6 Organization as Communication and Routines: Text, Interpretation, and Performance of Rules

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The idea of a communicative constitution of organization (CCO) is witnessing increasing attention in organizational studies (Blaschke, Schoeneborn, & Seidl, 2012; Cooren, Kuhn, Cornelissen, & Clark, 2011; Fenton & Langley, 2011; Koschmann, Kuhn, & Pfarrer, 2012; Leclercq-Vandelannoitte, 2011; Schoeneborn & Scherer, 2012; Schoeneborn & Wehmeier, 2013; Spee & Jarzabkowski, 2011; Stohl & Stohl, 2011; Taylor, 2011). It has the potential to fundamentally redirect our ontological and epistemological assumptions about organizations, thus raising new research questions. While the idea of a communicative constitution of organization is shared by many scholars following the earlier linguistic turn in organization studies (e. g., Alvesson, 1989; Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000; Boje, Oswick, & Ford, 2004; Czarniawska, 1998), the implications of the CCO perspective with respect to organizational phenomena such as, for example, change, culture, or identity are only beginning to show. In the following, we employ the CCO perspective to provide new insights into another central concept in organization studies: organizational routines.

Organizational studies heavily discuss organizational routines, particularly their contribution to organizational stability or change. Undeniably, organizational routines are a fundamental mechanism for coordinating work (Cohen et al., 1996; Cyert & March, 1963; Feldman & Pentland, 2003; Jarzabkowski, Lê, & Feldman, 2012; March & Simon, 1958; Ortmann, 2010). Despite this important role of routines in organizations, their conceptual nature is not yet well theorized (Becker, 2008; Dionysiou & Tsoukas, 2013). Common conceptualizations range from routines as stable, repetitive standard operating procedures (Cyert & March, 1963; March & Simon, 1958) to routines as sources of organizational flexibility and change (Feldman, 2000; Feldman & Pentland, 2003; Howard-Grenville, 2005; Pentland, Feldman, Becker, & Liu, 2012; Pentland, Haerem, & Hillison, 2010; Pentland & Rueter, 1994; Rerup & Feldman, 2011). Whereas the first perspective primarily focuses on the structural aspects of routines, the latter sees routines through the lens of the performing actors and their ability to enact routines in multiple ways.

Building on insights from the CCO perspective, we develop a framework for organizational routines that allows us to conceptualize their dynamics. In particular, we propose a refined understanding of organizational routines based on their communicative characteristics. Conceptualizing organizational routines as an interplay between rules, as specific organizational texts, the interpretation, and the performance of these texts in conversations explains the inherent dynamics of organizational routines. Our framework enriches the debate on the communicative constitution of organizations by showing how rules become and are enacted as organizational texts.

The chapter is divided into five main sections. First, we review the current debate around the nature of organizational routines and address some of its shortcomings. The second section introduces the CCO perspective and the concepts of text and conversation following the Montréal School. Next, we transfer this communicative theory to our understanding of organizational routines. This shifts our focus to the interpretation of rule texts as a necessary step in the conversational enactment of these rule texts. The fourth section discusses the implications of a communicative understanding of organizational routines. Last, we conclude the chapter with a brief summary.

Routines Between Stability and Change: A Critical Review

Traditionally, routines are conceptualized as a source of stability in organizations, prone for dealing with reoccurring activities (B. & Y., 1988; Cyert & March, 1963; March & Simon, 1958). They are ex-ante defined action patterns which are triggered by an also ex-ante defined stimulus, and they are mindlessly processed once the triggering stimulus has been identified (B. & Y., 1988). The underlying idea is that routinized behavior enables organizations to respond to recurring, similar tasks in a reliable and efficient way (Cyert & March, 1963). In order to ensure an efficient processing of recurring, similar tasks, routines have to be repeated in similar ways. Feldman (2000, p. 611) summarizes this traditional perspective as follows: "routines are repeated patterns of behavior that are bound by rules and customs and that do not change very much from one iteration to another."

In recent years, however, organization studies have witnessed a *processual turn* that shifts our understanding of organizations as structural entities to organizations as processes of organizing (Chia & Holt, 2007). The main interest is how organizations become (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002) and how situated practices emerge and change (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011). Stability and change are not seen as opposing categories that exclude one another. Instead, the process perspective suggests conceptualizing them as a duality: two sides of the same coin (Farjoun, 2010). This has manifold consequences for our understanding of organizational routines. It has moved our thinking from seeing routines as inert phenomena (Hannan & Freeman, 1984) to an understanding of routines as sources of organizational change and renewal (Feldman, 2000; Feldman & Pentland, 2003). Interestingly, the potential for change is located in the internal dynamics of a routine and in the actors who are performing it (Feldman,

2000). Hence, Feldman (2000) introduced agency as an important variable for our understanding of organizational routines. The central argument is that routines are no longer abstract, formal patterns of behavior, but they are performed by people and therefore can change from one performance to the next (Feldman, 2000). Routines then do not determine the action of agents but quite the contrary: they provide the basis for agents to act in different, flexible ways.

In an effort to better understand what they characterize as the black-box of routines, Feldman and Pentland (2003) distinguish between the ostensive and performative aspects of routines. Following their understanding, which is borrowed from Latour (1987), the ostensive aspect reflects the abstract understanding or idea of a routine, whereas the performative aspect reflects the performance of a routine. The ostensive aspect of routines accounts for the general idea, the principle of the routine, but it should not be mistaken as a standard operating procedure. In light of the duality of stability and change, ostensive and performative aspects are recursively related: performances renew the ostensive part which, in turn, enables the performative part. Ostensive and performative aspects are mutually constitutive of each other, and only together they form a routine (Feldman & Pentland, 2003).

In a similar effort to explain the nexus between structure and action, Pentland and Rueter (1994) are the first to draw an analogy between routines and language. Building on Chomsky's (1980) notion of grammar, they argue that routines can be described as sequences of actions, and that the order of these sequences follows a particular grammar. Their concept of grammar, in turn, refers to a set of rules depicting the possible orders of sequences of actions. Just as language is a set of possible sentences, an organizational routine is a set of possible performances of a particular task. A sentence is analogous to the performance of a routine or, in other words, a single, complete repetition of an action sequence. And just as sentences in language, performances of routines comprise identifiable pieces. Sentences are constructed from syntactic constituents such as nouns or verbs, routines are similarly constructed from identifiable subprocesses (actions, subroutines), assembled in a specific order to bring about the intended task. Grammar describes the order constraining the individual performances or subroutines and aligns the actions in such a way that they become collective action patterns. It not only provides coherence and order, but grammar as a set of rules also determines the normatively correct characteristic of a routine. However, Chomsky's (1980) notion of generative grammar does not allow for the specification of a fixed outcome. Instead, "it defines a set of possibilities from which members accomplish specific sequences of action" (Pentland & Rueter, 1994, p. 485). Grammatical models thus cover both structure and agency: structure as a set of grammatical rules, agency as the power to choose and re-assemble the different parts into sentences. Grammar, in this sense, does not constrain or even determine action; it is the resource that enables action (Pentland & Rueter, 1994).

We are sympathetic to the current aim to explore routine dynamics and the duality of stability and change. Yet, we argue that both concepts still suffer from some conceptual shortcomings pertaining to the (1) ostensive and performative aspects and (2) the grammar of routines.

Ostensive and Performative Aspects. Though the difference between ostensive and performative aspects provides important insights to routine dynamics, the relationship between the two needs further elaboration (Dionysiou & Tsoukas, 2013). The framework asserts that routines can be both, sources of stability as well as sources of change, but it does not help in identifying the conditions under which routines lead to either stability or change. In other words, it is unclear how and why ostensive aspects influence the performance of routines, and vice versa (Dionysiou & Tsoukas, 2013). On the one hand, the argument is that already a very small degree of variety in routine performance prevents organizations from becoming inert or path dependent (Pentland et al., 2012). On the other hand, the literature on power asymmetries and managerial control, for instance, eludes us to the problem that individual deviations from prescribed behavioral patterns are often actively discouraged or even sanctioned (Crozier & Friedberg, 1981). This research shows that actors do not always have the power to do otherwise (Giddens, 1984) but, on the contrary, are forced to stick to prescribed patterns. Therefore, performance variations are less likely to be observed than the framework assumes.

Routines and Grammar. The analogy between the linguistic concept of grammar and the understanding of routines as grammars of action (Pentland & Rueter, 1994) helps us to entangle the structural features of organizational routines by decomposing them into action patterns (subroutines), which then are aligned by a particular set of rules (grammar). Still, it leaves an important aspect unresolved: As Pentland and Rueter (1994) themselves acknowledge, grammar as a set of rules in linguistics allows for an infinite variety of different sentences to be constructed (cf. Chomsky, 1980). However, research on path-dependence, drift, or simplification convincingly demonstrates that organizational routines do not allow for an infinite variety in their performance (Durand & Calori, 2006; Sydow, Schreyögg, & Koch, 2009). Routine performance is significantly limited by the organizational and institutional context it is embedded in, which the concept of grammar cannot account for.

We address these issues from the perspective of a communicative constitution of organization. A communicative understanding of organizational routines opens up new possibilities for conceptualizing the ostensive as well as the performative aspects of routines in ways that defy the static conceptions of mindlessness and stability. In particular, we extend the analogy between routines and grammar as suggested by Pentland and Rueter (1994). Instead of focusing on grammar only, we potentially gain a more complete picture by looking at communication at large, accounting for the generative interplay between its structural as well as conversational character of performance (Taylor & van Every, 2000). Here, the distinction between text and conversation as put forth by the Montréal School (Taylor & van Every, 2000) promises to enrich the debate on routine stability and change.

Communication: Between Conversation and Text

The Montréal School is a group of scholars who is interested in the constructivist notion that communication constitutes social reality (Craig, 1999; Schoeneborn, 2011; Schoeneborn et al., 2014). Building on the assumptions of the linguistic turn in philosophy (Habermas, 1984; Rorty, 1992) and in organizational studies (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000), it holds that our realities are constituted through communication (Taylor & van Every, 2000). Communication permits "to construct interactively a basis of knowledge, which becomes their joint property and thus cannot be said to belong to either of them individually" (Taylor & van Every, 2000, p. 3). The Montréal School takes a truly constructivist stance in that "language does not represent things that already exist. In fact, language is part of the production of the thing that we treat as being self-evident and natural within the society" (Deetz, 1992, p. 128). This communicative perspective shifts our attention from attempting to understand realities as they are to the epistemological question how it actually is constructed (replacing *what* through *how* questions; Luhmann, 1995). Furthermore, it displaces the individual agent and relocates our interest to the study of interaction and shared social constructions.

Specific to the Montréal School is their bimodal theory of communication, transcending the unimodal assumption of transmission theory in claiming that organizations emerge in communication (Taylor & van Every, 2000). Communication is, according to Taylor and van Every (2000), both, locution (representation) and illocution (action). To underline and conceptualize this basic bimodal property of communication, the most important distinction is the one between the modalities of conversation and text. "[T]he conversational dimension refers to the lively and evolving co-constructive side of communication (i. e., the 'site' of organization)," while "[t]he textual dimension corresponds with the recurring, fairly stable and uneventful side of communication (e. g., the organization's surface)" (Ashcraft, Kuhn, & Cooren, 2009, p. 20).

Conversation and Text

Conversation refers to the total universe of shared interaction-through-languaging of people (Taylor & van Every, 2000). The spectrum of conversation includes informal talk over a drink or lunch as well as formal encounters such as meetings, medical consultations, or court proceedings. Therefore, a multiplicity of different genres of communication can be identified, ranging from unprogrammed to programmed, from relaxed to rhetorical, from storytelling to argumentative forms (Orlikowski & Yates, 1994; Taylor & van Every, 2000). More importantly, conversation refers to the idea that language is not just representation but also action (Austin, 1962; Taylor, Cooren, Giroux, & Robichaud, 1996). Illocutionary speech acts are actions in themselves since they impose something specific on others. The verbs learning, pushing, bullying, and driving do not describe speech as such but describe different actions (Taylor et al., 1996). What turns a locution into an illocution is the assumption of intention both on the part of the speaker and the listener, although the interpretation of the listener may not be identical with the intention of the speaker. Conversation is thus not a

representation, but it describes the in-situ use of language by building on the textual resources available which enable and constrain it at the same time.

Conversation, however, cannot be understood without its counterpart, namely, the materialization of language, the symbolic domain of text (Taylor & van Every, 2000). The concept of text refers to the rather ordinary idea that speech comprises of words which are strung together in a systematic way in order to produce coherent and understandable communication. It is the semantic constrain imposed by the need to produce a sentence that is meaningful for others who possess the same linguistic code (Taylor & van Every, 2000). But texts do not only give order and structure to communication, they also provide a degree of permanency and materiality. They are the manifestations of conversations either in the form of spoken language or as written and/or other symbolic accounts. Texts transgress the locally and timely situated character of conversations (Taylor et al., 1996), thereby enabling the connection between past, present, and future conversations. The representation and memorization of communication is therefore accomplished by the production of text.

The Duality of Conversation and Text

Conversation and text are not independent but stand in a recursive relationship, which is constitutive for the process of communication. "The conversation begins as a scaffolding text. However, because the actions of interpretation are themselves interpretable, the conversation is in turn the subject matter of text. Each modality enfolds the other" (Taylor et al., 1996, p. 4). Conversation is mediated by text, and text is mediated by conversation. It is in this duality that communication unfolds and develops. The interplay between conversation and text can also be described as a translation of one dimension into another,

> which has the effect of talking a situation into being to generate a universe of discourse that describes it, and thus becomes, because of the time insensitive character of text, the means by which one situation influences another to produce a coherence that transcends the strictly local and makes the discourse produced by one conversation a resource to be used in others. (Taylor & van Every, 2000, p. 35)

Texts have to be interpreted semantically (i. e., translated into conversation) to become action (Taylor et al., 1996). For example, the sentence "I'll need that report for Monday morning, Jones" may be interpreted as a string of locutions, but then Jones would certainly have missed the point. The more probable interpretation is that of an order and therefore an illocutionary force (Taylor et al., 1996). The difference between speech as locution and as illocution depends on its interpretation. Deciphering the meaning of texts requires semantic interpretation. The difference between the explicit linguistic content of the text and the implied force of action result in its interpretation, which is based on background information, including the identities of the speaker and listener, time and space, the object of the conversational exchange, conventions of exchange, and the probable intentions of the speaker (Taylor et al., 1996).

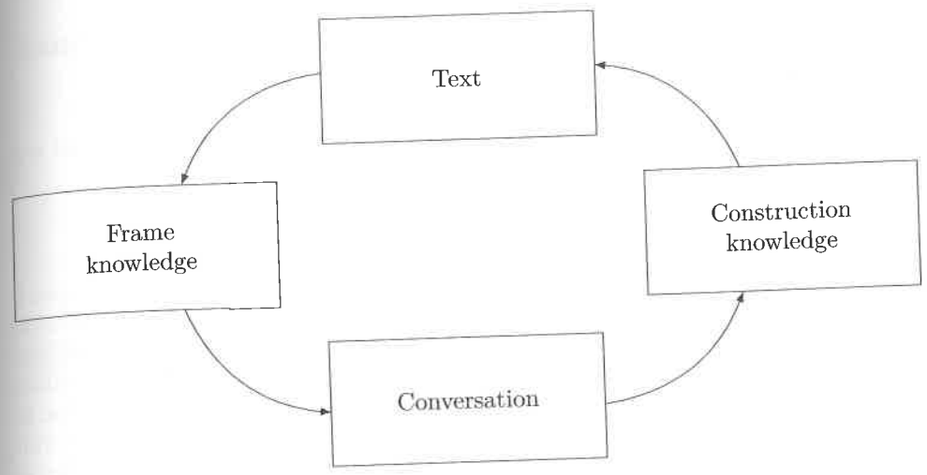

Figure 6.1: Conversation-Text Cycle (adapted from Taylor & van Every, 2000, p. 61)

Semantic interpretation plays an important role in the translation from text into conversation and from conversation into text. In borrowing from Goldberg (1995), Taylor and van Every (2000) distinguish between two domains of semantics: frame knowledge and construction knowledge. Frame knowledge relates to some background scene or frame necessary to interpret text, whereas construction knowledge is necessary for the translation of conversation into text, that is, knowledge about the rules of how to construct text. Conversation accomplishes the interpretation of text with frame knowledge in order to produce an epistemic interpretation, and conversation needs construction knowledge in order to produce an interpretation that transcends in text (see Figure 6.1 for a graphical representation of this cycle).

This cyclic mapping of one dimension onto another is a continuous process that keeps communication going. Texts are affected by other ongoing conversations involving other people and new circumstances (in time and space); thus, conversations as a unit of talk exhibit self-organizing properties (Taylor, 1995). Because of the necessary interpretation of text and conversation in order to become meaningful, variability is inevitable (Taylor et al., 1996). This potential for variability and self-organizing is, however, significantly constrained by the existing frame knowledge and the rules of correct use of language (construction knowledge). Notably, "correct" refers to standards of the discursive community and never to any absolute standard (Taylor & van Every, 2000). Enabling as well as constraining elements are indispensable and constitutive parts of communication.

Toward a Communicative Model of Organizational Routines

The insights of the Montréal School enable us to distinguish between textual and conversational aspects of routines.

Rules as Specific Organizational Texts

Seen through a communicative lens, some texts have the form of a locutionary speech act: they are supposed to make actors do something by formulating a behavioral expectation or, in other words, how to act in a specific situation. In organizations, such texts impose something on someone (what and how to act), and these impositions are formulated as rules (Cyert & March, 1963). Therefore, rules can be understood as organizational texts that have normative power. Rules as texts provide routines with structure and order. Without this permanency routines would not be identifiable (Dionysiou & Tsoukas, 2013). Only this material, symbolic part of routines makes them socio-recognizable (Gherardi, 2006).

Rule Performance as Conversation

Rules are performed in conversation. The (locutionary) formulation of a rule text requires an act of interpretation for the (illocutionary) enactment of the rule in conversation. Therefore, rule performance is never entirely determined by the rule text, because its enactment involves the necessary interpretation and adjustment of the rule to a particular situation (Dionysiou & Tsoukas, 2013; Ortmann, 2010). Rule texts are the symbolic, written, or spoken aspects, whereas conversation as rule performance is the in-situ application of the rule. Rules, therefore, refer to both the textual and the conversational aspects of routines.

Rule Interpretation and Rule Construction

Understanding routines as dualities of rule text and rule performance (conversation) implies shifting the issue of interpretation of rules to the fore, which has not deserved an elaboration in the discussion on routines yet (Dionysiou & Tsoukas, 2013; Parmigiani & Howard-Grenville, 2011; Rerup & Feldman, 2011). Interpretation is the necessary act of turning the textual elements of routines "into a situation that is comprehended explicitly in words and that serves as springboard for action" (Taylor & van Every, 2000, p. 409). The semantic interpretation of textual structures depends on semantic frames or, in other words, frame knowledge shared within particular communities. Routines may thus only be interpreted in the light of other routines, underlying organizational norms, and values (Feldman & Rafaeli, 2002; Howard-Grenville, 2005). They represent a collective accomplishment, "irreducible to the contributions of any individual participant" (Dionysiou & Tsoukas, 2013, p. 191).

Rule texts are not only interpreted through shared semantic frames, but they emerge alongside shared construction principles. Rules are constructed as understandable

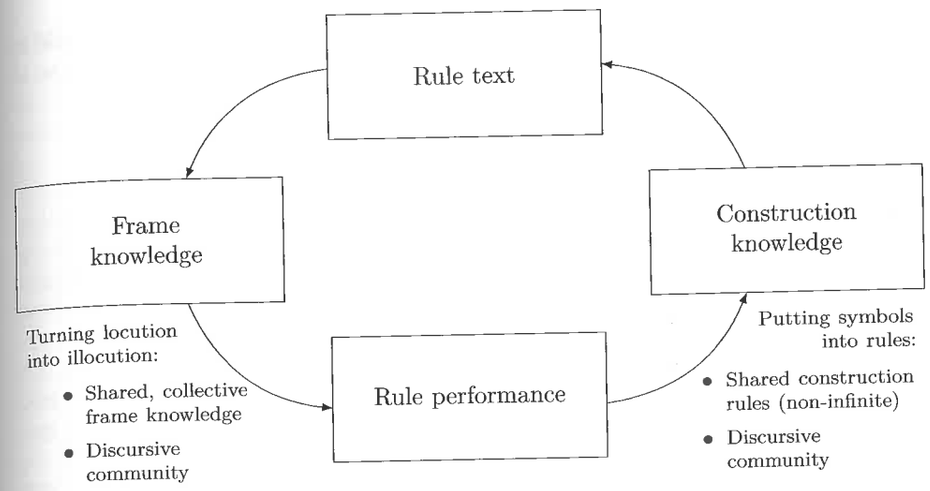

Figure 6.2: A Communicative Model of Organizational Routines

and performable illocutionary speech acts only against an accepted set of lexical units (Fillmore, 1976). To be identifiable and understandable as rules, the symbolic codes they consist of have to be put into a meaningful, intersubjectively accepted order (Cornelissen & Clarke, 2010). Figure 6.2 illustrates our communicative model of organizational routines.

A communicative lens first of all allows us to differentiate between rule text and rule performance. On the one hand, a rule formulates behavioral expectations in form of a text; on the other hand, the interpretation of the text is indispensable to perform the rule in conversation. Conversation is the in-situ use of rules. It builds on available textual structures that enable and constrain their application at the same time. This enabling and constraining character of rule texts is fundamental for our understanding of rule performance. Rules need to be interpreted in and adapted to particular situations where rule following and rule breaking are dualities (Farjoun, 2010). Our model assumes that rule texts and rule interpretation are different dynamics that may follow their own respective trajectories. The following discussion highlights that differences between rule texts and rule interpretation may co-exist even over long periods of time.

Discussion

In the following, we outline how our communicative model of organizational routines can enrich the debate on routine stability and change, particularly with regards to the interplay of rule text and rule performance. First, an understanding of organizational routines as communicative constructs opens up new avenues for conceptualizing routine dynamics. Second, it allows for the study of different types of routines as a

result of different textual genres. The ways routines are formulated and described in language shed new light on the question why certain routines show a high degree of performance variation whereas others do not (Pentland et al., 2010).

Routine Dynamics

In Feldman's (2000) view, routines can become the source of change each time they are enacted, thereby creating new performances which may lead to new ostensive patterns. Differentiating between rules as organizational texts and rule performance shifts the perspective towards the question if and how rule performance deviates from the taken for granted interpretation of the rule. Any deviation of rule performance from rule text first of all violates organizational frame knowledge (schemata) on how to act (Luhmann, 1995). The next question then is whether and how the rule text and the frame knowledge change as a result of the violation. A violation of a rule text represents an interruption of organizational communication, and as a result the conversation no longer connects to existing frame knowledge. There are three distinct ways how a discursive community may respond to such a violation of existing frames and expectations. It can (1) decide to reject this violation as non-legitimate, (2) adapt to and learn from this violation in changing the rule text and frame knowledge, or (3) overlook (consciously or subconsciously) the violation, which leads to an evolutionary drift of frame knowledge without inducing a change of the underlying rule text.

Rejecting. If a conversation is perceived to be an illegitimate, non-acceptable violation of a rule text by a respective discursive community based on its common frame knowledge, the violation may result in the sentencing of the deviant behavior. The community thus reinforces the existing rule text and frame knowledge in that it actively discourages further violations of interpretative frames. From an organizational point of view, the rule texts are marked as contra-factually stable (Luhmann, 1995). That is to say, a new communicative offer is rejected and the original rule text remains unchanged despite the fact that it has been performed otherwise. In other words, even a disconfirming rule performance does not lead to a change in the rule text. The rule amounts to an authoritative text that is privileged over disconfirming, deviating interpretations (Kuhn & Ashcraft, 2003). Therefore, the notion of rules as authoritative texts has the potential to connect the routine debate with issues of power and resistance to change (Dionysiou & Tsoukas, 2013). Not every actor is equally powerful, and certain actors may be legitimized to violate rules, whereas others are not. However, this does not imply that people or communities with lower degrees of formal power are not able to influence or alter rule texts. On the contrary, research on the politics of organizational learning points out that certain actors are quite skillful in manipulating common interpretations (Lawrence, Mauws, Dyck, & Kleysen, 2005). The question which texts become authoritative and why is of utmost importance for understanding routine dynamics. A related question concerns the issue of how actors legitimize rule breaking, and which texts they refer to in doing so. Organizations consist of multiple rule texts, which often are contradictory or competing in their logic (cf. Crozier & Friedberg, 1981). These contradictions open

the stage for power plays where actors draw on different rule texts and frames in order to legitimize their actions. We argue that it is a fruitful endeavor to elaborate on how the dynamics of power and politics make texts authoritative, and which resources are used therein.

Learning. In contrast to treating rule performances as illegitimate deviations, communities have the flexibility of responding to deviations by actively adapting to new impulses. In those cases, the practicing community takes a reflective attitude towards new stimuli and consciously integrates them into existing rule texts, thereby also changing construction and frame knowledge. The reformulation of rule texts as a result from variations in rule performances thus brings about the reflexive change of organizational routines. Unlike existing literature on routines (e. g., Feldman, 2000), our communicative model of routines has the advantage to depict not only emergent changes of routines but also deliberate, reflexive changes. Communities may actively decide to alter rule texts, frame and construction knowledge. This raises questions about how reflexive communication evolves, how it is pursued, and how new rule texts are generated.

Ignoring. The third possibility is that variations in the performance of rule texts are overlooked. Either they are tolerated, or the variations are so small in scale over time that they simply occur without further notice. Ortmann (2010) introduces the concept of drift to describe this phenomenon. The first case of purposeful ignorance refers to a differentiation of frame knowledge, that is, different discursive communities develop differing interpretative frames of the same rule text, which inevitably leads to differences in performance. A good example is the emergence of new communicative practices and genres (Orlikowski & Yates, 1994) using new symbolic codes or even words, for example, youth jargon or chat language. Over time, the interpretative schema gradually changes, resulting in new performances without changes to the rule text. The second case of unnoticed drift occurs when the variations are so small in scale or are so far apart in time that the differences in performance simply go unrecognized. Such gradual changes in performance lead to changes in the frames for the interpretation of rule texts. As Ortmann (2010) notes, drift is a potentially dangerous process, because the emergent change of routines may result in irreversible, path-dependent patterns (Sydow et al., 2009). When the change becomes apparent, it may be too late to reverse this emergent process (Ortmann, 2010). In contrast to change that results from learning, change as drift emerges without reflection. The concept of drift enables us to explain inertia and path dependence in the interpretation of rule text and rule performance.

Process studies consistently point out that even inert states (e. g., lock-ins) reveal a high degree of internal dynamics (Geiger & Antonacopoulou, 2009; Koch, 2011). Interestingly, path dependence and inertia do not result from stable, non-changing patterns, but quite the contrary: unnoticed, small-scale dynamics are essential for the emergence of inert states. These dynamics, however, do not lead to change in rule texts and their semantic interpretation. Our framework helps to explain why stable

patterns exhibit a high degree of internal dynamics. The existence of variations in rule performance is not necessarily an indicator for high degrees of routine change, as other studies suggest (Pentland et al., 2012).

The Collective Nature of Organizational Routines

Feldman (2000) and Feldman and Pentland (2003) have put actors on center stage in our understanding of routines. Accordingly, it is the individual who is able to change the ostensive as well as the performative aspects of routines. Moreover, the ostensive incorporates "the subjective understandings of diverse participants" (Feldman & Pentland, 2003, p. 101) in that each actor has his or her own understanding of a routine. A communicative understanding of routines, in contrast, emphasizes the collective, social nature of routines. Here, the central question is about the connectivity of communication (Schoeneborn, 2011), that is, the interconnection between rule texts and their interpretation in subsequent rule performances. A central insight refers to the social and collective nature of frame and construction knowledge. Communication is always a social act, relying on socially constructed and shared symbolic codes and frames. The enactment of rule texts can neither be reduced nor traced back to single individuals, because a collective, shared framework is indispensable for the interpretation of the rule text. Routines only become organizational if rule texts are collectively interpreted and enacted. Future research may elaborate on how collectives interpret and construct rule texts, and how shared interpretative schemes emerge (Dionysiou & Tsoukas, 2013). It would be fruitful to take a closer look at the ways in which routines are "talked into being," what linguistic patterns emerge, and how these patterns change over time as routines grow. Moreover, studies could investigate how consensus over rule texts is established or becomes questioned, and which linguistic patterns are associated with these processes. This would deepen our understanding of routine emergence and interconnectedness, as well as providing deeper insights into the organizational nature of routines.

Genres of Routines

A communicative understanding of organizational routines also has the potential to trigger new research questions with regard to the analysis of different types or genres of routines. A linguistic analysis of rule texts may account for different genres, which potentially lead to differences in rule performance. Just as the analysis of communicative genres in organization has shown (Orlikowski & Yates, 1994), different rule texts have different action potential. They may not only be interpreted in different ways according to the frame knowledge of the respective discursive community, but rule texts may also differ with different linguistic properties. Similar to Searle's (1975) differentiation between five illocutionary speech acts (assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, declarative), rule texts may be formulated in different ways, which leads to differences in rule performances. Rule texts can be codified in the form of written texts, drawings, prescriptions, propositions, orders, and so on. The interpretation of rule texts refers to these texts which, in turn, have a significant influence on the actual

performance of rules (D'Adderio, 2008; Turner & Rindova, 2012). Such questions cannot be answered theoretically but demand for explorative studies of differences in rule texts and rule performances. A communicative understanding raises new research questions on the ways rule texts are formulated, which result in different interpretations and lead to different performances.

Rule Text and Rule Performance as Organizational Communication

Our communicative model of organizational routines also contributes to the debate on what makes communication organizational (Schoeneborn, 2011; Sillince, 2010). So far, scholars of the Montréal School have been criticized for being too vague in addressing the characteristics of organizational communication (McPhee & Poole, 2001). We argue that rule texts are a key feature of organizations and that they differentiate organizations from, for example, a group of friends helping one of them to move (Cooren & Fairhurst, 2009). According to Cooren and Fairhurst (2009), the staying capacity of texts, that is, their ability to transcend time and become independent of their author, is critical for organizations to come into being. While not every text necessarily has this power, rule texts that formulate a contra-factually stable behavioral expectation certainly are constitutive of organizations (Schreyögg & Sydow, 2010). Organizations create and maintain a unique identity based on rule texts which makes them first of all identifiable as organizations (Luhmann, 1995). If this identity changes continuously, no identifiable pattern would allow us to speak of an organization. Certain expectations remain over time and independent of authors in the form of rule texts, upon which organizations enact a difference to their environment and thereby constituting themselves (Luhmann, 1995; Schoeneborn, 2011). However, this boundary is no fixed entity but is fundamentally constituted and re-constituted by communication. Each enactment of a rule text reproduces the organization and as a consequence also the boundary to its environment. In other words, the organization has no existence unless it is reproduced through the enactment of rule texts. Maintaining the boundary to the environment through the enactment of rule texts is therefore a self-referential process, that is, the organization establishes and re-establishes itself. The interplay of rule texts and their performance is therefore constitutive for organizations and at the same time makes communication organizational. Of major importance for further research would be to explore the relationship between rule texts and their communicative enactment. Neither the practice-based routine research (Feldman, 2000; Feldman & Pentland, 2003) nor the Montréal School (Taylor & van Every, 2000) explicitly deals with this important question. It would, however, be interesting to gain a better understanding about how rule texts become conversational in organizations.

Conclusion

The present chapter develops a communicative understanding of organizational routines inspired by the Montréal School. Differentiating between rules as specific organizational texts, their interpretation and performances in the sense of conversation allows us to shed new light on routine dynamics. Our model points to the important dimension of interpretation based on shared schemata; in other words, rule texts need to be interpreted in order to become enacted organizationally. This indicates the importance of discursive communities which share interpretative frames and allow a shared enactment of organizational routines. Furthermore our model helps to grasp different types of routines based on differences in rule texts. A communicative model of organizational routines therefore has the potential to shed new light on the relationship between routine stability and routine change.

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