

**CELEBRATING ORGANIZATION THEORY\***

MICHAEL LOUNSBURY  
Thornton A. Graham Chair  
University of Alberta School of Business  
4-40J Business Building  
Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2R6  
CANADA  
(780) 492-1684; [ml37@ualberta.ca](mailto:ml37@ualberta.ca)

CHRISTINE M. BECKMAN  
The Robert H. Smith School of Business  
University of Maryland  
College Park, MD 20740  
(301) 405-9002; [cbeckman@umd.edu](mailto:cbeckman@umd.edu)

**Prepared for *Journal of Management Studies* (Point-Counterpoint Section)**

\* We thank Diane Burton, Fran den Hond, Gerardo Okhuysen, Brent Goldfarb, Danny Miller, Tom Moliterno and Melissa Mazmanian for their comments on earlier versions of the paper, as well as Andrew Corbett, Bill Harley and Davide Ravasi for their editorial guidance. We are also extremely appreciative of the willingness of Jerry Davis to engage our arguments.

## CELEBRATING ORGANIZATION THEORY

Recently, there has been growing disquiet about the state of organization theory (whether that be theory more generally or organizational theory). Hambrick (2007) characterized the management field as having an ‘idolization of theory’ that inhibits our ability to understand the world. As part of his ongoing critique of the field and call for problem-driven research, Davis (2010, p. 691) commented that ‘organizational research can sometimes appear like a living museum of the 1970s.’ And in their introduction to the *Academy of Management Review* special issue on organization and management theory, Suddaby, Hardy and Huy (2011) echo Davis by criticizing the failings of contemporary organization theory and arguing that we need to generate new, preferably indigenous, management-centered theory.

While each of these recent commentaries make useful points about the nature of theorizing and the general state of the field that are worth considering, we also feel that the pessimism expressed about contemporary organization theory (OT) scholarship is over-stated. Even though OT as a field certainly faces many challenges, we share the optimism of others (e.g., Corbett, Cornelissen, Delios & Harley, 2014; March, 2007) that emphasize its vibrancy. For instance, in emphasizing the growing diversity of our field, Corbett et al. (2014, p. 15) claim that ‘there is a richness inherent in the study of management and organizations. Phenomena are abundant and theories and methodologies are likewise profuse.’

Indeed, we see contemporary theoretical conversations as quite generative and dynamic—both

with regard to progressive knowledge accumulation and the spawning of new theoretical problematics and orientations. If organization theory is a museum, the collection is much larger than Davis (2010) acknowledges. New pieces are being added to the collection, and many of these are potential anchors for new rooms of the museum. In celebrating the dynamism of OT, we highlight exciting recent developments in five theoretical domains—institutional logics, categorization, networks, behavioral theory, and practice theories.

In brief, we note that new institutional theory has not been a static relic, stuck in the 70s or even the 80s; the recent proliferation of research in the top journals on the institutional logics perspective (Thornton, Ocasio & Lounsbury, 2012) forges new theory about how organizations are variably interpenetrated with wider societal forces. Second, Hannan, Polos and Carroll (2007) reject some of the earlier assumptions of organizational ecology, embrace social constructionism, and have joined hands with a wider group of organizational theorists to develop a progressive research stream on categorization dynamics (see Hsu, Negro & Koçak, 2010). Third, network research has revolutionized OT since the mid-1980s, providing an understanding of how the structure of networks and attributes of actors at all levels of analysis impact behavior (e.g., Brass, Labianca, Mehra, Halgin & Borgatti, 2014). Fourth, performance feedback theory (Greve, 2003), spawned from behavioral theory (Cyert & March, 1963), examines with better precision some of the original theoretical questions in behavioral theory as well as raises new questions (see also Gavetti, Greve, Levinthal & Ocasio, 2012). Finally, practice theories across the social sciences and humanities have inspired the development of many new theoretical conversations including that of Strategy-as-Practice (SAP) which has its

roots in working groups at the European Group on Organization Studies (EGOS) colloquia less than a decade ago, and has more recently coalesced into a formalized interest group at the Academy of Management (e.g., see Golsorkhi, Rouleau, Seidl & Vaara, 2010; Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009; Vaara & Whittington, 2012).

As current leaders of the Organization and Management (OMT) division of the Academy of Management, the home for OT research and the third largest division in the Academy of Management, we will also report recent statistics about the growing internationalization (especially Europeanization) of OMT, as well as the innovativeness of our field in generating new kinds of questions and approaches. Since many of us in OMT are also intimately involved in EGOS, we note that there has also been a growing North American presence in European intellectual circles, creating two-way traffic for intellectual engagement and advance. It is also important to note that EGOS continues to be a vibrant focal point for the development of novel theoretical conversations, SAP being a case in point. There is much to celebrate and good reason to be optimistic about the state of our field and where it is going.

### **Organization Theory under Siege?**

The critiques of contemporary organization theory are varied, and include complaints about scholarship being overly theory-focused, anachronistic, too tied to disciplinary knowledge, and lacking in relevance. For instance, Hambrick (2007) accuses our field of having a ‘theory fetish’—he elaborates, ‘like insecure adolescents who are deathly afraid of not looking the part, we don’t dare let up on our showy devotion to theory’ (2007, p. 1347; see Miller, 2007 for a

sympathetic critique). He goes on to argue that our obsession with theory is a profound malady, prohibiting us from developing valuable managerial knowledge. He suggests that our profession would be well served if we could publish important observations as is done in epidemiology.

Hambrick's (2007) comments have been among the most prominent amidst the current stream of disquiet, leading to the creation of a new journal, *Academy of Management Discoveries*, whose founding mission is to focus on publishing novel empirical findings. To make his point about our 'theory obsession' problem, Hambrick (2007) notes the early epidemiological research on cigarette smoking and ill-health, and suggests such important findings would be rejected by management journals because of the lack of theory. However, we advise caution: one of the great examples of statistical misidentification is the relationship between cigarette smoking and poor grades (Huff, 1954). Thus, even with multiple, well-executed studies (which is an important component of replication in many fields), as seen in epidemiology, we fear such a direction has hidden dangers. For instance, given the concern in related fields (strategic management, economics and psychology) decrying a crisis of data mining, 'p-hacking', and the search for 'asterisks' (Bettis, 2012; DeLong & Lang, 1992; Goldfarb & King, 2013; Simonsohn, Nelson & Simmons, 2013), a focus on 'facts' may encourage searching vast quantities of data for statistical significance rather than producing good research. Alongside rigorous and replicable empirics, good theory should also be encouraged to help us assess empirical relationships. While an instrumental variable or natural experiment may allow us to differentiate between causation and correlation, it is still important to theorize about why

particular relationships exist – especially if we are concerned about how our empirical findings may be used in policy.

Davis (2010, p. 706) agrees with Hambrick ‘that the theory benchmark prevents the publication of papers that would enrich our understanding of organizational life but do not hang on a particular paradigm, while encouraging authors to link whatever their regressions turn up to the theories currently in vogue.’ He further notes, ‘given the diverse predictions of the many paradigms in organization theory, it is almost always possible to find a theoretical rationale for a result’ (Davis, 2010, p. 697). Of course, this cynical quip provides an overly-elastic conceptualization of organization theory that devalues the role of theory in research development while simultaneously indicting the ethics of organizational scholars as well as the capacity of reviewers and editors to assess knowledge contributions. While there is no doubt some truth to the complaints of Davis and Hambrick, the sweeping nature of their claims, as well as the flamboyant rhetoric they employ, distracts attention away from the value of their insights. One of Davis’ (2010) main critiques of organization and management theory is that we have made limited theoretical progress, or have been theoretically ‘stagnant’, for several decades due to the fact that we remain focused on ‘a handful of paradigms from the late 1970s [that] still exercise a predominant influence’ (p. 693). While we believe that there is scant evidence for this claim, it is one we take seriously enough to challenge in this essay.

Of course, OT scholarship faces many challenges, including a ‘statistical fetishism’ (Davis, 2010), problems associated with the lack of experimental control in social science research (Cook &

Campbell, 1979), the conservative nature of business schools where much of OT research takes place (March, 2007), and top journal-driven isomorphic pressures that threaten to direct scholars away from more unconventional research projects (Corbett et al., 2014). But is the state of organization theory so dire? We wonder if it is just sexier to be cynical and complain, rather than recognize and applaud positive developments.

### **The Dynamism of Organization Theory**

Without denying some merits embedded in the aforementioned critiques, we alternatively see organization theory as a tremendously vibrant and generative field. For instance, in the Organization and Management Theory (OMT) Division of the Academy of Management, there has been a growing diversity and internationalization of members. Following (and often leading) the Academy trends, OMT international membership is now over 50% (from 41% in 2005). In addition, paper submissions to the OMT division from European members for the first time exceeded those from North America (43% v 41%) for the 2012 Academy of Management meetings in Boston. The OMT division has also witnessed growing interest from Asian scholars—submission growth between 2010 and 2012 grew 50%, now accounting for 15% of overall submissions. Of those advanced doctoral students that have participated in the OMT Doctoral Consortium in the last four years, 39% and 34% were educated or are now employed outside of North America, respectively. Furthermore, the number of submissions has almost tripled over the past decade (from 239 in 2002 to 695 in 2012).

This growth in diversity is echoed by the experiences of the European Group on Organization Studies (EGOS), which has experienced growing internationalization, including rapid growth in North American membership and participation, as well as increasing interest from researchers in Asia, South America and elsewhere. For instance, the percentage of North American attendees at EGOS conferences has grown from around 5% in 2001 to close to 15% by 2012; and this percentage jumped to 23% in 2013 when the EGOS colloquium was hosted by HEC in Montreal—the first time in North America. This accords with internationalization data reported by Corbett et al. (2014), who note that the *Strategic Management Society* conferences have seen tremendous growth in numbers and countries represented, as has the *Journal of Management Studies*. In general, we believe that this increasing diversity of and interest in organization theory bodes well for the continued vibrancy of our scholarly field.

These larger demographic trends also importantly signal theoretical dynamism. Theory development happens when new directions are explored and unanswered questions are illuminated. This growing internationalization can infuse the field with new perspectives, new viewpoints, and a focus on new problems (or at least a focus on problems from a different perspective). Rather than needing new theory to stimulate the growth of the field, new people from new places can facilitate theory development. To see this, we can look at the intersection between theory and region in OMT division submissions. Despite being 15% of the overall submissions, Asian scholars submitted 32% of the papers on governance and corporate strategy and 28% of the papers in learning and adaptation to OMT in 2011. These existing theoretical



domains benefit from the new perspectives. Applying, questioning and extending our theories of corporate governance in China may in fact deepen our understanding of the theories itself.

Davis (2010, p. 705) suggests that to expect organizational insights to remain generalizable over time is a 'vain hope' and perhaps the same can be true for theories across place (see also March, 2007). However, without theory, we collect empirical regularities (that may be time-specific and place-specific) without understanding the fundamental whys and hows that a good theory encourages us to understand. Isn't this what Pfeffer (1993) suggested we should be seeking when he called for paradigm development? We believe that the growth of global OT scholarship seems a step toward generalizable theory or at least understanding what portions of our 'old' theories continue to hold true in new places and new times. Without placing our findings in a theoretical frame, we collect a series of empirical observations without understanding how they may relate and build on each other.

OT scholarship has also exhibited a great deal of dynamism. This is partially determined by the position of organization theory in the field. Using the OMT division of the Academy as an example, for at least the past 10 years OMT has served as the major bridge between the two major clusters in the Academy of Management (bridging the clusters anchored by strategy and organizational behavior; Pearce, 2003). Thus, if we follow network theory, the position of organization theory within the larger management field makes it the most likely to generate and espouse new ideas. To that point, OMT scholars have helped to spawn new divisions and

interest groups within the Academy: Managerial and Organizational Cognition (MOC), Critical Management Studies (CMS), and most recently Strategizing Activities and Practice (SAP).

Below, we address in more detail growth within the bounds of the organization theory field, focusing on exciting developments in five important and novel theoretical conversations that have emerged in recent years. Two of these theoretical conversations emerge out of the six theories highlighted by Davis (2010). In choosing theoretical areas to discuss in detail, we do not mean to discount other areas where vibrant research is happening. Among the OMT submissions in 2011, 16 different theories were used by 74% of the authors. The other 26% of the submissions are studying topics like bureaucracy, diffusion, corporate social responsibility, identity, culture, control, knowledge, innovation, and status. These are not one-off categories – these are important areas of new theory development. Consistent with the demographic trends noted above, many of these research areas are being studied across the globe, others are being driven by scholars outside the U.S. (e.g., social responsibility and bureaucracy submissions were 67% and 61% outside the U.S. in 2011). All of these trends provide indicators of vibrancy and variety in our scholarship.

### **The Institutional Logics Perspective**

The prominence of institutional theory among OMT division members has been well documented (roughly a quarter of all submissions to the Academy of Management annual meetings in both 2005 and 2011). Yet this single theoretical category masks the diversity and evolution of research that underlies or is related to institutional theory. In fact, 19% of all

institutional submissions in 2011 were also about entrepreneurship, identity or work (6-7% each). In addition, one of the most exciting new institutional research domains focuses on the institutional logics perspective (Thornton et al., 2012). This domain was virtually non-existent as a cohesive theoretical conversation five years ago. In 2011, 18% of all the institutional theory submissions to the OMT division also used institutional logics as a key word (and an additional third of the institutional logics submissions did not identify as institutional theory). The numbers suggest progressive theoretical development.

Yet Davis (2010) singles out new institutional theory (NIT) as an example of all that is wrong with OMT, including the dominance of stale and constraining paradigms. His claim seems as hollow as the scant evidence he provides—essentially focusing on the limits of one paper, on the structuration of organizational fields, published over thirty years ago (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). The limits of that paper notwithstanding, it is hard to make sweeping claims about an entire paradigm (NIT) that has underpinned hundreds of top journal publications, by focusing on a single article no matter how important and ritually cited.

More to the point, contemporary institutional research has little substantive connection to the ideas laid out in that paper focused on isomorphism, or even much of institutional research on diffusion in the 1980s and 90s. In fact, the institutional logics perspective rejects many of the early ideas underpinning NIT and the study of isomorphism, providing a much richer and fluid theoretical apparatus that focalizes cultural heterogeneity and practice variation (Thornton et al., 2012). The divergence of institutional logics research from the NIT statement laid out by

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) was explicit in the rogue Friedland and Alford (1991) chapter in the so-called 'Orange Book' edited by Powell and DiMaggio. In fact, it is written partially as a critique of NIT research on organizational fields. Entitled, '*Bringing Society Back In: Symbols, Practices, and Institutional Contradictions*', Friedland and Alford (1991) laid the groundwork for an institutional logics approach that offers a 'nonfunctionalist conception of society as a potentially contradictory interinstitutional system' (p. 240). Contrary to NIT emphases on isomorphism, they highlight the centrality of competition, conflict and institutional contradiction. This paper has become very highly cited, and catalyzed an entirely new research stream that emanated but distinctively diverged from NIT.

This new stream began slowly, with a trickle of papers in the late 1990s (e.g., Haveman & Rao, 1997; Thornton & Ocasio, 1999; Townley, 1997), but has recently blossomed as publications in top journals have accumulated and theoretical conversations have concomitantly broadened (Lounsbury & Boxenbaum, 2013). Initial research focused attention on how historical shifts in logics opened up opportunities for the reconfiguration of organizational practices, but the scope of the literature expanded quickly to include a focus on the tensions associated with logic pluralism. For instance, some research draws on the social movement literature to understand how actors usher new logics into fields (see Schneiberg & Lounsbury, 2008). Complementing this focus on collective action and logic struggle are studies that explore how competing logics relate to actors and their identities and practices (e.g., Jones, Maoret, Massa & Svejnova, 2012; Lok, 2010; Lounsbury, 2007; Marquis & Lounsbury, 2007; Meyer & Hammerschmid, 2006;

Pache & Santos, 2010; Reay & Hinings, 2009; Smets, Morris & Greenwood, 2012; Tracey, Phillips, & Jarvis 2011).

There is also renewed attention to how institutional dynamics affect and play out inside organizations. Analyzing organizational downsizing in Spain, Greenwood, Díaz, Li and Lorente (2010) developed the term 'institutional complexity' to refer to situations where organizations are faced with pressures stemming from multiple institutional logics. Greenwood, Raynard, Kodeih, Micelotta and Lounsbury (2011) theoretically developed the notion of institutional complexity to direct research towards an understanding of how the structural dimensions of fields (fragmentation, formal structuring/rationalization, and centralization) as well as characteristics of organizations (field position, structure, ownership/governance, and identity) shape how organizations respond to competing institutional logics. Hybrid organizations that combine multiple logics are particularly opportune focal points for the study of institutional complexity (e.g., Battilana & Dorado, 2010).

Thus, institutional logics research is occurring at multiple levels, with most research explicitly focused on delineating cross-level mechanisms linking organizations and their environments. Published research is quantitative, qualitative, as well as mixed method. And there has been particular attention paid to the development of micro-foundations (e.g., Thornton et al., 2012: ch. 4) to bridge more macro structural institutional research to more situated process studies. In short, the institutional logics perspective provides a prime example of the how OT is far from

stagnant, producing new areas of inquiry and paradigms that provide exciting new scholarly directions for the field.

### **Categorization**

Another relatively new theoretical domain in OT that has grown in significance and interest focuses on categorization processes. Recent interest in categorization was sparked by the work of Zuckerman (1999) who documented how categories provide clear and legitimate boundaries for identity and role conformance, and spanning categories can lead to the inattention of key audiences and concomitant penalties—in his case, firm stock price devaluation. Since that paper, there has been a growing community of scholarship detailing the sources and consequences of categories, and this scholarship brings together and reanimates ecological and institutional theories (Hsu, Negro & Koçak, 2010). While this new domain has roots in these ‘older’ theories, the OMT submission data suggest that 11% of all submissions in 2011 were self-identified as ‘Identity and Categorization’ (compared with 1 self-identified categorization paper and 6% identity submissions in 2005).

Categorization combines similar entities (e.g., organizations or products) into distinct clusters, rendering them understandable, and creating shared understandings about how groups of entities differ across categories (Zerubavel, 1997). Since categories simplify reality and make cognition and behavior more efficient, they can play a powerful role in organizing the attention of varied audiences, as well as enabling and constraining behavior (Hsu & Hannan, 2005). For instance, organizations that do not fit categories easily (e.g., innovative or novel firms) may

have difficulty being recognized and 'counted' (Kennedy, 2008). Thus, category schemes are pervasive and importantly shape the identities and interests of actors, providing an important foundation for role conformity in both market and non-market settings (Zuckerman, 1999).

Even though the study of categorization processes is not new (e.g., Rosch, 1983; Wittgenstein, 1953), growing organization theoretic interest in categorization, like the study of institutional logics, is exemplified by a growing corpus of publications in top journals as well as high submission rates to OMT for the annual Academy of Management conferences (this area has ranged from the third to fifth most popular OMT submission topic in the last three years).

Research demonstrates the categorical imperative across different contexts, and has begun to identify scope conditions. For example, Zuckerman, Kim, Ukanwa and von Rittman (2003) showed how typecasting in Hollywood films is a double-edged sword. While actors initially benefit from being typecast in a single genre, this benefit dissipates over time as mature actors gain from the ability to move across genres. It has also been demonstrated that penalties associated with category spanning may be mitigated when a category system is emergent or in flux (Ruef & Patterson, 2009), when categories become blended (e.g., Hsu, Negro & Perretti, 2012; Rao, Monin & Durand, 2005; Wry & Lounsbury, 2013), or when market makers seek the diversity and novelty associated with category spanning (Pontikes, 2012). Vergne (2012) has also shown that actors in a stigmatized category can avoid stigma related penalties by spanning to non-stigmatized categories. And Wry, Lounsbury and Jennings (forthcoming) show how category spanning can actually be rewarded.

The research agenda goes far beyond research on the categorical imperative, as exemplified by the diverse contributions included in the 2010 *Research in the Sociology of Organizations* volume on *Categories in Markets: Origins and Evolution* edited by Hsu, Negro and Koçak, and recent statements that direct the field towards the study of how categories emerge and change (e.g., Kennedy, 2005; Khaire & Wadhvani, 2010; Navis & Glynn, 2010; Phillips, 2013; Wry, Lounsbury & Glynn, 2011). Indeed, Kennedy and Fiss (2013) lay out an explicit agenda for research on category emergence. This type of theoretical development may not be the Darwinian selection between theories that Davis (2010) hopes for, but perhaps Lamarckian analogies and a blending of theories is more generative for organizational theory.

The study of category transformation and change is also a key focal point for research. Lounsbury and Rao (2004) emphasized the politics of categorization and showed how categories were reconstituted as the variance of entities within a category grew. Schneiberg and Berk (2010) argue that categories serve as cognitive infrastructures for learning, discovery, and innovation in markets, and show how collective action can lead to category reformation. Mohr and Guerra-Pearson (2010) emphasize how category change can be triggered by jurisdictional conflicts over practice. Kennedy, Lo and Lounsbury (2011) introduce the notion of 'category currency', and suggest that category change goes hand-in-hand with the efforts of actors to be valued by helping to reshape categories in ways that make them more appropriately recognized (see also Alexy & George, 2013).



Overall, the growing diversity (both topically and demographically) and theoretical innovativeness of categorization research is one of the most exciting contemporary developments in OT (see also, Durand & Paoletta, 2013; Glynn & Navis, 2013; Kennedy & Fiss, 2013; Vergne & Wry, 2014). While old theoretical paradigms such as the new institutionalism and population ecology may provide resources for understanding categorization dynamics, neither paradigm as constituted in the 70s and 80s is up for the task. More pointedly, categorization research provides a vivid example of a new theoretical conversation that stands in stark contrast to the imagery of ‘stagnation’ painted by Davis (2010) or puzzling complaints about the lack of new theory (Suddaby, Hardy & Huy, 2011).

### **Networks**

Networks research is active in OT and in management writ large (17% of OMT submissions in both 2005 and 2011), and networks are both a methodological tool and a theoretical lens that operate at multiple levels of analysis (Borgatti & Foster, 2003; Moliterno & Mahoney, 2011). Research on networks has explored the particular influence of *individual* ties, as well as the origins and consequences of *overall* network structures. Research examining how particular network structures emerge has been considered the ‘theory of networks’ (Borgatti & Halgin, 2011, p. 1168). For example, the network of interlocking directorates (board of director ties) is predicted by the geography and social cohesion of a region (Kono, Palmer, Friedland and Zafonte, 1998). Another strand of network theory seeks to understand the consequences of networks. For example, we can predict the spread of corporate practices such as acquisitions by the structure of the interlocking directorate network (Haunschild, 1993).

The origins of network theory date back many decades (see Beckman, 2010; Borgatti & Foster, 2003 for reviews and terminology). Beginning with Granovetter (1973) and Burt (1992), scholars have developed a 'flow' or pipes model, where networks act as a conduit for information to flow between actors (Borgatti & Halgin, 2011, p.1172). What information and how fast it flows or diffuses through network ties depend on the structure or position of those ties in the networks. For example, structural holes and cohesive ties can be both a source of and constraint on innovation (Ahuja, 2000; Burt, 2004). These effects appear to be contingent on the orientation of actors in particular structural positions (Obstfeld, 2005), the interaction with the geography of ties (Whittington, Owen-Smith & Powell, 2009), the uncertainty and thus information available in the market (Podolny, 2001), and the knowledge embedded in those network ties (Carnabuci & Operti, 2013; Wang, Rodan, Fruin & Xu, forthcoming). Another subset of this work examines small-world systems where a combination of interconnectivity across immediate ties and connections spanning clusters of ties provide both heterogeneous and shared information. These small-worlds have been associated with creativity and innovation (Schilling & Phelps, 2007; Uzzi & Spiro, 2005).

The 'flow' network model also includes diffusion research, whereby research has examined how practices spread through networks (Davis, 1991; Haunschild, 1993). Recent research has examined which ties are more likely to be influential, such as when resisters of contentious practices adopt them (Briscoe & Stafford, 2008), as well as the nature of the practice. For example, Briscoe and Murphy (2012) find that opacity rather than transparency aids the

diffusion of the controversial practice of curtailing retiree health benefits. At a macro-level, Powell, Koput and Smith-Doerr (1996) suggest that learning flows within a network of collaborating biotechnology firms.

In addition to understanding the consequences of particular network structures, network theory also focuses on the origins of networks. For example, Zaheer and Soda (2009) find prior status and centrality predict the formation of structural holes. Such research responds to Salancik's (1995) call for a better 'theory of networks', whereby we understand how network ties emerge. There is more work to be done here, and a better understanding of network antecedents needs to incorporate multilevel theorizing (Moliterno & Mahoney, 2011). That said, we concur with Borgatti and Halgin (2011) who argue that a 'theory of networks' is only one flavor of network theory.

Other network theory focuses on networks as the 'prisms' that provide status and legitimacy that help actors obtain important outcomes (Podolny & Page, 1998) or as the 'bonding' that helps aid coordination (Borgatti & Halgin, 2011). The high-status position of network ties signals the underlying quality of an actor (Podolny, 1993), and multiple benefits accrue to firms from affiliations with high status others (e.g., Burton, Beckman & Sorensen, 2002; Stuart, Hoang & Hybels, 1999). Other network theories emphasize how networks facilitate coordination and cooperation, and how economic behavior is embedded in a social context (Granovetter, 1985). Although it is widely accepted that embeddedness facilitates economic exchange (Uzzi, 1996, 1997), embeddedness may also result in biased decisions rather than better coordination that

benefits both parties (Sorenson & Waguespack, 2006). At a more macro-level, our theory of network forms of organization (Podolny & Page, 1998; Powell, 1990) also explains coordination across organizations, and this understanding is extended by recent research on why networks fail (Schrunk & Whitford, 2011).

Although this large body of research is not without problems, theoretical developments are encouraging. We know that the informal and formal networks work together to influence action (Gould, 1991), and recent work is examining how multiple types of networks interact in ways that exert power over organizational decisions (Beckman, Schoonhoven, Rottner & Kim, forthcoming), facilitate the maintenance of interorganizational ties (Rogan, forthcoming), and influence the formation of other types of ties (Shipilov & Li, 2012). Although an incomplete overview of this research, we have highlighted some of the important and interesting theoretical ideas in this research space. To suggest this work is not theoretical, or not relevant to our understanding of the world, seems implausible.

### **Performance Feedback Theory**

Next we turn to one of our oldest 'indigenous' organizational theories (Corbett et al., 2014, p. 12), the behavioral theory of the firm (Cyert & March, 1963; March & Simon, 1958; Simon, 1947). Although behavioral theory contains a broad set of assumptions and ideas, it focuses attention on the processes by which organizational decisions are made. Work emerging from these foundations accounts for approximately 20% of OMT division submissions in 2011. From these roots come organizational learning and evolutionary economics (Argote & Greve, 2007),

as well as work on cognition, politics, attention, routines, adaptation, and performance feedback (for a review see Gavetti et al., 2012). Here we focus on performance feedback theory (Greve, 2003).

Performance feedback theory suggests that firms make assessments of their performance in relative terms (as a function of aspirations) rather than in terms of absolute outcomes, and feedback about whether performance falls short of these aspirations is an antecedent of organizational change (Greve, 2003). One of the core insights – that when performance falls short of aspirations, decision makers engage in ‘problemistic search’ to try and improve performance -- emerges directly from the Carnegie School (e.g., Cyert & March, 1963, p. 169). But performance feedback theory itself did not develop until the 1990s.

Studies have commonly identified two distinct sources of aspirations: the firm’s own prior performance (historical aspirations) and performance of a meaningful referent group (social aspirations). While Cyert and March (1963) posit a very general model to understand the choice of aspirations and the level of performance to which firm’s aspire, scholars have utilized a number of different conceptual and empirical strategies (Washburn & Bromiley, 2012). In part, this is because performance relative to one aspiration may have different salience to decision makers as a function of how the organization is performing relative to other aspirations (Moliterno, Beck, Beckman & Meyer, 2013; Washburn & Bromiley, 2012); further, multiple aspiration points, taken together, may offer consistent, inconsistent, or ambiguous performance feedback (Audia & Brion, 2007; Baum, Rowley, Shipilov & Chuang, 2005; Gaba &

Joseph, 2013). Finally, firms do not always focus their aspirations upward: they also focus on a 'survival level' which is the performance level in which the firm's existence is threatened (Audia & Greve, 2006; Chen & Miller, 2007; March & Shapira, 1987, 1992; Miller & Chen, 2004) or a 'reference group threshold' whereby firms seek to maintain membership in their reference group (Moliterno et al., 2013).

This work all advances our understanding of how firms choose aspiration points. Although some scholars have conceptualized the social aspiration level as the average performance of others in a firm's industry (Baum & Dahlin, 2007; Bromiley, 1991; Greve, 1998; Miller & Chen, 2004), more recent research has begun to consider 'striving' comparisons where attention is focused on those of higher status or performance (Boyle & Shapira, 2012; DiPrete, Eirich & Pittinsky, 2010; Kim & Tsai, 2012; Labianca, Fairbank, Andrevski & Parzen, 2009; Moliterno & Beckman, 2013). These studies question the face validity of firms striving for 'average performance.'

Other developments have focused on the choice of social reference groups. Here, scholars have drawn on important work in managerial cognition and categorization (Porac, Thomas & Baden-Fuller, 1989; Reger & Huff, 1993) and on strategic groups (Fiegenbaum & Thomas, 1990, 1995; Panagiotou, 2007; Schimmer & Brauer, 2012) to suggest reference groups are smaller than the whole industry and important referents for organizational decision-making. This general idea, that reference groups are smaller than the industry, has been embraced by scholars and offers important specificity to Cyert and March's original model (Baum et al., 2005; Ketchen & Palmer, 1999; Labianca et al., 2009; Massini, Lewin & Greve, 2005). Finally, there is work beginning to

examine aspirations that arise from comparisons within the firm (Kacperczyk, Beckman & Moliterno, 2013; Mezas, Chen, & Murphy, 2002). This work ties performance feedback theory with work on politics, internal coalitions, and garbage can decision processes – another theoretical development emerging from behavioral theory (Gaba & Joseph, 2013; Gavetti, Levinthal & Ocasio, 2007; Lomi & Harrison, 2012; Vissa, Greve & Chen, 2010).

Finally, performance feedback theory has also examined different types of search. For example, Baum and Dahlin (2007) find that performance near aspirations fosters local search and performance farther away stimulates distant search. As another example, when firms exceed their aspirations, scholars have found that slack search is a mechanism that motivates innovation (Greve, 2003b). This work bridges to other work emerging from behavioral theory, work on organizational learning and the organizational search for new knowledge (Katila & Ahuja, 2002; Rosenkopf & Almeida, 2003).

In summary, performance feedback theory has led us to examine how firms set aspirations, their selection of social referents, and to better understand problem search. Theoretical progress is not always linear and empirical results not always easy to interpret, yet by engaging with the theoretical predictions we can better examine and test the actual mechanisms underlying behavior. Performance feedback theory is a vibrant and new theoretical domain that is very much in development.

## **Practice Theories**

One last example of the theoretical dynamism we celebrate involves the rise of practice theories. Over the past four decades, practice theories (e.g., Bourdieu, 1977; Giddens, 1984; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Ortner, 2006) have increasingly influenced OT research (e.g., Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011; Nicolini, 2013; Schatzki et al., 2001). While there are different versions of practice theory, practice theories highlight the co-constitutive aspect of structure and action; that is, social structures emerge from the situated action they also condition. Situated action shapes and is shaped by shared understandings about forms of socially meaningful activity that are relatively coherent and established. For many social theorists, practice is a key concept that links broader cultural belief systems and social structures to individual and organizational action, often in a dialectical way. Actors are conceptualized as knowledgeable and practical. Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina and von Savigny (2001, p. 3) comment that ‘practice approaches promulgate a distinct social ontology: the social is a field of embodied, materially interwoven practices centrally organized around shared practical understandings.’

Practice theories embodied in notions such as ‘culture as toolkit’ (Swidler, 1986) revitalized the study of culture as more dynamic and heterogeneous and as practices that can be utilized as a strategic resource (e.g., Friedland & Mohr, 2004; Weber & Dacin, 2011). In addition to redirecting institutional research (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006; Thornton et al., 2012), practice theories are embedded in a new dynamic approach to the study of routines (Feldman & Pentland, 2003), novel approaches to sociomateriality (e.g., see Leonardi & Barley, 2010; Orlikowski, 2007; Orlikowski & Scott, 2008), and the rise of the Strategy-as-Practice research field (see Vaara & Whittington, 2012, for a review). We focus our discussion on developments



related to Strategy-as-Practice scholarship which is a prolific example of a research community spawned in Europe, incubated at EGOS colloquia, and that has spread to North America and taken root in a recently created Academy of Management interest group.

Strategy-as-Practice (SAP) research was initially motivated as a response to conventional approaches to strategy research that was dominated by the microeconomics tradition and tended to downplay the role of actors and human agency (e.g., Jarzabkowski, 2004, 2005). SAP researchers sought to address this gap by focusing on 'strategizing' as the 'doing of strategy', to emphasize how strategic practices are embedded in and influenced by their social contexts (Whittington, 2006). SAP research broadly focuses on studying 'practitioners (those people who do the work of strategy); practices (the social, symbolic and material tools through which strategy work is done); and praxis (the flow of activity in which strategy is accomplished)' (Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009: 70).

As Vaara and Whittington (2012) nicely overview, there are by now a wide variety of notable empirical and conceptual SAP related publications. For instance, drawing upon discourse analysis, Vaara, Kleymann and Seristo (2004) showed how different discursive practices can be used to legitimate or de-legitimate strategies. Jarzabkowski and Seidl (2008) showed how strategies can be stabilized or de-stabilized through the use of strategy meeting practices such as bracketing of issues, turn-taking, voting, and stage-managing. Mantere and Vaara (2008) document how mystifying, disciplining, and technologizing discourses inhibit participation in strategy-making, while self-actualization, dialogization, and concretizing discourses enable such

participation. Kaplan (2011) drew on ethnographic methods to highlight how PowerPoint presentations are a kind of discursive practice, and an important component in the 'epistemic machinery' of strategy.

In contrast to mainstream strategy research that tends to focus on large-scale statistical analyses, much of this work draws on qualitative methods including ethnography, discourse analysis, participant observation, and interviews. The emphasis is on exploring strategy-making practices and processes in-depth to highlight the reflexivity of actors as they navigate complex organizational processes as well as wider cultural influences. Actors do not merely employ strategic practices, but as skillful, knowledgeable agents, they creatively adapt such practices to the situation at hand. For example, the cognitive 'framing' contests engaged in by managers alter the power structure within organizations and politically inflect strategy-making processes (Kaplan, 2008). In addition, mindfulness is at the core of performativity-based approaches to practice and institutions (e.g., Lounsbury & Crumley, 2007; Orlikowski, 2000). As Vaara and Whittington (2012, p. 14) note, 'SAP studies have therefore extended mainstream strategies research by bringing to light practices that have largely passed unnoticed, and discovering in them effects that previously were hardly imagined.' In addition, the roles and identities of those partaking in strategy are being problematized, focusing on the processes by which actors get to participate and how.

In summary, seeded in Europe and transplanted to North America and elsewhere, Strategy-as-Practice scholarship is a very exciting development that highlights how broader theoretic

movements can help motivate the creation of new organization and management theory. As we alluded to earlier, practice theories have also motivated a number of other theoretical shifts in OMT, and as our intellectual field becomes even more globalized, it will be interesting to see how ideas from Asia, South America, Africa and elsewhere may work their way into OMT to inspire novel insight as well as theoretical development.

### **Conclusion**

When we re-examine the arguments of prominent scholars such as Hambrick (2007) and Davis (2010) in light of our assessment of the field, we are left somewhat puzzled. Are scholars developing and extending theoretical ideas? Most certainly. Do we lack 'insight' and contributions 'to our knowledge and understanding' as Davis and Hambrick suggest? We don't think so. Within the broad category of institutional theory, we see significant theoretical conversations around institutional work and identity. Institutional logics and categorization may even be creating new theoretical rooms in our OT museum. Importantly, categorization brings together the research traditions of ecology and institutional theory. Rather than one theory 'winning' and driving out the other, categorization scholarship draws on insights from both to develop new understandings. These multiple-lens explanations are increasingly important (Okhuysen & Bonardi, 2011). In network theory and performance feedback theory, our ability to develop theory has been stimulated by new methodological techniques. Strategy-as-Practice and the practice turn more generally has spurred new approaches to the study of cultural processes and spawned new and exciting theoretical conversations.

Perhaps we need to re-consider what it means to ‘contribute to theory.’ Davis (2010) focuses on the limitations of theorizing, concentrating on six ‘vintage’ theories, and championing the development of mechanisms-based theorizing (Davis & Marquis, 2005). Hambrick (2007) suggests we lift the requirement to make a ‘contribution to theory’ in at least some domains, but he also suggests these non-theoretical papers should ‘cry out for future research and theorizing’ (p. 1350). In the ‘Information for Contributors’ for the *Academy of Management Discoveries*, they highlight ‘evidence’ and ‘phenomena’ but also note the role of theory to understand underlying ‘mechanisms’ and the role of ‘discovery’ to highlight the boundary conditions or to reject the basic assumptions of a theory. Underlying the rhetoric, we see recognition that theory is indeed important and central to developing knowledge. Yes, theoretical development looks different in different life stages of a theory and there are many variants of theorizing – but we need theory. We have seen graduate students and junior scholars latch onto this ‘anti-theory’ fad and offer anemic papers without mechanisms or deep understandings of the phenomenon they seek to understand. We believe we need a broad view of theoretical contribution, not a rejection of it. Indeed, regardless of the cleverness of the instrument or natural experiment, empirical work without theory does not feel like progress.

Theory is critical to understanding. We are in favor of understanding mechanisms and processes – we see these as important areas of inquiry. We need ‘ambidextrous’ scholars who both extend existing theory and discover new theoretical insights (Corbett et al., 2014, p. 5). Yet if we report ‘facts’ without engaging a theoretical conversation, how will we learn from each other? We advise doctoral students to find an existing conversation to which they want to

contribute because it allows us to learn from and build from each other, but that doesn't mean that we only seek incremental insights and ignore new theoretical directions – it means only that we document our movements from one set of ideas to another. Finally, we don't see the call to contribute to theory as something that discourages work in areas of practical interest, like how the personal attributes of CEOs shape firm behavior (like narcissistic CEOs who take outsized risks; Chatterjee & Hambrick, 2007, 2011). To harken back to an earlier debate, we need to re-engage in a conversation about what 'constructing theory', 'developing theory', and 'theorizing' looks like (Stinchcombe, 1968; Sutton & Staw, 1995; Weick, 1995) because it seems to us that theorizing is what we see in organizational theory and we should continue to strive for theoretical development as the way to build knowledge and provide insight.

We end with a call for knowledge building. It is clear that our understanding of the emergence and evolution of theory is hampered by our cognitive models of the field and how we categorize papers. Davis' (2010) assessment of organizational theory in 'theoretical stalemate' was supported by his analysis of outdated keywords. Certainly editors and reviewers need to have a broader view of what contributes to theory than what was on the reading list in their own doctoral seminars. To that end, we suggest that as a field we continue to have a conversation about the theories that are developing, and the exciting new ideas that can redirect extant theoretical conversations. We can use some of the technological advances of our time to aid in those efforts. Rather than keywords being updated every half a dozen years by Academy leaders (like us) with their own biases and blind spots, we might consider a regular crowdsourcing effort to allow our keywords to reflect the state of the field. This might resemble

more of an EGOS-like track model that is constantly changing on an annual basis as new constellations of scholars convene around different themes. If we find a way to track, and indeed celebrate, the emergence of new theories and theoretical conversations, we will not be trapped by our old mindsets and categories, and the dynamic and flourishing nature of organizational theory can be foregrounded.

## REFERENCES

- Ahuja, G. (2000). 'Collaboration networks, structural holes, and innovation: A longitudinal study.' *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **45**, 425-55.
- Alexy, O. and George, G. (2013). 'Category divergence, straddling, and currency: Open innovation and the legitimation of illegitimate categories.' *Journal of Management Studies*, **50**, 173-203.
- Argote, L. and Greve, H.R. (2007). 'A behavioral theory of the firm--40 years and counting: Introduction and impact.' *Organization Science*, **18**, 337-49.
- Audia, P.G. and Brion, S. (2007). Reluctant to change: Self-enhancing response to diverging performance measures.' *Organizational Behavior & Human Decision Processes*, **102**, 255-69.
- Audia, P.G. and Greve, H.R. (2006). 'Less likely to fail: Low performance, firm size, and factory expansion in the shipbuilding industry.' *Management Science*, **52**, 83-94.
- Battilana, J. and Dorado, S. (2010) 'Building sustainable hybrid organizations: The case of commercial microfinance organizations.' *Academy of Management Journal*, **53**, 1419-40.
- Baum, J.A.C. and Dahlin, K.B. (2007). 'Aspiration performance and railroads' patterns of learning from train wrecks and crashes.' *Organization Science*, **18**, 368-85.
- Baum, J.A.C., Rowley, T.J., Shipilov, A.V. and Chuang, Y-T. (2005). 'Dancing with strangers: Aspiration performance and the search for underwriting syndicate partners.' *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **50**, 536-75.
- Beckman, C.M. (2010). 'The history of corporate networks: Expanding intellectual diversity and the role of Stanford affiliations', in Schoonhoven, C.B. and Dobbin, F. (Eds), *Research in the Sociology of Organizations: Stanford's Organization Theory Renaissance, 1970-2000*. Emerald Publishing Group.
- Beckman, C.M., Schoonhoven, C., Rottner, R. and Kim, S-J. (forthcoming). Relational pluralism in de Novo Organizations: Boards of directors as bridges or barriers? *Academy of Management Journal*.
- Bettis, R.A. (2012). 'The search for asterisks: Compromised statistical tests and flawed theories.' *Strategic Management Journal*, **33**, 108-13.
- Borgatti, S.P. and Foster, P. (2003). 'The network paradigm in organizational research: A review and typology.' *Journal of Management*, **29**, 991-1013.
- Borgatti, S.P. and Halgin, D.S. (2011). 'On network theory.' *Organization Science*, **23**, 1168-81.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Boyle, E. and Shapira, Z. (2012). 'The liability of leading: Battling aspiration and survival goals in the *Jeopardy!* Tournament of Champions.' *Organization Science*, **23**, 1100-13.
- Brass, D.J., Labianca, G., Mehra, A., Halgin, D.S. and Borgatti, S.P. (2014). 'Contemporary perspectives on organizational social networks', in Lounsbury, M. and Ventresca, M. (Eds), *Research in the Sociology of Organizations*. JAI Press.
- Briscoe, F. and Murphy, C. (2012). 'Sleight of hand? Practice opacity, third-party responses, and the interorganizational diffusion of controversial practices'. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **57**, 553-84.
- Briscoe, F. and Safford, S. (2008). 'The Nixon-in-China effect: Activism, imitation, and the institutionalization of contentious practices'. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **53**, 460-91.

- Bromiley, P. (1991). 'Testing a causal model of corporate risk-taking and performance'. *Academy of Management Journal*, **34**, 37–59.
- Burt, R.S. (1992). *Structural Holes: The Social Structure of Competition*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Burt, R.S. (2004). 'Structural holes and good ideas'. *American Journal of Sociology*, **110**, 349–99.
- Burton, M.D., Beckman, C.M. and Sørensen, J. (2002). 'Coming from good stock: Career histories and new venture formation', in Lounsbury, M. and Ventresca, M. (Eds), *Research in the Sociology of Organizations: Social Structure and Organizations Revisited*. JAI Press.
- Carnabuci, G. and Operti, E. (2013). 'Where do firms' recombinant capabilities come from? Intraorganizational networks, knowledge, and firms' ability to innovate through technological recombination'. *Strategic Management Journal*, **34**, 1591-1613.
- Chatterjee, A. and Hambrick, D.C. (2007). 'It's all about me: Narcissistic Chief Executive Officers and their effects on company strategy and performance'. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **52**, 351-86.
- Chatterjee, A. and Hambrick, D.C. (2011). 'Executive personality, capability cues, and risk taking: How narcissistic CEOs react to their successes and stumbles'. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **56**, 202-37.
- Chen, W. and Miller, K.D. (2007). 'Situational and institutional determinants of firms' R&D search intensity'. *Strategic Management Journal*, **28**, 369-81.
- Cook, T.D. and Campbell, D.T. (1979). *Quasi-Experimentation*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Corbett, A., Cornelissen, J., Delios, A. and Harley, B. (2014). 'Variety, novelty and perceptions of scholarship in research on management and organizations: An appeal for ambidextrous scholarship'. *Journal of Management Studies*, **51**, 3-18.
- Cyert, R.M. and March, J.G. (1963). *A Behavioral Theory of the Firm*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.
- Davis, G.F. (1991). 'Agents without principles? The spread of the poison pill through the intercorporate network'. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **36**, 583-613.
- Davis, G.F. (2010). 'Do theories of organizations progress?' *Organizational Research Methods*, **13**, 690-709.
- Davis, G.F. and Marquis, C. (2005). 'Prospects for organization theory in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century: Institutional fields and mechanisms.' *Organization Science*, **16**, 332-43.
- DeLong, J.B. and Lang, K. (1992). 'Are all economic hypotheses false?' *Journal of Political Economy*, 1257-72.
- DiMaggio, P.D. and Powell, W.W. (1983). 'The iron cage revisited.' *American Sociological Review*, **48**, 147-60.
- DiPrete, T.A., Eirich, G.M. and Pittinsky, M. (2010). 'Compensation benchmarking, leapfrogs, and the surge in executive pay.' *American Journal of Sociology*, **115**, 1671-12.
- Durand, R. and Paoletta, L. (2013). 'Category stretching: Reorienting research on categories in strategy, entrepreneurship, and organization theory.' *Journal of Management Studies*, **50**, 1100-23.
- Feldman, M.S. and Orlikowski, W.J. (2011). 'Practicing theory and theorizing practice'. *Organization Science*, **22**, 1240-53.
- Feldman, M.S. and Pentland, B.T. (2003). 'Reconceptualizing organizational routines as a source of flexibility and change'. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **48**, 94-118.



- Fiengenbaum, A. and Thomas, H. (1990). 'Strategic groups and performance: The U.S. insurance industry, 1970-84'. *Strategic Management Journal*, **11**, 197-215.
- Fiengenbaum, A. and Thomas, H. (1995). 'Strategic groups as reference groups: Theory, modeling, and empirical examination of industry and competitive strategy.' *Strategic Management Journal*, **16**, 461-76.
- Friedland, R. and Alford, R.R. (1991). 'Bringing society back in: Symbols, practices and institutional contradictions, in Powell, W.W. and DiMaggio, P. (Eds), *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Friedland, R. and Mohr, J. (Eds) (2004). *Matters of Culture: Cultural Sociology in Practice*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Gaba, V. and Joseph, J. (2013). 'Corporate structure and performance feedback: Aspirations and adaptation in M-form firms.' *Organization Science*, **24**, 1102-19.
- Gavetti, G., Greve, H.R., Levinthal, D.A. and Ocasio, W. (2012). 'The behavioral theory of the firm: Assessment and prospects.' *Academy of Management Annals*, **6**, 1-40.
- Gavetti, G.D., Levinthal, D. and Ocasio, W. (2007). 'Neo-Carnegie: The Carnegie School's past, present and reconstructing for the future.' *Organization Science*, **18**, 523-36.
- Giddens, A. (1984). *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Glynn, M.A. and Navis, C. (2013). 'Categories, identities, and cultural classification: Moving beyond a model of categorical constraint.' *Journal of Management Studies*, **50**, 1124-37.
- Goldfarb, B. and King, A. (2013). *Scientific Apophenia in Strategic Management Research*. Working paper.
- Golsorkhi, D., Rouleau, L., Seidl, D. and Vaara E. (Eds) (2010). *Cambridge Handbook of Strategy as Practice*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Gould, R.V. (1991). 'Multiple networks and mobilization in the Paris commune, 1871.' *American Sociological Review*, **56**, 716-29.
- Granovetter, M. (1973). 'The strength of weak ties.' *American Journal of Sociology*, **78**, 1360-80.
- Granovetter, M. (1985). 'Economic action and social structure: The problem of embeddedness.' *American Journal of Sociology*, **91**, 481-510.
- Greenwood, R., Díaz, A.M., Li, S.X. and Lorente, J.C. (2010) 'The multiplicity of institutional logics and the heterogeneity of organizational responses.' *Organization Science*, **21**, 521-39.
- Greenwood, R., Raynard, M., Kodeih, F., Micelotta, E. and Lounsbury, M. (2011). 'Institutional complexity and organizational responses.' *Academy of Management Annals*, **5**, 317-71.
- Greve, H.R. (1998). 'Performance, aspirations, and risky organizational change.' *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **43**, 58-86.
- Greve, H.R. (2003). *Organizational Learning from Performance Feedback*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Greve, H.R. (2003b). 'A behavioral theory of R&D expenditures and innovations: Evidence from shipbuilding.' *Academy of Management Journal*, **46**, 682-702.
- Hambrick, D.C. (2007). 'The field of management's devotion to theory: Too much of a good thing?' *Academy of Management Journal*, **50**, 1346-52.
- Hannan, M.T., Pólos, L. and Carroll, G.R. (2007). *Logics of Organization Theory: Audiences, Codes, and Ecologies*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

- Haunschild, P. (1993). 'Interorganizational imitation – the impact of interlocks on corporate acquisition activity.' *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **38**, 564-92.
- Haveman, H.A. and Rao, H. (1997). 'Structuring a theory of moral sentiments: Institutional and organizational coevolution in the early thrift industry.' *American Journal of Sociology*, **102**, 1606–51.
- Hsu, G. and Hannan, M.T. (2005). 'Identities, genres, and organizational forms.' *Organization Science*, **16**, 474-90.
- Hsu, G., Negro, G. and Koçak, O. (2010). 'Categories in markets: Origins and evolution', in Lounsbury (Ed), *Research in the Sociology of Organizations*, volume **31**.
- Hsu, G., Negro, G. and Perretti, F. (2012). 'Hybrids in Hollywood: A study of the production and performance of genre-spanning films.' *Industrial and Corporate Change*, **21**, 1427-50.
- Huff, D. (1954). *How to Lie with Statistics*. Norton, W.W. & Company, Inc.
- Jarzabkowski, P. (2004). 'Strategy as practice: Recursiveness, adaptation and practices-in-use.' *Organization Studies*, **25**, 529-60.
- Jarzabkowski, P. (2005). *Strategy as Practice: An Activity-Based Approach*. London: SAGE.
- Jarzabkowski, P. and Seidl, D. (2008). 'The role of meetings in the social practice of strategy.' *Organization Studies*, **29**, 1391–426.
- Jarzabkowski, P. and Spee, A.P. (2009). 'Strategy as practice: A review and future directions for the field.' *International Journal of Management Reviews*, **11**, 69-95.
- Jones, C., Maoret, M., Massa, F. and Svejenova, S. (2012). 'Rebels with a cause: Formation, contestation, and expansion of the De Novo category "Modern Architecture," 1870–1975.' *Organization Science*, **23**, 1523-45.
- Kacperczyk, A., Beckman, C.M. and Moliterno, T.P. (2013). *Internal Social Comparisons, Risk Taking, and Change: Evidence from the Mutual Fund Industry*. Working Paper.
- Kaplan, S. (2008). 'Framing contests: Strategy making under uncertainty.' *Organization Science*, **19**, 729–52.
- Kaplan, S. (2011). 'Strategy and PowerPoint: An inquiry into the epistemic culture and machinery of strategy-making.' *Organization Science*, **22**, 320–46.
- Katila, R. and Ahuja, G. (2002). 'Something old, something new: A longitudinal study of search behavior and new product introduction.' *Academy of Management Journal*, **45**, 1183-94.
- Kennedy, M.T. (2005). 'Behind the one-way mirror: Refraction in the construction of product market categories.' *Poetics*, **3-4**, 201-26.
- Kennedy, M.T. (2008). 'Getting counted: Markets, media and reality.' *American Sociological Review*, **73**, 270-95.
- Kennedy, M.T. and Fiss, P. (2013). 'An ontological turn in categories research: From standards of legitimacy to evidence of actuality.' *Journal of Management Studies*, **50**, 1138-54.
- Kennedy, M., Lo, J.(Y-C.) and Lounsbury, M. (2011). 'Category currency: A framework for analyzing the effects of meaning construction processes.' *Research in the Sociology of Organizations*, **31**: 369-97.
- Ketchen, D.J. Jr., Palmer, T.B. (1999). 'Strategic responses to poor organizational performance: A test of competing perspectives.' *Journal of Management*, **25**, 683-706.
- Khaire, M. & Wadhvani, R. (2010). 'Changing Landscapes: The Construction of Meaning and Value in a New Market Category—Modern Indian Art.' *Academy of Management Journal*, **53**: 1281-1304.

- Kim, K.H. and Tsai, W. (2012). 'Social comparison among competing firms.' *Strategic Management Journal*, **33**, 115-36.
- Kono, C., Palmer, D., Friedland, R. and Zafonte, M. (1998). 'Lost in space: The geography of corporate interlocking directorates.' *American Journal of Sociology*, **103**, 863-911.
- Labianca, G., Fairbank, J.F., Andrevski, G. and Parzen, M. (2009). 'Striving toward the future: Aspiration-performance discrepancies and planned organizational change.' *Strategic Organization*, **7**, 433-66.
- Lave, J. and Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Lawrence, T.B. and Suddaby, R. (2006). 'Institutions and institutional work', in Clegg, S., Hardy, C., Lawrence, T.B. and Nord, W.R. (Eds), *Sage Handbook of Organization Studies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Sage.
- Leonardi, P.M. and Barley, S.R. (2010). 'What's under construction here? Social action, materiality, and power in constructivist studies of technology and organizing.' *Academy of Management Annals*, **4**, 1-51.
- Lok, J. (2010). 'Institutional logics as identity projects.' *Academy of Management Journal*, **53**, 1305-35.
- Lomi, A. and Harrison, R. J. (Eds) (2012). The garbage can model of organizational choice: Looking forward at forty. *Research in the Sociology of Organizations*, **36**.
- Lounsbury, M. (2007). 'A tale of two cities: Competing logics and practice variation in the professionalizing of mutual funds.' *Academy of Management Journal*, **50**, 289-307.
- Lounsbury, M. and Boxenbaum, E. (Eds) (2013). 'Institutional logics in action.' *Research in the Sociology of Organizations*, **39a** and **b**.
- Lounsbury, M. and Crumley, E.T. (2007). 'New practice creation: An institutional approach to innovation.' *Organization Studies*, **28**, 993-1012.
- Lounsbury, M. and Rao, H. (2004). 'Sources of durability and change in market classifications: A study of the reconstitution of product categories in the American mutual fund industry, 1944-1985.' *Social Forces*, **82**, 969-99.
- Mantere, S. and Vaara, E. (2008). 'On the problem of participation in strategy: A critical discursive perspective.' *Organization Science*, **19**, 341-58.
- March, J.G. (2007). 'The study of organizations and organizing since 1945.' *Organization Studies*, **28**, 9-19.
- March, J.G. and Shapira, Z. (1987). 'Managerial perspectives on risk and risk-taking.' *Management Science*, **33**, 1404-18.
- March, J.G. and Shapira, Z. (1992). 'Variable risk preferences and the focus of attention.' *Psychological Review*, **99**, 172-83.
- March, J.G. and Simon, H.A. (1958). *Organizations*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.
- Marquis, C. and Lounsbury, M. (2007). 'Vive la Résistance: Competing logics in the consolidation of community banking.' *Academy of Management Journal*, **50**, 799-820.
- Massini, S., Lewin, A.Y. and Greve, H.R. (2005). 'Innovators and imitators: Organizational reference groups and adoption of organizational routines.' *Research Policy*, **34**, 1550-69.
- Meyer, R.E. and Hammerschmid, G. (2006). 'Changing institutional logics and executive identities: A managerial challenge to public administration in Austria.' *American Behavioral Scientist*, **49**, 1000-14.

- Mezias, S.J., Chen, Y.R. and Murphy, P.R. (2002). 'Aspiration-level adaptation in an American financial services organization: A field study.' *Management Science*, **48**, 1285-300.
- Miller, D. (2007). 'Paradigm prison, or in praise of atheoretic research.' *Strategic Organization*, **5**, 177-84.
- Miller, K.D. and Chen, W.R. (2004). 'Variable organizational risk preferences: Test of the March-Shapira model.' *Academy of Management Journal*, **47**, 105-15.
- Mohr, J.W. and Guerra-Pearson, F. (2010). 'The duality of niche and form: The differentiation of institutional space in New York City, 1888-1917.' *Research in the Sociology of Organizations*, **31**, 321-68.
- Moliterno, T.P., Beck, N., Beckman, C.M. and Meyer, M. (2013). *Knowing your Place: Social Performance Feedback in Good Times and Bad Times*. Working Paper.
- Moliterno, T.P., and Beckman, C.M. (2013). *In through the out door: Effects of performance on resource decision making*. Working Paper.
- Moliterno, T.P. and Mahony, D. (2011). 'Network theory of organization: A multilevel approach.' *Journal of Management*, **37**, 443-67.
- Navis, C. and Glynn, M.A. (2010). 'How new market categories emerge: Temporal dynamics of legitimacy, identity and entrepreneurship in satellite radio, 1990-2005.' *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **55**, 439-71.
- Nicolini D. (2013). *Practice Theory, Work, and Organization: An Introduction*. Oxford University Press.
- Obstfeld, D. (2005). 'Social networks, the tertius iungens orientation, and involvement in innovation.' *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **50**, 100-30.
- Okhuysen, G. and Bonardi, J-P. (2011). 'Editors comments: The challenges of building theory by combining lenses.' *Academy of Management Review*, **36**, 6-11.
- Orlikowski, W.J. (2000). 'Using technology and constituting structure: A practice lens for studying technology in organizations.' *Organization Science*, **12**, 404-28.
- Orlikowski, W.J. (2007). 'Sociomaterial practices: Exploring technology at work.' *Organization Studies*, **28**, 1435-48.
- Orlikowski, W.J. and Scott, S.V. (2008). 'Sociomateriality: Challenging the separation of technology, work and organization.' *Academy of Management Annals*, **2**, 433-74.
- Ortner, S.B. (2006). *Anthropology and Social Theory: Culture, Power, and the Acting Subject*. Duke University Press.
- Pache, A. and Santos, F. (2010) 'When worlds collide: The internal dynamics of organizational responses to conflicting institutional demands.' *Academy of Management Review*, **35**, 455-76.
- Panagiotou, G. (2007). 'Reference theory: Strategic groups and competitive benchmarking.' *Management Decision*, **45**, 1595-621.
- Pearce, J. (2003). 'President's message: A bifurcated academy?' *The Academy of Management News*, **34**, 1.
- Pfeffer, J. (1993). 'Barriers to the advance of organization science: Paradigm development as a dependent variable.' *Academy of Management Review*, **18**, 599-620.
- Phillips, D.J. (2013). *Shaping Jazz: Cities, Labels, and the Global Emergence of an Art Form*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

- Podolny, J. (1993). 'A status based model of market competition.' *American Journal of Sociology*, **39**, 458-483.
- Podolny, J. (2001). 'Networks as pipes and prisms of the market.' *American Journal of Sociology*, **107**, 22-60.
- Podolny, J.M. and Page, K.L. (1998). 'Network forms of organization.' *Annual Review of Sociology*, **24**, 57-76.
- Pontikes, E.G. (2012). 'Two sides of the same coin: How ambiguous classification affects multiple audiences' evaluations.' *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **57**, 81-118.
- Porac, J.F., Thomas, H. and Baden-Fuller, C. (1989). 'Competitive groups as cognitive communities: The case of the Scottish knitwear industry.' *Journal of Management Studies*, **26**, 397-416.
- Powell, W.W. (1990). 'Neither market nor hierarchy: Network forms of organization.' *Research in Organizational Behavior*, **12**, 295-336.
- Powell, W.W., Koput, K.W. and Smith-Doerr, L. (1996). 'Interorganizational collaboration and the locus of innovation: Networks of learning in biotechnology.' *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **41**, 116-45.
- Rao, H., Monin, P. and Durand, R. (2005). 'Border crossing: Bricolage and the erosion of culinary categories in French gastronomy.' *American Sociological Review*, **70**, 868-91.
- Reay, T. and Hinings, C.R. (2009) 'Managing the rivalry of competing institutional logics.' *Organization Studies*, **30**, 629-52.
- Reger, R.K. and Huff, A.S. (1993). 'Strategic groups: A cognitive perspective.' *Strategic Management Journal*, **14**, 103-24.
- Rogan, M. (forthcoming). 'Executive departures without client losses: The role of multiplex ties in exchange partner retention.' *Academy of Management Journal*.
- Rosch, E. (1983). 'Prototype classification and logical classification: The two systems,' in Scholnick, E.F. (Ed), *New Trends in Conceptual Representation: Challenges to Piaget's Theory?* Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Rosenkopf, L. and Almeida, P. (2003). 'Overcoming local search through alliances and mobility.' *Management Science*, **49**, 751-66.
- Ruef, M. and Patterson, K. (2009). 'Credit and classification: The impact of industry boundaries in 19<sup>th</sup> century America.' *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **54**, 486-520.
- Salancik, G.R. (1995). 'Wanted: A good network theory of organization.' *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **40**, 345-49.
- Schatzki, T.R., Knorr-Cetina, K. and von Savigny, E. (Eds) (2001). *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*. London: Routledge.
- Schilling, M.A. and Phelps, C.C. (2007). 'Interfirm collaboration networks: The impact of large-scale network structure on firm innovation.' *Management Science*, **53**, 1113-26.
- Schimmer, M. and Brauer, M. (2012). 'Firm performance and aspiration levels as determinants of a firm's strategic repositioning within stratgic group strutures.' *Strategic Organization*, **10**, 406-35.
- Schneiberg, M. and Berk, G. (2010). 'From categorical imperative to learning by categories: Cost accounting and new categorical practices in American manufacturing, 1900-1930.' *Research in the Sociology of Organizations*, **31**, 255-92.

- Schneiberg, M. and Lounsbury, M. (2008). 'Social movements and neo-institutional theory: Analyzing path creation and change', in Greenwood, R., Oliver, C., Sahlin, K. and Suddaby, R. (Eds), *Sage Handbook of Organizational Institutionalism*. London: Sage.
- Schrank, A. and Whitford, J. (2011). 'The anatomy of network failure.' *Sociological Theory*, **29**, 151-77.
- Shipilov, A.V. and Li, S.X. (2012). 'The missing link: The effect of customers on the formation of relationships among producers in the multiplex triads.' *Organization Science*, **23**, 472-91.
- Simon, H.A. (1947). *Administrative Behavior*. New York, NY: Macmillan.
- Simonsohn, U., Nelson, L.D. and Simmons, J.P. (2013). 'P-curve: A key to the file drawer.' *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, **142**.
- Smets, M., Morris, T. and Greenwood, R. (2012). 'From practice to field: A multilevel model of practice-driven institutional change.' *Academy of Management Journal*, **55**, 877-904.
- Sorenson, O. and Waguespack, D.M. (2006). 'Social structure and exchange: Self-confirming dynamics in Hollywood.' *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **51**, 560-89.
- Stinchcombe, A.L. (1968). *Constructing Social Theories*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Stuart, T.E., Hoang, H. and Hybels, R.C. (1999). 'Interorganizational endorsements and the performance of entrepreneurial ventures.' *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **44**, 315-49.
- Suddaby, R., Hardy, C. and Huy, Q.N. (2011). 'Introduction to special topic forum: Where are the new theories of organization?' *Academy of Management Review*, **36**, 236-46.
- Sutton, R.I. and Staw, B.M. (1995). 'What theory is not.' *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **40**, 371-84.
- Swidler, A. (1986). 'Culture in action: Symbols and strategies.' *American Sociological Review*, **51**, 273-86.
- Thornton, P.H. and Ocasio, W. (1999). 'Institutional logics and the historical contingency of power in organizations: Executive succession in the higher education publishing industry, 1958-1990.' *American Journal of Sociology*, **105**, 801-43.
- Thornton, P.H., Ocasio, W. and Lounsbury, M. (2012). *The Institutional Logics Perspective: A New Approach to Culture, Structure and Process*. Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press.
- Townley, B. (1997) 'The institutional logic of performance appraisal.' *Organization Studies*, **18**, 261-85.
- Tracey, P., Phillips, N. and Jarvis, O. (2011) 'Bridging institutional entrepreneurship and the creation of new organizational forms: A multilevel model.' *Organization Science*, **22**, 60-80.
- Uzzi, B. (1996). 'The sources and consequences of embeddedness for the economic performance of organizations: The network effect.' *American Sociological Review*, **61**, 674-98.
- Uzzi, B. (1997). 'Social structure and competition in interfirm networks: The paradox of embeddedness.' *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **42**, 35-67.
- Uzzi, B. and Spiro, J. (2005). 'Collaboration and creativity: The small world problem.' *American Journal of Sociology*, **111**, 447-504.
- Vaara, E., Kleymann, B. and Seristo, H. (2004). 'Strategies as discursive constructions: The case of airline alliances.' *Journal of Management Studies*, **41**, 1-35.
- Vaara, E. and Whittington, R. (2012). 'Strategy as practice: Taking social practices seriously.' *Academy of Management Annals*, **6**: 285-336.

- Vergne, J-P. (2012). 'Stigmatized categories and public disapproval of organizations: A mixed methods study of the global arms industry, 1996-2007.' *Academy of Management Journal*, **55**, 1027-52.
- Vergne, J-P. and Wry, T. (2014). 'Categorizing categorization research: Review, integration and future directions.' *Journal of Management Studies*, **51**, 56-94.
- Vissa, B., Greve, H.R. and Chen, W.R. (2010). 'Business group affiliation and firm search behavior in India: Responsiveness and focus of attention.' *Organization Science*, **21**, 696-712.
- Wang, C., Rodan, S., Fruin, M. and Xu, X. (forthcoming). 'Knowledge networks, collaboration networks, and exploratory innovation.' *Academy of Management Journal*.
- Washburn, M. and Bromiley, P. (2012). 'Comparing aspiration models: The role of selective attention.' *Journal of Management Studies*, **49**, 896-917.
- Weber, K. and Dacin, M.T. (2011). 'The cultural construction of organizational life.' *Organization Science*, **22**: 286-98.
- Weick, K. (1995). *Sensemaking in Organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Whittington, R. (2006). 'Completing the practice turn in strategy research.' *Organization Studies*, **27**, 613-34.
- Whittington, K., Owen-Smith, J. and Powell, W.W. (2009). 'Networks, propinquity, and innovation in knowledge intensive industries.' *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **54**, 90-122.
- Wittgenstein, L. (1953/2001). *Philosophical Investigations*. Blackwell Publishing.
- Wry, T. and Lounsbury, M. (2013). 'Contextualizing the categorical imperative: Category linkages, technology focus, and resource acquisition in nanotechnology entrepreneurship.' *Journal of Business Venturing*, **28**, 117-33.
- Wry, T., Lounsbury, M. and Glynn, M.A. (2011). 'Legitimizing nascent collective identities: Coordinating cultural entrepreneurship.' *Organization Science*, **22**, 449-63.
- Wry, T., Lounsbury, M., Jennings, P.D. (forthcoming). 'Hybrid vigor: Securing venture capital by spanning categories in nanotechnology.' *Academy of Management Journal*.
- Zaheer, A. and Soda, G. (2009). 'Network evolution: The origins of structural holes.' *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **54**, 1-31.
- Zerubavel, E. (1997). *Social Mindscapes: An Invitation to Cognitive Sociology*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Zuckerman, E.W. (1999). 'The categorical imperative: Securities analysts and the illegitimacy discount.' *American Journal of Sociology*, **104**, 1398-438.
- Zuckerman, E.W., Tai-Young, K., Ukanwa, K. and von Rittmann, J. (2003). 'Robust identities or nonentities? Typecasting in the feature-film labor market.' *American Journal of Sociology*, **108**, 1018-73.