Strategy as Practice:
The Practice Turn in Strategy Research

PhD Seminar ETH/UZH

Lecturers
Prof. David Seidl, PhD

Dates
January 15th, 22nd, 29th, 2013 from 9h00-12h00

Location
ETH, Kreuzplatz 5
(room tbd)

Over the last decade, strategy-as-practice has emerged as a distinctive approach in strategy research, according to which strategy is conceptualized as something that people in organizations do rather than something that firms in their markets have. Such an interest in the doing of strategy directs our attention to the myriad day-to-day activities on the micro-level that make up strategy in practice. Yet, at the same time it calls for an appreciation of the role of the macro-level institutions in shaping these strategizing activities: Strategists are not acting in isolation but are drawing upon the regular, socially defined modes of acting that arise from the plural social institutions to which they belong.

This seminar aims at exploring the origin and epistemological foundations of the strategy-as-practice perspective and its implications for strategy research. Accordingly, participants to the seminar will read and discuss foundational papers as well as exemplary empirical studies in strategy-as-practice.

The objectives of this course are:
1. to provide students with a substantive understanding of the epistemological and theoretical foundations of strategy-as-practice
2. to discuss the implications of the practice approach for empirical research in this area
3. to provide illustrations of different types of empirical studies in strategy-as-practice
4. to develop skills in critiquing the literature, defining research problems and proposing empirical research in this area

Content
1. Origin and foundations of strategy-as-practice
The first session is dedicated to exploring the characteristics of strategy-as-practice as compared to other approaches to strategy.

Readings
2. **Implications of the strategy-as-practice approach for empirical research**

During this session, we examine and compare different types of empirical studies in strategy-as-practice. Given that the strategy-as-practice is interested both in the micro- and the macro-levels of analysis, the papers were selected along a micro-macro continuum.


3. **Epistemological foundations of strategy-as-practice**

This session is dedicated to the discussion of the epistemological status of the knowledge generated in strategy-as-practice research. In particular, we will discuss the potential of strategy-as-practice research to inform management practice.


**Requirements**

Each student is expected to proactively join the discussion and is expected to complete all the required readings for each session and come prepared to discuss them. In addition, each student is expected to:

a) lead the discussion on one of the papers selected for the course. Each session, some students will be selected – ahead of time – to prepare a presentation on the required readings. These students will present the papers highlighting their main message and comment on its strengths and weaknesses.

b) prepare two questions for each session that they would like to discuss. These questions should be sent to the lecturer before each session.

c) For each session, students have to hand in a concise critic of one of the papers to be read.