

Join SAP at AoM in Boston!

*Curtis LeBaron (Chair)
Brigham Young University*

My scholarly interests cut across several divisions at the Academy of Management, but I joined the Strategizing Activities and Practice (SAP) interest group because:

- We value scholarly rigor and intellectual diversity. We have pitched a large and accommodating tent.
- Our research is innovative and our conversations are interesting—I'm certainly not bored.
- We are a strong international group, with members from many countries.

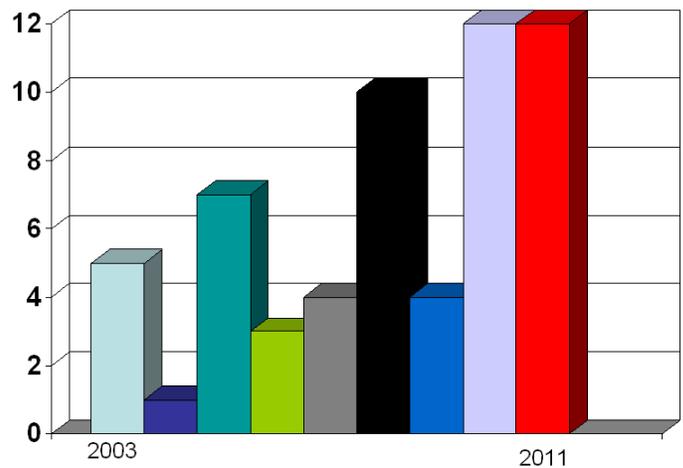
As an interest group, we investigate strategizing activities as they unfold day to day at all levels of an organization. The primary purpose of SAP scholarship is to advance knowledge and understanding of strategy as something that people in organizations *do*, rather than only something that organizations *have*. For example, we are exploring who organizational strategists are, what they do, how they do it, and what the consequences of their actions are.

We are growing. When SAP was created almost 2 years ago, we had only 12 members. In 2010, at AoM in Montreal, we had 261 members. In 2011, at AoM in San
(Continued on page 2)

SAP Research Surges

*Richard Whittington (Chair Elect)
Oxford University*

It's 10 years since the EIASM Brussels conference that is often held to have kicked off interest in 'Strategy-as-Practice' and which led to the 2003 special issue of the *Journal of Management Studies* (co-edited by Gerry Johnson, Leif Melin and myself). There's been a lot of progress since.



SAP Empirical Journal Articles, 2003-11

Please Submit a Paper or Proposal to SAP at AoM 2012

The Academy of Management is calling for submissions (papers, symposia, PDW proposals, and caucus proposals) for the 2012 AOM Annual Meeting, August 3-7, Boston, Massachusetts. The submission deadline for ALL submissions is January 10, 2012 at 5:00 PM ET (New York time). The official conference theme is "The Informal Economy," which calls for businesses, managers and scholars from different countries to innovatively use our concepts and theories to qualitatively and quantitatively examine a rich and yet-to-be-fully defined set of organization and management questions that are embedded within the informal economy.

As well as the new SAP Interest Group at the Academy, there are strong streams established at EGOS, the SMS and the British Academy of Management. And there has been a surge of empirical research.

Eero Vaara and I are working on a review article intended for the *Academy of Management Annals* and count more than 60 empirical articles appearing or forthcoming in the journal literature (see below the trend over time and www.sap-in.org for a list and summary of articles).

SAP articles have been appearing in leading journals such as the *Academy of Management Journal*, the *Journal of Management Studies*, *Organization Studies* and *Organization Science*. A further special issue is under way with the *British Journal of Management* on strategy tools (edited by Stéphanie Dameron, Jane Lê and Curtis LeBaron).

With such momentum, there should be plenty more SAP research to come!

Join SAP at AoM in Boston!

(Continued from page 1)

Antonio, we had 472 members. Our membership is now larger than some AoM divisions.

Please join SAP if you would like to:

- Help build a bigger and stronger community of strategic management scholars at the Academy of Management.
- Push the research envelope. Account for the social or organizational face of strategic management. See strategy as something that people do and not just something that organizations have.
- Use a variety of theoretical and novel methodological perspectives to study strategic management (including practice, institutional, discourse, sensemaking, routines, and cognition).
- Look deeper within organizations. See beyond top management teams to consider the strategic work of middle managers, consultants and non executives. How do such things as knowledge, identity, and emotions affect the strategic work of organizations and individuals?

We hope that you will join our lively conversation, which will continue in Boston, August 2012.

A New SAP Advisory Committee Was Formed in 2011

Thanks for the ongoing leadership of...

- Julia Balogun (Lancaster Business School)
- Paula Jarzabkowski (Aston Business School)
- Ann Langley (HEC Montréal)
- Linda Rouleau (HEC Montréal)

Looking Back, Looking Forward

*Julia Balogun (SAP Advisory Committee)
Lancaster Business School*

I am writing these paragraphs for the newsletter on the run up to Christmas. I am reminded as I write that it is exactly 2 years ago whilst on a pre-Christmas family skiing holiday that I received an email informing me that we had been granted the SAP Interest Group.

This news was a great Christmas present to share with the team who had helped put the bid together and created the support to make it possible: Paula Jarzabkowski, Richard Whittington, Linda Rouleau,

David Seidl, Saku Mantere, Curtis LeBaron, Eero Vaara, Ann Langley, Martha Feldman and Steve Floyd.

Two years in we are a thriving community at the Academy with a growing membership. Last summer in San Antonio, our first full participation in the conference programme, was a great success with some fantastic PDWs as well as many paper tracks and symposia.

I am looking forward to the conference in Boston this summer to see the additional progress we will have made.

The SAP group is also very active in other academic communities. We had another successful EGOS track in July in Gottenberg and submissions are already underway for our track at the EGOS conference in Helsinki in July 2012, with a focus on SAP and Discourse. The conveners are Chacha Abdallah, Kathryn Fahy and David Grant.

We also had a successful SMS conference under the leadership of Sotirios Paroutis and Robert Wright. There should be a call out soon for the 2012 conference in Prague.

In the UK, Mike Zundel is working to develop the SAP interest group within BAM, and Jane Le and Paul Spee are working to build a community of SAP scholars in Australia now that they have both taken up residence in Sidney.

I know there are also plans underway for additional special issues in journals for SAP. So please watch the SAP AoM Connect for news and also the SAPIN website.

Best Wishes to you all for 2012. I look forward to seeing everyone in Boston.

Strategy Practices: The Case for a Socio-material Lens

*Paula Jarzabkowski (SAP Advisory Committee)
Aston University*

S-as-P is concerned with the nexus between strategy practitioners, strategy practices, and strategy praxis. While all of these are relevant avenues with which to explore S-as-P, I am concerned that practices—those ‘things’ that are part of the everyday doing of strategy—have been under-researched within our field.

In part this is because practices are hard to grasp conceptually. Are they those intangible emotions and motivations that are performed in doing strategy, as some definitions indicate (e.g. Reckwitz, 2001)? Or are they more discretely defined as the objects, such as spreadsheets and flipcharts that are deployed, employed and enacted in doing strategy? And given these broad possibilities, are there theoretical lenses that can help us to more narrowly define practices in ways that will support their empirical study?

In this vein, I am increasingly turning towards socio-materiality as a way of thinking about strategy practices. This lens focuses attention particularly on the often overlooked material practices—the actual computers, desks, whiteboards, post-its, spreadsheets and other material objects—that are socially enacted in doing strategy.

Socio-materiality is not a uniform theoretical lens, as it encompasses different views on human and material agency, from those who conceptualise material objects as actors (e.g. Callon, 1986; Latour, 1987) to those who see material objects and human actors as entangled in complex ‘imbrications’ or arrangements of human and material agency (e.g. Leonardi, 2011) that offer both affordances and constraints in doing strategy.

Early forays in this area show the potential value of examining the material objects of strategizing. For example, Kaplan (2011) shows how the production of PowerPoint slides shapes the outcomes of investment decisions in a telecommunications firm. Others, such as Spee and Jarzabkowski (2011) and Vaara, Sorsa and Palli (2010), illustrate how strategic plans, as actual textual documents, both shape and are shaped by human interactions. However, such studies are only the beginning of a research agenda that needs to go further in exposing the complexity of material arrangements that are part of everyday strategizing.

If we take socio-materiality seriously, we will begin to see not only what things are part of doing strategy, but also what they perform. That is, we may end up with both (a) useful typologies of socio-material practices—simply developing robust conceptual bases for classifying and categorising socio-material practices would represent an advance on current knowledge; and also (b) understandings about how socio-material practices are performed and with what implications for strategizing.

In particular, we may see what is materialised, or brought into being within the strategy process, through these objects. That is, when people fill out and manipulate spreadsheets, there are both the materials of the spreadsheets themselves, with their encoded quantitative measures of strategy, and also what these spreadsheets materialise; representations of the material assets of a company rendered ‘visible’ in columns of figures.

Socio-materiality raises theoretical, methodological, and empirical questions that are beyond the scope of this brief musing. I look forward to continuing these discussions in other fora. For example, my colleagues and I are currently working on some of these concepts through a video-ethnography we have conducted on the global reinsurance industry. We hope to discuss the video-ethnographic method as a means of collecting socio-material data in a PDW at AoM 2012.

For EGOS 2013, we intend to focus the S-as-P sub-theme on socio-materiality and what it can contribute to our field, in order to further this research agenda. I hope it will prove a profitable avenue of research for people in our community.

(References available from author)

Call for Papers – AoM 2012

Saku Mantere (Program Chair)
Hanken School of Economics

The SAP program is characterized by diversity and quality. We encourage a wide spectrum of perspectives on the practice of strategic management and strategic organization. Our aim is to feature ambitious scholarly work across theoretical and methodological paradigms, as well as across different knowledge interests. We hope that our program will provide a forum for discussion between the qualitative and the quantitative, the managerial, the theoretical and the critical, the content and the process.

How to Join SAP...

We hope that you will become a member of the Strategizing Activities & Practice (SAP) interest group within the Academy of Management. In order to join this interest group, you must first be a member of the Academy, which you can easily do online:

<https://secure.aomonline.org/JoinOnline/join.asp>

On the membership application form, be sure to select the Strategizing Activities and Practice interest group. If you are already a member of the AoM, you can join SAP at any point throughout the year by writing a quick email to the AoM membership office:

membership@aom.pace.edu

As a member of AoM, you can freely access online information, resources and discussions about SAP. Log in at the following website and use the menu to locate the SAP interest group:

<http://connect.aomonline.org>

Thanks to Our Sponsors!

Claus Jacobs (Treasurer)
University of St. Gallen

In San Antonio, we were fortunate enough to design and deliver our first AOM SAP program on the basis of financial support from institutional members of the Strategy as Practice International Network (www.sap-in.org). The most recent institution to join SAP-IN, University of Sydney, teamed up with Aston Business School and HEC Montreal to sponsor our business meeting as well as the subsequent and well-received SAP party. Two PDW's were kindly supported by University of Oxford, St. Gallen, Lancaster University Management School and University of Zurich.

Gold Sponsor Aston University
 University of Sydney

Silver Sponsor HEC Montreal

Bronze Sponsor Lancaster University
 Oxford University
 University of St. Gallen
 University of Zurich

We thank all the above sponsors for their kind and generous support and look forward to an equally well-supported AOM 2012.



Call for PDW Submissions

Tomi Laamanen (PDW Chair)
University of St. Gallen

The year-end provides an excellent opportunity to reflect on some of the nicest memories during the past year and to envision the future.

The PDWs of the SAP IG in San Antonio belong to among some the nicest memories at the last year's AOM conference. We had several great PDWs that included, among others, our flagship session entitled "Strategy-as-Practice Research: Taking Stock and Going Forward" where the participants had the opportunity to discuss together the development of the field and envision the

future. In our paper development workshop, "Publishing Strategy-as-Practice Research" we paired emerging scholars striving to publish their work in the different top journals with some of the more senior scholars to jointly develop the ideas of the papers onwards.

In addition, we co-sponsored multiple sessions methods, including sessions on different approaches to study emergence in strategy processes, publishing qualitative research, studying management practices, producing ethnographies, and understanding group cognition.

In the coming year we envision an equally rich and intense program in which we warmly invite you to participate by proposing innovative PDW sessions or symposia, and by signing up as a coach or participant in the paper development session that we envision to repeat also next year.

Our target is that all of us will come away also from 2012 SAP PDWs in Boston recharged with great memories, ideas, approaches and collaborations at the cutting edge of the field's development.

SAP in Asia Pacific and Beyond

Jane Kirsten Lê (Representative)
The University of Sydney

The University of Sydney has become the most recent institution to join the SAP community as an Institutional Member. This signals the movement of strategy-as-practice from Europe and North America into the Asia Pacific region. There has already been one foundational workshop in Sydney, which attracted 25 delegates from the region. It created a lot of interest and excitement, and produced a regional network of SAP scholars. It is an active network with another workshop already in planning for April 2012. There is now a relatively strong contingent of scholars who engage with SAP in Australia (*Véronique Ambrosini, Stewart Clegg, David Grant, Jane Lê, Steve Fox, Paul Spee*), New Zealand (*Stephen Cummings, Peter Smith*) and Asia (*Masayasu Takahashi, Robert Wright*). However, the growth of the SAP network is not limited to this region. Indeed, there is growing interest in a number of different countries, notably Brazil and South Africa (*Annemarie Davis, Peet Venter*).

This internationalization of its academic community constitutes a key strength for SAP. Different regions bring different perspectives to their research and enable empirical and theoretical pluralism. This will facilitate our ability to continue making interesting contributions going forward. Our challenge will be to ensure that these regional networks are sufficiently integrated into the broader community, so we can maintain meaningful coherence.

The future looks promising!

SAP Leadership at the Academy of Management (2011-2012)

Past Chair	David Nils Seidl University of Zurich	david.seidl@iou.uzh.ch
Chair	Curtis LeBaron Brigham Young University	lebaron@byu.edu
Chair-Elect	Richard Whittington Saïd Business School	richard.whittington@sbs.ox.ac.uk
Program Chair	Saku Mantere Hanken School of Economics	saku.mantere@hanken.fi
PDW Chair	Tomi Laamanen University of St. Gallen	tomi.laamanen@unisg.ch
Treasurer	Claus Jacobs University of St. Gallen	claus.jacobs@unisg.ch
Secretary & Membership	Sotirios Paroutis University of Warwick	sotirios.paroutis@wbs.ac.uk
Representative (3 yrs)	Chahrazad Abdallah University of London	c.abdallah@mbs.bbk.ac.uk
Representative (2 yrs)	Jane Kirsten Lê University of Sydney	jane.le@sydney.edu.au
Representative (1 yr)	Anne D. Smith University of Tennessee	asmith51@utk.edu



Back row (left to right): Sotirios Paroutis, Tomi Laamanen, (not visible), Ann Langley, Richard Whittington, Curtis LeBaron, David Seidl, Saku Mantere.
 Front row (left to right): Anne Smith, Eero Vaara, Claus Jacobs, Jane Lê, Julia Balogun, Paula Jarzabkowski, Linda Rouleau.

“Best Student Paper”—SAP Research Award, AoM 2011

Katharina Dittrich
University of Zurich

“Meetings in the strategy process: Towards an integrative framework”



David Seidl (SAP Chair) congratulating Katharina Dittrich on the “Best Student Paper” prize

Honorable Mention:

- Valerie Michaud (ESG-UQAM), "Business as pretext? Managing business-community tensions on a social enterprise's website"
- Yun Su, Deborah Dougherty (Rutgers), "Knowledge flow between academic and industry scientists for complex innovation: Knowing as practice"

“SAP Best Paper”—SAP Research Award, AoM 2011

Jane Lê
University of Sydney

"When contradictory logics coexist: How work practices and institutional accounts reconfigure institutional logics"



Jane Lê receiving the “Best Paper” prize from Anne Smith (Awards Committee Chair), not visible

Honorable Mention:

- Katie Best (BPP U), "Strategy in Practice: Re-categorising tour guides as strategists"
- Christina Hoon (University of Hannover), Paula Jarzabkowski (Aston University), "Lighting the way to change: Usage of the 'beacon' metaphor in reforming the Lutheran Church"
- David Seidl (University of Zurich), Donald MacLean (Glasgow University), Robert MacIntosh (University of Glasgow), "Rules of suspension: A rules-based explanation of strategy workshops in the strategy process"

“SAP Best Reviewer”—SAP Research Award, AoM 2011

Charlotte Cloutier
HEC Montréal



Ann Langley accepting the “Best Reviewer” prize from Anne Smith on behalf of Charlotte Cloutier

Honorable Mention:

- Christina Hoon (University of Hannover)
- Tomi Laamanen (University of St. Gallen)

SAP Awards Committee 2011

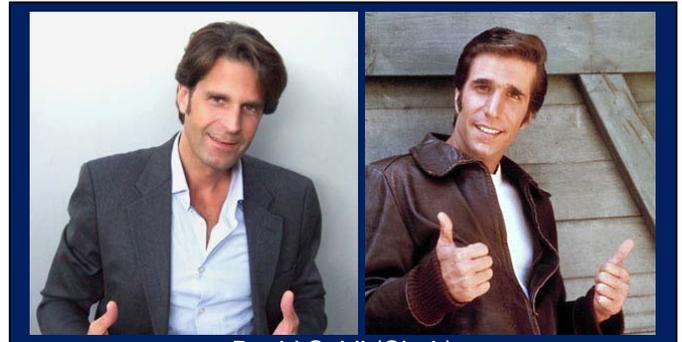
The award winners were selected in a rigorous, double-blind review process. Thanks to the Awards Committee for their careful work:

- Anne Smith, Chair (University of Tennessee)
- Veronika Kisfalvi (HEC Montréal)
- Paula O’Kane (University of Otago)
- Patrick Regnér (Stockholm School of Economics)
- Linda Rouleau (HEC Montréal)

SAP Business Meeting, AoM 2011



SAP Party, AoM 2011



David Seidl (Chair)
He first got down to business...then the party!





