Researching enterprises between organisation and organising

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Are organisations stable and ordered entities where change only appears as short interim periods of adaptation to disturbances, or are organisations characterized by constant change and fluid processes as the primary condition? This seems to be the two accounts behind the fundamental questions "what is an organisation, and how does it change?" It is these questions we address in this paper.

The dichotomy between stability and process has from the late 1980s been a central and significant discussion within organisation and management studies. The discussion is about how to understand and explain what is an organisation, and how does organisations change. Van de Ven & Poole (2005) states that this dichotomy reflects two contrary philosophical differences of epistemological, methodological and ontological types originating in analytical and continental philosophy.

In overall terms, this dichotomy has characterized two fundamental explanatory models for describing and analyzing the vast majority of investigated phenomena within human and

social science. Researchers tends to take off in an Anglo-Saxon tradition that tries to explain human or social phenomenon's as readymade "out-there-existing" entities that can be mapped and predicted in all its rational based appearances, or in a Continental tradition where social phenomena are understood as 'in-the-situation-emergences' that unfolds in a non-linear way constructed from processual interactions by different types of actors.

We, however, ask whether these two traditions are the only candidates for researching organisations and organisational change? In this paper we introduce a third candidate for understanding organisation and organisational change that is able to include both stability and process. We understand organisations as something that are characterized by changes and process as ubiquitous rejecting any essentialist understanding of organisations. Researching enterprises is in this approach oriented towards studying processes of organising that interprets change as ceaseless.

Nonetheless, at the same time we underline the importance of more stable and patterned ordering elements such as structures, cultures, narratives, materiality, time and space conceptualizing organisations as arenas that are also characterized by stability and order. In other words, we argue for viewing organisations as consisting of a string of 'both-ands' like stability and process, order and disorder, organisation and organising trying to grasp the rhythm of organisational work and everyday living lives.

We know that the argument for this third approach, located between two historical well established giants in organisation and management studies, can be attacked from either the stability or the process standpoint. However, the endeavour of this paper reflects a basic wondering on behalf of its authors of how to comprehend organisations in a world on the move. This has lead us to this preliminary proposal of insights that tries to challenge existing incorporated understandings that in some aspects need a more comprehensive demonstration and firmly empirical grounding but which we, nevertheless, exemplify empirically with an illustration.

Our argument for viewing organisations as comprising both order and disorder is theoretically based on concepts from pragmatism mainly the works by John Dewey and Anselm Strauss. Strauss (1993: 246) emphasize in his groundbreaking work that pragmatism offers a theoretical frame that take processual change in concrete ongoing (re)organising as a fundamental premise. For Strauss (and Dewey), however, ongoing processes are also embedded in ordered structures that for both Strauss and Dewey stand for stability. When Dewey talks about experience as active and passive processes, it means that social organising is both a process where organisations are actively committed to act as agents in

social worlds and, at the same time, experience is embedded in the current social order as a passive non-reducible part of living.

In *Democracy and Education*, Dewey writes about this mutual interdependency of experience: "*The nature of experience can be understood only by noting that it includes an active and a passive element peculiarly combined. On the active hand, experience is trying – a meaning which is made explicit in the connected term, experiment. On the passive, it is undergoing (…). We do something to the thing and then it does something to us in return…*" (Dewey, 1916/1980: 146). In our theoretical point of departure, we understand social organising as permeated by relatively stable ordering together with more situational and emergent contingencies as well following Strauss when he says that "*Order and disorder exists coterminously*" (Strauss, 1993: 253).

 Based on a pragmatist theoretical framework, we propose concepts for organisation/organising that can handle process and structure, change and stability, order and disorder, history, present and future. We introduce the concept of a transactional relation between subjects and worlds and the notion of social worlds as a way to coin organisation/organising in order to stress the organisational rhythm between processes and stability rather than to reify and order one above the other.

The pace of the paper will be to first introduce our take on the relation between process philosophy and pragmatism followed by an elaboration of the transactional relationship between subject and world and the notion of social worlds. In the second part, we present a case that is about organisational changes in a large biotech/pharmaceutical enterprise and the employed research methods. In the third part, we use the empirical case as an illustration for clarifying our line of reasoning with regard to researching organisations in the midst of change illustrating the rhythm of organisation/organising. We show that organisational members in order to create meaning in a situation of restructuring the enterprise install different stabile narratives of the organisation in order to live with the flux. Finally, in the fifth part we conclude and discuss the paper.

Process philosophy and pragmatism

Basic discussions

Many theories have over the years been coined about what is an enterprise within organisation and management studies. We have found ourselves many times seeking help in Mintzberg and his *Structures in Five* (1983) and the notion of culture found in Schein (1992)

when standing in front of the blackboard teaching our students. It is easy for students to comprehend that when you look at an organisation you can look for structures and artefacts, and ask about values and through that find a way to coin the organisational structure and culture. The problem is that these concepts of structure and culture address an enterprise that is stable while you do your investigations into it. However, results from empirical research often tell us that enterprises are far from stable units.

One solution to this empirical based challenge is to view organisations as constant changing as the 'normal' state of affairs, which is an approach that has been advocated by process inspired organisational theories in recent times. The understandings of organisations as either firm and stable units or constantly changing are frequently illustrated via the dispute between the two ancient pre-Socratic cosmologies of Parmenides and Democritus on the one side, and Heraclitus on the other hand (Styhre, 2002; Van de Ven & Poole, 2005). The cosmology of Parmenides and Democritus presents reality as permanent and unchanging in its essential substance where changes only occur on a spatio-temporal level, while Heraclitus understands reality as fluid and changeable in its essence in which process is a fundamental trait following the fundamental dictum from Heraclitus *panta rei*, everything flows.

Through more refined and postmodern translations in the works of Whitehead (1929/1978) and Bergson (1946/1992), the cosmology of Heraclitus has been employed as points of departures for the development of process philosophy. Whitehead (Whitehead, 1929/1978) develops a theory of the ultimate reality as derived from actual occasions as the indivisible units of the universe. These occasions are actualized through processes of concrescence (the becoming of concrete) and perish at full determinateness.

The discussion started in pre-Socratic times and continued and refined in the process theories of Whitehead and Bergson has been conveyed into an understanding of organisations within post-modern organisation theory where "…*organisations must be understood as an emergent property of change* (…) *change is ontologically prior to organisation*" (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002: 570). Thus, organisation and management researchers based on process philosophy argue that actors' beliefs, routines, habits, practice, etc. are ceaselessly changing and are without a firm and final essence (see e.g. Bakken & Hernes, 2006; Chia, 1999; Clegg, Kornberger, & Rhodes, 2005; Feldman, 2000; Orlikowski, 1996).

Several philosophers (Myers, 2002; Neville, 2004; Rosenthal, 1998) argue that process philosophy and American classical pragmatism are closely related through their focus on realism, fallibilism, process, experience, etc. Dewey (1937) actually made a very interesting

assessment of Whitehead's philosophy with subsequent remarks from Whitehead (1937) on Dewey's assessment underscoring the many resemblances between the two combined with an excellent recap of the core theoretical concepts in Whiteheads philosophy.

However, in the talk to the Eastern Division of American Philosophical Association on Whitehead's philosophy, Dewey (1937) argues that it seems as if Whitehead is placing his process philosophy in either rationalistic or realistic philosophical soil. Dewey refers to this as the mathematical-formal and genetic-functional method for conceptualizing the relation between subject-object, human-nature, the knowing-known, etc. Dewey (ibid.: 174) is giving emphasis to the word 'seems' because he finds his own argument a bit ambiguous and unresolved.

Postulating that Whitehead's philosophy takes off in classical rationalism, Dewey argues that Whitehead's process is grounded upon a logical structure that lies below the continuous stream of actual occasions. Dewey finds a strong tendency in Whitehead's philosophy to reduce each process of occasions and concrescence into coherent and necessary relation to each other as particular elements of an overall scheme. Every occasion, the scheme of nature in constant flux, thus, progresses as a logical system.

The realistic interpretation of Whitehead's philosophy, the genetic-functional, understands instead processes as emanating from examining how to resolve problematic situations thus making the primary the consequences from experimental observational inquiry. Here, progress of occasions originates from the specific empirical situation in the world in which it is not possible to separate entities because they are part of and products and producers of processes. In Whitehead's (Whitehead, 1937: 179) reply to Dewey, he underscores that his philosophy and method, and also his main challenge, was to fuse the two interpretations that Dewey has described. This is a challenge, which is echoed in both the process philosophers as well as in Dewey's work.

Dewey's fundamental exclusions of any method that begins from *a priori* principles mean that the self-evident trait in Whitehead's philosophy is problematic. The consequence for Dewey of accepting this fundamental point of departure in Whitehead is that innovation and creativity disappears. It is here that Dewey criticizes Whitehead for his tendency to work with ready-made movements towards some predetermined ends founded upon God as the final constituents. For Dewey, the world and any kind of social phenomena (e.g. organisation and organising) are dependent on the process of doing and undergoing. Every situation entails what Dewey terms 'ends-in-view' referring to the specific direction of the situation that is always on the move. Nevertheless, the direction of the situation keeps on changing together

with the transactional circumstances of the world that reflects the great inspiration from Darwin as well as the post-Newtonian physics of e.g. Maxwell, Einstein, and Bohr translated into Dewey's transactional pragmatism.

In present time, Rosenthal (1998: 272-275) and Neville (2004: 25-28) has continued the 'Dewey-Whitehead' discussion pointing out fundamental differences between the two philosophical approaches. The difference accordingly to Rosenthal (1998) is the bifurcation in the conceptualizing of time. For Dewey, time and therefore change is intuitively understood as something "emerging out of" while Whitehead sees time as processual "coming together of" (Neville, 2004: 27). For Dewey the problem with the latter understanding is that it expresses a firm structure founded upon a web of ontological discrete temporal atoms, which in the end results in a finite and essential arrangement whether it is as a logical system or from experience. In the Deweyan understanding, there are an infinite number of actual events that do not come together because this depends upon the concrete situation in which the subject and the world emerges (Dewey, 1937: 177).

It is through inquiry and the use of different ideas and hypotheses, concepts and theories that the situation is defined and time as well as space is part hereof. The pragmatist philosophical view of inquiry is to help define the felt uncertainties of situations, and the situation determines which concepts and theories are useful for an analysis of a given proposal of a problem definition. One can often use various theories and concepts as tools to think with ('instruments') in an experimental process, the aim of which it is to transform a difficult situation to one that is manageable and comfortable rather than uncertain. In the following, we introduce two terms, subject and worlds in a transactional relationship, and social arenas/worlds as terms to include the organisation/organising of this relationship. These terms are in our understanding helpful in stressing the rhythm of organisation/organising, stability and process.

Organisation/organising as grounded in transaction

Altman and Rogoff (1987) coin four different ways to understand the subject world relationship, namely as (1) trait, (2) interactional, (3) organismic (systemic), and (4) transactional. They take their point of departure in Dewey's and Bentley's (1949/1991) concepts of how humans change and become knowledgeable about their environment. Dewey and Bentley differentiate between three understandings of how individual and environment, doing and thinking, knowledge and action are related. These understandings

are termed 'self-action', 'inter-action' and 'trans-action'. Dewey and Bentley define the concepts as follows:

"Self-action: where things are viewed as acting under their own powers. Inter-action: where thing is balanced against thing in causal interconnection. Trans-action: where systems of description and naming are employed to deal with aspects and phases of action, without final attribution to 'elements' or other presumptively detachable or independent 'entities', or 'realities', and without isolation of presumptively detachable 'relations' from such detachable 'elements' "(1949/1991: 101-102).

When the relation between individual and environment is understood on the basis of an understanding of the two as separated, self-acting entities, the assumption is that the function of physical and social phenomena is governed by an 'inner self', internal essences, self-powers, forces, or intrinsic qualities inherent in these phenomena. It is the inner and stable *traits* in individuals and environments that determine their function. This means that physical and mental phenomena are defined and operate more or less independent of their environments.

When the relation between individual and environment is defined as *inter-action*, it refers to the fact that physical and mental elements exist independently of each other and possess specific properties. These elements can, however, interact on the basis of specific regularities or principles and in that way influence each other. Time and space can be included in the interaction but are normally treated as variables in the study of phenomena.

When individuals and environments are related to each other on the basis of a transactional understanding hereof, *time* and *space* are inseparable. Time and space, history and context, are in the transactional understanding of the relation between individual and environment aspects of an integrated unity. In the transactional worldview of the relation between the individual and the environment, it is the study of processes and activities or humans acting in social and physical environments, which are in focus.

Time is an inherent aspect of phenomena and makes up a dynamic element in individuals' relations to their social and physical environment. The emphasis on activity and process implies having an eye for the dynamic and often emerging qualities of phenomena, while maintaining that there is also rest or consummation. For example after having (re-)solved a difficult situation, the situation enters into a consummatory experience, a moment of rest and peace that may be seconds or years depending on the original uncertain situation.

In a transactional understanding of the relation between individuals and organisations, the unit of analysis is not either the subject or the world but a situation.

The situation is contextual and unfolds over time, and it is a unity of intertwined and complex phenomena whose parts are mutually penetrating and inseparable. Thus, a situation can only be studied as a united whole (Brandi, 2010). One cannot first tear it apart and then study its elements to understand the whole, because the whole cannot be reduced to the sum of its parts. In contrast to a systemic understanding of this relation between individuals and organisations, the transactional understanding of this relation allows for the study of unique situations without necessarily referring to them as part of a larger pre-defined system. This, however, does not mean that one cannot find a pattern or order, only that the point of departure for constructing the whole is the situation or event, not the other way around.

The understanding of the relation between subjects and worlds on the basis of a transactional understanding is helpful in conceiving of organisation/organising embracing both individuals and the institutional context that makes up the organisation. Having a transactional understanding of the relation between individual and environment, the unit of analysis is a situation that can be studied as unfolding in time and context and together creates a pattern of organisational commitment. This is elaborated in the following when organisations are understood as social arenas/worlds.

Social arenas/worlds as structured processing

The notion of social arenas/worlds has its roots in pragmatism (Dewey, 1922/1988) and symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934/1967). The term, social arenas/worlds, is applied to understand social organisation and organising as it unfolds amongst members of and in the context of organisations. It is the social worlds organised in social arenas that are the locus of analysis because one cannot understand an individual social world in isolation, because social worlds are always embedded in larger social arenas (Clarke, 1991).

It is important to note that social worlds are not social units or structures but are made up by a recognizable form of collective actions and transactions shaped by commitment to organisational actions and practices (see also Becker, 1970). Important features of social worlds are that they are not bounded by geography or formal membership but by "the limits of effective communication." Thus, a social world is an interactive unit, a "universe of regularized mutual response, communication or discourse" (Shibutani, 1955). As a result, social worlds influence the meaning that people impute on events:

"[Social worlds are] [g]roups with shared commitments to certain activities, sharing resources of many kinds to achieve their goals, and building shared ideologies about how to go about their business" (Clarke, 1991: 131).

In a social arenas/worlds perspective, the processes of transactions, tensions, competition, and negotiation are stressed. These processes unfold within and between social worlds, creating arenas of social worlds, and subworlds, in potential creative tensions and transactions. In arenas "various issues are debated, negotiated, fought out, forced and manipulated by representatives" of the participating social worlds and subworlds (Strauss, 1978: 124). Thus, the use of the notion of social worlds opens the eyes to see that participation not only involves striving for harmony but also to tensions and conflicts reflected in the different commitments to organisational actions and values (Elkjaer & Huysman, 2007; Hendley, Sturdy, Fincham, & Clark, 2006).

It is the tensions between commitments between social worlds that create the basis for what Strauss calls processual ordering. A basic assertion of social arenas/worlds theory is that it conceives of change of activity within and between social worlds as resulting from tensions and contradictions (Strauss, 1978, p. 124). One especially relevant aspect of social arenas/worlds theory is that it explicitly focuses on the intersecting and segmentation processes in arenas (Strauss, 1978: 123; 1993: 39). Segmentation is of special relevance in this paper since it focuses on the dividing processes in arenas in which new social worlds emerge.

Strauss characterizes social worlds by means of three overall concepts. The concept of trajectory denotes that every social world unfolds processual. Strauss defines trajectory as *"(1) the course of any experienced phenomenon as it evolves over time and (2) the actions and interactions contributing to its evolution. That is, phenomena do not automatically unfold nor are they straightforwardly determined by economic, political, cultural, or other circumstances; rather, they are in part shaped by the interactions or concerned actors"* (1993, p. 53-54).

Hence, the phenomenon at the centre of trajectory does not unfold through an 'internal logic' but is shaped through actions and interactions with other kinds of aspects making up the social worlds. This leads to the next fundamental concept: the conditions making up the social worlds. Strauss (1978, p. 122; 1982, p. 357) writes that a social world includes: the sharing of resources, information, and assumptions; common activities or work objects;

technologies and signs; spaces and building; people; plans and rules; and a certain division of labour.

Finally, Strauss (1982) underscores the significance of negotiation as the third concept. Negotiation denotes a fundamental trait that illustrates both the dynamic and political characteristics of social worlds. Every social world is characterized by intersections and segmentation, caused by both internal as well as external (between social worlds) conflicts and contradictions, which convey negotiations and give rise to processes of segmentation/intersecting. Thus, segmentation/intersecting is through its dependence on negotiations or processual ordering, as Strauss (1993: p. 254) later argued, a highly political process. In this paper we will employ the term 'processual ordering' as a concept that captures the double-edged process of continuously organisational change together with stabile social order and understandings. Strauss writes that processual ordering points to "*the lack of fixity of social order, its temporal, mobile, and unstable character, and the flexibility of interactants faced with the need to act* (…) *where although rules and regulations exists* (…)"(ibid.: 255).

In sum, we propose with arena/social world theory an alternative understanding of organisation and organising that is able to grasp both process and structure in the same situation by viewing organisation/organising in their mutuality. We understand this mutuality through the concept of transaction between subjects and world and see transaction unfolds in social arenas/worlds driven by the rhythm between fluidity and stability initiated by tensions and conflicts rather than smooth process.

An illustration: organisational change in biotech/pharmaceutical industry

Methods

Data were collected in Medindu (fictive name), which is an enterprise within the biotech/pharmaceutical industry.[1] The contact to Medindu was via an organisation in Denmark called Medicon Valley Academy, Denmark[2] and the HR network organized here.[3]

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[1] The project was part of an international comparative project, "The Evolution of Practice and Practising – A Comparison across Organisations, Industries and Countries" headed by Professor Elena Antonacopoulou from Liverpool University. The grant number was RES-331-25-0024.

The data that we draw upon is besides meetings and observations, documentary material, which consisted of the Annual Report (2005), the Internet, the intranet, newspaper clippings, issues of a newly launched company newsletter, and a booklet covering the Medindu history in two parts from 1966-1983 and from 1984-1993. The bulk of the data is, however, our interviews, which we made in two rounds. In the first round, we interviewed 14 persons. We were primarily focused upon changes in the induction practices, which we regarded as a 'window' to information about the organisational restructuring. After this first round of interviews, we had a meeting with the HR Manager and the Site Manager in which we gave a short presentation of the interpretations of data from our first round of interviews. Here we focused upon differences in voices that we had observed and the tensions originating from these differences. Based on this presentation we agreed to look for the voices of commitment to work in the enterprise in light of the organisational restructuring. Again, 14 persons were interviewed but this time only persons with different levels of managerial responsibilities from team leaders to the corporate level.

We made all data collection from about February to June in 2006, and we tried to combine our interviews for example with having lunch in the canteen in order to add to our understanding of Medindu. All interviews lasted from 3/4-1 hour and followed an interview guide. We were always two persons present during our interviews, which made it possible for one person to write extensive notes as well as to record them as MP3 files. This made it easy afterwards to both listen to the interviews and have an overview of the interview texts through the elaborated notes. We have interpreted our data in two steps covering first a phenomenological approach to qualitative data in order to reduce the quantity of the texts asking the question: 'what does this sequence of text say about organisational changes?' (Giorgi, 1975; Kvale, 1996). Then we have read the reduced text hunting tensions in and between social worlds by way of descriptions of commitment, work and the social organising processes.

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[2] Medicon Valley Academy (MVA) is a member financed network organisation within the biotech and life science area. MVA works to improve the conditions for science and knowledge production, technology transfer, innovation and for the preconditions for companies to exploit this knowledge. In addition, MVA works to visualize the potential of activities in both Sweden and Denmark as well as internationally. MVA's members include all the relevant university departments, healthcare organisations, and most of the biotech and meditech related companies and other organisations located in the Medicon Valley region. MVA is a not-for-profit organisation and managed by a Board of Directors and a staff located at offices in Ørestad City, Copenhagen and in the university town of Lund, Sweden (http://www.mva.org/composite-15.htm).

[3] We wish to thank a former colleague from the Copenhagen Business School who helped us a lot in the beginning of the project. It is Professor Jesper Norus who passed away much too young.

The case

Whenever the history of Medindu is told it begins with the story of the Danish medical doctor (the founder: 1918-2006) who in 1966 invented a way to standardise the application of antibodies to recognise and diagnose cancer cells. This invention was the foundation of Medindu and this is elaborated in a booklet written by members of the founder's family. This booklet used to be distributed to all newcomers in Medindu but this is no longer the case as the current idea is to *"look forward into the future and not dwell upon the past"* (from meeting with key informant). In the booklet, we are told the story about the inventive researcher who began his business when he was still connected to the university in some small rented premises with just himself and a laboratory technician as the only employee. In the beginning, the company grew slowly but in 1971-72, the staff consisted of 19 people, mostly women.

In 1993, the managing director tells the story about the many new products that are developed each year due to an active R&D department, and he writes: *"The change from a small company to one with subsidiaries all over the world has miraculously happened smoothly. The Medindu spirit is so strong that the majority of our new employees are absorbed very quickly and soon look upon themselves as members of the Medindu family"* (from the story of Medindu: 54). In the final chapter of the booklet, the wife of the founder sums up like this: *"Next to creating a good product is the goal to create a good healthy and fruitful atmosphere within the Medindu family"* (from the story of Medinfo: 103).

When we meet Medindu about 13 years after the publication of the above-mentioned booklet in the winter and spring of 2006, we are entering an enterprise that had appointed a new CEO (August 2005) and been restructured (December 2005). *"Towards the end of the year, the management launched a series of initiatives to create a clearer focus for the business, shorter decision-making processes, clear division of responsibilities within the organisation, and, not least, sharp customer and market focus"* (Annual Report 2005: 10). The restructuring included a change of name, a new visual appearance and organisational changes towards greater focus upon customers and efficiency as well as organising into three sites (one in Denmark and two in the US). A site manager whose task it is to coordinate between R&D and Operations heads each site while the long-term goals, strategies and visions are managed at the corporate level. The sales and marketing organisation has also been restructured into three sales regions in order to strengthen this part of the enterprise. Lean production was also introduced in Medindu to increase production efficiency and

reduce inventories. Lean production had in fact already been introduced back in 2002 but a new effort was made in 2005.

Four out of seven executive managers had been replaced in less than a year and just before we left the enterprise, the corporate HR director resigned because of disagreements with the new CEO about how to implement the changes in Medindu. When the new CEO presented the balance sheets for 2005, they showed a loss primarily due to non-recurrent expenditures to for example severance payment to former executives and other employees because of the restructuring of the company (from newspaper clippings). This was regarded as a temporary situation and only postponing the plan to become quoted on the stock market, which was the goal at the time.[4]

Medindu's headquarter is in Denmark and besides the three sites there are a number of subsidiaries and distributors all over the world. Today there are about 1300 full time employees (the numbers are from December 2006) in Medindu and about 400 of these are located in Medindu Denmark. In our study of Medindu we have limited ourselves to the Danish site, the production and R&D departments as well as the HR department. In the whole corporation, 35% are employed in production and 16% in R&D while 40% are employed in sales and marketing.

From our first meetings with our key informant in Medindu we are told that there is a relatively low turnover and low ratio of absence in the company, which nevertheless have increased lately. Our key informant mentioned the Medindu spirit as well as the involvement amongst employees as *"belonging to the past"* whereas today *"more people regard what they do in Medindu as just an ordinary job."* We also heard stories about how in the past decisions were made in the living room of the founder and that *"these stories are a long way from today's reality where the management is international and much more professional and distant from the employees"* (from meetings with our key informant).

Medindu's primary business area is cell-based cancer diagnostics, and Medindu develop, manufacture and market cell-based cancer diagnostics for both clinical diagnostics and research purpose. The work in hospitals in which cancer is being diagnosed, however, is becoming more and more automated. This implies that the demands are moving towards producing all encompassing integrated systems solutions rather than just delivering reliable antibodies: *"Today it's generally about automating as many of the manual processes in*

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[4] Very recent (March 2007) it could be read in press releases that Medindu had been sold to a private equity fund but this was never mentioned as a goal while we were there.

laboratories as at all possible, and about going one step further and creating fully integrated systems" (from company newsletter). According to the vice presidents for the sales organisation Medindu's strength in the past, the quality of antibodies is today only one of many different competitive parameters. There is a demand for all-round solutions, which means that it is the *"big and expensive contracts that we have to negotiate today"* (from company newsletter).

The case study illustrates the organisational changes of an enterprise that from its founding in 1960's was characterized by an understanding of itself as a an enterprise within the biotech/pharmaceutical industry that aimed to combine human progress and development together with a sound way of doing business to an understanding of a company that is primary oriented at providing good service to its clients and keeping its competitiveness capacity up to date in a ever changing market. This means that it is possible to talk about a Medindu original/past that focus on human progress, good products, and a sound business; and a Medindu new/future that focus on clients and market demand and supply. We describe this in the following as processes of social worlds segmentations followed by an analysis of two more specified illustrative cases of processual ordering.

Social world segmentation

In this section we describe the segmentation process of Medindu by interpreting the changes of 'past' Medindu into 'past, present and (maybe) future' Medindu, which is shown as an illustration of two social worlds within the arena 'biotech/pharmaceutical enterprise'. We begin by interpreting the tensions that led to the segmentation of an emerging social world followed by a closer look at the negotiations between the two social worlds, which we have identified as organisations with both stabile elements and emergence of new habits and creations of meanings. Presenting these two narratives in a tensional relationship is an interpretive mode and an attempt to identify possible points of departure for inquiry. In 'reality', the two social worlds were not so clearly cut because they live side by side partly acknowledging each other but the division is made to make it analytically possible to show that the organisational changes in Medindu hold elements of order and stability that is weaved together in a process.

The purpose of the restructuring of Medindu was to change the inward looking focus with an emphasis upon product as a result of research towards an outward oriented focus upon market and customers. The new focus means a greater organisational awareness upon

decision processes and clear lines of responsibilities while the new meaning with the development of the products first and foremost is to get them sold. The Medindu spirit and the Medindu family is given less attention at the same time as ownership is no longer family based but replaced by 'professional management. To most organisational members it makes sense to change the enterprise in order for it to survive but the imagination of the past Medindu is still vivid either as 'spirit' or 'ghost', and this is what creates the tension.

We see here that Medindu from its genesis was characterized as a social world within the arena 'biotech/pharmaceutical enterprise' by commitment to doing 'good' for patients while the newer developed commitment in Medindu is oriented at providing good services to customers and stakeholders for the sake of staying competitive and successful. Thus, there exist within the same enterprise two different social worlds with two different commitments that both define the uniqueness and identity of the enterprise demonstrating two different ways of social understanding from which any processual ordering of the enterprise takes its point of departure.

Thus, every change or development of the enterprise is negotiated from the transactions between these two narratives of the current state of Medindu. This means that the understanding and story of the change processes is told from a more or less stabile standpoint from which the process or the flux is mirrored against. This continuously making and remaking of images and narratives of changing enterprises is why we cannot subscribe to organisations being solely organising because as we show they are always also created as specific organisations by way of commitments to certain social worlds.

The changes are created by the new organisation- and management modes, especially a new CEO and the negotiations of the commitments and culture of the old social world and its organisational agents that this gives rise to. The changes are initiated by an analysis of the competitive situation of the enterprise undertaken by the board of directors and the new management, which has replaced the family. When this situation can be interpreted as a tension between the old and the new Medindu it is because many organisational members including managers on lower levels can see that the new development is 'sensible' but that they through their commitments to the work of the enterprise is sincerely worried about it is the right way forward and also whether it is the right way to go about the changes.

Within this overall tension between the two social worlds there are myriads of processual orderings going on within for example the social organising, the work methods, technologies, and other commitments. The observed processual orderings is a testimony of the changes

as a possibility for questioning the formerly mentioned Medindu-spirit, which by some are also termed a 'ghost' from the past that it has been possible to be liberated from and just to regard Medindu as a workplace rather that a family. Thus, it is not possible to just talk about an earlier 'good' enterprise, which is being changed to a 'bad' enterprise for employees and management to work in but about different interpretations, which in our reading holds possibilities for inquiry into habits and for new transactions, and to see the organisational changes as both stabile and processual.

We for example see the processual aspect constantly present in the negotiations between the different commitments, understandings, technologies, and logics that resides in the two described social worlds and its organisational agents while at the same time these aspects also functions as stabile points of departure for these processes of ordering. Negotiations do not start from scratch but revolves around creations of stable understandings.

Employees and management, who picture Medindu as a research oriented culture, trace it back to the importance of the founding father even though the family has not been part of the everyday life of Medindu for a number of years: They also ascribe the process, the ordering mechanism to be about economy. It is the liberation from the family and the need to establish a more competitive enterprise that is included in the argument for moving the enterprise away from research: *"Before it was a family driven enterprise in which the focus was not so much upon surplus but about the production of good products. Now this has changed and we have to produce results."* Another interview person says: *"Medindu has been like a university, a research oriented environment which now has developed into more businesslike."*

The installed stabile picture is that of the happy family or the old fashioned university in which research was up to the free will and creativity of the researcher. This is a place worth working and living in but the process of market and money splinters this happy stability. This is one picture that works as a stabile order but at the same time unstable process is also working to break this picture down – and creating the tensions and ruptures that from our pragmatist founded theoretical frame are the most interesting in studying organisational change.

Another interesting analytical aspect in these excerpts is that we see two different markers of the studied social worlds that again display the arena of Medindu as segmented into two social worlds. In the old Medindu management and employees was working as researchers and committed to the development of knowledge and methods to help people overcome cancer. In the new Medindu, the mission statement of the enterprise is to put focus on the medical business, which is a totally different outlook than the old social world. Additionally,

we can understand this as a complementary way of understanding the role of Medindu as one that tries to answer research based questions while the new Medindu tries to answer to business based questions.

The new social world is also emerging with reference to the need to reduce complexity, which the old Medindu has contributed to create. The following is a rather vivid description of how the everyday life and work of Medindu creates this complexity image: *"Somebody from a research unit who likes Medindu will call about a research project and don't we want to be part of that? Then there is a customer who wants some particular products and couldn't we produce them right away? And we could not continue like that. We somehow had to streamline the company and everybody can see that. We have to have these numbers of customers, products and research projects down so that we can handle them."* Reduction of complexity is always an organisational problem, and one way is naturally to prioritise between activities. In Medindu this became a focus upon fewer products, less research and more market and, thus, also changing the power patterns in the enterprise: *"It has been company policy to treat all customers alike but now we differentiate between them and reduce the products in order to strengthen our market voice. I trust that it's the right decision but some (R&D, aus) will probably resist because they are enthusiastic for their products."*

The new CEO is ascribed a good deal of blame in the changing of the enterprise but you can also claim that all he does is to react to market conditions, which means that Medindu can no longer maintain its more inward looking gaze but has to change its self-understanding of an enterprise open to changes in the external environment. *"We used to be number one but now we're number two. We've not managed to grow so much and the competition has become more severe, and new players have entered the market."* In addition, another says: *"It's become another world. When I started six years ago, the products almost sold themselves. Now we have competitors. It's a new world and it's become a really tough competition."* It is significant that when the interviewed organisational members are talking from the point of view of new Medindu the answers is permeated by battle and competitive based metaphors as e.g. '*competition has become more severe, and new players have entered the market*'; ; and '*we used to be number one but now we're number two*'.

The fundamental understanding of being a modern Medindu social world is to be competitive and to adapt (survive) to external changes versus understanding changes and development driven by curiosity and interest. The striving to be better than the others was a completely new kind of self-understanding in Medindu. Thus, to understand Medindu as an organisation and the processual ordering in Medindu, regardless of membership of the old social world or

the new, has to be translated and related to the existing images in the arena. However, it is also important to stress that the illustration do not sketch the organisation as one thing where one social world has replaced or totally assimilated the older one but that the two social worlds and its agents transact in everyday works and happenings.

Before there existed apparently only one social world, the family and the orientation towards research. It was easy to commit yourself to but then changes of ownership and management take place, and then a possibility opens up towards commitment to a new social world brought in by a new generation of young managers but naturally not without resistance. It is all this we name tensions and possibilities of new ways of organising and possibilities of new commitments. The tension can be interpreted as a tension between a research- and a market oriented enterprise, which can be expressed like the following: *"When people hear the word 'factory' it's like a red rag to a bull. It's bugaboo for both the academic employees and the laboratory technicians. There's a great fear of standardization."*

The segmentation process cannot be understood with reference to the relation between management and employees because these are voices talked from different subscriptions to the more or less stabile social worlds in the enterprise. To us this is interesting because it can mean to work with two narratives, two social worlds, which exist as two possible standpoints for commitment for both employees and management, and as such can be inquired into. It is important to remember that there is not a Chinese wall between the two narratives because there is some overlap both in terms of persons and content. We have illustrated the two social worlds below in table 1:

	The 'old' Medindu	The 'new' Medindu
Commitment	Development of good products to patients	Providing good service to customers
Goals	Production innovation	Product sale
Management	Bottom up	Top down
Metaphors	Curiosity, research-based, variation	Fighting, adaption for survival, standardization
Members	Researchers, developers	Managers, consultants,

Table 1: Old and new Medindu

In the following we illustrate in a more specific manner how the processual orderings in Medindu can be understood as interplay between processes and stability. To do this we trail the unfolding of process and stability in two tracks of processual ordering. The first processual ordering track interprets how the transaction between old and new Medindu changed the status of which type of goals should had primacy and was legitimate to talk about and inquire into in Medindu. The second processual ordering tracks the changes of the work object: the cancer diagnose tool.

Processual ordering track 1: 'weak-strong' transactions

In Medindu it is still possible to "*burn for your work, cancer research, and it is great to be able to contribute to help ill people."* The issue, and where it is possible to see processual ordering, is the emphasis upon new product development or getting the products sold. In the social world of the new Medindu, the primary goal for the company is the sale of products, which is a commitment that meets fierce resistance in the old Medindu. In the social world of the old Medindu, the focus is on the developing of new products: *"Our founder was researcher and for many years Medindu has been very research oriented. Many ideas have naturally come from R&D and our marketing organisation was relatively weak. Now we're about to turn it around but they (the marketing, aus) do not know our area very well yet. I don't agree with this development because we (R&D, aus) have a much larger understanding of the field and more ideas to be able to point towards new directions for Medindu."*

In the excerpts, the interview person uses the term 'weak' referring to the role of sales department in old Medindu and that the development of new products was 'strong'. This is a relationship that has been turned upside down with the segmentation of the new social world. In the present arena, it is the sales people that are strong and new product development that is weak according to the R&D members. In the 'weak-strong' continuum the continuous negotiations or processual orderings between the two social worlds in Medindu come to the fore. The transaction is processual because the negotiation of what has primacy in Medindu, development of new products or sales of products, is constantly being (re-)constituted and worked out from internal and external contingencies in Medindu, e.g. between managers within the R&D department and sales department, between Medindu and the demand of the suppliers, etc.

At the same time the 'weak-strong' theme in Medindu is also structural since the transactions takes place as negotiations that are based on two lucid and firm understanding of

commitments in the social worlds comprising Medindu. Naturally, the existing commitments have different status in the arena meaning that the status of the commitment of old Medindu is being heavily undermined by the strong commitment of new Medindu. The status of commitments are under constant change due to the fact that change is a fundamental trait of organising but still the social worlds processual ordering has to take off in a firm understanding of the specific social world self-understanding.

In the specific case under study the consequences of the 'weak-strong' status in Medindu is that it make up the pool of possibilities for the different organisational members to act legitimate in Medindu. E.g. it is more legitimate to pose question of how to sell a given product than it is to start developing new products thus any legitimate track of inquiry has to start in uncertain situations that is about 'issues with sale'. Another significant aspect in the 'weak-strong' theme is that the relation between innovation (exploration) and business processes (exploitation) has changed. In old Medindu, the primary focus was on product innovation while the business process and exploitation in the company was of minor interest.

Working with product innovation as the primary goal in Medindu had the consequence that employees and management allowed a large mistake rate from the product innovation processes. Only a few percentage of the product innovation attempts resulted in product that were able to create value for Medindu, which was part of the motto 'it is acceptable to take-risks' in the social world of old Medindu. This relation has changed together with changes in the 'weak-strong' theme in Medindu. In new Medindu the primary aim is to be effective and streamline business processes so the waste percentages could be minimized: *"We have gone from being a company with innovation and now to have a bottom line that is positive. We're now producing 'me, too' and there's no more research but only routine diagnostics. Today we look towards routine diagnostics and not towards the research world."* Against this, the argument is that before new products had difficulties in finding their way to production, and if they did, became part of an inventory rather than being sold. In Medindu It is possible to say that processual orderings around commitments in the company has been within a group of managers and employees that used to be very influential, an influence that is disappearing and where some probably also will disappear in person.

Processual ordering track 2: from diagnose to system solution

The purpose with Medindu originated in the founder's invention of a method to diagnose cancer, and Medindu over the years found a place in the market as a niche production. The

customers were both researchers who used Medindu's products in their research and hospitals who used the tool in laboratories to diagnose cancer. Medindu's primary business area is still cell-based cancer diagnostics, and Medindu develop, manufacture and market cell-based cancer diagnostics for both clinical diagnostics and research purpose.

The work in hospitals in which cancer is being diagnosed, however, is becoming more and more automated. This implies that the demands are moving towards producing all encompassing integrated systems solutions rather than just delivering reliable antibodies: *"Today it's generally about automating as many of the manual processes in laboratories as at all possible, and about going one step further and creating fully integrated systems"* (from company newsletter).

According to the vice presidents for the sales organisation Medindu's strength in the past, the quality of antibodies is today only one of many different competitive parameters. There is a demand for all-round solutions, which means that it is the *"big and expensive contracts that we have to negotiate today"* (from company newsletter). They also agree that Medindu have too many products, and that the task is to reduce the amount of products and find out where the money is made as well as which customers to focus on. This focus upon clinical use and delivery of systems solutions takes place at the expense of research and support of researchers because it no longer pays of: *"We no longer deliver so much to research as there is not so much money in that."*

The reasons for restructuring the strategy of Medindu to that of delivering primarily to hospitals meant a closer look at how hospitals handle their diagnostic work. Rather than just deliver parts of this process the emphasis today is to deliver whole systems that can match the automated workflow of hospitals. One of the interview persons says it like this: *"Hospital services have changed and there is a lack of labor power and it has become very expensive. This has created a demand for good technical solutions. There is a wish to automate as much as possible and to deliver systems that can handle that rather than just tools for manual practices."*

This move into systems solutions is also a move into a much more competitive and risky market because of the size of the projects and products, which is very different from the niche production of standardized antibodies. An interview person says: *"We do not longer have a niche production and others can produce the same as us."* But this is nevertheless the strategy and one of our interview persons says: *"Our new CEO wants to put all stakes on system solutions".* This is a statement that emphasizes the changed role of the technology or

product that Medindu has as its core sales product. The changed role of the technology that previously was a tool to diagnose cancer and in new Medindu is a system solution tool marks the processual ordering of Medindu. By following the technologies and how the organisational members of Medindu talks about and transact with the core product of Medindu demonstrate a change from a Medindu oriented at supporting doctors and researchers in locating cancer cells to a tool that is designed to assist and ease hospitals work routines as regards working with cancer.

The terms 'diagnose' and 'system solution' denotes also refinements of the processual ordering in Medindu. 'Diagnose' is a term that refers to finding the cause of a problem or what an illness is that automatically creates pictures of doctors, nurses, illness, and a patient. Contrary, 'system solution' refers to the optimizing of the arrangement or improved organisation of elements that automatically creates pictures of engineers, technician, consultant, managers, and a customer solution service. We see the change within an arena that is characterized by processes in the constant interpretation of a tool but at the same time has to work with firm understandings of what constitute this tool and what the tool is intended to do as stretched between old and new Medindu.

It is within this area of systems solutions and large projects that there is competition on the market and much more to win – and to lose. One of the interview persons says: *"The new focus areas (systems solutions, aus) have big companies as competitors and it's in this competition that we're supposed to win market shares."* The other voice sees the future differently: *"I think it's extremely dangerous with these focus areas (system solutions, aus) and the strategy about winning market shares from others. The consequences are that there is a need for less development because we focus upon fewer areas."* The processual orderings appears rather clear, development of new products (R&D) against a more streamlined process between production and sales.

The start for any organisational inquiry was in old Medindu 'how does this tool work as a cancer detecting device?' that in new Medindu is rephrased to 'how does this tool function as a system solution?' These are totally divergent ways of understanding the core production object of Medindu. Thus, the situation that has to trigger change in new Medindu is when uncertainties about how the tool functions as a system solution are being questioned and not how it detects cancer per se.

Conclusion and discussion

In this paper, we have argued for an understanding of organisations and organisational change as comprising both processes and stabile order. To highlight in a more concrete way how a pragmatist approach contributes to encompass process and stability, disorder and order, we have used an illustration from a qualitative case study conducted by the authors into organisational changes in an enterprise within the biotech/pharmaceutical industry.

The illustration focuses on the segmentation process of the arena 'biotech/pharmaceutical industry' in the studied organisation, and how this segmentation can be understood as processes of constant change and disorder together with stability and order. From the analysis of the illustration, we have shown that the arena 'biotech/pharmaceutical industry ' changed from being dominated by one social world into two social worlds, old and new Medindu, with different commitments, work methods and objects, ideologies, and status. We assert to have illustrated that transaction between the two segmented social worlds unfolds both as processes and order. The transaction is captured in the concept of processual ordering from Strauss' work that is based on the philosophical ideas from Dewey and Mead.

In the segmentation of the arena, everything undergoes changes continuously, which we have demonstrated is the case, e.g. in the processual change of the core product of the enterprise under scrutiny: the cancer diagnose tool. Further, this ceaseless process of change is something that is enacted on the basis of transaction between many different elements in Medindu. E.g. we see the concrete negotiations between organisational members from old and new Medindu on how to understand the role of the core product the cancer detecting tool, whether product innovation or sale is principal, how management should be conducted, whether Medindu is committed to serve patients or customers, who is weak and strong, etc. Thus, based on our empirical illustration we have demonstrated that organisation and organisational change must be understood as characterized by continuous process and disorder both in its own social world as well as in the connections to other social arenas/worlds.

The processual nature of organisations and organisational change is, however, also interwoven with order and stability. Based on the illustration, we have argued that social worlds and its members constantly transact based on firm understandings of what it means to be a member of Medindu that is defined as different organisational forms ('old and new', 'spirit and ghost', etc.), and with different consequences of the influences of changes in the external environment by way of new business models, new demands in the health care

sector with regard to the work with cancer diagnoses affecting the commitment of Medindu as an enterprise within the biotech/pharmaceutical industry, as well as the rules and regulations that has to be followed in Medindu, and the business in general. In other words, organisation and organising is also influenced by stable elements.

Following Dewey, we characterize the mutual interdependency between process and stability as a backward and forward connected process linking what we do to the world to what we enjoy or suffer from the world in consequence (Dewey, 1916/1980: 147). This transactional relationship constitutes the fundamental trait of how we understand enterprises as organisation and organising. The characterizations of emergent transactional types of organisation and organisational change presented in our illustration should be considered as a tentative proposal that need further detail and perhaps also adjustment. The main purpose of this paper has been to set a pointer to a line of inquiry that attempts to provide at least some relevant support for our claim: that organisation and organising comprise stability and process, order and disorder, rest and movement, and not only one or the other.

The introductory proposed middle-way alternative for understanding organisation/organising can be discussed and questioned. The fundamental inquiry is whether it is really possible to argue for a perspective that is able to comprise both the processual and stabile entity approach understanding enterprises as both organisation and organising? For many process inspired organisational theorist the relation between process and entity is a key topic for discussions (see e.g. Bakken & Hernes, 2006; Hernes, 2008: 132; Styhre, 2002; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). At the same time, this inquiry also forms one of the main discussion themes in the renaissance of process philosophy onwards from Nicholas Reschers (1996) ground breaking work.

Basically, the outset for the discussion is how entity and substance can be captured within a process based theory of organisation. One strand of ontological thinking sees material substance as constituent of reality. In the ontology of material substances, everything can be reduced to a set of basic elements or particles that are external to one another. The fundamental nature of each particle is independent of the nature of other particles and the forces of interaction do not affect inner natures. Substances are material things and everything is a 'machine', comprising independent parts, each adapted for a specific function and moving in a specific manner within the machine.

The substance and essentialist strand is what process philosophy together with pragmatism argues against. Following Whitehead and the other classical process thinkers, Rescher

(1996: 35) claims the primacy of processes *"physical existence is at the bottom processual…one must prioritize processes over things and activities over substances".* Process thought focuses principally on change and the temporal. Becoming, not being, is ontologically central as Tsoukas & Chia (2002) also emphasize. Contingency and emergence are essential elements and take precedence over determinism and the static, which is at the core in substance ontology.

Following Dewey's pragmatism and Strauss we do not argue for a substance and essentialism ontology talking about organisation and change. The point of departure in Dewey's and Bentley's transactional philosophy contains a deep-seated process philosophical way of thinking as also Miettinen (Miettinen, 2001: 395) underscores. Dewey writes about process and stability that *"The permanent and enduring is comparative. The stablest thing we can speak of is not free from conditions set to it by other things…a thing "absolutely" stable and unchangeable would be out of range of the principle of action and reaction…"* (Dewey, 1925/1981:).

For Dewey and Strauss the relation between stability and process is a question of the pace and rhythm of change. This means that some elements in transactional processes in organisations can evolve so slowly that they look and be felt almost as stabile and untouchable. But the totally non-processual entity with independent existence from other entities and the world is incoherent with Dewey's basic philosophical underpinnings as we e.g. see in his fallibilism and anti-essentialism. Organisations become knowledgeable only from acting and doing in the world in relation to challenging and uncertain situations, which automatically opens up for processes. However, at the same time, Dewey (and with him Strauss) also opens up for saying that social structures and order exist, but that these structures and orders are not immutable, eternal necessary and unshakable.

In pre-Socratic times Heraclites asked whether it is possible to step twice in the same river. A spontaneous response to such a question is: it depends! We do not step into the same waters, but it is much more debatable whether we step into the same or different river, which demonstrates the context-dependency to such a question. For Heraclites the answer was a 'no' since even though it looked the same, the river is not a stable entity but something that is characterized by constant flux. There is no core essence of things but only movement and change.

Rephrasing the question, we can ask whether it is possible to enter twice (at different times) the same organisation. Imagine that you step into Medindu on a given Tuesday and once

again Wednesday. It is quite unproblematic to imagine and say that you do not step into the same organisation since Medindu can e.g. have employed a new secretary in the HR department, installed a new printer, turned off the heat due to the warm weather, new dishes at the buffet table, etc. from Tuesday to Wednesday. Looking at Medindu this way is one way of understanding the organisation as undergoing changes all the time.

To be able to say that you step twice into the same organisation is that there is identity between the activities and situations in Medindu Tuesday and Wednesday, which occurs along the lines of spatio-temporal extension of Medindu. The activities are relatively specific, which makes Medindu different from other organisations within the arena of biotech/pharmaceutical enterprises. However, this seemingly stability in Medindu is very dependent on the perspective that one approach Medindu with. What would happen if you approach Medindu from a micro-perspective? A micro-perspective will be able to question the routinization of repetitive activities saying that they are not characterized by firm order but are constantly undergoing changes. Another perspective would be to zoom out. What would the answer be if you stepped into Medindu a Tuesday in 1972 and another Tuesday 2006? Again you would see a fundamental difference in what seemed as stable routine activities and doings in Medindu as we have demonstrated with the analysis of social segmentation. In 2006, you would still step into some type of organisation and organising of activities but these activities have changed from the ones in 1972, which emphasizes the transactional character of enterprises as both organisations and organising.

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