices go beyond formal boundaries of the organization and occupational jurisdictions, such as the practice of medicine, nursing, and caregiving may cross the boundaries of hospitals and occupational groups. For example, a social practice may emerge around the use of a new technology for medical treatment including practitioners from different occupational groups – i.e. nurses, surgeons, radiologists - working intensively on the promotion and defence of its use, which over time percolates into their identities establishing a new shared practice.

Organizations of some size, house many co-existing social practices (Wenger, 1998; MacIntyre, 1984) that are, on one hand, often mutually dependent on each other in the context of organizational work, and on the other hand compete for scarce resources (cf. nursing and medicine in a hospital). Co-existing practices also need to grapple with the constant pressure for change and adaptation as exerted on members of the formal organization. The core argument of this essay is as follows; the inherent logics of social practices have often been studied from a singular internal perspective (e.g. practising), while failing to shed light on how the interplay of social practices in an organization may as well have a constitutive effect, namely influencing the sustainability and conservation of the social practice itself. We know how the formal institution may influence social practices by encouraging through support and provision of necessary resources as well as by putting pressure on the social practices for adaptation and reform (Barley and Tolbert, 1997; Thompson, 2005). The dynamical relation between formal organization and social practices is constitutive for both (Giddens, 1984). However, we will argue here that the interplay of social practices within the same organizational context may play a similarly important constitutive role. The conserving disposition of social practices then might be explained through its protective measures to safeguard what it is (being), what it does (doing), and what it knows (knowing), from other social practices in an organization.

Yet, we contend that potential goal conflicts rather than a state of goal congruence or even harmony between social practices are part of organizational life and tend to surface when there is scarcity of resources, as well as through the formulation and development of organization-wide policies and procedures. Note here that rather than speaking of work related conflict between people who are embedded in practices (e.g. a doctor and nurse in a hospital, a psychologist and economist in an academic department), it is meaningful to adopt a structuralist understanding by arguing that these conflicts, to some degree are rooted in inherent and fundamental struggles between distinct social practices. Distinction is thus constitutive of social practices because it elicits boundaries. Being in a social practice is at the same time not being something else (a practitioner of medicine not of nursing), knowing something may also be rejecting to know something different (medical knowledge not aromatherapy), and doing some work is also refraining from doing other work (doing surgery, not patient care). A brilliant analysis that exemplifies the latter point is Bent Flyvbjerg’s (2001) book on the struggles between the (natural) sciences and social sciences. As members of a social practice, for example, the social scientists are rejecting the notion that scientists can produce any meaningful knowledge about social phenomena.
Conservation of the social practice is about a struggle for relevance and survival against a multiplicity of social practices within the frames of a constantly changing formal organization. A contested view reveals the necessity of social practices possessing a capacity for dealing with competing pressures from within the organization, in defence of their own distinct practice. However, the capacity for dealing with competing pressure does not need defense only but a sense of balance, co-existence, and integration (Beadle and Moore, 2006). The core of distributed leadership is the balance between practices: implications for management as a social practice and for individual development to accept and cede authority lead to propositions around the leadership of social practice. We argue that such capacity takes the shape of a leadership process, which differs widely from traditional formal managerial roles in organizations. Rather, through and in moments of contest, social practices bring forth a distributed and internal capacity of leadership processes that is a necessary condition for its absorption of resources and sustainability in the face of change. We contend that such capacity for distributed leading in social practice partly explains why some social practices survive while others decay and wither. We show how (distributed) leading in social practices in a potentially conflictual organizational context is a complementary part of its inherent logics (being, doing, knowing) that is a necessary condition to sustain to ensure its continued existence. We briefly discuss, in the full paper, established constitutive elements of social practices before we move on to describe the interplay of social practices in organization and thereby argue for leading as a complementary constitutive element of social practice.
Sociomaterial embeddedness and power in institutional maintenance and change: an ethnographic study of organizational routines in two hospitals

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This paper focuses on the development of a framework about the relationship between institutions and actors, with a close consideration of the social and material conditions of the actors’ embeddedness. We will also empirically study sociomaterial practices (Orlikowski & Scott, 2008) across different contexts during an institutional change and acknowledges the reciprocal power relations between actors in an institutional environment. This framework will help us to explain how individuals may enact or alternatively engage in creative rearrangements, drifts, inventions or innovations, pursuing and challenging social and material affordances with also considering different faces of power during institutional change or maintenance. Our paper not only develops a perspective on materiality and institutions, but also evaluates applicability of this framework with an empirical analysis of two public hospitals in Istanbul.

Early studies in neo-institutional perspective had a strong emphasis on forces from the outside, leading to isomorphism between different organizations in similar environments. Whereas, recent studies have focused more on answering questions like “how actors change institutions?”. For example, Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) introduced institutional work approach to answer this question. They define institutional work as “the purposive action of individuals and organizations aimed at creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions” (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006: 215). Relying on institutional entrepreneurship, institutional work assumes that agency of actors is more than a “straw man” despite extant institutional pressures and actors can actually change institutions. If field level or organizational level conditions are convenient, there is room for institutional entrepreneurs to engage in institutional work by taking the advantage of enabling conditions of the structure (Battilana & d’Aunno, 2009).

According to Berger and Luckmann (1966) micro-activities have significant roles for any institutionalization process. “Institutionalization occurs whenever there is a reciprocal typification of habitualized actions by different actors” (Berger and Luckmann, 1966: 72). Later, Giddens argues that structures (institutions) come into existence, in time and space, only through their instantiations of social practices, which exhibit structural properties (1984). Furthermore, with their seminal work, Barley and Tolbert (1997) have drawn links between actions and institutions. “Script”, in this model, refers to dual embodiments of both actors and institutions, in other words “observable, recurrent activities and patterns of interaction characteristic of a particular setting” (Barley & Tolbert, 1997).

“Power” is an important property of the relationship in between institutions and actors, and necessarily bi-directional (Lawrence, 2008). Lawrence defines four types of power based on sources and targets. Regarding the source there are two types: systemic and episodic. If the source is systemic, then respective power mechanisms are “discipline” and “domination” which emerges from the quest of legitimacy of actors who attempt to draw their behaviors on the ruling institutions. When the source is episodic, than actor’s enactment to change institutions come from themselves, such as “influence” and “force”. Among these processes, targets of “discipline” and “influence” are subjects and may act differently, whereas targets of “domination” and “force” has no option and acts like an object.
Materiality is an indispensable constituent of mechanisms underpinning institutionalization process (Lawrence, 2008, Monteiro & Nicolini, 2015). Sociomateriality (Orlikowski & Scott, 2008) concept, which emerges as a result of attempts to understand reciprocal relation of the social and the material, claims that there is an entanglement of social and the material rendering existence of an ontological unit. In addition to this constitutive entanglement, another approach to sociomateriality embraces social and material as ontologically separate and argues that these two separate units become inseparable over time (Leonardi, 2013). We will use hyphen “-” to indicate this separateness and write “socio-material” (Tuncalp, in press) in this paper to identify this second view.

Our framework is comprised of three major regions: the social realm, the action realm and the material realm. While describing these realms, we also differentiate between their paradigmatic and syntagmatic (Mouzelis, 1995) differences (See Figure 1). “Paradigm” refers to general rules and resources that are applicable across contexts and relatively timeless. “Syntagm”, on the other hand, involves ordering and syntax, and have temporal dynamics, representing the observable part of a paradigm.

In developing our framework, we also borrow constructs from the practice theory: praxis, practice and practitioner. “Praxis” is a singular representation of practice and refers to an actual activity. “Practice”, on the other hand, is a patterned behavior, which consist of bodily and mental activities, using “things”, way of thinking, basic knowledge and emotional states. These practices are carried by “practitioners” who are the ones performing activities (Reckwitz, 2002).

The paradigmatic layer in the social realm involves social rules and structures, whereas the paradigmatic layer in material realm involves material rules, properties and laws of natural sciences that are independent from a specific context. Instantiation of these paradigms in a specific context creates syntagmatic levels of the social and material realms and creates affordances for creation and maintenance of scripts. When a non-reflexive enacting actor performs elements of a script (Barley & Tolbert, 1997) within the social realm, entanglement of social with material within a relational ontology constitutes “sociomaterial practices”. Whereas, when actors gain a reflexive capacity, the social rules and the materiality can be distinctly afforded, leading to a capacity for socio-material praxis.

As syntagmatic area in the framework embodies scripts, different types of power mechanisms are also relevant to that area. Power emerges as a property of interactions between socio-material praxis and sociomaterial practices (Figure 2). While a high order construct, a sociomaterial practice, may both constrain and enable a socio-material praxis, providing affordances for a practitioner, with dominance and/or discipline, reflexive practitioners can initiate deviations in sociomaterial practice via their influence and their individual/collective forces.

The representation summarized in this framework is actually cross-sectional in nature and represents how a script has been performed at a given time. Similar descriptions may be drawn and compared at the same context at different times or across different contexts. In this way, we may visualize, identify and acknowledge micro-level changes, possibly leading to macro-level shifts in an institutional order.

The framework explained above is our starting point for empirical studies that we will carry out in two public hospitals in Istanbul. So, with empirical data, this framework may be improved at the end of this study through abduction.

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The Algorithmic Materiality of Uber – Riding with Uber Drivers

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“Drive when you want...No office, no bosses”
Uber Technologies Advertisement

Scholars have recently underlined the shortcomings in the neo-institutional literature for not being cognisant enough of the role of materiality within institutional struggles (Cloutier and Langley 2013: 373, Lawrence et al, 2013). In this paper, we take the agential realism perspective of technology in practice (Orlikowski and Scott 2013, 2015) to examine the ways Uber algorithms perform agential cuts (Barad 2003), which in turn serve to constitute a set of new institutional dynamics within the transportation and logistics industry.

We use agential realism to conceptualise the institutional dynamics as a relational whole, which can be agentially separated through material discursive practice (Barad 2007). Barad (2003) argues that practice performs agential cuts, which have the effect of (re)constituting the local arrangement through material and social enactment and reconfiguration (e.g. Introna 2011; Suchman 2007). Rather than being a static, recurrent process, the agential cuts make practice as on-going process creating active inclusions and exclusions. We use this processual characteristics of practice and its consequences to examine the materiality underpinnings of institutional dynamics. The research was based on a six-months ethnography of the Uber training centre in Cape Town and interviews with Uber Cape Town managers and drivers.

Uberization

Uber Technologies, a privately held technology firm based in San Francisco was launched in March 2009. It entered South Africa (SA) in mid-2013 and counts itself in 59 countries (Shapshak, 2013). The Uberization of the economy (Davis, 2015; Walker, 2015), is a catchphrase for what has been recently coined the gig economy’s thrust into nearly every traditional marketplace for goods and services. The gig economy and its associated technologies are often portrayed as enabling better use of capital and idle assets to benefit consumers (Cusumano, 2014, p. 32; Rogers, 2015, p. 90). Belk (2014) sums up these benefits as distributing what’s ours to others for their use and the act of receiving what’s theirs for our use In gig economy lingua franca, the Uber app is presented as enabling “capitalist acts between consenting adults” (Rogers, 2015, p. 87).

The Uber app is the window of Uber algorithmic materiality. On the rider side, the app proposes an interactive geo-localization system which enables riders to obtain a faster ride, monitor the progress of their Uber drivers and pay via card payment (Rassman, 2015, pp. 82–83). Riders access a series of information on the drivers (picture, registration number, Uber ratings and estimated time of arrival), can calculate the price of the ride beforehand, share their itineraries with their family and friends, and split fare bills with other riders. When the ride is over, riders have to rate their drivers before being able to access other rides.
On the driver side, the GPS app navigates directly to the riders’ location and informs him of riders’ names. The app informs drivers via their smartphones of the aggregated results of their weekly and biweekly customer’s ratings. Uber Technologies submit drivers and riders to constantly changing prices. Uber management claims that prices changes are being calculated objectively by the Uber algorithm based on a supply and demand ratio, which varies according to when and where Uber drivers are on the road (Rosenblat and Stark, 2015). Yet Uber can alter the base rates its drivers can charge and also kick drivers off the Uber platform if they fall below a certain customer rating (Rosenblat & Stark, 2015).

South African taxi associations like many others worldwide, cry afoul and protest at Uber’s ability to seemingly bypass regulations. They readily point out that Uber presented as a mere service platform and drivers as independent contractors who are free to work at their convenience, is disingenuous. For the South African established industry, “the Uber app has merely replaced the call centre that most taxi companies operate” (Gedye, 2015).

Based on field notes and transcribed interviews, our analysis also draws upon key events and institutional struggles surrounding Uber between 2009 and 2015. We identify three processual characteristics of the Uber algorithmic materiality – calculative, disruptive and evaluative. First, despite the claims that the supply and demand ratio is setting the price, the imperceptability and the opaqueness of Uber’s control of the relationship between data and algorithm has affected the material enactment and social configuration between riders and drivers. Second, the active inclusions and exclusions enacted via the Uber app feed a perpetual internal and external struggle between the public and the private institutional reality of being an Uber driver. Finally, the customers’ rating which is supposedly the most transparent practice has made Uber drivers and riders become attuned to forms of algorithmic control.

Our research seeks to address a recent call of a stronger consideration for materiality within the neo-institutional literature in two significant ways. Firstly, the relational ontology stance avoids conflating macro and micro level of analysis of the current institutional struggles raging between Uber and local taxi associations and taxi operators by concentrating on the material discursive practices enacted via the Uber app/Uber drivers’ arrangement. Through a practice lens perspective, our focus interrogates how institutional phenomena are constituted in everyday practices and consequentially shaped by institutional dynamics (Orlikowski and Scott, 2015:206). Second, by adopting an agential realist stance of technology in practice, we view the material as part of a sociomaterial ensemble (Orlikowski 2000), contrasting with the classic neo-institutional accounts, which often privilege social over material and the discursive over the material.

References


Contemporary working environments are increasingly characterized by the proliferation of digital technologies and software applications. Within modern offices occupied by managers, accountants, analysts, marketers, and business analysts this includes the extensive use of word processing and e-spreadsheet packages as these software suites have become particularly ubiquitous in the everyday process of managing and organizing. Whilst there have been various studies of high-end software used in the worlds of finance and trading, architecture and design, or engineering and safety planning (Knorr-Cetina & Grimpe, 2008; Yaneva, 2014; Leonardi, 2012), one of the key technological artefacts underlying much of modern organizational work – the digital spreadsheet – has received much less attention as a focus of inquiry. This lacuna is particularly significant when one thinks how deeply institutionalized spreadsheet technologies have become in organizational work and the sheer diversity of its usage: forecasting models, performance metrics, schedules, to-do lists, Gantt charts, or tables and graphs are all frequently fabricated and visualized using spreadsheet technologies. Furthermore, through complicated adaptations and programming scripts these are used to develop sophisticated rankings and ready-made file sets that yield management accounting devices that are easily transferable across sites. We can also see examples where spreadsheet tables are used to store and distribute economic and demographic statistical information by major knowledge brokers such as the Office for National Statistics. In this way, it not only subsists in the work of management, but could also be seen as a central material dimension underlying the institutional dynamics and processes of organizing.

In order to explore the status, attraction and application of these technologies in practice, this paper draws on two extensive ethnographic case studies within the public sector. This includes an examination of the application of spreadsheet devices and calculative practices within a local strategy think tank connected to a regional council and the management of primary and secondary education within the UK. Based on participant observation, informal chats, and documentary evidence the research focuses on the ways in which practices of summing up, collecting and allocating are performed through meetings whereby tables and figures are negotiated, teased out and tested. In the case of the think tank, we will examine in greater depth the process of securing funding from central government and the internal evaluation of grants proposals. The unit used Microsoft Excel to perform a plethora of organizational and managerial practices such as modelling the regional economy, building future scenarios, devising ranking methodologies, performing cost-benefit analysis, and more. While electronic spreadsheets are used extensively, our attention was particular drawn to the differing ‘material aspects’ of the software, as enacted through print-outs, conversations, visual queues, coloring and formatting, automation and/or formula usage. These are not always electronic or digital but are enacted through various collective encounters and assemblages (Delezue & Guattari, 1987) that open and close spaces for contemplation, consideration and action. Moreover, while certain focal points may be seen as ‘driving the action’, such as ‘credible numbers’, or ‘the right decision’, these are also shaped and reshaped through the ways in which the technologies are engaged with, provoked, challenged, or taken for granted.

The second case will also explore the use of spreadsheet technologies through a detailed examination of management in practice. This will include focusing on the enactment of decisions, metrics and new spaces of interaction and intervention that underlies the process of performance measurement in terms of the assessment, ranking and spacing of pupils, teachers and schools. Through a focus on specific meetings and related practices we seek to explore in greater detail the making of particular categories and objects (e.g. ‘borderline cases’) and how these bring together
both ‘local’ enactments and ‘national’ standards and metrics. A detailed analysis of ‘what counts’ and ‘how they are counted’ during this morphogenetic process of dividuation and individuation (e.g. ‘problematic’ students; forms of intervention) raises some fascinating questions and implications not only for the school, but also for pupils and teachers and how they perform their roles within these complex spaces of action and interaction. In order to develop the notion of ‘energized spaces’ this paper will build upon Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) theory of smooth and striated spaces and Latour’s (2012; 2013) recent exploration of organization as a mode of existence. This includes examining artefacts and their associated engagements as ‘points of intensity’ whereby gradients of energy and force permeate through different socio-material assemblages of calculating, measuring, quantifying, ranking, and accounting. Additionally, viewing these cases through the lens of energized spaces underscores the interrelatedness of the digital and the non-digital, the electronic and the analog, the visual and the auditory, and how management and organization practices are performed through different degrees of theses mediums. For instance, how the visual presence of a ranking table has the propensity of accelerating discussions or diminishing them. Or how the absence of a computer screen might divert concerns from specific problems to others by amplify the sense of objectivity of particular forms of facts. Finally, this framework attempts to bypass the established separation between the tangible and intangible, the objective and subjective, discursive and material and other binaries based on things as discreet, essentialist entities (or what Barad (2007) refers to as a shift towards ‘agential realism’) and enables an exploration of the continuities of these institutionalized technologies and their affect on processes and practices of organizing and management.

References


The space of possibilities: How ICT affords or constrains the spatial practices of organisations. The case of collaborative research in business schools

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What happens to physical space in our age of connected devices? How is the real world affected by the increasingly vast virtual world? The example of mobile connected devices illustrates an effect that can be generalised to most connected devices. The increasing use of information and communications technology along with the availability of affordable high-speed connectivity to the Internet rivets us to screens over long hours each day. Much can be done via our devices: work, watch television, book theatre tickets, plan trips, chat with friends and colleagues, learn a new language, etc. When more and more activities can be engaged in anytime and anywhere (in theory) via connected devices, it can only seem logical that some effect on the way we design, use and experience physical space will be at play. Exploring this effect on organisational spaces will be the focus of this paper.

Investigations on the effect of information and communications technology on physical space have already been undertaken in the area of human geography. There is a sizeable body of literature on mobility underpinned by information and communication technology. However little work has been done on the relationship between organisational space and ICT - especially connected devices. Organisation studies and management literature have extensively examined how physical spaces of organisations are related to organising, but ICT is remarkably absent. Organisational space is attracting increasing attention from researchers across a multitude of disciplines. It has traditionally been taken for granted in organisational studies and management literatures. With the combined and mutually reinforcing processes of globalisation and informatisation, the space we inhabit as members of society has been undergoing a noticeable transformation. They are processes underpinned by information and communication technologies. Manuel Castells has proposed to call the result of these processes ‘The Network Society’. Emerging from this new society are concepts such as the virtual world, mobility, liquid modernity and the space of flows. Each of these new concepts has been developed in dialectical opposition to what seems to have defined the traditional view of space as being real, relatively immutable (solid), and fixed to defined places with historical significance.

According to Jones (2009) “(...) new ICT has both facilitated an organisational response to globalisation as well as fostering new forms of working practices which in turn are enacted in a reconfigured material formal space”. This is a view supported by both Bauman and Castells. However little, if any, empirical research has been undertaken on the sort of role ICT plays in this spatial transformation of organisations. It is therefore the purpose of this project to study the relationship between ICT and organisational space. Thus, the following broad question was initially posed: How do ICTs and spatial practices shape each other in organisations? The spatial transformation described above can be illustrated with what is happening to the McLennan-Redpath Complex of McGill University. This complex houses the library collection for the Humanities and Social Sciences for the university. The traditional spatial practice of making books available on shelves for consultation (with tables and chairs provided) has been slowly yielding to the new spatial practice of providing a workspace for students to work on their portable devices and meet for group work.

Printed matter in the form of books and journals are being moved to the archives to make room for more workspace. The digitisation of books and journals has made the Real World Virtual World Fixity physical artefacts increasingly redundant. Stacks of books are now used as partitions between workspaces due to their excellent soundproofing characteristics. More catering facilities (dining areas and vending outlets) have been created to offer students a space to take breaks and meet. Students can consult books and journals online, but still require adequate installations and high quality
network connectivity. The library is transforming the physical space using the existing material (stacks of books) to adapt to new spatial practices. Students use social media (the library remains a quiet zone) to organise breaks. The above example, albeit simplified for the purposes of illustration, shows how ICT allows for the disappearance of one embodied presence, only to be replaced with another one. Students are liberated from the constraint of having to go to the library to consult references. They can do it from anywhere they can get an Internet connection. By mobilising the Gibsonian notion of affordances and taking the opportunity to study an organisational space currently undergoing extensive transformation, the following research question and case is put forward: How does ICT afford or constrain the spatial practices of organisations? The case of collaborative research in business schools.

The research question is best suited for a qualitative approach since the aim is to unpack the manner in which spatial practices are deployed in a specific setting – the research setting in business schools in this instance. Contextual sensitivity (Silverman, 2015; Benbasat et al., 1987) can only be ensured with a qualitative method since a quantitative approach would require a certain level of abstraction that would numb the researcher to the locale of the phenomenon as it unfolds. This is especially of importance given the research question is located in an under-theorised part of the literature. The research question mobilises two main concepts – affordance of ICT and spatial practices in organisations - and seeks to study the relationship between the two. The concept of affordance of ICT is well established in the IS literature, albeit with a variety of interpretations (Pozzi & al. 2014). The concept has its origins in developmental psychology and took form with the work of James J. Gibson in 1977 with the chapter The Theory of Affordances in the book titled Perceiving, Acting, and Knowing: Toward an Ecological Psychology edited by Robert Shaw and John Bransford. Affordance as developed by Gibson is the range of possibilities offered by an environment. Although these possibilities can be considered essential aspects of the surroundings, they can only be defined in relation to an actor situated within it. As the actor interacts with the environment, they will perceive available possibilities for action. It is within this context of possible actions – or affordances – that the actor will pursue their objectives. Hutchby (2001) was the first to apply the concept of affordances to ICT artefacts (Pozzi & al. 2014) in demonstrating the technological shaping of sociality. Since then, the affordances of ICT have been the subject of a range of studies and essays in Information Systems, Organisation Studies and Management disciplines. As a result, the concept has been adapted to suit particular investigative needs, but also enhanced to provide researchers with a more balanced framework. This is what Fayard & Weeks propose in Affordances for Practice (2014) by taking into account social affordances alongside technological ones in order to avoid a deterministic approach. In their view, practices in organisations are underpinned by the range of social and technological affordances offered to actors by the environment. These sets of affordances are described as affordances for practice.

Although the concept of affordance has been developed in terms of the possibilities offered by the interaction an actor has with the environment, it can also logically be described in terms of constraints (or limitation of possibilities). The result of the actorenvironment interaction can result in constraining action just as easily as affording it. If we are to accept affordance rooted in essential properties of the environment, the same essential properties can lead to constraint. In the same way that Fayard & Weeks (2014) entangle the social and technological, constraint is dependent on the social context as much as affordance. Although the explicit consideration of constraints as the other side of the same coin as affordances is limited to psychology (Ricio & Stoffregen 1988), it is frequently presented as its pendant in more recent literature in Information Systems, Organisational Studies and Management (Majchrzak & Markus 2012). Affordance and constraint are therefore conceptually the result of the same situated interaction between actor and environment. The concept of affordance incorporates both possibilities and constraints at the same level.
In this study, we define affordance as the range of possibilities or constraints on organisational practices resulting from the interaction between a situated actor and essential properties of ICT. Although this may seem to follow the determinism Fayard & Weeks try to address (2014), the taking into account of the situatedness of the organisational actor should ensure that social affordances (or constraints) are not negated. This therefore makes it possible to isolate affordances (or constraints) of ICT for the purpose of addressing the research question stated above.

It is also interesting to note that the concept of affordances has already been used for spatial considerations (see William Gaver 1991 « Sequential affordances... »). Although a theory of social practices has been developed by sociologists such as Bourdieu (1980) or de Certeau (1990) and taken up by many researchers in Management and Organisational Studies, study of spatial practices in organisations has remained limited for many years. This is despite the fact that spatial practices are generative of organisational space and that all evidence points to the importance of space in the organising process. Henri Lefebvre’s theory on the production of space provides the most useful (and used) conception of spatial practices (Lefebvre, 1991). According to him, a spatial practice allows a member of society to connect daily routines with the network composed of places and routes making up the reality of urban life. It is a practice (within the perceived space of his triad) simultaneously shaping space and shaped by space. It is the perception of space that determines how these daily routines evolve and eventually structure daily life and social reality.

Many studies mobilise Lefebvre’s spatial triad when examining organisational space. However, few actually focus on the daily routines in detail. It is at this level that the process of the constitution of space can be broken down into well-defined and recognisable parts. Despite this gap in knowledge of spatial practices in organisations, many studies on social practices, more broadly, exist in the literature. According to the Lefebvrian worldview, spatial practices have a phenomenological basis centred on the human body. The geometric and mechanical properties – the specific manner in which our organs, bones and joints are put together – determine the scope of possibilities for spatial practices. Walking and sitting are some of the basic spatial practices made possible by our bodies and also shared with our primate cousins. More evolved and complex spatial practices such as opening and closing drawers, sitting at a dinner table to eat or just typing away on a keyboard are just as much based on the basic properties of the human body as sitting and walking. Spatial practices are so taken for granted, it almost seems ludicrous to conceptualise them. Sitting at a desk or walking into a shop are all spatial practices which seem like obvious and inevitable ways of spatially organising the wide variety of human activity of our contemporary societies. However, as Lefebvre and others point out, these spatial practices are the result of a combination of what our bodies and the physical environment afford along with a historically contingent social process ensuring one practice becomes institutionalized while alternatives don’t. Why sit at a dining table to eat when one can sit on the floor? Any Westerner not ever having been invited to a traditional family home in India will find such a question quite strange. That is because spatial practices are the result of social processes that become so embedded in daily routines over time, that questioning them becomes unusual. It is this taken-for-granted aspect of spatial practices that makes their study so challenging and yet incredibly fascinating. Our focus will be on the relationship between these spatial practices and the affordances of ICT.

In order to conceptualise the relationship between spatial practices and the affordances of ICT, one existing study seems particularly useful and relevant. Paul Leonardi looked at how engineers in the automotive industry were afforded or constrained by ICT in their daily routines and how constraints were often overcome by adapting the ICT to their needs (Leonardi 2011). In this study, Leonardi develops a conceptual framework relating the essential properties of ICT with the daily routines – or practices of the engineers - to analyse how they responded to the affordances on offer from, and constraints imposed, by the technology. He also develops the concept of organizational infrastructure supporting daily routines, and how these daily routines in turn construct this
infrastructure. By adding a Lefebvrian ‘twist’ to Leonardi’s framework, we can focus on spatial practices (as part of daily routines) and equally narrow infrastructure to organisational space. The resulting theoretical framework can then be summarised with the diagram below. The illustration reflects a process in the ongoing interaction between the essential properties of ICT and the spatial practices of actors in organizational settings. Leonardi (2011) provides two major contributions useful for this study. Firstly, he firmly establishes, based on the literature, the proposition that there is a strong relationship between ICT and organisational routines. Secondly, he proceeds with theorising this relationship based on the notions of affordance, constraint and the imbrication of human and material agencies. Spatial practices can also be referred to as spatial routines and are a subset of organisational routines. Since the relationship between organisational routines and ICT can be theorised, so can the relationship between spatial practices and ICT. In order to do this, we will need to adapt Leonardi’s framework.

In his study, Leonardi focuses on the imbrication of human and material agency, and how this affects change either on organisational routines or technology over time. The manner in which the imbrication takes place is determined by the perception by human agents of what is afforded (or constrained) by either existing organisational routines or technology. Although equal consideration is given to the affordances (or constraints) of organisational routines and technologies, Leonardi’s framework and study focus on technology. Although never making any specific references to organisational space, Leonardi’s framework lends itself very easily to a study of organisational space using Gibson’s concept of affordance. Leonardi makes the point that it is the perception of affordances offered by technology that is of interest rather than any essential property since what is enacted as an affordance depends on the perception of the human agent. This is identical to Lefebvre’s concept of perceived space as part of his theoretical triad.

Fieldwork on two of the three sites (McGill and JBS) has been completed with data having been collected from interviews, direct observation and archives. This corpus of data is still undergoing analysis and findings will be presented in the full version of this paper.

References


Investigating the impact of abusive supervision on knowledge sharing & mediating factors

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Major barriers to implementing knowledge management systems in firms are neither the systems themselves nor the technologies behind them, but rather individual employees within these firms (E. F. Cabrera & Cabrera, 2005; A. Cabrera, Collins, & Salgado, 2006; Wang & Noe, 2010). In fact, knowledge hoarding is quite prevalent in the workplace, as knowledge can be perceived by individuals as a source of power and competitive advantage (A. Cabrera & Cabrera, 2002; French & Raven, 1959). However, knowledge sharing is an important tool for firms to progress, making employees and overall organization to perform better. Hence, the question arises of how can firms nurture knowledge sharing among their employees? More especially in SMEs, employees are at the core of firms operation: they carry a wealth of knowledge within themselves as the scale of operations is small and limited, thus knowledge management is extremely critical in SMEs; thus, the relationship between employee & supervisor within organizations is crucial to investigate.

Supervisors play an important role in the direction, evaluation, and coaching of employees. Some supervisors are supportive, fostering subordinates’ abilities and empowering them to achieve their goals (House, 1996, Shoss et. al 2012). In contrast, other supervisors humiliate, belittle, or otherwise treat subordinates derisively (i.e., abusive supervision; Tepper, 2000). We define abusive supervision as “subordinates’ perceptions of the extent to which their supervisors engage in sustained displays of hostile verbal and non-verbal behaviors (excluding physical contact)” (Tepper, 2000). Examples of abusive supervision include intimidation, threats of job loss, aggressive eye contact, and humiliating or ridiculing someone in front of others (Tepper, 2000). Employees targeted with such abuse often experience negative consequences such as job and life dissatisfaction, psychological distress, low self-esteem, decreased morale and lowered citizenship behavior (Burton & Hoobler, 2006; Tepper, 2000; Tepper, Henle, Lambert, Giacalone, & Duffy, 2008; Zellars, Tepper, & Duffy, 2002).

While the prevailing literature considers abusive supervision as it occurs in corporate settings, the abuse of employees in SMEs is virtually unexplored. When the number of employees is small, the negative reactions of employees to supervisory abuse will have a proportionally greater impact (Meglich & Esley, 2011). Employees who are abused by their supervisors are more likely to commit deviant acts against the organization (e.g. purposely damage equipment or supplies, deliberately waste company supplies), against their direct supervisor (e.g. disobey supervisor’s instructions, interfere with or block supervisor’s work) and to quit their jobs (Tepper et al., 2009).

Recent epidemiological studies report that between 10% and 16% of working people claim that their supervisors regularly exhibit abusive behaviour (Namie & Namie, 2000). There is a paucity of studies examining how a supervisor’s behaviour, and particularly abusive supervision, may become a barrier to knowledge sharing between employees, which further impacts work performance and employee wellbeing. Previous studies have noted that knowledge sharing is influenced by organizational, motivational, and individual factors (Wang & Noe, 2010). Specifically, researchers found that trust, justice, a cooperative organizational culture, and management support are positively related to knowledge sharing at the individual level (Wang & Noe, 2010). In our paper, we examine abusive supervision as a barrier to knowledge sharing. Furthermore, we also explore the role of co-worker support and organizational support as mediating factors.

Hogan, Raskin, and Fazzini (1990) found that 60 to 75 percent of employees viewed their immediate supervisor as the worst aspect of their job, and Aasland, Skogstad, Notelaers, Nielsen, & Einarsen (2010) found between 33 and 61 percent of employees reported immediate supervisors with consistent and frequent destructive leadership behaviours. Keashly (2001) finds that the abusive
behaviours are those behaviours that are alleged as thoughtless of an individual’s integrity and frequently result in hurting or damaging the targeted individual. Duffy et al. (2002) describe the abusive behavior as a behaviour that negatively affects an individual’s ability in creating and maintaining relations with others, in achieving success related to work and favourable standing. (Murari 2013) Researchers found that abusive supervision was negatively related to subordinates’ organizational citizenship behaviours in a study conducted with Air National Guard members (Zellers, Tepper and Duffy, 2002). Tepper (2000) found that individuals, who perceived their supervisors to be abusive, were more likely to quit the organization. Of the people who remained with the organization, subordinates who perceived their supervisor to be abusive showed lowered job and life satisfaction, along with a reduction in normative and affective commitment. Also, individuals reported experiencing higher levels of psychological distress. Other research also showed reduced job satisfaction among subordinates who experience abuse in the workplace (Tepper, Duffy, Hoobler & Ensley, 2004; Schat, Demarias & Kelloway, 2006). Researchers have also reported negative relationship between abusive supervision and organizational commitment in addition to what Tepper (2000) reported (Duffy, Ganster & Pagon, 2002; Schat, et al., 2006). Research also suggests that victims of abusive supervision report higher intentions to quit (Schat, et al., 2006).

However, and although individuals are receiving negative treatments from their abusive supervisors, they may perceive that they are getting support from their co-workers, their family, their organization and/or sometimes through divine interventions. This support may offset the negative effects of abusive supervision on their knowledge sharing. Thus, individuals subject to abusive supervision may be less likely to reduce their knowledge sharing behaviour if they are obtaining support from their organization or from their coworkers. Therefore, we will explore if providing support from different sources can serve as a buffer for reducing the negative effects of abusive supervision on knowledge sharing. Individuals have distinct perceptions about key actors within their organization, and behave differently in response to these perceptions (Lavelle, Rupp, & Brockner, 2007). The organization, the supervisor, and one’s co-workers are three major partners or sources of social influence in a workplace; it is meaningful to investigate how support from these different sources may interact with and influence individuals’ discretionary behaviors, however, during initial interviews with two firms we found that people in India have high socio-emotional values making people in need of moral support and encouragement, from co-workers, from the organization or from self-believed divine powers through prayers. To an extent this helps them to come out of the situation. Much of this work has focused on revenge and retaliatory behaviors, actions that are designed to inflict injury or discomfort on the person who is judged responsible for having caused harm (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997), but very little exists on the effects on knowledge sharing behaviour of employees. Based on the literature and interviews that we conducted, we propose to empirically test the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Abusive supervision has negative effects on employee Knowledge sharing.

Hypothesis 2: Organizational support moderates the effect of abusive supervision on knowledge sharing.

Hypothesis 3: Co-worker support moderates the effect of abusive supervision on knowledge sharing.

References


Artifacts as learning tools: Evidence from medical practice

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Improvisation is considered an increasingly relevant topic for organizations (Crossan and Sorrenti, 1997; Weick, 1998; King and Ranft, 2001). We considered to study improvisation in medical practice since it is believed to be “an art and a science” (Haïdet, 2007; Saunders, 2000), and it embeds much improvisation, as it requires the adaptation of behaviors and performances. Despite the high level of regulations, medical practice presents some characteristics make it an interesting context to study, observe and analyse improvisation. The paper deals with critical case where the manifestation of improvisation allowed the researchers to replicate or expand the existing theory (Eisenhardt, 1989, Plowman et al., 2007). The study tried to answer to the following research question: How does improvisation emerges in environments characterized by the existence of a large number of procedural controls? What are the conditions/circumstances allowing improvisation? The attempt to answer such questions unveiled the existence of several artifacts.

This research was conducted through an ethnographic grounded theorizing (Suddaby, 2006). To this extent, empirical evidence provided the basis for extending the knowledge on improvisation. At the same time, the use of ethnography helped us keep the research question within a certain latitude to incorporate the nature of the events that occurred at the site of research (Locke, 2001). We used observational methods, interviewees, and daily interactions. Learning, artifacts, organizational improvisation and medical practice. From our observations we can highlight the existence of several artifacts that worked as two-sided mechanism. On one hand, the artifacts helped the medical practice learning process since it exhibited the procedures to follow, for example, in case of a cardiac arrest. On the other hand, artifacts help physicians comply with administrative procedures in order to meet accreditation standards. Despite the shift from the traditions experience/intuit-based medical practice to evidence-based medicine (EBM), the difference between codified and tacit knowledge (Edmondson et al., 2003) we registered that in medical practice tacit knowledge is yet transferred (Nelson and Winter, 1982) in an improvised way. While the internal systems seek to standardize the available and useable knowledge, causing a shift in the learning paradigm, in practice, knowledge transmission behaviours remain the same.

In medical practice low level learning enabled by repetitive behaviours, as routines, is enacted through administrative procedures that have to be completed along with medical practice. In such a context, improvisation offers new opportunities for learning as it occurs through heuristics and the rise of new points of view. To this extent improvisation materializes in a non-routinized manner (e.g., development of complex rules and structures to deal with the lack of control and in an ambiguous context), as learning through improvisation (Fiol and Lyles, 1985). Artifacts play a crucial role in both types of learning since they help consolidate routinized and non-routinized procedures and constant remind the importance of rules for medical practice.

In medical practice, learning with real life situations will allow broadening physicians’ knowledge and improvisational skills (Davis, 2000; Fragata and Martins, 2004), allowing the development of the adaptability and flexibility that is needed for an accurate performance. Improvisation is the mechanism that is used to develop physicians’ abilities through practice. It allows capitalizing que experience that is obtained from unpredictable situations that characterize this profession (Crabtree, 2003; Pfeffer and Sutton, 2006), supported by the existence of artifacts that are used to sustain learning and comply with the restrictions from accreditation standards and pressures from society.
References


Risky Heuristics

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Risk is pivotal in interorganizational collaborations (IC). By risk we mean “the extent to which there is uncertainty about whether potentially significant and/or disappointing outcomes of decisions will be realized” (Sitkin & Weingart, 1995: 1575). Risk within ICs posits an interesting theoretical puzzle. On the one hand, organizations are dependent on collaboration across environments increasingly dynamic and governed by loose arrangements. On the other hand, managerial intervention aimed to minimize the risks for organizations is a “tempting solution” (as the unintended consequences are largely unknown). Facing these decisions and under scarcity of information and time, managers resort to cognitive shortcuts useful for fast decision-making, that is, heuristics (Bingham & Eisenhardt, 2011; Kahneman, 2011). A celebrated claim among managers is that risk is manageable (Kahneman, 2011; Shapira, 1995). This view is often related to the proliferation of risk management (Beck, 1992; Power, 2004). Not only risk is thought to be manageable, but managers are also expected to minimize risk. Hence, further insight on how managers deal with risk impacts on the dynamics of ICs is theoretically important. Firstly, managers initiate feedback processes about risk assessments for which they rely on heuristics for fast decisions (Bingham & Eisenhardt, 2011; Kahneman, 2011). Secondly, managers constantly received, interpret, and send clues (Knight, 1921; Power, 2004; Slovic, 1993), such that management of risk perceptions has become as important as the actual risk (Shapira, 1995; Slovic, 1993; Taleb, 2001). Prior research has focused on the performance risk – the probability that intended goals may not be achieved (Das & Teng, 1998; Slovic, 1993). Performance risk is well documented, for instance, the probability of loss materialized in extra costs (Park & Ungdon, 2001; Stinchcombe, 1985). While performance risk arises from the firm-environment interaction, firm-firm interaction shapes relational risk – the probability that a partner might fail to cooperate (Das & Teng, 1998; Nooteboom, Berger, & Noorderhaven, 1997). Drawing on sociology (Burt, 1992; Coleman, 1988; Granovetter, 1973), research suggests that when organizations have multiple ties (i.e. high density) risk of uncooperative behavior is lower due to social control mechanisms (Mariotti & Delbridge, 2012; Uzzi, 1997). Although instructive, the role of managers in dealing risk by actively carry out risk management within ICs remain poorly understood. Against this backdrop, we argue that bringing together the heuristics and the social network perspectives is a fruitful approach to understand on how managers deal with risk impacts on increasingly complex ICs.

Heuristic documented, for instance, the probability of loss materialized in extra costs (Park & Ungdon, 2001; Stinchcombe, 1985). While performance risk arises from the firm-environment interaction, firm-firm interaction shapes relational risk – the probability that a partner might fail to cooperate (Das & Teng, 1998; Nooteboom, Berger, & Noorderhaven, 1997). Drawing on sociology (Burt, 1992; Coleman, 1988; Granovetter, 1973), research suggests that when organizations have multiple ties (i.e. high density) risk of uncooperative behavior is lower due to social control mechanisms (Mariotti & Delbridge, 2012; Uzzi, 1997). Although instructive, the role of managers in dealing risk by actively carry out risk management within ICs remain poorly understood. Against this backdrop, we argue that bringing together the heuristics and the social network perspectives is a fruitful approach to understand on how managers deal with risk impacts on increasingly complex ICs.

Given the scarcity of prior research, we followed a case study approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Yin, 1994). We studied 40 organizations in a UK-based £50 million building project completed between 2006 and 2008. The building industry, among the world’s largest, was a suitable setting as building projects are complex settings remarkable for high performance risk (e.g. financial losses) and relational risk (e.g. dysfunctional collaboration). Our data sources entailed over 2,300 pages of project documentation complemented this with 12 interviews with managers. Consistent with prior research (Nooteboom et al., 1997; Shapira, 1995), we measured risk based on project manager’s monthly reports on: (1) the probability that something will go wrong; and (2) amount of the loss
incurred. The probability (p) of a risk to be materialized had six levels: highly likely (over 95%); likely (50-95%); fairly likely (21-49%); unlikely (2-20%); very unlikely (.5-2%); and, extremely unlikely (up to 0.5%). The estimate of the loss size related to costs (c) and delays (d), and comprised five levels: disastrous (>£400,000; >30; severe (£200-400,000; 15-30 days); large (£50-200,000; 5-15 days); marginal (£10-50,000; 2-5 days); negligible (<£10,000; < 2 day days).

In the honey-moon phase, organizations hold mutual positive expectations. The client embraced the positive references from third-parties, “...references [about the builder] obtained from other clients were excellent” (meeting minute). Although risk was evaluated at £2.5 million at the start on site, the development of multiple ties among organizations (i.e. density) reduced the risk while organization collaborated to meet milestones for the progress on site.

The risk-control phase depicted a unexpected sharp rise in risk following reports of dysfunctional collaboration. Our analysis shows an intensification of managerial control. More surprisingly was the risk escalation as managers beefed up risk control (e.g. regular checks on site) which induced interaction patterns among organizations characterized by fewer ties (i.e. decrease of density), as shown in Figure 1. The fade-away phase depicted precarious collaboration among organizations and risk decreased as the project was nearly completed.

Our contribution is a theoretical framework of the unintended consequences that steam from the interplay between risk management and the dynamics of interorganizational networks. Thus far, research have focused on preventing or minimizing risk in complex ICs (Axelrod, 1984; Gulati, Wohlgemut, & Zhelyazkov, 2012; Ring & van de Ven, 1992). Based on the study of a building project – a typical complex setting, we extend this literature by showing how risk management might occasion different patterns of interaction among Risky Heuristics organizations leading to potentially significant and/or disappointing outcomes in collaborations. This paradox extends the literature on heuristics that has, thus far, focused on heuristics as useful cognitive shortcuts for managers (Bingham & Eisenhardt, 2011). We also contribute to the emergent literature on the genesis of dynamic interorganizational networks (Ahuja, Soda, & Zaheer, 2012) by shedding light on the role of risk management to explain how dense versus sparse network structures form and evolve (Coleman, 1988; Granovetter, 1973). Last but not least, our methodology illustrates how bringing together inductive research and sociometric techniques might assist scholars in making sense of the complexity that underlies collaboration among organizations.
Banks in times of the ‘Compte Nickel’ and mobile payment solutions: Do credit cards and agencies will disappear?

François Delorme (CERAG, Grenoble Université) and Céline Louche (Audencia Business School)

The banking sector is in full transformation due to technological changes. There are clear signs that some of its central and symbolic socio material elements are disappearing, namely the agency and the credit card. The objective of the paper is to study this phenomenon by investigating an illustrative case, the ‘Compte Nickel’ (CN).

CN is a French initiative started in 2014. The name ‘nickel’ refers to a French expression that alludes to the character neat and right of something. CN is ‘nickel’ (or right) because there are no overdraft facilities. It provides a bank full account number and a card that can be used to make purchases in France and abroad. Users can deposit money, make cash withdrawals, perform bank transfers or set up direct debits. The CN is distributed not in a bank but at newsagent’s shops. Moving the account from a banking agency to a newsagent’s shop constitutes a significant spatio-material change. If the CN keeps the usage of the credit card with basic services, the CN’s card differs from the regular credit cards in many aspects. The CN credit card is completely anonymous and neutral. The credit card is associated with a highly performing technology that permits the account to be activated in real time. Moreover there is no debit possible on the account. This last point is essential because it highlights an aspect studies in sociomateriality have somehow neglected but is essential in all financial activities: the role of technologies and objects in exerting control, whereas actors do it in the banking system.

A CN account can be open in a few minutes without an appointment in a bank agency and no eligibility criteria (personal income or minimum deposit amounts). There are no specific requirements except an ID document, 20 € and a mobile phone because code access are sent by SMS. This last artefact underlines the importance of technology and material agency.

The development of the CN is an interesting case as it tells us that banking agencies can disappear. Another example highlighting the potential disappearance of the conventional banks is the case of mobile payment solutions. If mobile banking is just emerging in France, it is already a reality in Africa. From a material point of view, banks are not always present in villages or even cities and ATMs are scarce. However mobile phones are numerous. As a result SIM cards have become a sort of bank account. Through mobile shops, which are everywhere (just like newsagents for the CN in France), it is possible to send money to somebody without cash. In Ethiopia, there are 10 billion bank accounts but 34 billion mobile phones. So 20 billion phones have the potential to become bank account.

We must also study the reasons of the success or the failure of new technology to understand the possible end of the credit card and bank agency. For example, few years ago, “moneo” was invented as an electronic purse system, launched in 1999 and stopped in July 2015. It was simply an application on the credit card, but it failed. Was the step towards ‘zero-cash one step too far? Mobile payment is a success in Africa where bank is absent in the daily sociomaterial reality. As Latour (1992) explained with the Aramis case, technology can failed. Nobody killed Aramis, but no one supported the project, in spite of its modernity. According to Callon and Ferrary (2006: 38): "Networks are a grammar of the forces and relations of forces": To explain the genesis of this expression, the authors take the example of the commercial failure of the electric car in the 70s: it could not dethrone the thermal car which had (and still has) a suitable and developed network. Coming back to the CN, it has been adopted beyond all expectations because users have developed their own practices, and shared them. In terms of number of clients: the first CN account was opened in February, 11, 2014; on the 15th of April 2015 it counted 100 000 clients (CN reached breakeven); and on the 8th of December 2015 it counted 200 000 clients. It is approximately 750 new accounts every day. In terms of the targeted clients, it has attracted customers well beyond its original target.
group. If 54% of CN clients have monthly incomes inferior to 1000 euros, 27% have between 1000 and 2000 and 19% have more than 2000 euros per month. Data show that 30% of the CN clients are unemployed while 45% are employed.

The literature in socio-materiality has focused its attention on the different links between material agencies and actors (Leonardi, 2010, 2011; Orlikowski, 1992, 2000, 2005, 2007; Latour, 1993, 1999; de Vaujany, 2015) either to understand how technology is influencing human actions or how humans construct, interpret and use technology. In this paper, we propose to refine the notion of material agency by making a distinction between technology and artefact as artefacts are inextricably entangled with materiality. We argue that the ‘intermingling’ between technology, artefact and actors deserves more attention. In the case of the CN, not only technology is playing a role but the banking agency as an artefact is key. The CN does not exactly eliminates the ‘agency’ but displaces it from the formal banking agency to the newsagent’ shop, putting the ‘bank’ back to places where it had disappeared (for economic « Alternatives Economiques », Janvier 2016, http://www.alternatives-economiques.fr/la-revolution-de-la-banque-mobile-en-ethiopie_fr_art_1418_74987.html reasons), and providing a space for new practices. Our case shows that the materiality is not exactly disappearing but actually transformed and moving places

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Materiality & identity: Jewish figurines and Polish contemporary identity

Yochanan Altman (Kedge BS), Mark A.P Davies (Heriot-Watt University) and Anita Proszowska (AGH University of Science and Technology in Kraków)

The aim of this paper is to bring to the fore the neglected issue of material(ity) identity by presenting empirical findings about cultural/ national/ religious artefacts and developing a discourse on their relevance to personal identities. The topic we explore is the sale and use of Jewish figurines in the context of Polish traditional folklore about their value as talisman, good luck omens, and amulets against bad luck as well as souvenirs. Despite the popularity of these collectibles that might at first glance be considered religiously influenced, the numbers of people professing the Jewish religion is extremely low.

We will show that these beliefs, traceable to medieval times, are interlinked with two critical current phenomena: consumerism and tourism, thereby making them contemporary and for some consumers, also of ‘new age’ relevance.

Based on two participant observation periods during the traditional Emmaus fare in Kraków, Poland (2014, 2015) we provide evidence from traders and buyers of these artefacts, supplemented by an opportunistic survey of local residents and interviews with tourist market stall holders.

Our research questions aim to understand how consumers make collecting decisions which may on the surface appear somewhat irrational, but which to those concerned can deliver purposeful meaning. Our primary interest is in establishing (1) the motives behind why people collect, that ‘a priori’ can be subdivided into (1) what they personally achieve by collecting at a group, or individual level, possibly through affirming social identity, and (2) how collecting might consolidate affiliation or solidarity at a more extensive, subcultural, level. Historical, cultural determinants of the observed phenomena Anti-Jewish literature began to appear in Poland since the end of the sixteenth century, which alleged that Jews were striving for economic domination amongst Christians. During the period of the Second World War, the Nazis punished by death all those who helped Jews to avoid concentration camps, in which some Poles ingratiated themselves with the occupiers in the belief that they would be spared. Poles had limited contact with others outside the country until their liberation toward a free market economy by 1989, which meant an over-reliance on propaganda and heresay until that time. Since 1989, there has been an influx of foreign capital together with growing tourists, who are interested in the achievements of Polish culture and economy. Poles then began to be more tolerant of differences in the customs and cultures of other communities or religions helped also by the high number of Polish expatriates in EU countries (Polish is the second language after English in the United Kingdom) exposed to other beliefs and ways of life. On the surface, Poles are proud of their Catholicism and consider themselves to be deeply religious, although declared Catholicism is rather superficial. Whilst deep faith should denounce the ownership of various secular talismans associated with financial success, many adult Poles appear superstitious.

Previous research into figurines of Orthodox Jews depicted with a coin (that symbolically indicates the holding of money) distinguished between two types of souvenirs: nice, elegant figurines (from 25 PLN to approximately 90 PLN); and cheap, simple, primitive figurines (from 8 PLN to 22 PLN).
Visits were conducted to sales agents, observations of buyers and sellers, and interviews with store buyers, including the Emmaus Fair 2015, in which buyers generally expected that the product would deliver good luck in business and financial success to the owner, reflecting the importance of superstition. However the figurines bought by both Polish and foreign tourists were not directly affected by buyers’ religion – since buyers varied in both their type and degree of religiosity. The types of figurines bought depended on the buyer’s lifestyle, wealth and age, with older buyers (40+) choosing more elegant and expensive products than younger people. However, only 3% of respondents were aware of the superstition attached to the ‘Jew with a coin’ figurines, skewed toward older, more conservative members of society. This suggests that these figurines are unlikely to become an important contemporary symbol of Jews as perceived by contemporary tourists visiting Krakow.

They also found that there is divided opinion about the figurines ranging from warm feelings to utter contempt. These memorabilia representing Orthodox Jews can be interpreted as either pleasant souvenirs or as grotesque anti-Semitic stereotypes of infirm, old men in traditional costumes and beard6 that dehumanize the authentic Jewish identity. Both interpretations are associated with superstition, in bringing wealth to the hosts, providing they are received as gifts rather than as direct purchases. But is this deep cultural context known to buyers and sellers of these products? Owners need to follow daily rituals in glancing at their figurines attached to their homes to guarantee the financial success of the day7. Further analysis will reveal whether this is another sign of anti-Semitism, sympathy for the Jewish nation, or a neutral superstition between national identities.

The current authors wish to build on the previous study and pursue additional research questions, acting as moderators of mixed focus groups based on tourist and religious status, and aim to elicit: How do purchases interact with everyday groups based on tourist and religious status, and aim to elicit: How do purchases interact with everyday lives? Once purchased, where are they displayed in private homes, and for what purpose? Do they impact on friends, family and siblings or to other institutional forces? Are stories told around the figurines and if so, at what times / events of the year? Do these figurines bond families together—or even nations? If so, how?

Can collecting become dysfunctional over time, creating an obsession with worshipping objects as material artefacts or as icons of decoration? Do the stories above facilitate / recreate pleasant or unpleasant memories in historical periods of significance? A follow-up survey of consumers will be conducted. Sampling will comprise of quotas based on collectors, and non-collectors, partitioned by tourists and non-tourists, and further partitioned by Polish Catholics, Orthodox Jews and atheists/agnostics within two major open market locations in Poland. These groups will be compared for their motives, including impact of superstition, rituals, and dysfunctional behaviour, with sources thereof identified, where relevant. From this, we aim to add to our understanding of theories on collecting and buyer behavior.

If these artefacts were sold previously then it must have been occurring in very small amounts. In the Krakow area Jewish figurines have been present for the longest time in the Emmaus tradition of the Easter Monday. Evaluation of the wealth of buyers was carried out by researchers based on their verbal declarations and external appearance during the interview.
The social materiality of cross-cultural encounters: The case of Danish Police officers in the Greenland police

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There has been a recent turn towards social materiality and a spatial dimension in organization studies. However, the theoretical purchase of these studies often resigns discrete material objects to “envelopes of meaning” (Pels et al., 2002, cited in Engeström and Blackler, 2005: 308) as passive carriers of discursive or symbolic meanings. Subsequently, Hatch (2011: 356) calls for new modes of conceptualization around the material and symbolic elements of organizations and their culture, suggesting that “the core phenomena of organizations are not independent of one another, but efforts to recognize their interdependence requires new approaches to theorizing able to confront the complexities involved”. Theoretically, this need for new theoretical orientations to explore the relationship between socio-materiality, organizations and culture in particular has resulted in a plurality of theories drawing from among other actor network theory (Alcadipani and Hassard, 2010; Latour, 2005), feminism and post-humanism (Barad, 2014; Haraway, 2000), organizational studies on power (Clegg and Kornberger, 2006; Ropo et al., 2013; Zhang and Spicer, 2014), and the body and embodiment (Dale and Latham, 2015; Kenny and Fotaki, 2015; Pullen and Rhodes, 2015).

Despite the budding popularity in other corners of organization studies, the majority of diversity and cross-cultural management has been dominated by social-psychological and discourse-oriented approaches, which has led to a downplaying of the spatial-material context (Benschop & Van den Brink 2013, Zanoni et al., 2010). As a result the socio-material and physical (spatial) aspects of cross-cultural encounters are often overlooked or conceptualized as introductory, taken-for-granted background information, rendering the organizational space as an ‘immobilized’ container (Tatli et al 2011, Boogaard & Roggeband 2009, Zanoni & Janssens 2007, Holvino & Kamp 2009, Foucault 1984). The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the theorization of the relationship between socio-materiality, organizations and culture by focusing on the role of social materiality in cross-cultural encounters. We do so empirically through the analysis of ethnographic data from the Danish-Greenlandic police collaboration.

The case studied in this paper is focused on the Danish-Greenlandic police collaboration. The history of Greenland and Denmark dates back more than six centuries. Greenland became a part of Norway in 1261, and when Norway was joined with Denmark in 1380, Greenland came under Danish rule (Rosing, 1999). In 2008 the majority of the Greenlandic people voted for more autonomy from Denmark. The result of the vote came into effect on June 21st, 2009, which also happened to be Greenland’s National Day. It was left up to Greenland to decide when they would take over responsibility for most of the areas still ruled by the Danish government at the time. In 2015, Denmark contributed a block grant to Greenland of more than 3.5 billion DKK annually, and continued to have the power of government over foreign and defense policy, as well as the military and police force. The Greenlandic Chief of Police reported directly to the Danish Minister of Justice, (through the Attorney General and the Danish National Police Commissioner) and the governance of the Greenlandic legal system remained with the Danish Parliament as well (Augustesen & Hansen, 2011; PM, 2010). In 2016 the Greenlandic police force is composed of approximately 1/3 Danish police officers and 2/3 Greenlandic police officers. The vast majority of the Danish officers are in Greenland on shorter stays, either on 2 years contracts or on 4-6 months summer assistance assignments.
The data collection for this paper started in February 2015, where a full week’s cross-cultural training program arranged by the Danish police school was observed. The participants on the course were the people going on summer assistance assignments in the summer 2015. In August we travelled to Greenland for 13 days to interview and observe police work in Greenland. We spend 6 days following the police work in Ilulissat, 4 days in Sisimiut and 3 days the airport-town Kangerlussuaq (combined during arrival and departure to and from Greenland). We took part in the daily live of the station. Met into the office at the same time as them, interviewed officers when possible and went on as many trips, patrols, house searches, arrests etc as we possibly could. Generally, we experienced 100% open access to the stations – even received our own key and were invited in on everything that happened during the time. The trip thus resulted in approximately 60 pages field notes and 13 interviews lasting between 1-2,5 hours. Before and after the trip additionally 12 interviews were conducted over satellite link from the main police station in Copenhagen.

Whereas we had expected to find collaboration difficulties stemming from for example colonial discourses and the use of stereotypes, we were surprised to find the degree to which material institutional dynamics placed a set of very specific boundaries for the legitimacy of the work performed in Greenland. More specifically how the social materiality of geographic distance and environment, artefacts like different police material and habitual professional behavior created specific difficulties for the Greenlandic police force to legitimate their work within the overall institution of the Danish police, which they in principle belonged to, but in material practice was very far from belonging to. Drawing on literature on post-colonialism and intercultural management, we explore how attention to the everyday experience of social material dynamics brings new possibilities for exploring organizational cultural dynamics of power, inter-cultural adjustment and cross-cultural learning. Rather than consider culture enactment in terms of active suppression or the discursive internalization of cultural regimes, we can see the complexity of cultural politics as emergent in the dependent relations between people, objects and relations.
The spatial and temporal configuration of Tech City as field: when control is not where it is expected to be

Sabine Carton, Carine Dominguez-Péry and Haraubia Imad Eddine (CERAG, Université de Grenoble)

Tech City UK (launched in November 2010 by British Prime Minister David Cameron) is both a label and a strategy for the United Kingdom. In the broad area of digital technologies and digital startups, it is at the heart of the economic dynamic of the country. In the context of this essay, we propose viewing Tech City not as a mere communication attempt, not as a usual public policy, not as a market (or effect of a market), but as a ‘field’ mainly structured by major events in the context of London. To capture this dynamic, we draw on the Field Configuring Event (FCE) theory as elaborated by neo-institutional literature.

An institutional field is a community of organizations that engage in common activities and are subject to similar reputational and regulatory pressures (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Such fields have been defined as “a network, or a configuration of relations between positions” (Bourdieu, 1992) and as “centers of debates in which competing interests negotiate over the interpretation of key issues” (Hoffman, 1999: 351). Institutional fields can be characterized by several elements. First, fields are “relational spaces that provide an organization with the opportunity to involve itself with other actors” (Wooten & Hoffman, 2008: 138). These spaces are structured spaces. Second, actors within an institutional field share common understandings: a “community of organizations that partakes of a common meaning system and whose participants interact more frequently and fatefully with one another than with actors outside the field” (Scott, 1995: 56). Third, fields are characterized by formal rules (Scott, 2001). Field-configuring events have been found to have an impact on all three aspects of institutional fields (Hardy & MacGuire, 2010). Thus, institutional fields are not part of a general linear model. Meyer et al. (2005) suggest new intellectual perspectives, such as field configuration and methodological heuristics that may facilitate investigation of fields that are far from equilibrium. They recommend conducting natural histories of organizational fields, and paying attention to turning points when fields are away from equilibrium.

The dynamics of institutional fields have also been studied via the concept of social skills (Fligstein, 2001). Fligstein focuses his attention on groups who form a field, the rules and resources available to skilled actors and their groups, the relations between fields, and the interpretation of relations within and across fields by skilled strategic actors within groups. Thus they focus on interactions in a field between artefacts, individuals, and spaces at a micro-level. Powell et al. (2005) also take part in this more general move in the social sciences to analyze momentum, sequences, turning points, and path dependencies by linking network topology and field dynamics. Thus, institutional fields can be conceptualized as mechanisms evolving in relational spaces. One actor takes note of another and through this process of referencing one another, actors bring a field into existence (Wooten & Hoffman, 2008). There are several definitions of FCE. Lampel & Mayer (2008) defined FCEs as temporary social organizations such as tradeshows, professional gatherings, technology contests, and business ceremonies that encapsulate and shape the development of professions, technologies, markets, and industries. FCEs are defined as settings where people from diverse social organizations assemble temporarily, with the conscious, collective intent to construct an organizational field. These events are microcosms of nascent technologies, industries, and markets. They are places where business cards are exchanged, networks are constructed, reputations are advanced, deals are struck, and standards are set (Meyer, Gaba & Colwell, 2005). In fact, research has mainly studied how FCEs help structure emerging fields (cf. Garud & Ahlstrom, 1997; Meyer et al., 2005; Rao, 1994) or help reproduce recurrently structuring mechanisms in stabilized fields (Anand & Watson, 2004). Our ambition here is to more extensively explore events and their relationship with fields, and to analyze the spatiality, materiality, and temporality of both constructs. We first undertake a meso-economic analysis of the field itself. By means of a chronological analysis of Tech City and an analysis of the
Tweets and Re-tweets on the topic, we show that Tech City is focused on a limited set of organizations and actors which convey its identity. We show that these relationships are quite structured. They are hierarchical, topical, and mainly focused on London’s territory. Our detailed analysis of a trade show (Internet World) also stresses the importance of the spatiality (how the trade show is organized and organizes participants and their industry in space), territoriality (where it is located in London) and materiality (the material practices of communication of participants and attendants) of the event.

Then, by means of an ethnography of a major event related to Tech City, the London Technology Week (and one of its Trade shows, Internet World), we zoom in on the microdynamic of the field. We show that the London Technology Week is a set of ever-expanding events. These events, by gathering a cluster of public and non-public structures, seem to play a major role in the social networks emerging. The trade show Internet World has existed since 1992 and was initiated by UBM. In 2014, the management team of UBM had the intuition that it was necessary to renew the concept in order to maintain visitor interest and to help further develop it. Inspired by Fashion week, UBM suggested creating a Tech Week event that would gather events from the whole High Tech community, and among those events, the Internet World trade show. To achieve this transformation, both the content and the concept of the trade show greatly evolved from 2013 to 2014. First, the content of Internet World went from a vendor-oriented content to an editorialized content, intended to be more personalized in response to visitors’ needs. To do so, the content was built in cooperation with the main actors of the ecosystem throughout the year via surveys, focus groups, or informal meetings between the organizer and the Tech industry. The objective being to deliver specialized content that can be compared to an educational program dedicated to a targeted public. Aligned with the educational model, Internet World within Tech City encourages hands-on experiences to deliver this content. Concretely, this takes the format of an Internet World Lab held by Microsoft lab and start-up pitches. One of the UBM directors said: “We historically don’t tend to get a lot of IT audience to the show. What would you want out of a show like ours? And, they said to us, we want more hands-on learning. We don’t want to just sit in and be told stuff. We want to actually have workshops and enhance our skills. So, that is why we came up with some of the Internet World Lab in the marketplace Theatre, which is a little bit more hands-on, a bit more engaging”. Second, the concept of the trade show has also evolved. Via Tech Week, the objective is not only to offer networking opportunities, but also to be a mirror of the Tech community by gathering its main representatives. By combining different events, the organizer wishes to created synergies among events to better serve visitors’ needs. This can take the form of self-service content “with no restrictions” for visitors that are curious as one visitor explained “So, this year, London Tech Week, which is what this event is part of, is a major city event that is pulling together something like 132 different events and forums and conferences. This week, I’ve got a range of those, including I’m going to the investors meeting on Thursday night. I’m also going to these Forester events, Gartner events, those enterprise architecture events, and it’s covering all aspects of information technology. But there are also things around actual technology innovation as well.” (Visitor, Internet World Trade Show).

Although UBM was initially reluctant to have other competitive trade shows participate in Internet World, taking place simultaneously with Internet World, at the end of the day, they accepted, believing that the community or ecosystem effect would bring more value than competition. These elements lead us to discuss the notions of “fields”, “events”, “space”, and “materiality” and their possible relationships with public policies. Both our meso-analysis and ethnography show that Tech City has become a major Tech ecosystem attracting numerous companies and startups to boost employment in the UK. Tech City has also resulted in a concentration of financial resources invested in real estate to reconfigure the architecture and territory of London. London, its new buildings, its new urbanism and territory, is widely diffused (e.g. by London Partners). Its economic events perform and materialize Tech City as a field, its hierarchy, its rules, and key stakeholders. This is also
coherent with a view which holds that Tech City is related to a permanent distribution and redistribution of social capital. London wishes to appear as “the digital capital of Europe” via the web and social networks. To be in London, to take part in its events (in particular those socially and materially connected to Tech City), is a means to gain prestige and reputation for digital startups. Additionally, the fiercer the competition and search for prestige of local startups, the higher the prestige of the field itself.

Interestingly, we identified expected and unexpected controls enacted in practices by the City of London, the UK government, or private stake-holders related to Tech City UK. First of all, the Mayor of London has established and communicated on a strategic policy. This relies on strong communication (in particular through a private company), as well as on some usual incentives (e.g. subsidies, urban policy, education...). But mostly, and in contrast to French public policy about digital companies and digital ecosystems, this relies massively on the organization of events and networking activities making the field dynamic and strong. Thus, events are the core lever to deploying this strategy: the bottom-up approach encourages synergies in the field. In contrast to what the neo-institutional literature emphasizes, here we move from a discrete to a large number of events that are concentrated in the same space and time.

Our work has implications for theory, methodology, and practice (e.g. public management and public policies). First, this invites us to go beyond the view of FCE models focused on single events to multiple, more or less dyschronic (Alter, 2000, 2003) events likely to jointly configure, deconfigure, or reconfigure the field itself. This also results in fuzzier boundaries between the notion of field and that of industry as defended by industrial economics. Our work also stresses the material, spatial, and temporal nature of events with their duration. To explore this further, Gosden’s (1994) view of events and “systems of references”, Schatzki’s (2010) work about temporospatial events, or Hernes’ (2014) vision of “fields of events” could be particularly useful. Still, from a theoretical point of view, this research shows the potential of events in the organization of public policy, and the impact of control or attempts of control over the dynamic of a territory. Events and networking should probably be seen as more than mere marketing and communication opportunities in the description of public policies.

Our work also has methodological implications. It shows the potential of a joint use of ethnographic and meso-social analysis (e.g. based on chronologies, chronological matrices, lexicometric analysis of communication, social analysis of tweets and re-tweets) for the exploration of a field and its configuration, de-configuration, and re-configuration through events.

Lastly, our work also has managerial implications. We show the importance of the spatiality and temporality of events (e.g. the London Technology Week and the tradeshows connected to it) in new public policies about digital ecosystems and digital startups. We also show that these policies leave a lot of room for emergence and unexpected results, and that they necessarily rely on private stakeholders and private infrastructures (e.g. related web and social networks).

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Institutional plans versus situated actions: A video-nased case of simulation in health care

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This paper is concerned with the material dimension of professional settings. Inspired by the work of Kirsh (1995) on the arrangement of artefacts in the workspace, it argues for an ecological interpretation of the process of following an instruction as an activity. Our main working hypothesis suggests that materiality grounded in technical artefacts and objects impacts control of action and activation of tasks execution routines. More precisely, in this paper, the “plan” (as a program made of instructions) could be considered as a cognitive aid that facilitates the tasks execution in complex professional settings. The analysis relies on Lucy Suchman’s contrast (2009) between concepts of ‘plans’ and of ‘situated actions’ that oppose purposeful action and situated action at a level of local interactions. These concepts are discussed in the light of current research on institutional work that analyse social actors engaged in a ‘purposeful effort’ to manipulate some social dimensions of the context in which they operate (Philips & Lawrence, 2012). Data are collected in a context of simulation-based medical research and the device is apprehended as an artefact that is designed to improve a professional setting.

More precisely, the study is concerned with the implementation of a digital artefact – a simulation-based training device rooted in a lifelike virtual mannequin – in an experimental hospital, that aims at improving teamwork skills to physicians and other health professionals. This implementation is conducted within a project called PACTE (Programme d’Amélioration du Travail en Equipe) and is based on professional activities’ simulation techniques inspired by real scenarios of risky situations.

The device is initially designed and controlled by the Haute Autorité En Santé (HAS-French National Authority for Health) and seeks to improve learning and team coordination in practice. Overall, the objective is to detect defect professional behaviours and faults committed by health professionals in their everyday activities. It is assumed that agents, when immersed in a specific simulated ‘scenario’, will reproduce real professional situations and, in turn, reveal defaults in their individual or collective tasks. Based on observations of simulated activities, the paper scrutinises the degree of alignment between the initial ‘plan’ thought by an institutional frame, namely the HAS, and the ‘situated actions’ in practice run by health professionals. Overall, this paper is in line with the pluridisciplinary tradition initiated by workplace studies and microsociology that also inspired recent advances in Management and Organization Studies, such as practice-based studies (Gherardi, 2000) or socio-material approaches (de Vaujany et al., 2013).

The analysis is based on the observation of ‘occurring natural data’, which seek to recreate interaction processes resulting from recorded sequences of action. The emphasis is put on the discrepancy between scenarios/ scripts initially thought at the institutional level by the HAS, on the one hand, and professional body practices / routines based on the uses of material objects during the simulation, on the other. These material objects include medical devices, furniture, screens and circulation space.

More than 20 hours of video data have been collected and gather simulation training sessions as well as debriefings that follow those sessions. Although video methods are increasingly used in Management and Organization Studies, they are still under explored by scholars and are worth considering here. This method encourages researchers to locate interactional processes whereby agents make everyday sense of their experience and configure their social environment. Although
well established in sociology, it is only recently that management studies shed light on this method (see, for example the case of strategy research accounted in Gylfe et al. (2016). Video analysis is complemented by a series of transcriptions that reflect the processual and embodied nature of interactions in professional settings as well as coordination between different scenarios and gestures that could also arise in practice.

This method is useful to account for uses of material objects and body engagement in the accomplishment of routinized tasks in practice (Kirsch, 1995). The data analysis leads us to the selection of a short video sequence (45 seconds) that identifies temporal discrepancies between instructions (resulting from initial scenarios) and actions (triggered by the use of material objects in routinized professional practices). Other video sequences could also illustrate these discrepancies.

The video analysis shows a disadjustment between purposeful action designed at the institutional level by the HAS and situated actions that follow routines in simulated professional settings. In practice and during the course of their action, healthcare professionals find clues – materialised in objects – located in their work environment to execute tasks. This result echoes Hollan et al. (2000, p. 177) who argued that “the human body and the material world take on central than peripheral roles”, since “minds are not passive representational engines, whose primary functions is to create internal models of the external world. The relations between internal process and external ones are far more complex involving coordinations at many different time scales between internal resources – memory, attention, executive function – and external resources – the objects, artifacts and at hand materials constantly surrounding us.” Moreover, literature on simulation techniques in healthcare claims that “there is a widespread belief that simulation experiences (and effectiveness) improve proportionately as the precision of the replication of the real world improves” (Dieckman et al., 2007, p. 183). Yet, we argue that the degree of replication of the real world is inherently dependent on the ways simulated scenarios had been initially thought by the institutional frame. Scenarios/instructions that are meant to create the conditions for an everyday professional practice are not enough or dedicated to capture routines and dynamics that would emerge in a familiar environment. This paper offers some insights to go beyond these discrepancies between institutional plan and situated actions. In particular, the elaboration of a bottom-up design or design in use of the socio-technical device could reach a better involvement from healthcare professionals and develop a more contextualised oriented governance.

References


Trajectories in co-creating space: The case of a film festival

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The recent spatial turn in organization studies (Dale & Burrell, 2008; Kornberger & Clegg, 2004; Taylor & Spicer, 2007; van Marrewijk & Yanow, 2010) has allowed us to better understand how one key material actor (Carlile, Nicolini, Langley, & Tsoukas, 2013; de Vaujany & Mitev, 2013; Orlikowski, 2007, 2009; Petani & Mengis, 2015; Scott & Orlikowski, 2013) - space - comes to play in our efforts of organizing. Most of these studies have assumed that organizations have a given, relatively permanent corporate space.

Organizations such as banks, hospitals, or firms have their headquarters, their subsidiaries, their factories, and warehouses, which define their physical extension. Yet, there is an array of organizations that qualify for their mobility and temporariness (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995) and that have only a very limited stable corporate space. Organizations such as commercial fairs, cultural or sport manifestations (Glynn, 2008) “take place” for a limited time in one location before moving to the next. These temporal and, to some extent, spaceless organizations have to create their corporate space for a limited time and in interaction with a hosting territory. In the case of cultural events, this is often a urban setting (Quinn, 2005), in which the temporary organization actively intervenes and whose public spaces sometimes even become symbolic reference points for the event itself (e.g. the “croisette” promenade of the Festival de Cannes).

Yet studies, inquiring into the relationship between these organizations and their hosting territory (Quinn, 2005) have addressed mainly the effect of the temporal organization on the local community (Glynn, 2008), the local policy (Glynn, 2008), or the urban area (Quinn, 2005). We know very little on how these organizations temporarily build their spatiality in interaction with the hosting territory and how it draws and transforms the materiality (de Vaujany & Mitev, 2013) of its spatial surrounding. From an organizational perspective, what is of particular interest is that these organizations can serve as an extreme case (Flyvbjerg, 2006) to study the emergence of a corporate space. Before us, other authors have referred to the processual nature of space with notions such as spacing (Beyes & Steyaert, 2012; Jones, McLean, & Quattrone, 2004), timespace (Schatzki, 2009), or interstitial space (Furnari, 2014). Focusing on the recurrent building and undoing of the corporate space, we can study how this process unfolds in interaction. Co-located in the hosting territory, where the cultural event takes place, there are a series of third socio-material actors (Orlikowski, 2007), e.g. local businesses with their shop-windows, squares, etc., who contribute to the co-construction of the temporary space of the cultural event.

With this research, then, we aim at exploring the relationship between the temporal organization and the local actors, with whom it has to deal in sharing or co-creating its spaces. We ask how does the interaction between the cultural event and the local actors of the hosting territory evolve over time, through which they co-create the organizational space of the cultural event?

We inquire into this question drawing on an ongoing longitudinal observational study informed by the interpretive strand (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). The context of our study is the Festival del film Locarno in the Italian part of Switzerland where we study the sociomaterial interactions between the recurrent temporal cultural event, that takes place every year in the city of Locarno (Switzerland), and the local actors of the hosting territory.

Regarding data collection, the study combines observational data - including photographs - with qualitative interviews and a historic analysis of newspaper articles. We started data collection with photo-ethnographic observations (Ybema, Yanow, Wels, & Kamsteeg, Frans, 2009) of the festival’s spaces, taking over 1100 pictures during August 2014 (for the 10 days of the festival), March 2015 (2
days during low season) and again August 2015 (6 days during the festival). The visual method pointed us to the silent, material partners of the festival (van Marrewijk & Yanow, 2010), in particular space. We soon realized that the festival’s space was formed not only by the squares or courtyards transformed by the festival itself, but also by the shop windows, cafés, or other cultural venues of other actors, which were repurposed or dressed up during the festival. We then conducted semi-structured interviews with the festival organizers, members of the local population, and festivalgoers to better understand, which spaces are most important for the festival to them and why. We chose interview partners following considerations of convenience, and then we continued with snowball sampling, with the aim to find people with a relatively long-term memory of the festival’s spaces. Through the interviews, we could narrow our focus on eight organizations, which provided spaces both co-created in interaction with the festival and other spaces, which rose, instead, from an independent initiative of local actors.

In order to better understand why certain important Festival spaces disappeared, while others grew and how this was related to the interaction with the festival, we traced these spaces over more than three decades (’80s, ’90s, and the years after 2000) through an historic analysis of the articles of the two main newspapers of the region (La Regione and il Corriere del Ticino). The thematic analysis of these newspaper articles, following the principles of inductive theory building and of an interpretive approach is still ongoing. Our study indicates that the faith of festival spaces that emerge in interaction with local actors of the hosting territory depends upon four distinct trajectories: (1) Gradual institutionalization; (2) independent co-orientation; (3) tolerated contrariety; and (4) open adversity. The first are spaces created by third actors that gradually become an institutional part of the festival with the festival providing material resources and spatial markers to signal affiliation and coherence. The second are spaces created by third actors, which become increasingly popular amongst festivalgoers (e.g. the Pardoway, a path of bars and restaurants officially recognized by the festival), but despite some affinities with and recognition from the festival, maintain a material and symbolic independence (e.g. Paravento, a bar and provider of underground cultural events). The third are spaces that despite being very popular amongst festivalgoers and even sharing an affinity with the festival, are considered as non-festival by the organizers of the festival even if tolerated (e.g. La Rotonda, a square on which multi-cultural food stalls propose economic food and entertainment). Finally, the forth are spaces that although sharing a programmatic similarity, are fought by the festival (e.g. Rivellino, a little film festival that wants to contrast the official one).

Our data suggests that the festival, not having direct control over many of its festival spaces, exercises some form of bureaucratic and ideological control, by institutionalizing some organizations, and by providing a system of values and beliefs with which the organizational actors tend to identify. In fact, in the non-institutionalized spaces, organizational actors tend to submit willingly to the rules and values performed by the festival: they align, for example, not only their programs and services, but also their aesthetics and narratives with the ones of the festival. In this way, even if the festival does not perform a direct control on these organizations, they operate as if they were under an ideological control of it. With the analysis we are conducting at present, we will try to further push our understanding how the materiality of the festival spaces co-created with third actors can explain, in part, why one trajectory unfolds and not the others.

We hope that this study can help to further our understanding of a processual account of organizational space that takes the interaction centerstage in the theorizing attempt rather than a stable set of actors. Indeed, the actors participating in the ongoing construction of the organizational space, being both material and social actors, are not only multiple, but also have some fluidity.
References


Are space planners political actors?

Eliel Markman (PSL-Université Paris-Dauphine)

In recent years, organization’s innovative space took more and more place. Indeed, changing space is an argument for global organizational change but it also has been an argument for changing organizational practices and further, culture. Through this paper, we interrogate the person who is in charge of space planning, and in fact, has to construct a certain image of the company. Long regarded as a simple architect job, our researches revealed that a space planner is also a consultant, a HR etc. in sum an emerging profession that concerns on governmentality. Our purpose here is to open a discussion on space planners as political actors. Key words: governmentality, materiality, politics, space-planners, consulting, Socio-materiality Sub-theme: The presence of materiality in the philosophical and sociological sources of neoinstitutionalism;

Space and artefacts are today considered as an active factor within organizations, as long as it has an instrumental, symbolic and esthetic function (Bechky & Elsbach, 2007). Space has a significant impact on satisfaction, motivation, affect (Brookes & Kaplan, 1972; Oldham & Brass, 1979; Brief & Weiss, 2002) and influences organizational identity (Berg & Kreiner, 1990; Hatch, 1990; Strati, 1992). Organizational space interrelates managers, members and organizations (Davis, 1984). According to the Standing Conference on Organizational Symbolism (SCOS) (Dégot, 1986), space is peopled with Artefacts that are to be analyzed as a whole, considering one the one hand physical space (Rosen, Orlikowski & Schmahmann, 1990), on the other hand artefacts, which are « intentional products of human action perceptible through the senses » (Gagliardi, 1990, page 32). What appears clearly is that the advent of new workspaces calls for new ways to work on space and explore new theoretical approaches. Changing an organization space strongly influences organization itself (Carr & Hancock, 2006), space can even be a leverage for organizational change (Duffy, 2000) that could, as an example, increase flexibility (Verlander, 2012). thus, many organizational change come with a spatial change (Van Marrewijk, 2009). As an example, Oksanen & Ståhle (2013) explore spatial characteristics that can increase innovation. Leonard (2013) argues that, in her case, the creation of a « green » space is a clear expression of lean management. Hence, materiality and aesthetics is a path to organizational politics and power structure (Dale & Burrell, 2008), and the moment for its change is a privileged time to observe it.

Govern mentality defines an organization’s ability to frame but also to induce organizational practices, or « conducts of conducts » (Foucault, 2004, Dean, 1999, Miller & Rose, 2008, Dean, 2010). Foucault’s concept definition is threefold: first, « an institution as a composed ensemble of procedures, analysis and reflexions, calculations and tactics to apply a specific nevertheless complex form of power. Population is the main target, political economics, the main knowledge and security dispositive the technical instruments. » (Foucault 2004 : 111). Second, this kind of power is an underlying trend which explains a kind of government apparatus and knowledge. Third, governmentality shed light on a state shift from administration to government. (Foucault, 2004; Alden, 2007; Laborier, 2014). Friedman (2015), who bases his analyse on Lewin (1936) and Bourdieu (1993) explains that space can also be understood as a « space of possibilities » (page 245), thus, which could be a leverage for change management. He fosters that space could be a path to a certain « rule of the game » (idid. p 246) so a clear expression of organizational habitus, understood as « a preconscious level, leading social agents to employ relatively fixed and predictable “strategies” of which they are unaware. ». Karen Dale (2005) follow the same idea by explaining that space control the bodies and shapes attitudes. In other words, governmentality implies power as a practice framed by a certain amount of dispositive (Foucault, 1975). Foucault explains that government is a way to suggest conducts without imposing directly. Hence, it implies a certain amount of liberty. Since Kooiman (2008) explains that « Governability can therefore be defined as the overall capacity for
governance of any societal entity or system » (page 173), space appears to be another government dispositive. In the same order of ideas, Stephane Côté (2014) argues that straight orders are barely necessary since actors orient their practices relatively to a particular organizational ethos. As an example, Ibarra et al. (2006) explain that new management methods based on personal realization find its raison d’être in this organizational ethos rather than panopticon inter-surveillance or direct orders.

This paper is part of a wider study -my PHD- on organizations removal. We have conducted three parallel field studies. We observed that « space planning » is a central moment moment of the removal process, thus the « space planner » appears to be a central character within a removal set. Many professionals are especially dedicated to this kind of missions, essentially architects, human resources directors and consultants. Which practice, according to our observations, can be standardized as follows (Gruber, De Leon, George & Thompson, 2015) 1) Understands client, service or company’s need and plan de removal (discovery phase). 2) Organise participation or communication among the company, in other words, inform and/or involve collaborators (ideation phase). 3) Design and settle the company into its new space, move itself (delivery phase). Following Pine & Gilmour (1998) findings, we can consider that experience economy1 is today’s dominant consuming stream. Thus, we easily understand that the « space planner » as « director » of a company new settlement has a significant role for organizations whatsoever. Nevertheless, his role appears to be neglected by organizational literature. So the point of this presentation is to explore: In which measure, can we consider a space planner as a political actor? This could also be qualified as « commercial utopias » (Klein, 2001), Comparing this approach with the « experience economy » one regarding the creation of a new space might be an issue that we voluntarily put aside.
The materialization of a public policy: the analytical power of visual artifacts

Caroline Scotto (PSL-Mines ParisTech)

This proposal is a methodological attempt to shed light on the status of artifacts in institutional analysis. The paper focuses on the standards mobilized in the construction of public policy through the research question: How visual artifacts are used in the construction of the discourse? The research analysis the implementation of a nationwide public policy regarding France’s higher education and research system through the design of a new campus. The paper proposes to study the use of maps - as a “visual language”- in order to legitimate the discourse. This paper contributes to understand the material analysis of organizations.

The issue of materiality has recently spread to the different streams of Management and organizations studies (deVaujany & Mitev, 2015). This material turn focuses on instruments, objects, artifacts, etc. involved in organizations and organizing. As the digital revolution creates a new immaterial context – information, work activities and practices, territorial scattering, etc. (deVaujany & Vaast, 2014), organizations are in need of re-materialize their reality. Therefore, the material factor could be a way to analyze institutional dynamics (Jones, Boxenbaum & Anthony, 2013) and more especially, to analyze the discourse.

Various public sectors have been disrupted since the digital revolution. For example, the Health sector, the Higher Education and Research system or the city organization. These sectors are in crisis and they struggle to change their paradigm as public policy is usually constructed through standards; hospital for the Health sector, campus for the Higher Education and Research system (Paquot, 2015). This topic recalls the question of the myth (Meyer &Rowan, 1977) and the mobilization of the rational myth in industrial design (Hatchuel& Mollet, 1992) in order to challenge the design of objects taken for granted.

In this paper, we propose to test the analytical power of visual artifacts. In order to do so we investigate the status of the image as a tool to analyze the discourse during organizing processes through the following research question: How visual artifacts are used in the construction of the discourse?

This paper is part of a research about the Campus Paris-Saclay (France) project. This project is part of the implementation of a nationwide public policy regarding France’s higher education and research system. Its main purpose is to give France a system of excellence in order to gain international visibility and competitiveness. Cooperation is the design principle of the public policy at Saclay. The campus, as a physical and organizational object, appears to be the solution of France’s strategy to meet the cooperation principle. The public policy is based on the myth of the campus and the rationality of co-localization developed in economic geographic (Porter, 1998).

The paper proposes to study the use of maps - as a “visual language”- by the political discourse (Kress, Van Leeuwen, 1996) in order to give projections of the future organization of the Campus of Paris-Saclay in France. We will use an archeological approach (Meyer and. al. 2013) to collect the data produced by and for the project. The collection of these visuals artifacts allows to investigate the discourse through two templates (Dumez, 2009):

- Comparative : comparison of different objects (analogies);
- Dynamic: evolution of the same object through time in order to identify the different forms of the project (genealogy) (Foucault, 1977).
The Silicon Valley, which serves as a reference for the development of the public policy at Saclay, did not develop as a result of an intervention by the State or a public policy but through the development of business networks and cooperation with universities already present in the territory (Saxenian, 1994). This paper shed light on the power of visual artifacts as analytical tool of the discourse. One finding of this paper shows the visual analogy with the successful Silicon Valley is used by the discourse at Saclay in order to legitimate the project by the simplification of visualization; colocalization is the solution to meet the cooperation principle of the public policy. Images participate to the legitimation of the discourse and the strategy, even if the organizational reality of the two territories cannot be compare.

We propose to use this particular result in order to analyze the construction of the content of a public policy. The aim is to research the tension between the discourse and the reality of the sector involved. The idea, in further research, is to challenge the public policy standards in order to allow innovation for the design of new objects.

This paper contributes to understand that the material analysis of organizations and, especially, organizing allows an alternative way to classical “structures or actors analysis” and might participates to a transversal stream in Management and Organizations studies analysis.

References


Materializing morality: The creation of a new concerned market field

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The fairtrade market is booming, carbon trading is widely known, and impact investing that offers social and environmental benefits becomes increasingly popular. We witness a proliferation of concerned markets. Concerned markets are characterized by multiple values. They are markets that fuse economic interests and social values, thus thrive on values that are usually considered “non-market” by economists (Geiger, Harrison, Kjellberg, & Mallard, 2014). Indeed, products that actively invoke moral values – solidarity, environmental protection, or animal welfare – face increasing demand and have developed into well-accepted and institutionalized elements in the market place.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the intersection of materiality and morality in the context of concerned markets. To do so, we investigate the role of material market devices and ask: What is the role of market devices in contributing to the creation of a new concerned market field? Being interested in how the material buttresses new socio-moral phenomena, concerned markets seem to be a particular intriguing setting to study. We address our research question by drawing on the literatures in institutional theory and economic sociology on valuation.

Institutionalization is a process whereby value is infused (Selznick, 1957). Values, in particular moral values, play an important role in underpinning legitimacy (Suchman 1995), and making institutions and organizations meaningful (Gehman, Treviño, and Garud 2013; Suddaby et al. 2010). However, although moral values are a core concern in institutional theory, how values become attached to objects such as market goods, and become performative in the market place has only been little examined. If so, institutional analysis has dedicated most attention to discursive approaches rather than turning attention to materiality (see e.g., Hardy & Thomas, 2015). Economic sociologists interested in valuation, on the other hand, have highlighted the important role of material infrastructures and market devices. The literature on market devices dissents the idea of intrinsic product value and demonstrates the crucial role of materiality in shaping market activities and valuation processes (Callon, 1998; Karpik, 2010; Muniesa, Millo, & Callon, 2007). The array of devices that reconfigure market arrangements and reduce uncertainty is broad, encompassing accounting instruments, evaluative tools such as ratings and rankings, or visual devices such as labels and brands. All these devices mediate market transactions, generate, shape, intervene, discipline, and control market operations, in short, they “work on the market” (Cochoy & Dubuisson-Quellier, 2013). However, economic sociologists have predominantly studied the design and performance of calculative market devices in financial market settings (Aspers & Beckert, 2011). In this paper, we cross-fertilize the literatures on institutions and valuation, and investigate the material underpinnings of moralization processes in constructing a new concerned market field. In particular, we analyze material market devices and their role in rendering moral values performative, and buttressing the institutionalization of a new market field.

Drawing on a longitudinal case study of fairtrade flowers in Switzerland, we trace the employment of market devices during the birth and institutionalization of this new concerned market field over a time period of 15 years (1990 to 2005). Fairtrade flowers were one of the first non-food markets that combined high ethical and moral values with economic activity and payoff. We analyzed societal level developments, market devices, and the organizations and actors involved in designing the devices and creating this new market field. On the societal level, we find that the process was triggered by
raising socio-moral concerns about the inhuman working conditions on flower plantations and a simultaneous consensus on the need for fair and environmentally-friendly produced flowers. However, the practical realization of a market for fairtrade flowers was initially strongly contested. Surprisingly, the most vehement opponent was the dominant fairtrade standardization organization Max Havelaar Switzerland. Its members concentrated their work on small farmers and their food products, and assessed non-food commodities as a threat for the credibility of the overall fairtrade project. This skepticism provoked civil society actors and conventional supermarkets to develop their own certification system for flowers, thus making a first attempt at transferring non-economic value into market value (Thévenot, 2015) and codifying the moral values of sustainable and environmentally-friendly produced flowers into a material device. However, this moralization attempt was of little avail, because only few flower farms followed this standards, and Swiss customers did not recognize it. Then, Max Havelaar entered the field by offering a certification standard for flowers. This market device initiated an unexpected market success of moral flowers, rapidly reaching a market share of 50% (see figure 1). This material valuation device contributed to the creation of the new market field by successfully linking all relevant market actors; plantations and their workers, Swiss importers and vendors, consumers, the standardization organization and civil society actors. Their “coming together” and economic activity was stabilized on and embedded in a material basis, which was decisive for the creation of a market field for moral flowers. Moreover, the device was backed by the strong reputation of the elite actor Max Havelaar.

The findings of our case study reveal the important role of material devices in rendering moral values explicit, and facilitating and steering new economic activity that fuses social and economic mandates. Market devices can bring together various market actors and materially embed and coordinate their activities and understandings, thus buttressing the institutionalization process of a new market field. Our analysis also shows that it matters by whom such material devices are designed and employed in order to elicit “moral performativity” and create a new, legitimate market field that cobble multiple actors and values.

Our study makes several contributions. First, we cross-fertilize institutional theory with the literature on valuation devices to explore the material underpinnings of market building phenomena at the intersection of social and economic life. Second, to further develop the insights from our case study, we draw on a perspective developed by Bowker and Star (1999) to make sense of the construction and evolution of classification systems. They use the notion of convergence to describe the mutual constitution of the material infrastructure and the social world, which can foster the prosperity of specific sites such as market fields. In our case, the fitting together of collective market devices and the growing legitimacy of flowers’ moral value was crucial for institutionalizing fairtrade flowers and creating a new market field. By introducing certification devices for non-food products, the fairtrade idea could exceed its original aspiration of justice in the North-South food trade. Third, based on our analysis, we seek to introduce the notion of a value-based field. The findings of our case study demonstrate that the actors of the moralization process no longer organized their activities around a tangible issue (Hoffman, 1999). Instead, a new field formed around shared moral values. Moral values, it seems, have the potential to ground new organizational and market fields, with material devices rendering abstract moral values legitimate and performative.
Institutional legitimacy and spaces: A grounded analysis of firefighters’ journey into digitization

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This paper provides a comprehensive and adductive analysis of the digitization of a firefighting organization. We followed the principles of grounded theory (B. G. Glaser & Strauss, 1973) and collected qualitative data by completing semicentered interviews and passive observation. Our analysis suggests that even though the firefighting organization intended to strengthen its institutional legitimacy thanks to digitization, its operational capabilities were actually challenged by massive reliance on IT. Our analysis also highlights how collaborative practices emerged among operational to address with the internal issues caused by digitization. These practices supported the firefighting organization’s management of spaces during operations, which eventually provided a better support to the firefighting organization’s legitimacy than digitization. As the literature has mainly explored institutional legitimacy as political matter, our work contributes to a enriched understanding of the role of operational practices and spaces in the building of an organization’s institutional legitimacy. This study is currently under progress. In the latest years, organizations such as firefighting services have struggled to maintain their institutional legitimacy in a rapidly changing environment.

Institutional legitimacy can be defined as an organization’s capability to develop enough political capital and compliance from other organizations (Mondak, 1993). As our society is going through digitization, these organizations have been rethinking the role of information within their processes. From the field, firefighting organizations nowadays provide information in a timely manner to their stakeholders, including local and national officials. By becoming a competitive provider of critical information, the firefighting organizations also expect to win institutional legitimacy, thereby protecting their assets. Our work focuses on a firefighting organization that we label here FireStop. FireStop is a public organization that runs firefighting activities in the suburbs of one of the busiest urban regions in France. FireStop is in charge of the safety of more than 10000 citizens and runs more than 70000 life-saving interventions per year. Since the beginning of the 21st century, FireStop had to address important changes in relation with information. First of all, the legal frames in relation with traceability evolved and made compulsory the tracking of all data captured and produced by FireStop. In addition, increased consumption of information from the public opinion compelled FireStop’s stakeholders (including officials) to systematically request from FireStop critical information at every stage of operational processes. Information such as identity, nationalities of the citizens involved in the incident was secondary decades ago but became more critical than ever. FireStop’s digital transformation meant that tracking events, data, and making sense of the course of action was of primary expectations from the top management. This evolution conducted FireStop to invest massively in Information Technologies to ease information transmission between the professionals involved in the operation chain when incidents occur. More recently FireStop’s successful handling of a major train accident, built on efficient management of spaces by operational, supported its current visibility and legitimacy. However, the growing informational dimension of firefighting did not develop without challenges. FireStop, according to some of its members, had to reinvent its mission and core identity. In addition, the ubiquity of technology and information also confronted the firefighters with information overload and a more chaotic experience of operations.
To acknowledge and analyze this situation, we followed the principles of grounded theory (B. Glaser, 1978; B. G. Glaser, 1999). We adductively analyzed data collected from 22 interviews, more than 60 hours of observations, as well as public and semi-private archives. We completed data triangulation between multiple sources of information and completed open, axial and selective coding.

Our core category was entitled ‘from chaos to harmony’. Therefore our analysis focused on coping strategies from the firefighters who have been the most exposed to information in their daily activities since the implementation of the new IT platform. Our analysis reveals that, to support operational excellence, FireStop operational have learnt to keep track on the course of action by maintaining their attention balanced between four spaces. In this work, we inspire from the Britannica encyclopedia to define a space as (un)limited extent in which events and objects take place. Four main spaces emerged from our analysis: geography (intervention scene, places), materiality (buildings, vehicles, and tools), the others (police services, officials, hospitals…) and ‘What if’ (hypotheses and risks).

Every time additional pieces of information are captured, the operationals regularly track new events that occur in each space. In a continuous manner, the operationals recapture data and information so that the group does not focus only on one space, thereby reducing their attention devoted to other spaces. Such a capability was progressively developed after massive investments in IT by FireStop. In the first years following these investments, the operationals, facing higher amounts of information and data, would feel discomfort due to a higher risks of confusion and misunderstandings.

The contribution from this research is both practical and theoretical.

From a practical perspective, our findings highlight how part of the organizations involved into digital transformation might need to develop new capabilities not to suffer from information overload, even though an enthusiastic approach to digital transformation can tend to elude such a necessity. From a theoretical perspective, our work depicts digitization as the two faces of Janus. FireStop is a good illustration of Asforth and Gibbs’s alerts on the « double-edge » of legitimacy (1990), e.g. organizations’ search for legitimacy can paradoxically decrease legitimacy: Even though FireStop expected to gain institutional visibility by improved production of information on operations to its stakeholders, the performance of its core activities went threatened by digitization. On the one side, digitization provides an opportunity for organizations to gain institutional legitimacy, which also supports their survival and jobs. On the other side, digitization, by weightening the informational dimension of operations and activities, significantly challenges coordination and urges organizations to quickly develop new ways to support coordination. Our research further details how firefighters collectively handled this difficulty by extensively rely on spaces.

From a theoretical perspective, our work enriches ongoing research on legitimation by depicting the importance of operational tacit know-hows to deal with this issue. Institutional legitimacy has been primarily approached as a strategic, political stake rather than an operational one so far (Rothstein, 2004). Our work aligns with previous research that promoted a comprehensive rather than strictly political approach to legitimacy issues (Hajer & Uitermark, 2008; Henrickson & McKelvey, 2002; Hoque, 2005). While the tenet that organizations handling of spaces fuels their functioning seems quite intuitive, the idea suggested here – according to which organizations’ institutional legitimacy grounds on spaces - seems more counterintuitive and definitely needs further elaboration, as well as additional data and cases.

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Cities of the future: a sociomaterial innovation for the governance of sustainable urban development

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How Norwegian local governments respond to foreseen challenges and opportunities of a changing climate future? This article aims to study such a question by examining Cities of the Future (CoF), a strategic project running from 2009 to 2014 that aimed to foster collaboration between the 13 largest cities in Norway (almost half of the country’s population), four ministries (Climate and Environment, Local Government and Modernization, Petroleum and Energy, and Transport and Communication), the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities and the business sector.

In line with most of today’s public policies, knowledge and innovation are expected to play a prominent role in the political management of climate change. Ministry of Environment envisioned CoF as an innovative and knowledge-intensive project to address the pitfalls identified in previous similar experiences, namely, lack of coherence between goals and instruments and a deficit of innovative thinking in the local governments. However, such a novel way of dealing with complex problems such as climate change may raise challenges for traditional governance models. Efforts in this regard may require going beyond the traditional governance levels towards the establishment, maintenance and transformation of different collaborative forms (Carlile, 2002). Is this the case in CoF?

Despite a growing body of literature is examining change towards more sustainable technologies, policies and practices, the fact is that very little is known about how environmental innovations come about (Ratinen and Lund 2015). This investigation aims to contribute to the literature that explores the ways in which individuals, groups and institutions embody widely differing perceptions of and practices of environmental innovations (Guy and Moore 2007). In particular, I am concerned with the ways in which Norwegian cities innovate to initiate societal movement and thus local transitions towards more sustainable forms of city are shaped and performed in Norway.

Despite innovation has been a widespread subject of study for decades, it has not lost its interest and relevance. On the contrary, it seems that recent threats associated with climate change have introduced a sense of urgency into much current innovation thinking (Skjølvold 2012, Sørensen 2013). Classical understandings of innovation have been challenged by a growing number of scholars pointing out the limits of pervasive accounts to accurately describe how innovations actually unfold (Pinch 1996). This paper draws on such approaches and understands innovation as a sociomaterial process of putting in place comprehensive and heterogeneous networks that ultimately constitute a successful case. Bruno Latour (2005) describes innovation as a demanding effort to connect many different elements - technical and social, human and nonhuman - into a hybrid assembly of people, organizations, knowledge and things. I draw on a sociomaterial and practice-based perspective to focus on the situated understandings and enactments around CoF. What does actually characterise this innovative initiative to facilitate local transitions to sustainable cities? What is new in “new”?

This investigation has been conducted mainly through a combination of a qualitative content analysis of Action Plans and a total of 13 semi-structured interviews with relevant actors in the initiative. Furthermore, as part of the commencement activities, we organized a workshop with participants in CoF to get input in relation to what they considered important to study and foster dialogue around common concerns. The interviews were conducted between January and May 2015 and varied in
their duration; from 1 up to 2 hours. The analysis of the data has been inspired by Grounded Theory Methods.

In the light of these theoretical and methodological considerations the paper has two primary goals. First it aims to contribute to solve the lack of empirical evidence on how transitions are enacted by describing the practices through which Norwegian local governments are performing environmental innovation. Second, the paper aims to reflect on the governance of sustainable urban development and transitions more generally.

The findings showed four different set of practices through which environmental innovation is enacted: as driving force, framing device, learning arena, and governance framework. CoF involves unlike continuous, overlapping, heterogeneous and multidirectional efforts to link local, regional, national and international levels. The network served as a way of negotiating and comprising different administrative levels and its contingent practices – i.e the global, national, regional, and local- in several ways. Furthermore, CoF represent an effort towards the effective tackling of climate change by assembling in meaningful manners relevant stakeholders and the corresponding types of knowledge and competence that they bring along.

Thus, the governance of sustainable urban development is translocal, i.e: involving multiple loci and different forms of interventions. Local goverments are interconnected in complex ways to different administrative levels as well as economic, social and cultural phenomena in manifold levels. CoF is an important arena that enables relational experimentation and learning by facilitating multiple interchanges that connect local experiences with the universal phenomenon of global warming, at the same time as render and frame the global and rather abstract threats as an urban concern.

References


PGMacro for sustainability: a practice of planning and management and its visual artifact

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Organizations need to search performance models more systemics and this organizational change demands the development of specific strategies to encourage interaction among organizational subjects in environments favorable for the creation of new knowledges (STRAUS, 2002; HOLMAN, DEVANE, CADY, 2007; PAQUET; WILSON, 2011). Concepts of governance (interactions among political society, civil society and market) and of co-governance (use of organized ways of interactions for management purposes) involves search for agreement between the parts from collaborative practices that has sub-estimated the core importance of the heuristic learning (PAQUET; WILSON, 2011) facilitated by visual artifacts characterized by a prevalence of holistic and immediate information (MEYER et al., 2013). “PGMacro”, also known as ‘Macroeducação’, is a participatory planning and cooperative management method that helps the establishment of a co-governance build by the collective, focusing people and outcomes, developed in Embrapa (Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation) (HAMMES, 2012; HAMMES; ARZABE, 2015). The foundations of “PGMacro” were built in the environmental management area to work the concept of sustainability. The method is based on the perception that complexity is easier noted from different points of view (panoramic and collective vision) and uses several visual artifacts (constructed images, such as drawings, maps, models) as a way of composing circuit relationships between people and their ideas in a creative and interpretive process, creating ‘materiality’ for joint analysis.

To present the structure of “PGMacro” method, three figures were made that aims a) synthesize its stages and components; b) demonstrate how governance is established in different stages; and c) what are its effectivity, efficacy and efficiency indicators.

The stages and components of this method are presented in Figure 1. The stage “Awareness” involves partnerships articulation and the definition of a collective actions chronogram, outlining the roll of each representative. It involves design a process map – a visual representation of a process that defines the order of activities and gives participants a sense of how these activities fit into the larger context. The advertisement of the proposal aims to promote engagement and transparency. At stage “Rebuilding”, the involved ones “reread” the individual knowledge following criteria of collective interpretation, building a collective concept of sustainability. The collective construction occurs from the interaction of individual concepts by creating an abstract representation (drawing) and consensus among peers. So the sense is made collectively and interactively, allowing the leveling of knowledge and a common language between the partners. According Straus (2012) having a common language is crucial. All the stakeholders must agree on a language of process in order to be able to design a common way of working together. This stage promotes an agreement within the group and allows the rising of more innovative strategies to be used at stage “Suitability”, where the transformations are made in an experiential process of internalizing knowledges from action (learning by doing). Finally, “Habitation” is characterized by providing monitoring and safeguard of achievements, consolidating them following collective evaluation multilevel (management group, multipliers and local community). Governance it’s established in each stage, as per Figure 2, and the effectivity, efficacy and efficiency indicators (Figure 3) measure its performance. This practice it’s based on combining several ideas that will create a complexity, which will be simplified once again, without returning to the beginning, but creating something new and feasible to be done - innovative strategies as ‘emerging properties’ in a spiral movement.

GMacro is a complex method that may be synthesized using visual artifacts (diagrams), which will make comprehension easier as it allow the reader to “walk around” this method in a small visual
place that comprises all of its parts (stages and components). Thus, the reader can train its perspective (particular), referring to a method’s stage, for example, and a perspective more systemic (considering the stages in a group) without getting out of the figure, because it ranges both the particular and the general. It’s within this perspective that the method works, from the individual/particular/simple to the collective/complex and from the complex to the simple with the help of visual artifacts that allow a creative and interpretive process, creating ‘materiality’ for joint analysis.

References


Picturing premature birth

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This is a longitudinal, qualitative case study on a research collaboration between academic medical researchers and data analysts from an independent contract research organization. The goal of the project was to combine academic medical researchers’ expertise in premature birth and data analysts’ skills in machine learning in an effort to identify temporal and geographical trends of premature birth and to generate new hypotheses about the health problem. In other words, the former had clinical and academic expertise in the study of premature birth and the latter was experienced in using machine learning to find regularities in complex datasets.

Because the two groups of experts interacted in team meetings where their shared focus of attention was always on visual representations of data, this study examines how the images succeeded in facilitating their collaboration. The images were maps of cluster analysis that visualized how the rate of premature birth changed over time across the United States. Their purpose was to transform an abstract research problem into something concrete the researchers could work on collaboratively (Ewenstein and Whyte 2009). This study asks: 1) how do the two groups of experts read the data visualizations and 2) how is their collaborative relationship shaped by the interactions around the images?

Scholars who have studied research activities in laboratories have demonstrated the role of visual representations in scientific knowledge creation. They have shown how visual representations contribute to the construction of knowledge by certifying and communicating scientific findings (e.g., Gilbert and Mulkay 1984; Latour 1986; 1987; 1990). Visual representations are powerful in that they are perceived as objective and true depictions of reality (Daston and Galison 2007; Dumit 1999; Golan 1998; Jasanoff 1998; Tufte 1997). They can be aesthetically pleasing and influence how information is perceived (Burri 2012). Jasanoff (1998, 718) claims we live in “an age of scientific enchantment” where data has authority specifically when it is translated by the means of science and technology.

Yet, visualizations of research objects are not definite, but entail activities such as composing, interpreting, and debating (e.g., Latour and Woolgar 1979; Knorr-Cetina 1981). These processes are shaped by actors’ professional traditions of seeing and reading images (Joyce 2008; Prasad 2005). In scientific communities, epistemic cultures play an important role as each field has its own practices that are used to generate knowledge (Knorr-Cetina’s 1999). Even beyond the work of scientists, any type of expertise entails training, education, and the development of a set of professional skills that will eventually lead to “professional gaze” (Styhre 2010).

As this study focuses on a collaboration among researchers from distinct knowledge-work environments, the different ways of creating knowledge and reading data visualizations are particularly evident. Daston and Galison (2007) make a distinction between “epistemologies of the eye” and “practices of seeing” in order to highlight how professional activities always have an epistemological base. This study reveals these differences in academia and industry-based research. Furthermore, as the study is longitudinal, I examine what happens to the collaborative relationship over time as the partners’ competing professional gazes repeatedly clash.

The data was collected as part of a three-year-long ethnographic research project on a new research center studying the problem of premature birth. The research center is located in an elite research university in the United States. The analysis utilizes team meeting recordings, their transcripts, and interviews collected over the course of two years, after which the research project ended.
The analysis reveals the differences in both the assessment of visual representations and the objectives visual representations seek to accomplish in the two research environments. It relates to the different standards and forms of knowledge utilized around visual representations of data in academic and industry-based research. The analysis also shows that when collaborators have different criteria for interpreting visual representations, the images begin to highlight the differences between the groups, rather than facilitate exchange of ideas.

References


Institutional analysis and materiality: the contribution of the French institutionalist thinking (Lourau, Lapassade and Castoriadis)

Jean-François Chanlat (PSL-Université Paris-Dauphine)

In the field of Organization Studies, the institutional analysis has been very popular since the Eigthies (Di Maggio and Powell, 1983, Powell and DiMaggio, 1991). As most of these works came from the Anglo-Saxon field and has influenced other linguistic OS field, notably the Francophone one, it is interesting to present the French Institutionalist thinking current which is not very well known by the English linguistic field, of course but also by many young Francophone OS researchers (Chanlat, 2014a et b). French Institutionalist Thinking comes, of course, originally from Durkheim seminal work. But the current we are going to introduce in this paper appears at the end of 50 and during the Sixties and the Seventies. The main figures are Castoriadis (1975), Lapassade (1962; 1971), Lapassade and Lourau, 1971). Influenced by Castoriadis reflections on bureaucracy and socialism (1975), Lapassade and Lourau are going to develop an institutional analysis of organizations (Hess and Autier, 1993). After the 1968 events, this current is going to be very influential in psycho-sociology of organizations (Barus-Michel, J, Enriquez, E and Lévy, A, 2002), notably in the Latin countries and develops a perspective in which the power relationships, social imaginery and institutionalization process are inter-related for transforming organizations into more democratic social units.

Our paper will be divided in two parts: 1) in the first one, we will introduce the key ideas, of the French Institutionalist current and the place they gave to materiality, 2) and in the second part, we will compare its vision to the institutionalist mainstream vision and describes its originality. We will show how the socio-historical context will explain the differences of attitudes observed between the two Institutionalist currents (French and Anglo-American). We will conclude on the contribution of this current to our OS field, notably in the context of this OAP workshop intellectual posture and at last, its possible link with Bourdieu work (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Chanlat, 2015).

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Session 4: Ethics and ontologies in MOS (24\textsuperscript{th} June, 9 AM – 4 PM)

A critique of the material and process turns in management and organization studies: How to re-introduce History and Politics in the study of work transformations

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Management and Organization Studies are crisscrossed by numerous ‘turns’. Most of the time, these turns are fed by broader theories and theoretical debates in the humanities and social sciences. In the context of ongoing debates, two turns are particularly present: the materiality and the process turns. We first present the history and historical roots of each turn.

The materiality turn is grounded in Karl Marx’s writings (e.g. the concepts of material dialectic, historical materialism, materiality but also activity, see Marx, 1845; Engels, 1878; Marx & Engels, 1997; Lukacs, 1923; Adler, 2009), and in Marxist or post-Marxist debates (e.g. those related to material culture, see Berger, 2009). Marxism and post-Marxism are both the poison and the remedy, in the sense that Marx and Engels clearly offered a dialectic well beyond notions such as materiality and sociality, or materiality and humanity; but their immediate followers (positivists and most post-Marxists) strengthen their analytical device in a direction which polarized the debate because of the emergent naturalism and domestication of ‘Nature’ of that time.

More recently, the materiality turn has borrowed both from Marxism, material culture and phenomenology (Gagliardi, 1991; Dale, 2005) to extend the discussions to management, organizations and organizing. This has resulted in the SCOS (Standing Conference on Organizational Symbolism) movement and the more specific approaches of culture, space artifacts and time in organizations (borrowed from Schein, 1983). All share a concern for post-discursive approaches. Science & Technology Studies (STS) have also deeply influenced the debate, in particular the discussion about sociomateriality (e.g. of technology and technology-related practices, see Orlikowski, 2007). We suggest here to see the current materiality stream as both a forum for discussing ontologies (beyond technology – more generally about management, organizations and organizing) and theoretical views (about embodiments, objects and instruments in relation with management and organizations).

The process turn (see Hernes, 2014) is fed both by process philosophies (in particular pragmatism) and post-modern thought (Helin et al, 2014). It sheds light on the processual nature of our world. Organizing is becoming (e.g. Whitehead, 1929). The process turn emphasizes a realist view, that of “becoming-realism” (Chia, 1996). Movement (Bergson, 1934), process and activities constitute the time and space of collective activities (see. Dale, 2005). This turn is particularly critical of the view of organizations as “entities”, i.e. clear cut ‘essential’ forms with power and autonomy.

Next, we analyze points of convergence and divergence between the materiality and process turns, which have more in common than expected. There are common ontological and historical roots between them, in particular in their joint emphasis on activity (which is a major aspect of Marxist and post-Marxist debates, e.g. the Soviet theory of activity, see Hook, 1993).

We then raise four key questions and critiques of both streams. Firstly, History as the ontogenesis of ontogenesis (i.e. the becoming of becoming and its modalities) is largely absent. It seems that for process-based studies, History represents either a long time span, which is a very limited view of
History; or a big historical ‘event’ inclusive of other ones, which would also be a nonsense. For advocates of the materiality turn (who seem to have forgotten Marx’s historical views) a strong focus on the underlying materiality of practices (i.e. what they are more than what they meaningfully do) and a focus on spatialization have discounted History as well. This is extremely regrettable, as, in contrast to Marx, this makes advocates of both streams unable to grasp the major work transformations occurring, which have been studied by other research and disciplines for the last 20 years (Meda, 2010) and which we experience almost every day in our own lives. In addition, and paradoxically, both streams aiming at overcoming dualities have created dichotomies through the very rhetorics that sustain them (material versus ideal, or process versus entities). Our third critique is about body and embodiment. If researchers in both turns share phenomenological concerns (e.g. Merleau-Ponty, 1942, 1945, 1964), they do not capitalize on these concerns to think through embodiment as a condition of permanence and durability. This creates difficulties to make sense of the dialectic or movement stressed by both turns (and their continuity-discontinuity).

Lastly, the materiality and process turns have a strange exogenous view of politics and power (in contrast to Marx). Philosophically and socially, they both come back to their scientific community and the inter-textuality of contemporary research to build their “scientific contributions”. Alternative ontologies (focused on power as a transformative capability) and teleological transformations (Schatzki, 2010) are not discussed. These critiques converge around the idea that both streams lack the dimensions of historicity and politics.

The last part of our argumentation tries to develop propositions to introduce history and politics through: the use of some Marxist notions such as historical materialism and through the exploration of the Marxist experiences of pedagogy and transformation. We highlight the historicity of our contemporary world and our incapacity to expose and transform this world, using a comparison of the mono-world, mono-community world of the Middle Ages universities (see also de Vaujany & Mitev, 2015). In particular, Gosden (1994)’s model based on the notions of ‘references’, habitual practices and public time is described as it provides some answers to our concerns. They make it possible to think about the past as layering in experiences in various ways, and about the possibility for researchers to compare various layers of experiences of the past to produce a historiography. From these insights we finally try to draw some implications for a more political dimension of our field. If economy has its ‘political economy’, why wouldn’t there be a ‘political gestiology’ of management and organization studies? More than ever, it is important that researchers in our field do not exclude themselves from work and collective activity transformations occurring in our world - through re-historisizing and re-politizizing the notions of experience, embodiment, semiosis and agency, which already exist in both turns. Marx did not miss the rendez-vous of the big mutation of the 19th century, so advocates of the materiality and process turns should not miss the big work transformations of the 21st century.

References


How to manage the dead? Dirty practices and (c)lean management

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“My first one, it was a woman”, Mike says while he accelerates the train to depart the station. “It happened between the stations of Houten and Culemborg and it must have been around four o’clock in the afternoon”. Mike was driving with 130 km/h round a bend, he tells me, illustrating this by making a big loop with his arm. “And there she suddenly was. On the middle of the tracks... The woman squatted and I thought she was looking for something she’d lost”. He pauses but then continues, softer and slower. “But she squatted further and further down. She went all the way down and I saw how she made herself as small as she could with her arms around her body”. Mike lets go of the throttle to illustrate what he means. He wraps both his hands tight around his shoulders and puts his chin on his chest. He sits straight again and looks me in the eyes. “When I saw that I knew it. I told myself: ‘Mike, this is going to be your first one’” (informal conversation shadowing train driver Mike, August 7, 2015).

Nowadays, many organizations advocate an abstract concept of management. Townley (2002a) explains abstract management as something that is rooted in the epistemic foundations of modernity. Similarly, for Max Weber modernity equals rationalization: a universal process in which social and organizational life is governed by bureaucracies through a set of impersonal rules and procedures (Albrow 1992; Townley 2002b). For a bureaucracy to develop towards its full potential, it should be ‘dehumanized’, that is “eliminating from official business love, hatred, and all purely personal, irrational and emotional elements which escape calculation” (Weber 1978, p.975). Rationalizing thus defends certain practices or ways of living as ‘rational’ while labeling others as ‘irrational’ (Townley 2002b), something resembling the notion of institutional logics (Friedland & Alford 1991).

In the paper to be presented at the OAP 2016 workshop I will use the insights on rationalities and logics to the empirical field of what could be labeled as ‘dirty work’ (Ashforth & Kreiner 1999), work that is “physically, socially or morally” (Hughes 1958, p.122) tainted. Most of the emerging literature thus far has shown how ‘dirty workers’ deal with dirt and emotional or physical challenges, and how they, as a stigmatized employee group, establish a shared sense of identity (e.g. Ashforth & Kreiner 1999; Ashforth et al. 2007; Thiel 2007; Tracy 2004; Simpson et al. 2014). This has illuminated several defensive tactics or mechanisms through which both dirty workers (Ashforth & Kreiner 1999) as well as managers from dirty work occupations (Ashforth et al. 2007) normalize the taint of work.

Yet, although these defensive tactics show that the meaning of ‘dirt’ is socially constructed and to a certain extent flexible, this literature somehow seems to assume that dirty work in different contexts is normalized in similar ways. What thus remains unaddressed is how the meaning of dirty work is constructed when different rationalities or logics are at work. This is an important topic, as it highlights how stigmatized employee groups deal with dirty work through processes of normalization but, more importantly, also how this happens in the context of the rationalization and dehumanization of modern bureaucracies. From an instrumental managerial logic, for example, work has to be rationalized through certain control measures or performance indicators (Courpasson 2000; Townley et al. 2003). From a practical logic, however, ‘dirty workers’ need to protect their work to a certain extent from rationalization, simply in order to continue what they themselves evaluate as good or safe work practices (Kamoche & Maguire 2011; Thiel 2007).

I will explore the above-mentioned topics through data of a two-year longitudinal ethnographic research on collaborative practices in the Dutch railway system. Two of the groups of employees I studied during my research are exposed to what could be labeled ‘dirty work’ during their career: train drivers and incident responders. Each year, approximately 190 people in the Netherlands ‘jump’
in front of a train in order to commit suicide. For the railway organizations, suicides have serious consequences both in terms of personal and emotional impact as well as the disruptive impact on the railway operations. Every other day a train driver sees or hears someone jump in front of his train; every other day, a train conductor steps out of this train to find this victim and see whether (s)he is still alive and look at the state of the body (i.e. whether it is a complete or ‘fragmented’ body); every other day a team of about five incident responders travels to this ‘crime scene’ to evacuate passengers from the train and, often, to clean the train and tracks that are smeared with blood and body sludge. In the analysis of my empirical data it was not just the normalization of ‘dirt’ that became evident; more importantly, on the background of normalization the rationalization of organizational life played an important role. The ‘dirty workers’, in this case, were confronted with an instrumental managerial logic that aimed to rationalize their practices (i.e. the way in which bodily remains should be collected or how long the completion of a suicide was supposed to last). By following the process of how train suicides are ‘managed’ or ‘organized’ by the railway organizations, my data shows that different occupational groups experience the suicide in totally different ways. Whereas the train driver sees a human being ending his/her life, the organization sees a ‘problem’ or ‘disruption’ to be managed, while the incident responders see bodily remains to be gathered and trains and tracks to be cleaned. Besides normalizing taint, dirty workers are confronted with processes of rationalization that hinge upon notions of dirtiness/cleanliness, mind/body, rationality/emotionality and life/death.

My paper and presentation will contribute to the general aim of OAP by exploring the material practices of dirty workers and, moreover, to the theme of this year by means of illustrating a case of material practices in the context of different institutional logics.

References


Developing a relational approach to the role of materiality in organising: An analysis of the mediating functions of artefacts in product development practices

Meri Jalonen (Aalto University)

The role of objects in organisational phenomena has attracted increasing attention in recent years, following a ‘material turn’ in social sciences (Kallinikos et al., 2012). In organisation studies, debates on the sociomaterial nature of organising have centred on the possibility of drawing a distinction between what is social and what is material on one hand and between human and material agency on the other (e.g. Kautz & Jensen, 2013). The present study develops a relational approach to the analysis of the roles that objects play in different situations as well as to shifts between roles over time. The relational approach draws on the notion of mediation from cultural–historical activity theory, actor–network theory and a postphenomenological theory of human–world relations. These theories focus on the interactions of humans and non-humans and suggest that the consequences of these interactions depend on the relationships between the participants rather than on their characteristics (Engeström & Escalante, 1996; Latour, 2005; Verbeek, 2005). Hence, the study analyses the roles of objects as emergent and more or less temporary functions which an artefact may acquire in a specific situation as part of a practice.

The study illustrates the use of the relational approach by analysing how artefacts mediate product development practices and how their mediating functions shift over the course of the product development process. The relational approach refers to materiality with the term ‘artefact’ instead of ‘object’ to enable rigorous empirical analysis of the role of materiality in organising. Artefacts are human-made, simultaneously conceptual and material constructions, which serve specific purposes (Cole, 1996; Kallinikos, 2012). Hence, artefacts do not only include material things but also concepts and symbols. Furthermore, artefacts are themselves sociomaterial in nature: The entanglement of meaning and matter produces their mediating ability. Therefore, artefacts make possible the transmission of culture across situations and communities (Wartofsky, 1979).

The relational approach enables a dynamic understanding of the role of artefacts by analysing the performances of artefacts rather than their characteristics. organisation scholars have observed that artefacts play different roles in different situations (Ewenstein & Whyte, 2009; Nicolini et al., 2012). Despite implying that artefacts’ roles stem from situated interaction between artefacts and humans, previous studies have associated the role that artefacts play in organising with the inherent characteristics of artefacts, thus limiting their explanations of artefacts’ shifts between roles. The mediating ability of an artefact emerges in situated interaction between the human actors and the artefacts. When artefacts perform mediating functions as part of a practice, they encourage some ways of acting or discourage others (Verbeek, 2005). The artefacts fulfil particular purposes or programmes of action (Latour, 1994) in the situation at hand, and different human actors may interpret these purposes in different ways.

The empirical study examines the mediating functions performed by different kinds of artefacts as part of work practices along a product development process. The product is a hybrid package for food products: Its material form depends on the combination of fibre and plastic. The package is developed to meet the needs of food companies but its end users are consumers. Each hybrid package is designed according to the requirements of the food product and the production process of the customer to be efficient in production while attractive to consumers. The study took place when the manufacturing technology and the production practices of the hybrid package were still under development. The first commercial package had only recently entered the market and the team in charge of its development, sales and production had limited experience of how different
combinations of fibre and plastic material as well as different forms of the package behaved in the production process. Therefore, the product development process required the collaboration between the team members (representing different areas of expertise), the customer and suppliers. Moreover, the development process relied heavily on experimentation and iteration. The design of a new hybrid package was tested in trial runs once the customised components of the manufacturing technology had been produced and based on the experiments in the trial runs, the components were adjusted and brought to the next trial runs.

The analysis traces the mediating functions of artefacts by investigating observations of seven events that represent the phases of the product development process. Some of the events involved only members of the team, others also members of suppliers. The analysis identifies artefacts and 11 mediating functions: action, anticipation, communication, decision making, delegation, documentation, evaluation, explanation, organisation, problem solving and standardisation. The findings demonstrate that some mediating functions, such as communication, were important in the early phases of the development process, whereas others, such as evaluation, appeared essential in the later phases of the process. In addition, the analysis shows that the performance of artefacts transformed across the observed events. A number of central artefacts participated in multiple events during the development process. Each of them performed multiple functions in the events and these functions differed between phases of the process. For example, samples of the hybrid package under development triggered evaluation and problem solving in the first round of trial runs, while they mediated action, evaluation, documentation and standardisation in the production phase.

The findings suggest that artefacts are multifunctional and transformative in nature. Whereas previous studies have focused on one function of an artefact at a time due to their characteristics-based analyses (e.g. Ewenstein & Whyte, 2009; Nicolini et al., 2012, Scarbrough et al., 2015), the present study demonstrates that artefacts acquire multiple mediating functions in different situations. Hence, the study proposes that the role artefacts play depend on the sociomaterial constitution of the situated practice. Furthermore, the analysis of mediating functions enables tracing the transitions in artefacts’ roles and the consequences of the transitions to the activity over time. Additionally, mediating functions permit the analysis of the interplay and intertwining of human and material agency (Pickering, 2010). Artefacts shape the performance of human actions by inviting or inhibiting particular behaviour and meaning, participate in the carrying out of sociomaterial practices and perform many operations automatically.
Sociotechnical at stake: prototypes as intermediaries for sustainability transition

Carola Guyot Phung (Ecole Polytechnique)

Systemic innovation is necessary to achieve sustainable transition and prototypes necessary to test it in uncertain environment. Through a case study in the recycling industry, we show that prototypes of systemic innovation are intermediaries for sociotechnical change between technological niches and sociotechnical regimes.

Innovation as a technical object is inscribed (Akrich, 1989) in an environment (Pickering, 2013), i.e. the networks of related actors, described as the circulation of the object. The circulation results from this innovation (Akrich, 1991) and where some things end up being taken for granted. Objects induce social life and ways of doing things (Orlikowski, 2002). Solving-problem activities are routines (Dosi, 1982) that provide stability to sociotechnical regimes (Geels, 2002, 2011). Sociotechnical regimes are systems of technical artefacts combined with social relationships aligned to fulfill a given function. Multi-Level Perspective (Geels, 2002, 2011) provides an analytical framework for technological change: technological landscapes are the broader context; regimes are the stable level where routines and technology selection are key dimensions; technological niches (Kemp & al., 1998) are the cocoon where new technologies are nurtured. To realize sustainable transition, innovations emerge branching up with regimes during "windows of opportunities". Technological Innovation Systems (TIS) (Edquist, 1997) aims at improving systems. For both streams, this impels systemic innovation – whose benefits can be realized only in conjunction with complementary innovations and requires interrelated changes in product design, supplier management, information technology (Chesbrough & Teece, 1996, 2002). Systemic innovation implies the use of complementary assets possessed by others actors (Teece, 1986, 2006).

Among the repertoire of innovation process (Seidel and al., 2014), prototyping activities (Orlikowski, 2007) are essential to test the potential of new technologies or products ( Thomke, 2003), receive feedbacks from lead users (Von Hippel, 1986) and customers (Thomke & Von Hippel, 2002), persuade partners ( Schrage, 2000). Prototypes are epistemic objects (Rheinberger, 1997) that allow building knowledge through conjectures-tests iterations about technology, application and markets for new materials. They perform different types of work ( Nicolini and al., 2012): enroll actors (Akrich and al., 1986), motivate cooperation (Bogers & Horst, 2012), and provide platforms for participation (Horst, 2011) across organizational boundaries being part of infrastructure (Star, 2010).

Intermediaries are individual actors or organizations. They are not neutral and play different roles. Individual actors can be intermediaries inside or outside the organization (Fabbri, 2015). They act as an interface between the inside and the outside, and at different moments of the innovation process (Howells, 2006). They are between designers and users (Winch & Courtney, 2007), sellers and buyers (Liottard, 2012) help find consultancy and funding (Howells, 2006). Intermediary organizations are dispatched in three main categories (von Lente & al., 2003): knowledge services, research and technology, semi-public or industry organizations. They play three key functions (von Lente and al., 2003): 1) articulation of options and demand, 2) alignment of actors and possibilities, 3) support of learning processes.

In this paper, we want to determine if prototypes can play the role of intermediaries in an innovation project, as played by intermediary organizations or individuals at a meso-level, which would complete the literature by giving a micro-level analysis of innovation systems.

Rubbish is a transient i.e objects in circulation, loosing value at each buying and selling step (Thompson, 1979). Innovation in the recycling industry is fundamentally systemic: we try to put value
on waste - “ab-jets”, i.e residues (Dagognet, 1997) of consumed objects we usually want to get rid of (Zinna, 2004) - by transforming them into new goods (Barthes, 1957; Zinna, 2004). Thus uncertainty is a major dimension of the innovation process: 1) quality is uncertain because waste is at the end of the production chain, 2) uncertain outsourcing, 3) new process for new material, 4) no client base for the new product or material, 5) customers uncertain about the stability of sourcing, 6) regulation not well synchronized with new products. There is deep “shared uncertainty” (Aggeri & Hatchuel, 1999).

We adopt a comprehensive research based on a case study of innovation project, during the prototyping phase – when everything is to design, in use and in making (de Vaujany, 2006). The grounded theory is used to explore data - mainly interviews.

The case is an industrial start-up of products made from recycled materials (furniture foam), impelled by new French regulation. The innovator is opportunity-oriented rather than environment-oriented (Parrish, 2010). He co-developed new products with customers with the great help from machine manufacturer. Interactions and knowledge creation around the prototype are analyzed through interviews of the innovator, prior clients, machine manufacturer, investors and close innovation system actors.

The prototype plays different roles that are usually attributed to individual and organizational intermediaries:

1) articulation of options and demand : The prototypes (new foams from used ones) were clearly a coproduction between the innovator and lead users from different sectors, ending in joint proprietorship of patents. This was possible when the user was willing to enter a collaborative process. The new products allow future related products. Customers that were not willing to enter a joint development process did not try to find better articulation with their needs.

2) alignment of actors and possibilities : the strongest alignment was between the innovator and the users, and the innovator and the machine manufacturer. Although the machine manufacturer was not in contact with final users, they developed prototypes in their laboratories for these specific customers. At the end of the process, the users were the sellers of the new products for the innovator. Engagement of every actor is critical.

3) support of learning processes : the prototypes were clearly a tool for new and cross-knowledge. Either by joint development or because of a commercial failure, there is knowledge generation about the product, the process and the applications. High level of previous knowledge of every actor was a condition to produce additional skills. The innovation was the opportunity for the machine manufacturer to seize new market demands.

Prototype builds linkages between two levels described by MLP: niche and sociotechnical regime. Through its material and relational dimensions, the prototype is an intermediary for change in sociotechnical regimes, mixing at an early stage, products, knowledge and activities from innovation and from existing demand. It makes close linkages with motivated actors established in the sociotechnical regime. For less motivated and engaged ones, testing the prototype was a way for the new technology to develop in the longer term. Some actors, like banks, were never changed their routines, even if funding the project when they saw prototypes as proof of the new activity.

References


Only the artefact mattered: The expressiveness of the 4AD record company

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“No recognizable ties to the zeitgeist – no not to any cultural trend, in fact. All of that, Ivo felt, was irrelevant; only the artefact mattered – the music and its exquisite packaging.” (Aston, 2013, p.xiii)

“What is it about a record label that makes it the sort of place you want to spend time in?” (Aston, 2013, p.4)

4AD is an iconic name of alternative independent (indie) music. Co-founded by music visionary Ivo Watts-Russell in 1980, it produced some of the most representative records of indie rock. Its catalog covers names such as Bauhaus, the Cocteau Twins, This Mortal Coil, Deerhunter, Sun O))), Scott Walker, Pixies, to name just a few. Over the years the label was able to launch a distinctive “4AD sound.” What is interesting for the purpose of this paper is the fact that, to a great extent, this sound was made material through an equally distinctive artwork.

This artwork transformed sound into visual stimuli, which reverberated back to the distinctiveness of the 4AD identity showing how the music sounded. In a sense, 4AD became a “place”, as the opening quote indicates. This place congregates a community of fans attracted not only by the image but also by the symbolism of 4AD as a combination of aesthetic affinity, musical experience and artistic sophistication.

In this presentation we ask: why and how does 4AD materialize with an aesthetic image that acts as a sensegiving mechanism to the interpretation of its sound?

4AD, the company, started its operation in the 1980s. Initially, it was imagined as a temporary project: it should terminate its existence, by design, in the year 2000. Eventually that goal was dropped and the organization prolonged its existence until today. Over this period, it has defined an identity that articulates, in a careful weave, sound and visual elements. What is interesting about the case is the careful interweaving of the material and the immaterial. Business-wise 4AD is a record company: it sells music. In fact, it is more than that: it offers a complex aesthetic solution that carefully blends the immaterial (sound) with the material (image, the record as a material artifact).

In this paper we use the case of 4AD but others could also be considered, for example ECM.

Emphasizing the sociomaterial underlines the importance of the material world in organization studies, over and above the more usual consideration of the role of language, cognition, speech or other cerebral forms of functioning. A sociomaterial perspective appreciates people’s actions as being embedded within material as well as social processes and structures (Orlikowski & Scott, 2008). Material and social facets of existence are mutually constituted and inseparable (Orlikowski, 2010; Wagner, Newell, & Piccoli, 2010). We represent 4AD as constituting the sort of case that enacts sociomateriality as the intersection of the bodily, the communitarian and the material, in an entanglement of social forces that produces a unique organization. 4AD achieves this through a careful expression of its identity as a process at the crossroads between sound and vision.

In 2000 Schultz, Hatch and Larsen coined the notion of “expressive organization.” In such a context, expressiveness refers to the articulation of several elements to constitute and to convey a given organizational identity. The notion of organizational expressiveness attracted organizational scholars’
attention to the role of multiple interrelated elements in the creation of a corporate identity. Organizational expressiveness, the authors pointed out, involves a complex articulation of elements that should be consistent and mutually reinforcing.

In this paper we explore how the record company was able to ground its sonic identity in a material support that articulated the immaterial with the sociomaterial, namely through its record covers and website. These artifacts created a distinctive space in the music industry, countering the trend towards the total dematerialization of music as a product that circulates in the digital world and which is bought via downloads to electronic devices that can contain a mass of thousands of materially indistinguishable songs.

In this scenario 4AD is still, for its community, “the sort of place you want to spend time in” (Vine, 2012). We therefore explore the cultivation of the sociomaterial as an expressive act. Through the careful weaving together of the music, the image, and the symbolic meaning of the music–image articulation, 4AD constructed a strong identity, rich in emotional and symbolism (Schultz, Hatch & Larsen, 2000).

The case of 4AD constitutes an exemplary case of how materiality can be used to manage an organization’s expressiveness and to build a sonic universe that summons the social and the material in a deliberate, carefully constructed project. By doing this we discuss organizing at the crossroads between process, identity and brand as materialized in an artifact: the music record.

References


Enhancing cooperation between communities through linked boundary objects: translating falls prevention research evidence into practice

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Embedding health services research evidence into practice is recognized as a key challenge in contemporary healthcare services (Glasgow and Emmons, 2007; Cooksey, 2006), and close attention is now given to problems of implementing and diffusing innovations from research into practice (Eccles et al., 2009; Wilson et al., 2010). While some of this work has been directed towards the materiality of the workplace, the predominant focus has been on the technical and functional properties of work spaces and objects themselves (Carayon, 2010; Winters et al., 2009), rather than on the meanings and experiences of materiality for healthcare staff working within these environments. Drawing on a case study of falls prevention initiatives at an acute teaching hospital in Portugal, this paper addresses this gap by considering the way that sequential linked boundary objects can help to bridge epistemic gaps between research and practice communities, facilitating the translation and embedding of research evidence into everyday practice.

Theoretically this paper builds on the notion of the ‘boundary object’ (Star and Griesermer, 1989; Star, 2010), put forward to describe objects which are understood differently by different groups or communities, but which guide sufficient mutual understanding to develop collaboration (Fox, 2011; Star and Griesemer, 1989). This has become a widely adopted idea, with research examining how objects such as catalogues, maps or other standardized tools (Star and Griesemer, 1989; Allen, 2009; Carlilile, 2002) act to facilitate inter-professional coordination. Recent work has examined how boundary objects can both facilitate and inhibit new technologies and policies entering into practice (Fox, 2011). Extending this, we consider how certain boundary objects can allow coordination between some communities but not others where either epistemic and/or practice differences are too great. However, we suggest that additional intermediary boundary objects can bridge this gap and facilitate coordination between such non-intersecting communities. This leads us to consider the relationships between boundary objects and how assemblages of linked boundary objects may play a role in allowing coordination across diverse communities. In doing so, this paper contributes to a deeper understanding of boundary objects and their capacity to influence institutional dynamics through the materialisation of research evidence into practice. The topic of the paper clearly fits within the OPA 2016 workshop on materiality and institutions in management and organisational studies.

Empirically this paper focuses on the adoption of falls prevention research evidence in a hospital setting. Data was collected through 46 in-depth interviews with twenty-six nurses, eight consultant physicians, four nurse aides, three engineers, two administrative staff, two health and safety technicians, two managers, two social workers and a laboratory technician. Findings highlight how the use of a fall risk assessment tool aided in the improvement of certain lead clinicians’ awareness of falls prevention research but proved to be limited in the translation of research into everyday practice. The adoption of an additional object – a pink wristband - did contribute to patients’ falls prevention measures being adopted into practice by improving the communication and collaboration amongst the wider community of hospital staff. However, it was also found that the effectiveness of this approach was further dependent on the symbolic projections staff attribute to fall-prone patients, which in turn are mediated by the meaning professionals ascribe to boundary objects used in the identification of patients’ risk of falling.

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Collaborative practices and materiality: the case of the French national railway company (SNCF), an exploratory ethnography in railways stations

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Change in customer service meets a need in public firms and more so for those with territorialized networks, for whom this mutation leads to a change of practices and work places. SNCF, the French national railway company, which is a public, commercial and industrial organization, manages the infrastructure of the French national railways and the operations of transport services (passenger and freight). For Foucault (1967), the train “is something we pass through, it is also something that brings us from one point to another, and then it is also something that passes by”, space of the “outside” and of the “inside”, the train station is a paradigmatic case of the rail world. The station is a place geographically and an architectural unit, and it includes actors interacting with tools (screens, ticket machines, punching machine, touch panel information) but also objects (chairs, tables, piano, etc.) The train station basically embodies the organization through material objects which are at the same time witnesses and actors of organizational transformations of SNCF and more widely societal evolutions. This importance given to material artifacts is paradoxical when the business is divided in its activities (TGV, Transilien, TER) and when the dematerialisation has already become a strategic priority in recent years.

Collective action includes various actors (rail versus commercial operators, customers versus users, sedentary versus nomadic, etc). Beyond the sole agents, we are able to think that the practices of these “users of the station” deeply evolve under the influence of several factors: a work style that is increasingly mobile, a need for more personal or semi-collective spaces, and the increasing desire to save valued time. These new practices are not without consequence in the traditional landscape of the train station: we are finding nomadic passengers in search of conviviality, workspaces, innovative services and these uses are profoundly changing the space of the station. Meanwhile, major train stations’ renovation projects are currently taking place in French territory, outlining future collaborative practices.

Therefore, our research question is: to what extent is the emergence of collaborative practices transforming the organizational space of the train station? This study is based on a first ethnography in several French railway stations, over a period of nine successive weeks at SNCF, as an agent, but also alongside users and customers.

This station ethnography allows us to analyze the train station as an organizational space in itself, and to highlight the emergence of collaborative practices within it. We were initially focused on the work of SNCF agents in points of sales (shops, express sales) and with mobile agents in stations (passenger and platform reception, welcoming and boarding). This immersion has helped to structure the observations around three main dimensions: (1) the spatio-temporal context of the station (physical and virtual sub-places, insertion in the territory, temporality of travel and rail production); (2) the observed practices (actors, work, jobs, tools); (3) existing management devices (design and development of spaces and agents). We view the train station as the receptacle but also the place of institutional logic fermentation defined as “the socially constructed, historical pattern of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality” (Thornton et Ocasio, 1999). These first results allow us to define the railway station as an organizational space, understood as a “spatial framework produced and reproduced through collective action” (De Vaujany and Mitev, 2015), consisting of material and symbolic artifacts (Clegg and Kornberger, 2006). Hence the characterization of this railway station by three main objects: the boundary objects (such as the security gates to access the platforms), work tools objects (those the agents use in their work such as their radio or tablet), and finally the symbolic objects relating the
mutations of a station (such as traditional billboard versus immaterial information). The emergence of collaborative practices concerns the agents, which we are studying in this ethnography, but also the customers, users of the station and finally the territory of the station. It would be interesting to study these material practices for users of these extended categories as well.

The interaction of the station with the public space alters the practices in the station and over time, also changing the activity of the transporter itself. For example, the introduction of new sales tools such as the tablet, make the sale “alongside the client” rather than the traditional “face to face” sale we used to have. Similarly, the appropriation of mobility by users may eventually change the physical boundaries of some railways stations areas by creating workspaces and services. We will seek to distinguish the interactions between these objects identified earlier as characteristics of the organizational space to the railway station (boundary objects, work tools objects, symbolical objects) and the actors in collaborative practices (agents, users-clients, territories). Following this explanation, our aim will be to understand how these collaborative practices can structure new artifacts, and how new artifacts can alter collaborative practices. We will conduct our analysis in three different railways stations, understood as ideal-typical cases of organizational arrangements in force at SNCF: a railhead station (1), a railway station in an urban area (2), and a small railway station in the region of Paris (3).

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