



# Organizational Routines: How They Are Created, Maintained, and Changed (Perspectives on Process Organization Studies)

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Over the past 15 years, organizational routines have been increasingly investigated from a process perspective to challenge the idea that routines are stable entities that are mindlessly enacted.

A process perspective explores how routines are performed by specific people in specific settings. It shows how action, improvisation, and novelty are part of routine performances. It also departs from a view of routines as "black boxes" that transform inputs into organizational outputs and places attention on the actual actions and patterns that comprise routines. Routines are both effortful accomplishments, in that it takes effort to perform, sustain, or change them, and emergent accomplishments, because sometimes the effort to perform routines leads to unforeseen change.

While a process perspective has enabled scholars to open up the "black box" of routines and explore their actions and patterns in fine-grained, dynamic ways, there is much more work to be done. Chapters in this volume make considerable progress, through the three main themes expressed across these chapters. These are: Zooming out to understand routines in larger contexts; Zooming in to reveal actor dispositions and skill; and Innovation, creativity and routines in ambiguous contexts.

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**Jennifer Howard-Grenville** is an associate professor of management at the University of Oregon's Lundquist College of Business. She studies processes of organizational and institutional change and has explored the role of routines, issue selling, and culture in enabling and inhibiting change. She is particularly interested in how people change their organizations in response to environmental and social demands. Her work has been published in Academy of Management Journal, Organization Science, Organization & Environment, Law & Social Inquiry, California Management Review and several other journals.

**Claus Rerup** is Associate Professor of Organizational Behavior at Ivey. He currently does research on organizational sensemaking, routine dynamics, and organizational learning with a particular interest in understanding how organizational and institutional change unfolds over time and boundaries. He specializes in qualitative research, combining historical and archival data with close ethnographic observations of organizational processes in real-time.

**Ann Langley** is Professor of Strategic Management at HEC Montreal, Canada and holder of the Canada research chair in Strategic management in pluralistic settings. Her research focuses on strategic change, inter-professional collaboration and the practice of strategy in complex organisations. She is particularly interested in process-oriented research and methodology and has published a number of papers on that topic. In 2013, she was co-guest editor with Clive Smallman, Haridimos Tsoukas and Andrew Van de Ven of a Special Research Forum of Academy of Management Journal on Process Studies of Change in Organizations and Management. She is also coeditor of the journal Strategic Organization.

**Haridimos Tsoukas** ([www.htsoukas.com](http://www.htsoukas.com)) holds the Columbia Ship Management Chair in Strategic Management at the Department of Business and Public Administration, University of Cyprus, Cyprus and is a Distinguished Research Environment Professor of Organization Studies at Warwick Business School, University of Warwick, UK. He is the co-founder and co-organizer of the International Symposium on Process Organization Studies (with Ann Langley). His research is informed by process philosophy, phenomenology, and neo-Aristotelian perspectives on reason and the social. His interests include: knowledge-based perspectives on organizations and management; organizational becoming; practical reason in management and policy studies; and meta-theoretical issues in organizational issues in organizational and management research.

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