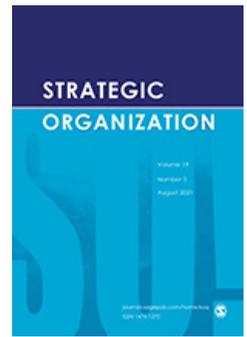




Virtual Symposium

# Publishing Process and Practice Research

14 February 2023



## Schedule

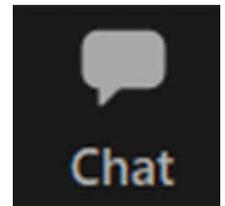
- Davide Nicolini (Warwick) and Ann Langley (HEC Montreal): the importance of process and practice research, and the distinctive nature of their central research questions in and around strategy (including vis-à-vis each other). *Brief Q&A*
- Ann Langley (HEC Montreal) and Paula Jarzabkowski (Queensland): how to choose strategy-related journals (and conferences) for process and practice research, and how to tailor papers for these audiences. *Brief Q&A*
- Paula Jarzabkowski (Queensland) and Martha Feldman (UC Irvine): common reviewer issues in process and practice research and how to pre-empt them in paper submissions. *Brief Q&A*
- Martha Feldman (UC Irvine) and Davide Nicolini (Warwick): responding to editors and reviewers - effective strategies and common pitfalls. *Brief Q&A*

Chair: Richard Whittington (Oxford) Support: Krista Petit (Ivey)



## Please feel free to ....

- Jump into Q&As using the Zoom hand-raise
- Dialogue and reference using the Zoom chat function
- Nod, smile and laugh with Zoom camera on (if comfortable)



wbs

WARWICK BUSINESS SCHOOL  
THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

# For the Change Makers

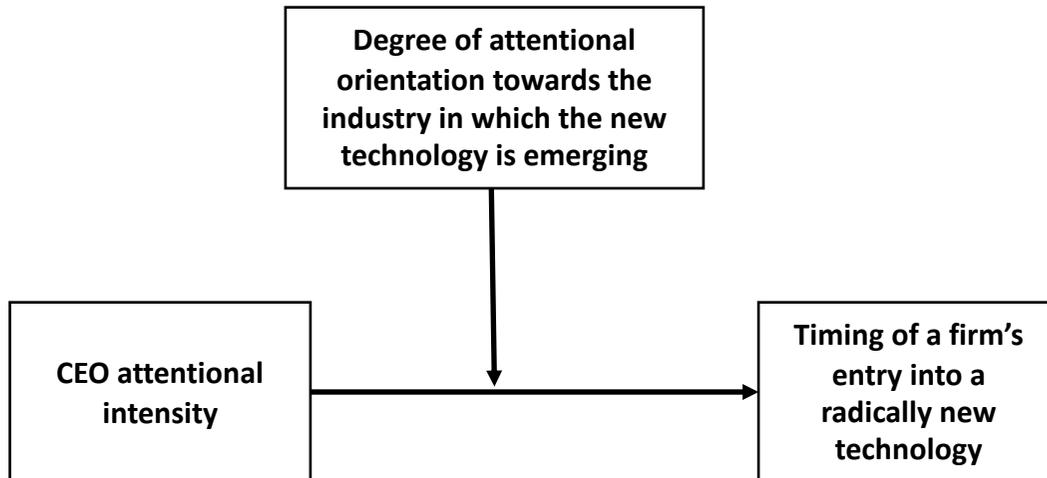
**Daive Nicolini**

Warwick Business School (UK)  
and BI Oslo (Norway)

**The importance of process and  
practice research, and the distinctive  
nature of their central research  
questions in and around strategy**

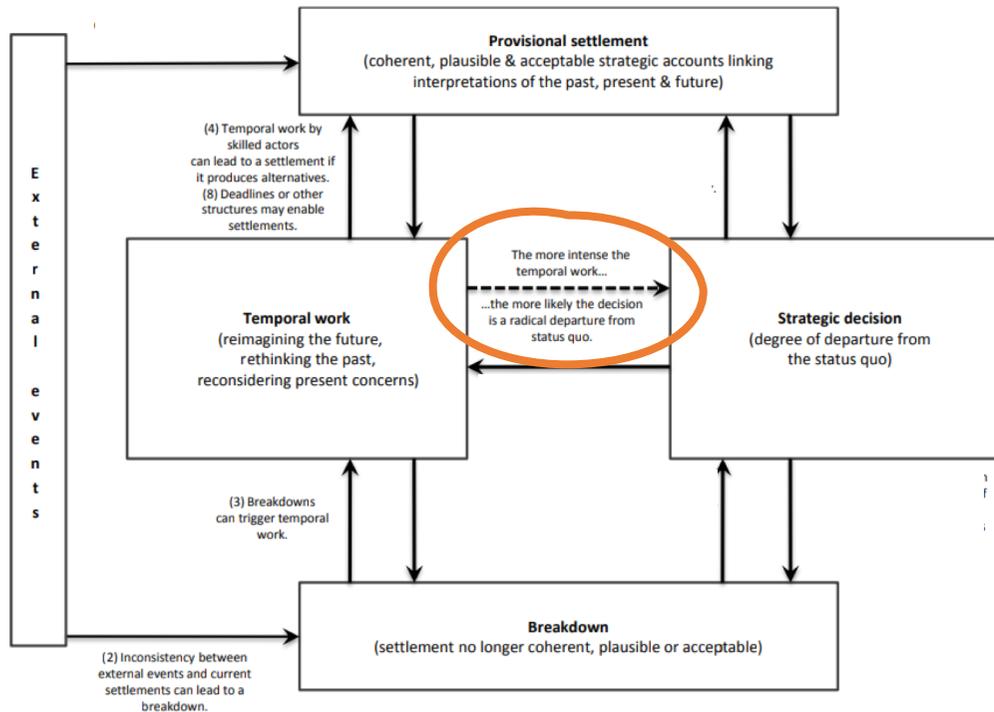
# What are we talking about? An example

- Sarah Kaplan has published variance, process and practice papers on the same topic



Eggers, J. P., & Kaplan, S. (2009). Cognition and renewal. *Organization Science*, 20(2), 461-477.

# A process Study



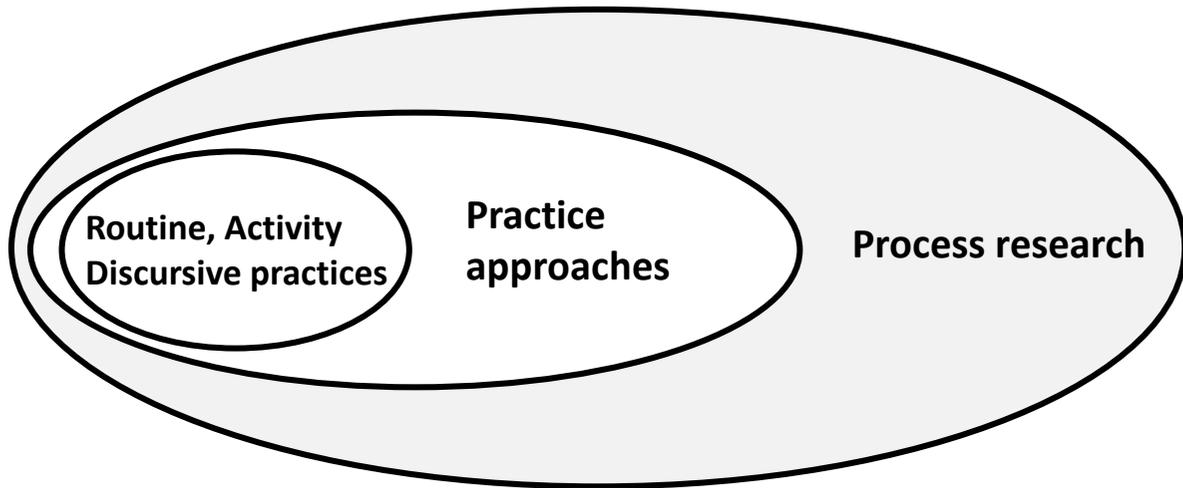
Kaplan, S., & Orlikowski, W. J. (2013). Temporal work in strategy making. *Organization science*, 24(4), 965-995.

# Practice study: flying even closer to the ground (ethnographic study)

- *How actors attempted to transform their own cognitive frames of a situation into predominant frames?*
- Where frames about a strategic choice were not congruent, actors engaged in highly political framing practices to make their frames resonate and to mobilize action in their favor
- **Doing things with words:** they used specific types of verbal interactions and discursive practices (framing contests).
- Those actors who most skillfully engaged in these practices shaped the frame that prevailed in the organization and gained power in the process

Kaplan, S. (2008). Framing contests: Strategy making under uncertainty. *Organization science*, 19(5), 729-752.

# What is the main distinctive thing about process and practice research?



# What is in a name?

	Process	Practice
<b>As an empirical object</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temporal relationships among events (vs. relationships between variables)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Routinized accepted ways of doing saying things and relating with people and through objects and the body</li> </ul>
<b>Set of theoretical perspectives (what is worth studying + how to study it)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sequences if events, activities and interactions unfolding in time</li> <li>• Weak vs strong (evolution vs. becoming)</li> <li>• Interviews, archival/historical data, observations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practices, praxis and practitioners: what people say, what they do how they relate with other people and objects.</li> <li>• How strategy is situationally produced and how it retroacts on situations</li> <li>• Interviews, archival/historical data, observations, video, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>As a body of scholarship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A large body of survey based studies focussed on variable that affect strategic processes (vs processes itself)</li> <li>• Growing body of qualitative research &amp; field studies of processes evolving over time</li> <li>• Focus mainly on middle/top managers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close descriptions of strategic activities focussed examining strategy &amp; planning meetings, workshops, decision making process at multiple org levels.</li> <li>• Growing body of work using discursive perspective to analyse strategy making</li> <li>• Emphasis on tools and material artefacts</li> </ul>

Modified from Kouamé & Langley, 2023

# Why adopting a process and practice orientation in strategy research?

- Choice or “orientation” (methodological tradition, paradigm) is a matter of taste, chance or both
- The findings speak to me, they are meaning-full

# Right reasons

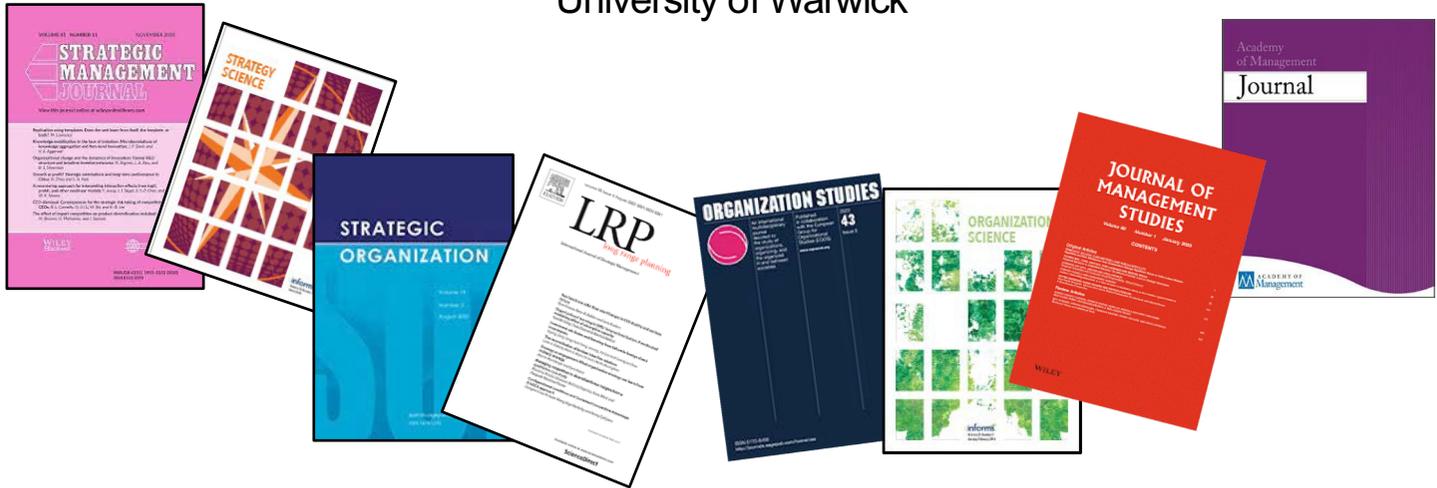
- I am interested in:
  - The temporally constituted nature of organizational and strategic phenomena
  - Plural perspectives and tensions and how they play out in the real world
  - How things come to be the way they are (organisation's 'strategy' or a market cycle, or competition, are things that are constructed within multiple people's actions)
  - Staying close to what people were doing and going beyond description

# Wrong reasons

- Doing process & practice studies is easier than variance studies (quantitative or experimental)

# Choosing strategy-related outlets for process and practice research

Ann Langley, HEC Montréal  
University of Warwick



# Important conference outlets for process and practice research

Intimate settings for process and practice work...



<https://osofficer.wixsite.com/pros>

2023 Warwick Summer School on Practice and Process Studies.  
Wednesday 12, Thursday 13 and Friday 14 July 2023

[https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/wbs/research/ikon/events/summer\\_school\\_on\\_practice-based\\_studies/](https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/wbs/research/ikon/events/summer_school_on_practice-based_studies/)

Interest groups at the big conferences...

APPLY NOW!!!



Strategizing Activities & Practices



Strategy Process Interest Group  
Strategy Practice Interest Group

# Things to consider in choosing journals

- The usual suspects:
  - Journal prestige and impact
  - Journal review processes and turnaround
- Place for conversation about strategy process and practice?
- What type of conversation? Do I fit?
  - Editorial board, and especially senior/associate editors
  - Recent publications and topic foci
  - Special issue calls and past special issues
  - Openness to the types of methods you are using
  - Published papers that inspire you!



# Web of Science Keyword: "Strategy Process"



# Web of Science Keyword: “Strategy as Practice”





# Specialist strategy outlets 2023

## *Strategic Management Journal*



Co-Editors: **(process or practice)** Rajshree Agarwal, Vibha Gaba, Mary Benner (have all done qualitative work) Associate Editors (process or practice):

- Ben Hallen (qualitative analysis, case studies)

2019 Sloan History & Strategy Research 2018 Sloan on Strategy Process & Practice

## *Strategic Organization*

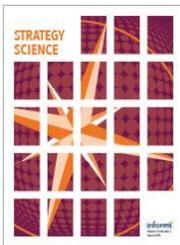


Co-Editors **(process or practice)**:

- Paula Jarzabkowski
- Charlotte Cloutier
- Amit Nigam

2023 Scall on Impact 2022 Sloan TemporalWork  
2021 Themed issue on Communication  
2020 Sloan Strategy-IdentityNexus

## *Strategy Science*



EC: Todd Zenger  
Senior Editors: **(process or practice)**

- Violina Rindova (identity, culture, cognition, process research)

2018: Sloan KeyDimensions of Strategic Decisions

## *LongRangePlanning*



Co-ECs: Thomas Lawton  
Roberto Vassolo

Associate Editors **(process or practice)**

- Julia Hautz
- Sotirios Paroutis

2023 Scall on Purpose 2018 Sloan on Performativity  
2017 Sloan Transparency and Inclusion



# General management journals 2023

## Academy of Management Journal



Deputy/ Associate Editors (**Strategy process or practice**):

- Matthew Grimes
- Ann Langley
- Davide Ravasi
- Juliane Reinecke

Methods Expert

- Curtis LeBaron

## Journal of Management Studies



Co-Editors (**Strategy process or practice**):

- Christopher Wickert

AEs: Elena Dalpiaz, Johann Fortwengel, Yuliya Snihur

2023: SiCall on Repurposing Management for the Public Good: Processes, Obstacles and Unintended Consequences  
2020 SiCommemorating Weick

## Organization Studies



EC: Renate Meyer/ Paolo Quattrone SEs (**Strategy process or practice**):

- Laure Cabantous, Martin Komberger
- Davide Nicolini, Linda Rouleau
- Paul Spee, Janne Tienari, Tammar Zilber

2023 SiCall on Open organizing 2022 Si Entrepreneurial Practices  
2021 SiPower, performativity, process 2018 SiUses of the past

## Organization Science



EC: Lamar Pierce  
DEs and AEs (**Strategy process or practice**):

- Ruthanne Huising, Stefano Brusoni
- Jason Davis, Hila Lifschitz-Asaf,
- Andrew Nelson, Anastasia Sergeeva, Sonali Shah

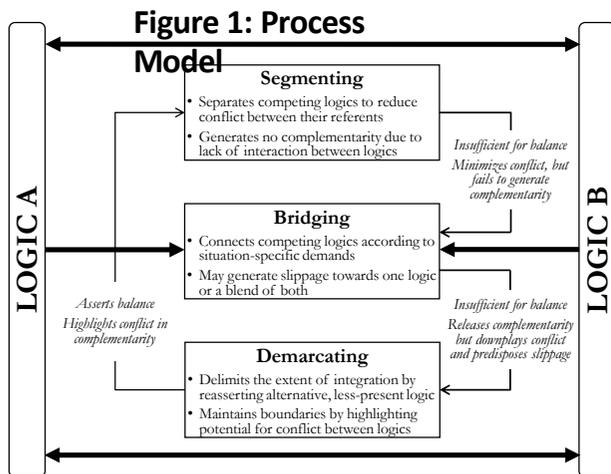
2021 Si on Emerging Technologies and Organizing

# **Common reviewer issues in process and practice research and how to pre-empt them in submissions**

Paula Jarzabkowski

University of Queensland Business School and Bayes Business School

# Isn't process longitudinal over time?



**Editor/Reviewer comment:** Most models show either causal relationships (variance) or temporal/sequential relationships (process). I'm not sure which Figure 1 depicts. It seems you are suggesting sequential relationships, but **you do not have process data**. I suspect there is some sort of logical structure in this model that doesn't fit into either variance or process models. Please **clarify what you are doing and make sure it is defensible**.

## Response in submitted

Insights into these flexible, ad hoc combinations further benefit from practice theory's "in the moment" process ontology (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011; Langley, Smallman, Tsoukas, & Van de Ven, 2013). This ontology is sensitive to organizations "as they happen" (Schatzki, 2006), and to how their routines and logics are continuously enacted in specific instances of human action (Jarzabkowski, Lê, & Feldman, 2012; MacKay & Chia, 2013). Hence, unlike studies that view process as a sequence of events that change a status quo over a period of time (e.g., Klarner & Raisch, 2013), those using a practice lens find that activities are in a continuous and cyclical process of flux within the moment (Langley, 2007; Langley et al., 2013). As Smets and Jarzabkowski (2013) show in their study of lawyers working across legal jurisdictions, a single conversation can comprise multiple, continuous, and recursive adjustments to the relationality of competing logics, and thereby enact a change process, albeit "in the moment." Hence, competing institutional logics are not fixed in some structural order but are continuously and flexibly instantiated in the momentary processes by which individuals adjust to any given situation.

# What are practices? A consistent ontology

## Reviewer comments

- **What is a practice?** The major issue that I want to flag up has to do with the term ‘practice’. ... The author(s) refer to Nicolini (2013), so they are well aware that there are different approaches to practice, different underlying practice theories, and different meanings of the word ‘practice’. ... *the word ‘practice’ is used rather loosely throughout the paper.* ... There are instances that the words ‘practices’ and ‘activities’ are used interchangeably. There are instances that it is about ‘practices and processes’ rather than just ‘practices’.
- **Who is practicing?** Strategy, power, structure and controls are not practicing themselves ... You refer to “multiple actors and the practices they draw on” later in the page, but don’t refer much as much as you should to *the actors being the ones practicing.*
- **How do practices have effects?** It’s not clear how *small practice problems* (p. 19) “eventually culminated in a critical breakdown in which the change process came to a halt because a key deliverable could not be met”.

# Scaffolding to show effects

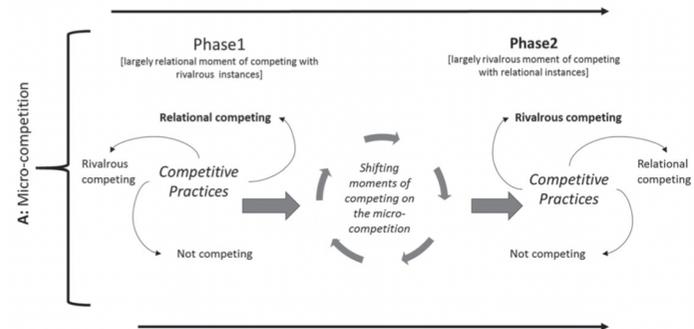
## Show the practices

Phase	Summary of activities	Representative data
A-Phase 1 <i>Environmental scanning and shaping</i>	<p>A1. Collecting and releasing information about the market while interacting with competitors/clients at conferences, social settings and formal meetings.</p> <p>A2. Seeking and releasing industry news media (newspapers, press releases etc.)</p> <p>A3. Collecting and reacting to information about the price of some (never all) of the deals that have closed</p>	<p>A1. That's what Baden Baden's [large industry conference] about... "what do you think, where's it [the market] going to go; is it going up, is it going down?" They'll be saying "our guys downstairs think prices next year will go up 5." So you've got all this going on. (interview)</p> <p>A2. Both explains that this morning he was reading a press release from [Competitor A] saying that they are not renewing/withdrawing in [Region A]. (fieldnote)</p> <p>A3. The word was that nothing would go below two prices, but news has come through that BigRe has written something at 0.3. Manager1 jokes: "that's because they don't understand the business." Manager2 states that "the chances are we won't get back on either the Dutch or Belgium deals. Might have some more luck with the Dutch, because SuperRe is coming off but BigRe is also trying to get back on these deals." (fieldnote)</p>
B-Phase 1 <i>Positioning</i>	<p>B1. Adjust pricing on specific deal based on information received as part of A (above)</p> <p>B2. Positioning quoting <i>high</i> (increasing price); <i>within the ballpark or low</i> (undercut competitors)</p> <p>B3. Not quoting, but staying connected to information [see D1]</p>	<p>B1. An underwriter describes that "you start with the modelled price (or some firm-specific "loss curves" where business is unmodelable) and then put your experience on top. The specific price you then give to the client deviates from the model, according to how the competitive arena is unfolding: which you pick up from all the conversations you have." (fieldnote)</p> <p>B2. <b>Quoting high:</b> They look at the spreadsheet: "this client should pay a bit more." Therefore he will "push more for the rate increases." He decides to, therefore, provide a quote more expensive than last years' market price. (fieldnote)</p> <p>B2. <b>Within the ballpark:</b> If you quote, even if the final price is not your quote but it's still within the range, and then you wish to have a share, then usually you get a share. If you quote, usually you will get a share if you are still within the market and not too far off. (interview)</p> <p>B2. <b>Quoting low.</b> Jake is providing the details of DealB to his colleagues. Some of the competitors have come back with their prices, "they've drowned out our voices wanting a raise." He shakes his head. "This situation is a classic example of where you want smart competitors." (fieldnote)</p> <p>B3. <b>Not quoting.</b> "where we have only a very small share, then we normally wouldn't quote first. (interview)</p>
C-Phase 1 <i>Leveraging</i>	<p>C1. Leveraging long-term relationship with client to influence price within client interactions.</p> <p>C2. Leveraging the large amount of capital the reinsurer can provide the client (e.g., quoting a large share)</p> <p>C3. Leveraging the depth of knowledge and additional expertise that can be provided</p>	<p>C1. "We quoted and the client had brought in a new reinsurer who was 50% below our quote. So we said sent them an email with a few choice words about historical relationships to make our case. And they came to 1% of our quote. We can now put a 20 million dollar line down." (fieldnote, internal meeting)</p> <p>C2. "We've very large capacity. [Client A], we have put up \$50million. That extra left is important. (interview)</p> <p>C3. We have services around the main product as well for clients [...] the real value is our technical expertise, that we understand what he is doing... we convinced</p>



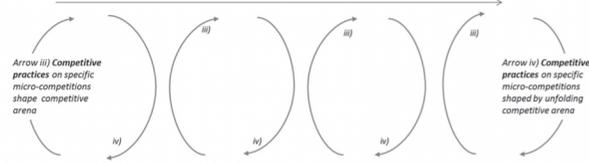
## In-the-moment effects

B: Unfolding competitive arena  
[corpus of micro-competitions]

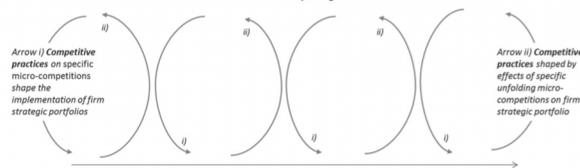


## Over-time effects

C: Unfolding competitive arena, comprising the corpus of multiple micro-competitions



A: Specific micro-competitions on which competitors have shifting relational, rivalrous or noncompeting motivations



B: Unfolding strategic portfolios of individual firms

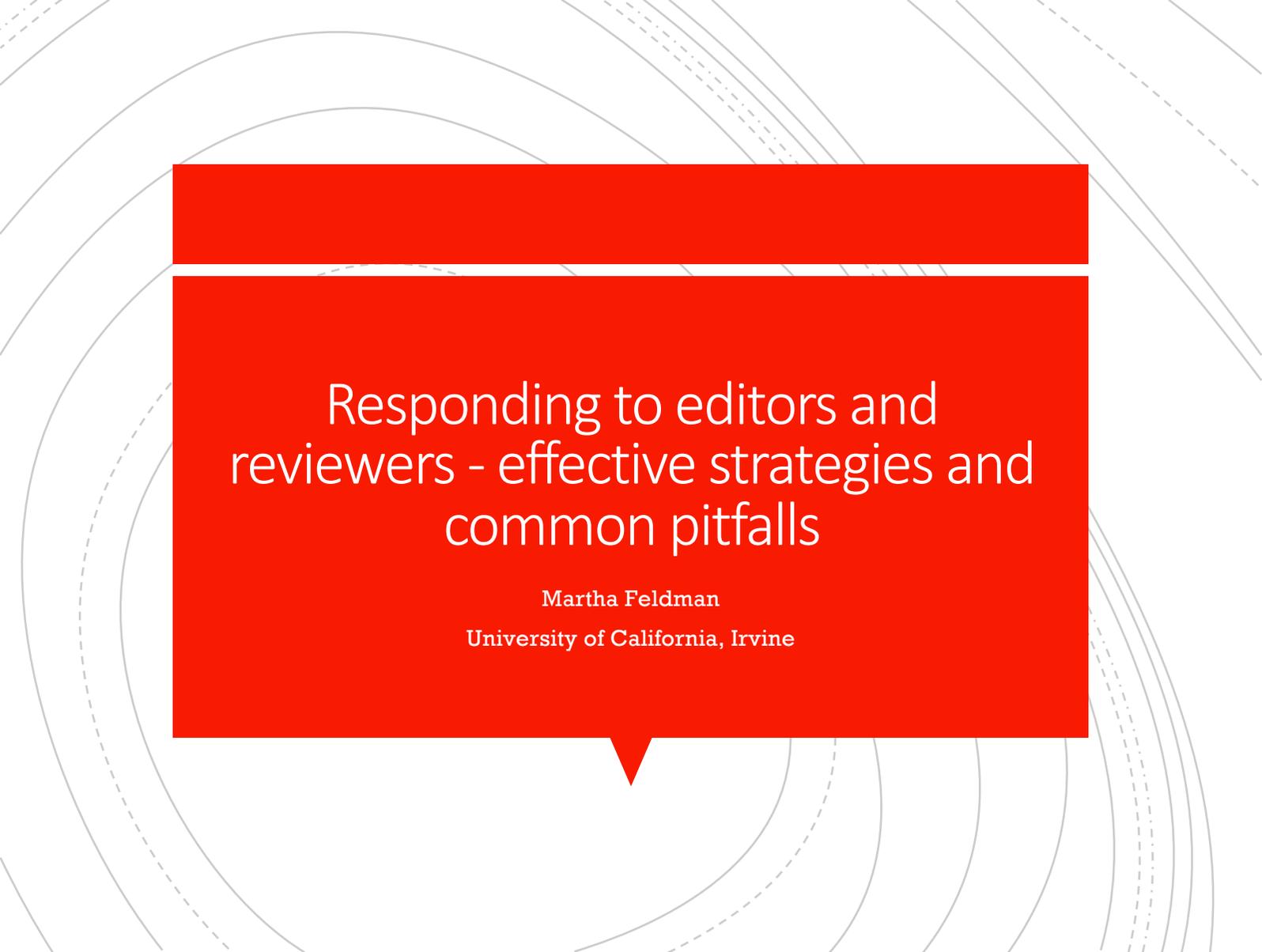
# In conclusion

## Ontological consistency

- Specify your practice/process ontology
- Make it coherent throughout your paper, including consistent terminology

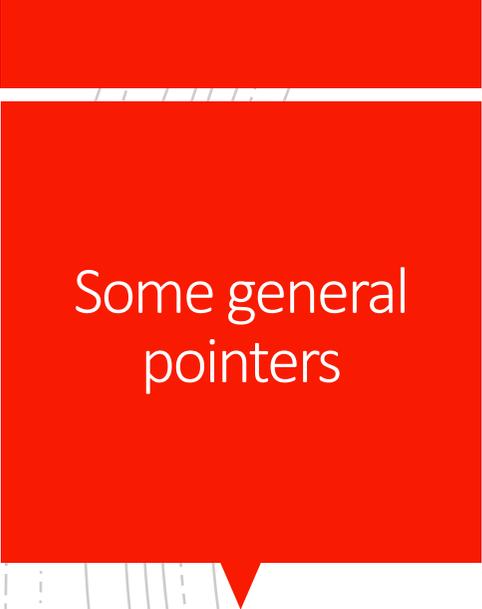
## Scaffolding

- Show a representative sample of the practices in a table
- Explain how practices construct moments of doing strategy
- Explain how these moments construct a pattern that is recognizable as 'strategy' or 'structure' or 'competition'

The background features several concentric circles, some solid and some dashed, in a light gray color. A large red speech bubble shape is centered on the page, containing the main text.

# Responding to editors and reviewers - effective strategies and common pitfalls

Martha Feldman  
University of California, Irvine

A red speech bubble graphic with a white outline, containing the text 'Some general pointers'. The bubble has a tail pointing downwards and to the right.

## Some general pointers

- **Think of your editor and reviewers as proxies for your readers.**
  - Whatever they don't understand is what other readers will not understand.
- **Your job is to articulate your work in a way they will understand.**
  - Sometimes there is no connection you can make, but that is rare.
- **Grow a thick skin, but not too thick!**

## Practice and process papers

- Use opportunities to nominate editors and reviewers who have published process or practice theory papers.
- You are likely to have some mix of understanding within editors and reviews about what process or practice theorizing is and how to express it.
- Work at clearly articulating your orientation to process or practice theorizing
  - and why it is relevant to your project
  - and how it helps you (and the reader) achieve new insights.



## An effective strategy

- 1. Dealing with emotion (regardless of the decision)**
  - Read the letter, then set aside to deal with emotion.
- 2. Dealing with substance**
  - Read the letter in detail.
  - Outline ideas for dealing with critiques.
  - Consult with collaborators, colleagues and advisors.
  - Then put the letter away.
- 3. Working out changes**
  - Do not make point by point changes
  - Vet the revised paper again through giving presentations and having colleagues and advisors read the paper.
- 4. Preparing response letter (for resubmit)**
  - Address the main substantive changes first.
  - This is the time to make point by point changes.

## Common Pitfalls

1. Dismissing the advice of the editor/reviewers because they don't understand what you are saying
2. Thinking that because you know more about your topic, the reviewers and editors must be wrong.
  - Of course you know more about your topic. It's your job to communicate what you are saying in such a way that they understand it (and learn).
  - Meeting this challenge can be very beneficial – it can increase your ability to connect with a broader audience.
  - There are times when the task is simply impossible, but it is likely to feel more impossible than it is.
3. Revising by addressing each point in the editor's/reviewers' comments.
  - The revised manuscript needs to make a coherent argument. This is not a likely result of addressing each point.