

# **Collective Action and Organization Theory**

## **3 credits**

### **Course Dates**

Monday/Wednesday, May, 23, 25, 30, June 1  
13:00-16:00

### **Instructors**

Henri Schildt [schildt@hanken.fi]  
Teppo Felin [teppo.felin@gmail.com]

### **Location**

Hanken, Arkadiankatu 22. Lecture room to be announced.

### **Enrollment**

Students are asked to enroll by email with Henri Schildt ([schildt@hanken.fi](mailto:schildt@hanken.fi)), latest by May 18th. The number of participants is unlikely to be capped.

### **Deliverables**

Students will be asked to identify and briefly present an existing empirical article for each class. A focused 10-page paper is required (due at the end of June).

### **Course Content**

This seminar focuses on agency, both generally as well as within, between and by collectives and organizations. We investigate perspectives towards agency in philosophy, social theory, empirical sociology, and organization studies. Our aim is to expose course participants to diverse views on action and agency and to reflect how the arguments might contribute to empirical research and our understanding of organizational and collective processes more broadly.

The course is organized around four themes: (1) theories of individual agency and intentionality, (2) traditional explanations of collective action, (3) collective and individual agency in the organizational context, and (4) collective action among organizations at the industry (or organizational field) level.

The course is taught by using participatory seminar sessions (four sessions, three hours each) with assigned pre-readings. In addition, all students are asked to identify an existing high-quality empirical article that illuminates the topic of the session. Students may be asked to briefly present the key points from their chosen article to other students during the session – focus should be on the empirical material in the study and the findings should be related to some of the session readings.

## **Session 1 – Agency and Intentionality**

May 23

### *Required readings*

Boudon, R. 2003. Beyond rational choice theory. *Annual Review of Sociology*.

Giddens, A. 1984. *The Constitution of Society*. Chapter 1 / pages 1-40.

Emirbayer & Mische, 1998. What is agency? *American Journal of Sociology*.

### *Optional readings*

Coleman, J. 1986. Social theory, social research and a theory of action. *American Journal of Sociology*.

Felin, T., & Foss, N. 2011. The endogenous origins of routines and capabilities: The poverty of stimulus. *Journal of Institutional Economics*.

Jepperson, R. & Meyer, J, 2011. Multiple levels of analysis and the limits of methodological individualisms. *Sociological Theory*.

Sawyer, K. 2001. Emergence in sociology: contemporary philosophy of mind and some implications for sociological theory. *American Journal of Sociology*.

## **Session 2 – Collective Agency**

May 25

### *Required readings*

Benford, R. & Snow, D. 2000. Framing processes and social movements: An overview and assessment. *Annual Review of Sociology*.

Ostrom, E. 2000. Collective action and the evolution of social norms. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*.

Polletta, F. & Jasper, J.M. 2001. Collective identity and social movements. *Annual Review of Sociology*.

Tollefsen, D. Collective intentionality. *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (<http://www.iep.utm.edu/coll-int/>)

Tomasello, M. & Rakoczy, H. 2003. What makes human cognition unique? From individual to shared to collective intentionality. *Mind & Language*.

*Optional readings*

Granovetter, M. 1978. Threshold models of collective behavior. *American Journal of Sociology*.

Jasper, J.M. 2004. A strategic approach to collective action: Looking for agency in social movement choices. *Mobilization*.

Hardin, R. 1982. *Collective Action*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

Searle, J. 1990. Collective intentions and actions.

Tuomela, R. & Miller, K. 1988. We-intentions. *Philosophical Studies*.

**Session 3 – Intraorganizational Dynamics and Collective Intentionality**

May 30

*Required readings*

Bechky, B. & Okhuysen, G. 2011. Expecting the unexpected? How SWAT officers and film crews handle surprises. *Academy of Management Journal*.

Foss, N. & Lorenzen, M. 2009. Towards an understanding of cognitive coordination: Theoretical developments and empirical illustrations. *Organization Studies*.

Johnson, V. 2007. What is organizational imprinting? Cultural entrepreneurship in the founding of the Paris Opera. *American Journal of Sociology*.

Kaplan, S. 2008. Framing contests: Strategy making under uncertainty. *Organization Science*.

King, B., Felin, T., & Whetten, D. 2010. Finding the organization in organizational theory: A meta-theory of the organization as a Social Actor. *Organization Science*.

*Optional readings*

Feldman, M. & Pentland, B. 2003. Reconceptualizing organizational routines as a source of flexibility and change. *Administrative Science Quarterly*.

Lounsbury, M. & Glynn, M. 2001. Cultural entrepreneurship: Stories, legitimacy, and the acquisition of resources. *Strategic Management Journal*.  
March, S. 1962. The business firm as a political coalition. *The Journal of Politics*.

Pentland, B. & Rueter, H. 1994. Organizational routines as grammars of action. *Administrative Science Quarterly*.

Townley, B. 2002. The role of competing rationalities in institutional change. *Academy of Management Journal*.

#### **Session 4 – Collection Action by Organizations**

June 1

##### *Required readings*

Hargrave, T. & Van de Ven, A. 2006. A collective action model of institutional innovation. *Academy of Management Review*.

Rao, H., Monin, P. & Durand, R. 2003. Institutional change in Toque Ville: Nouvelle cuisine as an identity movement in French gastronomy. *American Journal of Sociology*.

Wry, T., Lounsbury, M. & Glynn, M. 2011. Legitimizing nascent collective Identities: Coordinating cultural entrepreneurship. *Organization Science*.

Zietzma, C. & Lawrence, T. 2010. Institutional work in the transformation of an organizational field: The interplay of boundary work and practice work. *Administrative Science Quarterly*.

+ A working paper under review (to be distributed)

##### *Optional readings*

Aldrich, H. & Fiol, M. 1994. Fools rush in? The institutional context of industry creation. *Academy of Management Review*.

Dorado, S. 2005. Institutional entrepreneurship, partaking, and convening. *Organization studies*.

Davis, G.F. & Zald, M. 2005. Social change, social theory, and the convergence of movements and organizations. In Gerald F. Davis, Doug McAdam, W. Richard Scott, and Mayer N. Zald (eds.), *Social Movements and Organization*

*Theory*: 335-350. New York, Cambridge University Press.  
([http://webuser.bus.umich.edu/gfdavis/Papers/davis\\_zald\\_05.pdf](http://webuser.bus.umich.edu/gfdavis/Papers/davis_zald_05.pdf))

Davis, G. & Thompson, T.A. 1994. A social movement perspective on corporate control. *Administrative Science Quarterly*.

Garud, R., Jain, S., & Kumaraswamy A. 2002. Institutional entrepreneurship in the sponsorship of common technological standards: The case of sun microsystems and java. *Academy of Management Journal*.

Lee, B.H. 2009. The infrastructure of collective action and policy content diffusion in the organic food industry. *Academy of Management Journal*.

## **ABOUT THE INSTRUCTORS**

Henri Schildt is an Assistant Professor of Management and Organization at Hanken School of Economics. His current interests focus on applying discursive perspectives to understand effects of institutional logics, the emergence of new organizational fields, and the formation of social categories. His prior research has focused on strategic change and learning in technology-related alliances. Henri's articles have been published in *Academy of Management Journal*, *Strategic Management Journal*, *Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice*, and *Strategic Organization*.

Teppo Felin is an Associate Professor and Lee Perry Fellow at the Marriott School, BYU and a Visiting Fellow at Lund University, Sweden. He has also been a Visiting Professor at Emory University, Aalto University and Hanken School of Economics. His current research interests include the microfoundations of strategic organization, markets, social aggregation and emergence, organizational capabilities and design, social theory and the philosophy of science. His research has been published in *Organization Science*, *Academy of Management Review*, *Managerial and Decision Economics*, *Erkenntnis* and other research outlets. He is on the editorial board of the *Academy of Management Review* and other journals. He is currently co-editing a special issue of *Organization Science* on organizational economics and capabilities, as well as an interdisciplinary special issue of *Managerial and Decision Economics* on the emergent nature of the firm, markets and social aggregation.