Strategy-as-Practice

PhD Seminar

Preliminary outline

Strategy is a central theme in organization studies. While most of the literature in this field conceptualizes strategy as something that organizations have, this course will place an emphasis on the doing of strategy. This focus on doing strategy is referred to in the literature as strategy-as-practice (s-as-p) which attempts to understand “what people do in relation to strategy and how this is influenced by and influences their organizational and institutional context” (Johnson, Langley, Melin, & Whittington, 2007). While strategy is conceptualized in this approach as “a situated, socially accomplished activity”, the process of doing strategy is often referred to as strategizing and involves the “actions, interactions and negotiations of multiple actors” which draw on institutionalized practices to inform their practice (Jarzabkowski, Balogun, & Seidl, 2007). This emphasis on practices is grounded in a broader ‘practice turn’ in the social science more generally (Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina, & von Savigny, 2001), which attempts to understand how practices shape and are formed by day-to-day activities.

This course is based on the strategy-as-practice literature and will conjugate theories, methodological and empirical material.

Pedagogical Objectives

By the end of this course students should be able to:

1. Understand the philosophical background of the strategy-as-practice literature
2. Discuss about theories and methodologies used in the strategy-as-practice view
3. Describe what strategy-as-practice is and what is central in the doing of strategy
4. Explain how strategic processes can lead to specific strategic outcomes
5. Appreciate how micro-activities, macro-context and their interactions influence strategy

Dates:

1. March 24, 15h00
2. April 7, 15h00
3. Mai 5, 15h00
4. Mai 13, 15h00
5. June 10, 15h00
6. June 17, 15h00
Lecturers:

Prof. David Seidl, PhD
Stéphane Guérard, PhD

Teaching Material

Papers and books will be discussed.

Sessions
1 Defining the field of S-as-P
(Johnson, Melin, & Whittington, 2003)
(Jarzabkowski, Balogun, & Seidl, 2007)

2 Origin of the S-as-P approach: micro-activities and process theory
(Pettigrew, 1985)
(Mintzberg, 1973)

3 Philosophical foundations of the so-called “practice turn”
(Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina, & von Savigny, 2001)
(Oflikowski, 2009)
(Rasche & Chia, 2009)

4. Practice theories: Bourdieu and Giddens (knowledge and structuration)
(Whittington, 2009)
(Barley, 1986)
(Jarzabkowski, 2008)
(Gomez, 2009)
(Oakes, Townley, & Cooper, 1998)

5. Methodological challenges
(Balogun, Huff, & Johnson, 2003)
(Balogun & Johnson, 2004)

6. Post-processual approach
(Tsoukas, 2009)
(Chia & MacKay, 2007; 2009)
References:


