



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)

(Orlikowski, 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:

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- Jarzabkowski, P., Balogun, J., & Seidl, D. 2007. Strategizing: The challenges of a practice perspective. Human Relations, 60(1): 5-27.
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- Johnson, G., Melin, L., & Whittington, R. 2003. Guest's editors' introduction: Micro strategy and strategizing: toward an activity-based view. Journal of Management Studies, 40(3-22).
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- Mintzberg, H. 1973. The nature of managerial work. New York: Harper & Row.
- Oakes, L. S., Townley, B., & Cooper, D. J. 1998. Business planning as pedagogy: Language and control in a changing institutional field. Administrative Science Quarterly, 43(2): 257-292.
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- Pettigrew, A. 1985. The awakening giant: Continuity and change in ICI. London: Blackwell.
- Rasche, A. & Chia, R. 2009. Researching Strategy Practices – A genealogical social theory perspective. Organization Studies (forthcoming).
- Schatzki, T., Knorr-Cetina, K., & von Savigny, E. 2001. The practice turn in contemporary theory. London: Routledge.



Tsoukas, H. 2009. Practice, strategy making and intentionality: A Heideggerian onto-epistemology for strategy-as-practice. In D. Golsorkhi & L. Rouleau & D. Seidl & E. Vaara (Eds.), Cambridge Handbook of Strategy as Practice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (forthcoming).

Whittington, R. 2009. Giddens, Structuration Theory and Strategy-as-Practice. In D. Golsorkhi & L. Rouleau & D. Seidl & E. Vaara (Eds.), Cambridge Handbook of Strategy as Practice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (forthcoming).