Multimodality in Institutional Analysis and SAP Research

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Multimodality in institutional analysis

» Communication is central in institutional analysis

» Increasing in interest in visuality (e.g., sub-theme 7 in Rotterdam), but it is only a part of multimodality

» Research on legitimacy and legitimation as a case in point; a theoretical need to go beyond verbal or textual communication

» The role of multimodality is accentuated in mediatized society:
  » New technologies
  » New forms of mass media
  » Social media
Multimodal legitimation

» Rhetorical or discursive legitimation strategies:
  » Verbal or textual aspects
  » Visual components (e.g., pictures or photographs)
  » Sound
  » Video

» Multimodal legitimation genres (e.g., Twitter or Youtube)

» Legitimation judgments as expressed in multimodal forms e.g., in social media
A model of discursive legitimation in mediatized society

Multimodality in rhetorical strategies and discursive practices

**LEGITIMATING RHETORIC:**
- Positioning
- Legitimation strategies
- Underlying assumptions

**MEDIATIZATION:**
- Staging
- Editing
- Storying

Processes of production

Multimodality in media’s discourse practices

**LEGITIMACY JUDGMENTS:**
- Positions
- Actions and issues
- Underlying assumptions

Processes of consumption

Multimodality in audiencies’ interpretations and judgments
Sociomateriality and multimodality in SAP research

» A growing interest in sociomateriality in organization studies

» Strategy-as-practice (SAP) research as a case in point

» Sociomateriality is ‘the constitutive entanglement of the social and the material in everyday organizational life’ (Orlikowski, 2007: 1438).

» In terms of communication, this entanglement is necessarily multimodal

» Thus, sociomaterial ethnography can complement our understanding of communication and discourse e.g., in SAP research
Multimodality in strategy work

» **Spatio-temporal setting:**
  » Enables and constrains multimodality in communication
  » E.g., spatial arrangements in a meeting

» **Tools and technologies and artifacts:**
  » Provide multimodal affordances
  » E.g., the use of PowerPoint or Facebook
  » E.g., strategic plans as memory traces

» **Actors:**
  » Agency is linked with multimodal communication abilities
  » E.g., verbal or visual rhetorical or technological skills

» **Shows in strategy work processes:**
  » Imbrication of material and human agency in a multimodal manner
Figure 1. A Methodological Framework for Sociomaterial Ethnography in Strategy Process Research

Episode of strategy work

Material Objects as Inputs
(Representations of strategy work from Prior Episodes)

Material Objects-in-Use:
- Tools and technologies
- Material artifacts

Multimodal Affordances
Multimodal Agency
Imbrication

Strategic Actors:
- Positions and interests
- Knowledge and skills

Strategy Work Processes:
- Idea generation
- Conflict resolution
- Co-orientation

Material Objects as Outputs
Representations of strategy work to inform Future Episodes