

A: Title for the session:

“Working here”: Linking Place and Strategies as Practice

B: Description

How do places inform strategic practices and how do strategic practices contribute to the formation, maintenance or possible deterioration of places?

In the session we are interested in exploring the relationships between strategic practices (Varaa & Whittington, 2012) and place, place-embeddedness and place identification (Gieryn, 2000; Fine, 2010).

Practices here refer to the “various tools, norms, and procedures of strategy work... Praxis refers to the activity involved in strategy-making, for example, in strategic planning processes or meetings.

Practitioners are all those involved in, or seeking to influence, strategy-making” (Varaa & Whittington, 2012: 6).

Gieryn (2000) define place as a unique spot in the universe”. While places possess physicality and material form, they are also socially constructed and invested with meaning. Places thus are never fixed but endlessly made (Gieryn, 2000: 471).

Strategy tends to portray strategic processes as best practices that exist independent of specific places and locations. This then enable ideas to spread, disseminate and be taught irrespective of locations. To the extent that locations appear they appear in the form of material or economic contexts – on par with other strategic factors such as competitive rivalry, the negotiation strength of buyers and suppliers; variables that factor into strategic decisions and determine what constitute an optimal strategic response. Discussions of strategies however often tend to ignore place – yet where we are and what we see around us inform what we see as important, how we construe and think about problems (Gieryn, 2001).

In the session we are interested in exploring how strategic practices are embedded in and informed by place. Understanding the relationships between place and strategic practices we argue is critical to answering a series of questions including but not limited to:

- How firms develop and grow (or fail) (Muhos et al. 2010)
- Place based firm strategies – how firms develop strategies around their connection to a place and a community (Marquis & Battilana, 2009).

- The physical and social sustainability of firms (Korsgaard, Müller & Tanvig, 2015).

While questions of place and place-based strategies is particularly salient for small rural firms, we believe all strategic practices are essentially shaped by the places in which strategic practices take place.

Thus, we are interested in exploring the causal relationships between places and strategic practices – that is – how places inform, motivate, shape, filter and provide meaning to strategic practices as well as how strategic practices in turn alter, maintain or create socially constructed places.

Given this emphasis we are open to a wide array of different papers: More specifically we accept conceptual as well as empirical papers.

- Empirical papers here may involve experimental studies (e.g. using vignettes or photographs), qualitative case studies including ethnographic studies, document-based studies and action studies.
- As mentioned, we are interested in places as a socially constructed phenomenon. From this it also follows that we are also interested in the possible antecedents and consequences of places *losing* their place-like qualities by transforming into non-places, that is losing their inherent meaning as places.
- We adopt an inclusive view of what constitutes a place and welcome papers operating at different levels of analysis. Places here may refer to “the North”, countries, cities, rural communities or an urban neighborhood. We are also interested in papers exploring place-less firms or strategic practices associated with virtual places.
- Papers may also differ with respect to the duration of the time-section studied. Hence, we welcome papers that explore the immediate effects of physical places on routine strategic practices as well as studies that explore the long-term effects (the social construction of places) of strategic practices.
- The specific strategic practices and the strategic contexts of the strategic practices in question may also vary and can include the strategic practices of entrepreneurial start-ups, large investment decisions (mergers and diversifications) or HRM-strategies. Papers may emphasize major events in the form of change and upheaval or seemingly “mundane”, routine decisions.
- A goal of the session is to stimulate theoretical and conceptual conversation. Hence, we encourage participants to develop and present clear conceptual arguments that can stimulate to such a conversation.

Note that we also welcome contributors whose initial purpose may not have been to study the relationships between place and strategic practices to take another look at their data and explore potential relationships based on data that have already been collected and analyzed.

References

- Claire, C., Lefebvre, V., & Ronteau, S. (2020). Entrepreneurship as practice: Systematic literature review of a nascent field. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 32(3-4), 281-312.
- Fine, G. A. (2010). The sociology of the local: Action and its publics. *Sociological Theory*, 8(4), 355-376.
- Gieryn, T. F. (2000). A space for place in sociology. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26, 463-496.
- Korsgaard, S., Müller, S., & Tanvig, H. W. (2015). *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, 21(1), 5-26.
- Marquis, C., & Battilana, J. (2009). Acting globally but thinking locally? The enduring influence of local communities on organizations. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 29, 283-302.
- Muhos, M., Kess, P., Phusavat, K. and Sanpanich, S. (2010). Business growth models: review of past 60 years. *International Journal of Management and Enterprise Development*, 8 (3), 296–315.
- Nayak, A., Chia, R., & Canales, J. I. (2020). Noncognitive microfoundations: Understanding dynamic capabilities as idiosyncratically refined sensitivities and predispositions. *Academy of Management Review*, 45(2), 280-303-.
- Varaa, E., & Whittington, R. (2012). Strategy-as-practice: Taking social practices seriously. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 6(1),1-52.

C: Form:

The papers will be presented in the session. Papers are distributed before the conference and each paper is paired with a discussant. Each paper are provided with a total of 20 minutes – 10 minutes for the presentation, 5 minutes for a discussant and 5 minutes for other questions. The session is rounded off with an open discussion and comments based on the papers presented, chaired by the session organizers.

D: Responsible(s) for the session: Name, position, contact information*

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E: Publication and dissemination: Do plans exist for publication after the conference or do plans exist for other forms of dissemination?

Our ambition is to develop a special issue based on the session. More specifically, we are working on developing a special issue based on this session as well as a previous session at the Arctic Frontiers (February 2021). We also seek to develop the theme of the session for future conferences including EGOS 2022.