

Call for Papers

Fifth International Symposium on Process Organization Studies

Theme: The Emergence of Novelty in Organizations

General process-oriented and theme-focused papers are invited

www.process-symposium.com

20-22 June 2013

Minoa Palace Resort, Chania, Crete, Greece

(<http://www.minoapalace.gr>).

Conveners:

Raghu Garud, Penn State University, USA (rug14@smeal.psu.edu)

Barbara Simpson, University of Strathclyde, UK (barbara.simpson@strath.ac.uk)

Ann Langley, HEC Montreal, Canada (ann.langley@hec.ca)

Haridimos Tsoukas, University of Cyprus, Cyprus & University of Warwick, UK (process.symposium@gmail.com)

Keynote Speakers:

Keith Ansell-Pearson, Professor of Philosophy, University of Warwick, UK, author of *Geminal Life*, editor of *A Companion to Nietzsche*

Deborah Dougherty, Professor of Management, Rutgers Business School, USA

Jaan Valsiner, Professor of Psychology, Clark University, USA, editor of *Culture and Psychology*, and co-editor of *The Cambridge Handbook of Sociocultural Psychology*

Rationale: What is a Process Perspective?

Process Organization Studies (PROS) is a way of studying organizations that unfolds from process metaphysics – the worldview that sees processes, rather than substances, as the basic forms of the universe. A process view rests on a relational ontology, namely the recognition that everything that is has no existence apart from its relation to other things. A process orientation prioritizes activity over product, change over persistence, novelty over stasis, expression over determination. Becoming, change, flux as well as creativity, disruption, and indeterminism are the main themes of a process worldview.

Seeing process as fundamental, such an approach does not deny the existence of states, events, and entities, but insists on unpacking them to reveal the complex processes - sequences of activities and transactions - that are involved in and contribute to their

constitution. As process philosopher Nicholas Rescher notes, “the idea of discrete “events” dissolves into a manifold of processes which themselves dissolve into further processes”. A process point of view invites us to acknowledge, rather than reduce, the complexity of the world and, in that sense, it is animated by what philosopher Stephen Toulmin calls an “ecological style” of thinking.

Purpose, Venue, and Organization

The aim of the Symposium is to consolidate, integrate, and further develop ongoing efforts to advance a sophisticated process perspective in organization and management studies.

PROS is an annual event organized in conjunction with the annual series *Perspectives on Process Organization Studies* (Series Editors: Ann Langley and Haridimos Tsoukas), published by Oxford University Press, and it takes place in a Mediterranean island, in June each year. Topics so far have included: “Sensemaking and Organizing” (First Symposium, Cyprus, 2009), “Constructing Identities in and Around Organizations” (Second Symposium, Rhodes, Greece, 2010), “How Matter Matters: Objects, Artifacts and Materiality in Organization Studies” (Third Symposium, Corfu, Greece, 2011), and “Language and Communication @ Work: Discourse, Narrativity and Organizing” (Fourth Symposium, Kos, Greece) (details can be seen at www.process-symposium.com).

Around 70 papers are usually accepted, following a review of submitted abstracts by the conveners. Authors of accepted papers will have the opportunity to interact in depth and share insights in a stimulating, relaxing, and scenic environment.

The **Fifth Symposium** will take place on **20-22 June 2013**, at Minoa Palace Resort, Chania, Crete, Greece (<http://www.minoapalace.gr>). The Symposium venue, comfortable, beautiful, and situated by the sea, will provide an ideal setting for participants to relax and engage in authentic and creative dialogues.

The Symposium is organized in two tracks:

1. One is the General Track, which includes papers that explore a variety of organizational phenomena from a process perspective.

More specifically, although not necessarily consolidated under a process metaphysical label, several strands in organization and management studies have adopted a more or less process-oriented perspective over the years. Karl Weick’s persistent emphasis on *organizing* and the important role of sensemaking in it is perhaps the best known process approach. Henry Mintzberg’s, James March’s, Andrew Pettigrew’s, and Andrew Van de Ven’s work on the making of strategy, decision making, organizational change, and innovation respectively, also shows a clear awareness of the importance of process-related issues. Current studies that take an explicitly performative (or enactivist or relational or practice-based) view of organizations have similarly adopted, in varying

degrees, a process vocabulary and have further refined a process sensibility. Indeed, the growing use of the gerund (-ing) indicates the desire to move towards dynamic ways of understanding organizational phenomena, especially in a fast-moving, inter-connected, globalized world.

Since a process worldview is not a doctrine but an orientation, it can be developed in several different directions, exploring a variety of topics in organizational research. For example, traditional topics such as organizational design, routines, leadership, trust, coordination, change, innovation, learning and knowledge, accountability, communication, authority, technology, etc, which have often been studied as “substances”, from a process perspective can be approached as situated sequences of activities and complexes of processes unfolding in time. A process view treats organizational phenomena not as *faits accomplis* but as (re)created through interacting agents embedded in sociomaterial practices, whose actions are mediated by institutional, linguistic and objectual artifacts.

2. The second is the Thematic Track, which includes papers addressing the particular theme of the Symposium every year.

For **2013** the theme is: **The Emergence of Novelty in Organizations**

A description of this theme and its importance follows.

The emergence of novelty is most readily evident in processes associated with creativity, invention, entrepreneurship, innovation, and the institutionalization of new product and service offerings. But, in addition, novelty is also more subtly present in many other ordinary organizational processes, including learning, strategizing, identity construction, leading, and the implementation of routines, to mention a few. Yet, mainstream theories of organization often relegate novelty to the status of a “residual category” where its subversive, disruptive and generative qualities remain largely unexamined (Joas, 1996), or only offer normative suggestions as to how organizations may cultivate novelty.

Processual understandings of organizing, which give prominence to “emergence” as a central dynamic, have the potential to go beyond normative considerations to inform novelty generation and creative practice in new and interesting ways. If relational, temporal and cultural aspects inform our understandings of novelty emergence, then praxis becomes the primary object of inquiry (Bernstein, 1972). It is in the dynamic interplay between actors and artifacts as they are intertwined in processes of experimentation, bricolage and improvisation that novelty emerges (Pickering 1993; Schatzki 2001; Simpson 2009). Understanding how actors build upon past experiences and future aspirations to cultivate novelty in the present invokes a temporal and embodied expression of agency (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Garud et. al, 2011). Fruitful lines of inquiry in this regard probe how novelty arises out of the challenges of managing several different processes simultaneously (Garud et. al, 2006; Joas, 1997; Rosenkopf & McGrath, 2011). Cultural issues suggest that the very meaning of novelty is a multi-level construct, implicating not just individuals but also the cultural and cross-cultural

communities within, and across which, novelty emerges (Bartel & Garud, 2008; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Dougherty & Dunne, 2011). In this regard, the role that categories, symbols, labels, narratives and discourses play in the emergence and definition of what is new and valuable requires further examination (Simpson & Carroll, 2008; Taylor & Van Every, 2000).

As this brief description suggests, novelty cannot be understood purely as a characteristic of individuals; rather novelty emerges from a collaborative web of interactions of agents and objects, within and across cultural, institutional, and situational contexts (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Sawyer, 2007). One may engage with such a distributed yet emergent approach from a variety of theoretical perspectives. For instance, actor-network theorization is sympathetic to such an approach, where “heterogeneous” material and social elements become entangled (Callon, 1980; Latour, 2005). Another approach is to consider discourse and narratives as key mechanisms to drive emergence and interpretations towards organizational novelty (Sawyer, 2007). And yet another would be to consider complexity as the basis for harnessing the relational, temporal and cultural facets of emergence of novelty (Garud et al, 2011; Tsoukas & Hatch, 2001).

In this year’s *thematic track*, we are interested in receiving conceptual, empirical and/or methodological submissions that address the emergence of novelty from relational, temporal and creative perspectives. Topics may include but need not be limited to:

- The ontological, epistemological, and praxeological conditions of novelty
- Experimentation, improvisation and bricolage in organizational practice
- Novelty emergence in and through mutual interaction and coordination
- The role of creativity in the practice of leadership
- Imagination and organizing
- Organizational discourse as creative practice
- The role of generative memory in the emergence of novelty
- The emergence of novelty through a recombination and recognition of ideas occurs across cultural and epistemic boundaries
- The temporal patterning of organizations in the emergence of novelty
- Understanding novelty emergence through the simultaneity of multiple processes
- The embodied experience of novelty generation

References

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Submissions

Both general process-oriented papers and theme-focused papers are invited. Interested participants must submit to Haridimos Tsoukas (process.symposium@gmail.com) an abstract of about 1000 words for their proposed contribution by **January 31st, 2013**. The submission must be made via email and it must be a Word attachment. It should contain authors' names, institutional affiliations, email and postal addresses, and indicate the track for which the submission is made (*General* or *Thematic*), while the subject matter line of the email should indicate "Process Symposium". Authors will be notified of acceptance or otherwise by **March 4th, 2013**. Full papers will be submitted by **May 31st, 2013**.

Limited financial assistance is possible for researchers unable to fund their participation in the Symposium.