Organization Studies

Call for Papers
Special Issue on

Power and performativity as interweaving dynamics of organizing

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Deadline for Submissions: 31 March 2019

Power and performativity are recurrent but distinct themes in contemporary organization studies. Each has been theorized in multiple ways, but what still remains largely unexamined is the interplay between them in the ongoing flow of organizing. It is the dynamic and co-productive potential of this confluence that provides the focus for this Special Issue. In particular we propose that by re-visioning both power and performativity through a processual lens, new possibilities for understanding their entwinements will emerge.

Power has traditionally been understood as a property or a possession that may be seized and wielded, either overtly or in hidden ways, in order to exert 'power over' others (Clegg, Courpasson, & Phillips, 2006). In this context it is often conceived in dualistic terms as some 'thing' that is available to the few for controlling the many. By contrast, process approaches endeavour to transcend this dualistic formulation, focussing instead on how power produces movement and change in our worlds. For instance, Foucault (1979) saw power as fundamentally relational and generative, and Follett (1924) argued for a 'power with' perspective that continuously emerges out of the actions of people working together.

A similar scenario can be drawn for performativity (Gond, Cabantous, Harding, & Learmonth, 2016), which may refer to managerial efforts to produce outcomes (Fournier & Grey, 2000), or to tactics to help managers change the status quo (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012). From a more processual perspective though, performativity offers a theory of how language constitutes experienced 'realities' (Austin, 1962), how organizations are made in communication (Taylor, Cooren, Giroux, & Robichaud, 1996), and how that which appears given and unchangeable is constituted moment by moment (Butler, 1997) through intra-acting material agencies (Barad, 2003).

In this Special Issue, we want to draw attention to the possibilities that arise if both power and performativity are conceived as dynamic processes that, through their continuous swirling together and apart offer novel opportunities to engage differently with organizing. Recent developments in *philosophical* and *theoretical* thinking about organizing have clarified the distinction between ontologically oriented assumptions of emergence, continuity and becoming, and more epistemologically oriented accounts of how organizational outcomes are produced (Helin, Hernes, Hjorth, & Holt, 2014; Langley & Tsoukas, 2017). However, the uptake of process as an ontological mode of inquiry has been hampered by the paucity of conceptual and methodological devices to support empirical studies. We need new tools that allow us to unravel the alternative logics of process-as-it-happens, to engage with the evolving nature of the categories we use to define (and redefine) the phenomena of working and living, and to re-configure the boundaries of more processual understandings of organizing. Developing such tools will not only contribute new ways of studying power and performativity together, but also new ways of carrying out research into organizing more generally. As an added bonus, it may further serve to address the immediate concerns of organizational practitioners, who are so often let down by the inadequacies of conventional theory when it comes to examining their own lived experiences of work.

This Special Issue seeks to advance process studies of organizing by re-imagining power and performativity as mutually constituting dynamics. Broadly we are interested in questions such as how might we better understand the performativity of power and the power of performativity, and how, in their interweaving, do power and performativity constitute the emergent becoming of organizing. We especially welcome empirical contributions that, in offering partial, localized or ephemeral accounts of power and performativity, open up new ways of engaging with these dynamic processes by entering into the emergent flow of organizing. Our specific aim is to focus more on the 'doing of' rather than the 'thinking about' process research.

Potential topics for submissions include, but are by no means limited to:

- Research methods that engage with the processual logics of power and performativity
- Ways of writing from/as/about material aspects of power and performativity
- The engagement of power with performativity in the communicative constitution of organizing
- Reflexivity, surprise and playfulness in the experience of power and performativity
- The role of body and language in the performative accomplishment of power
- Temporality in the entwinement of power and performativity in organizing
- The power of performance in new collaborative practices such as freelancing and co-working
- The performance of power in new organizational forms such as those introduced through the gig economy and democracy-based organization
- The power of non-human agencies in the performative accomplishment of organizing
- The performative power of contemporary research methods

Submissions
Please submit papers through the journal's online submission system, SAGE track at
http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/orgstudies, create your user account (if you have not done so already), and for "Manuscript Type" please choose the corresponding Special Issue. All papers that enter the reviewing process will be double-blind reviewed following the journal's normal review process and criteria. You will be able to submit your paper for this Special Issue **between the 15th and 31st of March 2019**.

Administrative support and general queries
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