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Sub-theme 70: Temporary Organizing: A Field at Critical Junctures?

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Call for Short Papers (Deadline: January 9, 2024)

Temporary organizing is a prevalent form of organizing in modern societies. It involves organizing stand-alone projects and events, project-supported and project-based organizations, or interorganizational project networks. Organizing refers not only to structure but also actors, or, in processual terms, not only to structuring but also staffing (Bakker et al., 2016). Due to its very nature, temporary organizing is marked by temporal (e.g. Dille et al., 2018; Stjerne et al., 2019; Vaagaasar et al., 2020), relational (e.g. Lenfle & Söderlund, 2019; Söderlund & Sydow, 2019; Sydow & Staber, 2002) and material (e.g. Comi & Whyte, 2018) crossroads, such as those between temporary organizing and permanent forms of organizing, long-term future visions and immediately pressing actions, stable structures and those enabling adaptability to ever-changing contexts.

Accordingly, temporary organising often involves liminality, including operating in-between multiple identities, temporalities, or spaces (Söderlund & Borg, 2018). Temporary organising manifests a movement through time in organizational life, where past promises and future projections are interwoven in the present (Hernes, 2022). Embeddedness and entrainment are fundamental to integrate knowledge from diverse domains of expertise within and across organizational boundaries. The crossing of organizational boundaries is often mediated through complex contractual frameworks that are stable in nature, yet attempt to organize for the unpredictable with the help of flexible designs, if not "disciplined flexibility" (Muruganandan et al., 2022). Similar examples of crossroads abound and direct attention to the complexities inherent in how temporary or semi-temporary organizations are enacted in practice.

Crossroads are also present in the development of temporary organizing as a research field. For example, temporary organizing became the home of many project scholars inclined towards theorizing in general and making use of organization theory in particular. Yet, despite the abundance of projects in society and the continued attention of scholars to projects in their research, temporary organizing extends to a myriad of other forms beyond what we usually consider to be projects, such as festivals and other cultural events, social movements, crisis relief efforts, interactive virtual objects and the like. As we turn attention to other forms of temporary organizing, interesting questions about structure and agency arise around the commonalities, contrasts, and contradictions, or more precisely, the processes and practices to be found in these forms and how to study them. What are the advantages of broadening the field of "project studies" (Geraldi & Söderlund, 2018) in such a way, or should we continue to focus on projects of a different kind? What happens when we also embrace other forms of temporary organizing in the research community and its research?

We would like to invite submissions that address, broadly, and from a diversity of theoretical and methodological traditions, how scholars and practitioners navigate amidst crossroads in temporary organizing where alternative directions are brought together. The following questions illustrate potential areas of interest, but they offer only a starting point; we welcome creativity in topic, theory and method:

- What kinds of coordination practices are encountered at these crossroads – temporal, relational and material – within and across organizations?
- How do power relations unfold at the myriad of interfaces present in project networks and ecologies?

- What are the ethical issues or emotional labour involved in managing contradictory demands in different forms of temporary organizing?
- What insights can temporality research gain from the study of temporary organizing?
- What are the implications of different forms of organizing for employment and industrial relations and vice versa?
- How does temporary organizing act in the creation of sustainable futures?
- How do digital technologies, including, for instance, machine learning, social media, and digital surveillance, influence existing temporary organizations and enable the emergence of new ones?
- How does temporary organizing research relate to the future of work? Is temporary organizing a form of "new work"? When and how will such work be precarious?
- How does materiality create constraints and open possibilities at a myriad of crossroads in temporary organizing?
- How should leadership be studied within and across projects and other forms of temporary organizing?
- How does identity work unfold within and across projects and other forms of temporary organizing?
- To what extent should a process perspective on projects focus only on management practices if it wants to capture tensions between stability and change?
- How do we reconcile temporary organizing and projects? Should we do so at all?

This sub-theme intends to stimulate a constructive dialogue around conceptual and empirical research across these and related issues. High-quality, novel contributions in both early and later stages of development, are warmly invited. For submission of short papers please see EGOS - SUB-THEMES: Call for Short Papers - European Group for Organizational Studies

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