

External agents' effect on routine dynamics: lack of compliance resulting in routine breakdown

Nicolai Busse Hansen

PhD Fellow

Aarhus University, DK

nmbh@asb.dk

Abstract: Prior investigations on organizational routines have called for research to enlighten our understanding of how social actors establish and maintain of routines as well as the causes of their disruption. The present paper contributes to this call by conducting systematic microethnographic analyses of naturally occurring interactional routine data in the form of recordings of job interviews in an international oil contractor company. The term interactional routine is used to describe recurrent and recognizable patterns of interaction. The findings suggest that the aspects of alignment and affiliation are central to how routines are maintained but also susceptible to disruption in case of mismanagement. Also the paper contributes with a more fine-tuned understanding of action in terms of them being organized in accordance with preference, which basically means that some actions are preferred over others. In producing an action, the relevant next action is projected. However the relevant next action is projected in a specific way and if this is not taken in to account then the routine becomes disrupted. Another core aspect is the notion of deontics that lends itself towards describing who has the rights to constrict the relevant next action. As it is shown, the major portion of this resides on part of the interviewers. The added value of this endeavor is showing how detailed analyses of face-to-face interaction can provide a step towards a more detailed understanding of the social machinery that drives, forms, and potentially disrupts routines.

1. INTRODUCTION

Conceptually organizational routines are repetitive and recognizable patterns of interdependent actions (Feldman & Pentland, 2003) that are resources for conducting organizational work (Feldman, 2000). Theoretical insights from practice theory (see Nicolini, 2012; Schatzki, 2001) emphasize individuals' everyday actions in constructing organizational reality (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011). Organizational routines are similarly argued to be constituted by everyday actions (Parmigiani & Howard-Grenville, 2011). However, as Dionysiou and Tsoukas (2012, p. 182) note, our understanding of *how* social actors establish and maintain patterns of action is imperfect. More research into the social machinery of routines is needed.

The present paper is a contribution to this endeavor that empirically addresses the role of interactional routines in organizational routines. The notion of *interactional routine* is introduced, which I define as routinized interactional sequences of recurrent, multimodally concerted, social actions with which a participant constricts and limits possible next actions of another participant for the achievement of some organizational outcome. This definition recasts that of interactional routine presented by Peters and Boggs (1986, p. 81) for the purpose of investigating interactional routines and how they make up organizational routines. The focus is on the performative and ostensive part of routines (Feldman & Pentland, 2003). Inspired by Garfinkel's (1967, p. 37) preoccupation with "... what can be done to make trouble" in social interaction, my focus is on how participants can cause trouble in routines. For the purpose of this endeavor, the following research questions are asked:

- What social factors indicate cooperation in interactional routines?
- In what ways are interactional routines susceptible to disruption?

In order to answer these research problematics, the interactional routine of questioning and answering is investigated in job interviews. As Schegloff and Lerner (2009, pp. 110–11) argue, questions have the capacity to project and constrict what the answers should be. Particularly I focus on questions that are *wh*-headed such as "what", "where" and "why" because they highlight specific information for the applicants to take into account in their answers. Questioning-answering often occur without problems in job interviews:

Excerpt (1) L2_7(VID)@00:01:13 - Shore based position

*I1:¹ Okay so my first question Pete i've noticed you
 have worked for three different employers until (YEAR)?
 [...]
 If you can just tell us what's going on there? Or why
 did you move from one employer to another?

¹ *I1 is Interviewer One.

[...]
*AP:² Well i was working for uh
[...]
I left them because i was offered a shore based
position.

In this excerpt, the applicant supports the interactional routine by taking on the appropriate interactional role and providing the preferred next action.

However at other times the interactional routine does not proceed so smoothly:

Excerpt (2) L2_1(AUD)@00:00:11 – What do you know?

*I1: What do you know about (EMPLOYING COMPANY)?
(1.6)
*AP: Frankly speaking I don't know about it too much.

In this excerpt the applicant is unable to provide the preferred next action in the form of the expected answer causing disruption in the routine.

I argue that two concepts are central cooperation in routines: *Alignment* and *affiliation*. They are core components in the social machinery that maintains routines. Alignment, or structural cooperation (Steensig, 2012), and affiliation, or social cooperation (Stivers, Mondada, & Steensig, 2011). This means that alignment in a routine involves providing structural support to the ongoing activity by accepting the terms of actions produced within it. In contrast affiliation involves sensitivity towards the deontic status of participants, which is the rights by which a participant can constrict and determine a next action (Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2012). Also cooperation relies on abiding by the preference organization (see Levinson, 1983) of the initial action.

The paper is structured as follows: In section 2 the theoretical framework of organizational routines is presented followed by an account for microethnographic research on job interviews. The data and method of the paper is then presented in section 3 followed by the analysis in section 4. This is split into 3 parts focusing on

² *AP is Applicant.

three different cases of routine cooperation. Case 1 provides an analysis of an unproblematic questioning and answering routine. Case 2 focuses on the ways in which applicant's can partially disrupt the routines by disaffiliating. Case 3 represents the perspective of the interviewer, their ownership of routines and how this can lead to interactional confusion and uncertainty on part of the applicant. In section 5 the paper is concluded and implications for theory of organizational routines are discussed.

2. THEORY

2.1 ORGANIZATIONAL ROUTINES

There are two approaches to the study of organizational routines that researchers typically position themselves in relation to. These are the Capabilities and Practice Perspective (see Parmigiani & Howard-Grenville, 2011 for an overview). In the Capabilities Perspectives, routines are advocated to be a building block in an organization's capability for generating a given action (Dosi, Faillo, & Marengo, 2008, p. 1166) occurring repetitively and in particular contexts. Advocates of the Practice Perspective, which the present research adheres to, are focused on eliciting the internal dynamics of routines (Parmigiani & Howard-Grenville, 2011, p. 417). Researchers within this approach are interested in the mechanisms that create (Dionysiou & Tsoukas, 2012), change (Feldman, 2000) and maintain (Howard-Grenville, 2005) routines in an organizational context.

From the Practice Perspective, the definition of routines rests on "... repetition, a recognizable pattern of actions, multiple participants, and interdependent actions" (Feldman & Pentland, 2003, p. 103). The set of recognizable patterns is in place to achieve some organizational outcome. In order for a routine to be defined as such the actions contained within it must repeat spatiotemporally and be recognizable

(Pentland, Feldman, Becker, & Liu, 2012). Recognizability is in place once the recipient of some first action recognizes that a particular other action should follow.

Human agency is placed at the center of the production of organizational reality. For example, Turner and Fern (2012) have shown that actors rely on their past experiences with routines when contextual constraint arises and adaptation is called for. Relatedly Lazaric and Denis (2005) investigated the ways in which actors learn new and unlearn old routines once a new set of norms is brought down on the production process of a company. Zbaracki and Bergen (2010) investigated a price-adjustment routine and the ways in which actors negotiate and reconstruct the meaning of the routine when uncertainty is present. Reynaud's (2005) interest is in the interdependency of formal rules and routines and the way in which actors operate in-between them.

Another central concept in the study of routines closely related to this study and the notion of agency is that of "action". Things are done in routines in order to reach a certain outcome. A hiring routine for example consists of, according to Feldman (2003), a sequence of actions such as producing an employment ad (Rafaeli & Oliver, 1998; see Rafaeli, 2000) and obviously interviewing and selecting applicants. Actions are thus "steps" in an ongoing process towards achieving some outcome (Pentland et al., 2012). Assessing future needs, establishing goals, making decisions are steps that make up the roadmapping routine reported by Howard-Grenville (2005). Some actions are more central to their respective routines than others. They constitute what Dionysiou and Tsoukas (2012, p. 197) call the core of the routine's ostensive aspect. They are in other words a central factor in defining the routine.

In their seminal paper, Feldman and Pentland (2003) proposed that routines best be understood in terms of the relationship between their performative and osten-

sive aspects. Fundamentally the split of routines into the two parts is a split into the abstract and concrete (Pentland, Hærem, & Hillison, 2010, p. 919). The ostensive aspect contains an abstraction of the patterns contained in the routine. In enacting a routine actors develop shared schemata containing information on the action to be taken during the course of the routine as well as a procedural understanding of the activity (Dionysiou & Tsoukas, 2012). The performative aspect on the other hand are the concrete occurrences of actions that people contribute with during the routine (Feldman & Pentland, 2003). In the performative enactment of the routine (see Dionysiou & Tsoukas, 2012, p. 190), actors display their individual understandings of the routine context and through interaction they align their actions, which in effect generates a shared understanding of the routine.

2.2 MICROETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH ON JOB INTERVIEWS

The job interview is a widely studied social practice within a number of different fields. However, studies on the social machinery at work within these interviews are sparse (Llewellyn, 2010, p. 77). Yet, a few studies exist that from ethnomethodological and conversation analytical (CA) standpoints investigate social interaction in job interviews.

The earliest study of interaction in job interviews are Ragan and Robert's (1981) study of "alignment talk" in simulated job interviews. What the authors define as alignment talk is talk designed to smoothen out problems that have occurred interactionally. The talk is used in order to normalize the interaction. For example, an interviewer might bring into question a certain aspect of the applicant's CV. The applicant then has to produce alignment talk, or an account more specifically, in order to justify or "normalize" his or her behavior.

One of the first to conduct a detailed microanalysis of naturally occurring interaction in job interviews was Komter (1986). She investigated the social function of reference to circumstances known to all the present parties in the opening stages of the interview. She labeled this kind of reference “token up-dates”. Their function is to facilitate ratification that present parties do in fact share the particular piece of knowledge referred to in the token up-date. Commonly this is knowledge with regards to who the present parties are, why they are there, previous contact between the employing company and the applicant, and so on. Dependent on what kind of knowledge the token up-date refers to, it facilitates particular topics in the immediately ensuing talk.

Button (1987, 1992) focused on question and answer sequences but in one interview only. He investigated, very relevant to this study, the interactional environment that lead an answer to be interpreted as not the right answer to a specific question. His preoccupation was with the speech exchange system and how it defines the interview as well as how the context becomes procedurally relevant to the participants. He argued that actions such as questions and answers should be understood in terms of their interactional achievement and role in the speech exchange system. Button argued (p. 162) that interviewers have systematic resources for monitoring the applicants’ understanding. In producing his answer to a question, the applicant displays his understanding of the question and readily makes it observable to the interviewers. However the understanding will always have its roots in the question. This means that in being asked an ambiguous question, the applicant risks answering the question in a manner that would render him distinguishable as someone who does not answer questions correctly. Contrary to the practices for handling misunderstandings in everyday conversation (see Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977), Button (1987) did not find any attempts by the interviewers to straighten out the issue. Instead it be-

comes a resource for them, which they use in order to establish the applicant as one cannot answer questions

Although Button's findings are far from generalizable, since his analysis is of one job interview, they point us in an important direction for the study of actions in a very routinized context. People, i.e. interviewers, monitor the fit between the first action, the question, and the relevant next action, the answer. This is something that the present research explores more in-depth. Contrary to Button's research however occurrences in the data presented here show that interviewers do attempt to straighten out misunderstandings in order to get the interview back on track. However, this practice might be contextually sensitive.

Recent shifts towards the multimodal aspects of interaction have reached studies on job interview interaction. LeBaron, Glenn, and Thompson (2007) studied the ways in which the applicant's "file-self" consisting of CVs and such is brought to relevance with the "real-self", which is the living, breathing person present in the interview. They did this by conducting a close analysis of the interviewer's embodied and verbal practices. Interviewers rely on the applicant's documents in a number of ways. For example, they might simply use it to obtain information about the applicant. Another practice is aligning. Thus, when an applicant refers to some piece of information, the interviewer will indicate that he or she recognizes it by directing gaze towards the file. Another common practice is using the file as a reference for moving the conversation forwards. Thus when a topic is concluded, the interviewer might look into the file and subsequently launch a new topic. Another very central and interesting practice is that interviewers will use the file in order to ask a potentially controversial question. The interviewer will glean some piece of information from the file displaying the origin of the question and ultimately designating the circumstances

as problematic and ask for the applicant to account for them. In a closely associated study, Glenn and LeBaron (2011) also investigated interviewers use of applicant's documents when formulating questions. In so doing, Glenn and LeBaron found that interviewers rely on these documents for asserting epistemic authority. This notion refers to the moral right for addressing and assessing some piece of information in the applicants CV for example. The interviewer will glance at the CV when asking his or her question, thusly indicating the source of the information, and claiming the rights for making it relevant in the interaction. These files become resources for performing actions and constraining relevant next actions when, for example, the interviewer problematizes a circumstance in the CV calling for the applicant to account for it. These studies (P. Glenn & LeBaron, 2011; LeBaron et al., 2007) highlight the importance of paying close attention to the embodied practices that are prevalent in the job interview routine.

Llewellyn (2010) researched the ways in which the recruitment practice is both a product and resource for the ongoing interviewing activity. In other words, the focus was the orientation towards the context that interviewers and applicants display during the course of the interview. The job interview context is a setting that entails a form of interaction that one would not encounter in everyday social encounters. For example this is the practice of interviewers rating the achievements of applicants. Llewellyn found that both interviewers and applicants orient towards the fact that it is the achievements of the applicant that is at stake in the interview. Interviewers recurrently look for instances where an achievement would likely be present. If achievements were missing, interviewers would orient towards it as so and hold the applicants accountable.

Lastly, Glenn (2010) focused on role of interviewer and applicant laughing at particular points in the interview and its relation to the asymmetry of the social roles of interviewer/applicant. A genuine pattern was observed: The interviewer presents a laughable. The interviewer initiated laughing followed by the applicant. Subsequently, the interviewer returns to the matter at hand. The practice of leading the conversation back into the matter at hand displays, according to Glenn, the asymmetric roles the participants in the interview inhabit. This means that interviewers orient towards the laughing as a “time out” and will subsequently fulfill the interviewer’s duty of returning to task. A major issue, however, that applicants face when presented with laughing is that it can be interpreted in different ways. Thus, laughing can be seen both as hostile but also affiliative. Interpreting the event as one or the other can have consequences for the outcome.

What all of these studies orient to is the wealth of detail located within the context of a job interview. Multiple embodied and verbal practices exist for getting things done and multiple ambiguous pitfalls reside in the interview. The present study is an extension of this prior research. It views the job interview as an organizational routine constituted by interactional routine consisting of recurrent patterns of recognizable interactions such as questions and answers that are instigated in order to achieve some organizational outcome of hiring the ideal employee.

3. THE SETTINGS, ETHICS, AND METHODOLOGY

The data sequences are pulled from a corpus of 26 interviews conducted in two international oil contractor companies. The majority of the recordings are video but supplemented with some audio recordings. Access has also been granted to other ethnographic materials such as applicants’ CVs and tests as well as job descriptions, inter-

view scripts, and in some cases interviewers' recommendations and assessments of the candidate.

For this paper, I have relied mainly on recordings from one company for the sake of continuity. The language spoken in the company is English. Their corporate headquarters is located in Europe with a supporting corporate headquarter in the Middle East. The recordings were made at these locations with the generous help of the local employees. The interviewer compositions vary. Usually HR representatives are present as well as people who would act as immediate superiors.

All applicants were made aware that the company was engaged in a research project both verbally by the interviewers and in writing through an information leaflet designed by the researcher. The applicants that participate have given their informed consent, been made aware that they can opt out at any time and notified that participation would not impact the outcome of the interview. In the transcripts, all information that could lead to the recognition of people and organizations present has been anonymized. Applicants are referred to as "AP" and interviewers as "I1", "I2", or "I3". In the cases where proper names are used, they are swapped with pseudonyms in the transcript that resemble the syllabic structure of their real name. All reference to company names and departments has been anonymized entirely due to the fact that the industry is highly dynamic with people moving frequently from company to company. This means that people know a little about all companies increasing the risk of recognition.

In order to answer the research questions presented in the introduction, the interactional routine of questioning and answering has been selected as the object of research interest. However, this does not delimit the data significantly as it is riddled with these. A second focus of the research questions is the notion of disruption. The

data were then examined instances were interactional questioning-answering routine was affected by potentially disruptive behavior. This implied searching for sequences were either the applicant or interviewer orient towards a problem in the first action, the question, or the next action, the answer. This denotes that an orientation is made to the answer has produced as not being the proper relevant next action. It might also be the case that the applicant makes orientation towards the answer as inadequate. Once these sequences were located they were transcribed using CA conventions³ (Hepburn & Bolden, 2013; Jefferson, 2004).

Falling within the tradition of Microethnography, also known as Video-based Ethnography, this study seeks to address larger organizational issues (LeBaron, 2008), such as organizational routines, by paying close attention to local occurrences of human activity such as interactional routines. Microethnography builds on a number of approaches but most centrally Ethnomethodology (see Garfinkel, 1967) and the closely related discipline of CA (see Sacks, 1992). The main interest of Ethnomethodology is the description of the “methods” social actors apply in order to make sense of the world that surrounds them (Heritage, 1984, p. 4). Members of social groups reflexively refer to and construct the social order and reality within which they engage (Coulon, 1995, p. 23). In other words, social order is created in and through the ongoing activities of social actors (Garfinkel, 1996, p. 7). An offspring of Ethnomethodology, CA similarly assumes social life to be structured but extends this order to the study of talk in interaction (Schegloff & Sacks, 1969, p. 290) and assumes this order is produced by people interacting for the subsequent discovery by analysts (Psathas, 1995).

³ See appendix.

Where CA has primarily focused on talk in interaction, microethnographers attend interaction from a more holistic point of view (LeBaron, 2008) "... while still privileging the participants recognizable sense-making perspectives in the analysis of talk..." (Garcez, 2008, p. 258). Thus microethnographers investigate the multimodal practices of participants in variety of settings by relying on detailed analysis of video recordings.

4. ANALYSIS

As argued in the introductory part of this paper, alignment and affiliation are central to maintaining and progressing the routine and problems in either of these two aspects lead to routine disruption. A few preliminary remarks are in order with regards to the concepts and their relevance.

Alignment concerns an interactant structurally supporting the ongoing activity (Stivers, 2008, p. 34) by taking on the appropriate interactional roles, accepting presumptions and matching the formal design preference (Steensig, 2012). Affiliation on the other hand involves cooperation on the social level. This entails "... matching prior speaker's evaluative stance, display empathy and/or cooperate with the preference of the prior turn" (Stivers et al., 2011, p. 21). Cooperation with design preference of prior turn will be shown to play an integral part of routine cooperation in the following.

The notion of preference organization in interaction refers to the idea within CA that when alternative actions can be produced after an initial action one might be preferred and the other dispreferred (ten Have, 2007, p. 137). For example, a question can be responded to in different ways: One can produce the expected answer (the preferred next action) or one can produce an unexpected or non-answer (the dispre-

ferred next action) (Levinson, 1983, p. 336). The production of a dispreferred next turn would be disaffiliative while the preferred would be affiliative. If the disaffiliative response is produced in a questioning-answering routine, the interactional routine is disrupted.

The fundamental difference between matching the formal design preference and cooperating with the action preference of the prior turn is as follows: A social action can linguistically be formatted in such a way that it on the structural level prefers a response, whereas it on the social level prefers something else. Stivers et al. (2011) exemplify this distinction with the interrogative request “You don’t have his number I don’t suppose” which is borrowed from Levinson (Levinson, 1983, p. 363). The request is designed so that the aligning response to it would be a refusal. In order to affiliate however, the request must be granted (Steensig, 2012).

Related to job interviews and the interactional routine of question-answer sequences, this distinction will become clearer as analysis progresses below. Section 4.1 presents a case of an interactional routine progressing without hindrance. This means that there are no problems in terms of alignment and affiliation, as will be shown. In section 4.2 a problem occurs resulting in the applicant producing a disaffiliative next action. Section 4.3’s case presents an exciting instance of the interviewer orienting towards a prior interactional routine as not having been concluded. In reopening the routine he confuses the applicant to such a degree that the applicant is forced to both disalign and disaffiliate.

4.1 Case 1: Alignment and affiliation

Excerpt (3) below is a case of how an interactional routine progresses without hindrance. It exemplifies how the concepts of alignment and affiliation become relevant

in interactional routines. In relation to theory on organizational routines, it then shows how participants perceive, abide by and orient towards the routine and what it is (Feldman & Pentland, 2003, p. 101).

The video recording is of an interview for a roving subsea supervisor position responsible for maintenance of underwater equipment on oilrigs. The recording was made in the company's Middle Eastern branch.

In excerpt (3a) below, Interviewer One (I1 in transcript), an HR manager, poses a question to the applicant (AP) concerning an issue with having worked for multiple employers until recently:

Excerpt (3a) L2_7(VID)@00:01:13 – Three different employers

1 *I1: [O↑kay_ .hh So my [first question: [Pete i've noticed
 ((AP looks at I1)) ((I1 looks at CV)) ((I1 moves CV)) ((I1 looks at AP))
 2 (0.5)
 3 you have worked for three different emp[loyers until
 ((AP nods))
 4 (YEAR)?=
 5 *AP: =Ye[s_
 6 *I1: [If you can: just tell us what's going on there? (0.3)
 7 () (0.2) Or why did you move from one em[ployer
 ((AP looks away))
 8 to another;

In the very first line of the excerpt while looking down at the CV, Interviewer One announces, “So my first question”. He then moves the CV slightly and states while shifting his gaze that he has “noticed” (l. 1) the applicant has “worked for three different employers” (l. 3). With this he does a number of things: First, he indicates the interactional questioning-answering routine they are going to be engaged in. In doing so, he makes relevant the interactional roles of asker and answerer. He also projects that the applicant should assume speakership once the question has been posed (l. 6-8). Secondly, he takes a deontic stance (Stevanovic, 2011). Using “my” in referring to his first question he proclaims ownership of the question and indicates he is going to

ask more than one. In doing so, he orients towards his rights to progress the interactional routine and constrict the relevant next actions of the applicant. Thirdly, through his embodied orientation to the CV by looking and touching and having “noticed” the issue, the interviewer concretizes the issue by constructing it as a problematic fact residing in the CV that the applicant needs to account for. The applicant confirms the issue (l. 5), and the interviewer invites him to account for the circumstances leading to the job changes adverb using the interrogative adverb “why” (l. 7), which is commonly used to encourage a justification for something (Schegloff & Lerner, 2009, p. 111). In producing the the next relevant action in response, it can be observed that he provides an answer where he starts accounting for when he was working for his prior employers and then giving a justification for changing between them (l. 23-26):

Excerpt (3b) L2_7 – Three different employers

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9   *AP:      [Okay,
              ((AP continues looking away))
10          (0.7)
11          Well i was uh working for (.) u::h
12          (0.8)
13          (PRIOR EMPLOYER 1) i think (0.2) until

((9 lines omitted during which AP accounts for when he was working
for his prior employers))

23          I left the:m: because i was offered a: (.)
24          [ >shore based position;<
              ((I1 takes notes))
              ((AP looks at I1 then down at I1's writing hand))
25          (0.9)
26          #u:h# (0.2) from (PRIOR EMPLOYER 2) (0.3) [in: (COUNTRY),
                                                         ((I1 stops
                                                         taking notes))

27   *I1:     °Yeah_°

((For 26 lines AP talks about how the role was a step up on the ca-
reer ladder and that he also wanted a shore based position PRIOR
EMPLOYER 1 could not offer))

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In terms of this response, it can be seen that he prefaces it with an “Okay” (l. 9). *Okays* can, sensitive to the context in which they occur, be ascribed different functions. Here, arguably, it is used for displaying an orientation towards the prior as

having been heard and a transition into the relevant next action (Beach, 1993). The point then is that in orienting towards the question in this manner, he displays understanding of the constrictions the interviewer has faced him with in determining the relevant next action. He accepts his own asymmetrical relationship with the authority the interviewer has. However this is only a display of orienting towards the prior. The applicant has to assume speakership and match the formal design preference, which means producing an answer after a question, in order to fully align and thereby support the ongoing activity. This he does in l. 11 onwards where he transitions into what Schegloff and Lerner (2009) calls a *well-prefaced response*. As pointed out by Pomrantz (1984), *well* can in some sequential environments be an indicator of disagreement. Schegloff and Lerner (2009) argue that *why* questions prefer responses that are headed by *because*. In the excerpt above, *because* is not produced until l. 23. By process of elimination, the well-prefaced response is not doing justification then. Rather, what can be observed is that the applicant starts accounting for when he was working for the prior employers before providing the justification, “because I was offered a shore based position” (l. 23-4).

On the surface then, the applicant provides a response that is both aligning and affiliative. He abides by the presuppositions of the interactional routine: he is the answerer, he should assume speakership, and a question needs an answer. His response is arguably also affiliative, as he endorses the interviewer’s deontic stance by accepting him as the one directing the interactional routine. It also seems that he provides the preferred next action (Levinson, 1983).

However in order to determine this, we must consider the ways in which the interviewer orients towards the applicant’s response or what is in CA terms called applying the proof procedure (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). Overlapping from l.

23-6, Interviewer One takes notes when the applicant produces the justification “because” (l. 23). While this is not necessarily indicative of a preferred answer, it is strongly suggestive towards him orienting towards the applicant’s next action as being an answer.

In order to determine whether or not the interviewer orients towards the applicant’s answer as affiliative, the point at which the interviewer assumes speakership next must be closer examined.

Excerpt (3c) – L2_7 – Three different employers

50 *I1: [Yeah so: w- w- Why do you wanna (.) [change your current
 ((I1 looks at AP)) ((I1 looks at CV))
 51 [job at the moment.=
 ((I1 looks at AP))

Here the interviewer, while looking at the applicant, initiates his turn with “Yeah” which functions as an acknowledgement token (Jefferson, 1984). It orients towards the immediately prior action as recognized and heard. He then asks another *why*-question, “Why do you wanna change your current job at the moment”. When he says, “change your current”, he looks down at the CV in front of him thereby displaying an orientation towards the source of the information and awareness that the applicant under employment. In completing his question, he looks up at the applicant. The fact that he seeks to change his current job is something that also requires justification. At the matter this stage is thus not the applicant’s prior job changes but the reasons for his current desire to change jobs.

The response this question receives reiterates the points made above:

Excerpt (3d) – L2_7 – Three different employers

54 *AP: [= .hhh Because my current job <is in [china. (0.3)
 ((AP looks away)) ((AP looks at I1))
 55 [And
 56 *I1: °Ye [ah °
 ((I1 looks down and takes notes))

At the moment the applicant starts producing the in-breath, he looks away. He then starts producing his justification, “Because my current job is in China” (l. 54). On the first stressed syllable of “China”, he looks back at the interviewer and completes the turn with falling intonation. In CA terms this is a *transition relevance point* (Schegloff, 2007, p. 4), which is a point at which another speaker can make an interactional contribution. It can be seen (l. 56) that the interviewer produces an acknowledgement token, “Yeah”, then looking down at his paper in front of him in order to take a note. The relationship between the initial *why*-question and the subsequent *because*-answer, is type-conforming (Schegloff & Lerner, 2009, p. 111) or in what can be called formal design preference (Steensig, 2012). This means that *why* demands a justification *because* some set of circumstances are problematic and needs to be accounted for. This is a structural relationship, which would thereby make it aligning. In terms of affiliation, providing an adequate justification is the preferred next action to the question, and this is what happens above.

In sum, then, the interactional questioning-answering routine is successful when a next action is affiliative by conforming to the preference organization of the first action and endorsing the deontic stance of the interviewer. This also means aligning to the interactional roles (asker/answerer) of the routine.

4.2. Case 2: *Alignment and partial disaffiliation*

The present section presents a case where the interactional questioning-answering routine is partially disrupted. This happens mainly in the affiliative aspect. In relation to organizational routines, this section informs that actions can be distinguished in terms of their preference organization. One can get actions that align and thus support the routine but fail to provide the preferred action.

The excerpt this section focuses on is an audio recording. Lacking visual information is a problem, however the linguistic modality in this particular excerpt is a source of interesting behavioral considerations. The interview is for an engineer position and the interviewer is the same as in excerpt (3). The question, “What do you know about (EMPLOYING COMPANY)” is asked as the very first one:

Excerpt (4a) L2_1@00:00:14 – What do you know

1 *I1: What do you know about (EMPLOYING COMPANY).

As Schegloff and Lerner (2009, p. 111) note, *what*-prefaced questions refer to objects. The object, here, is the applicant’s knowledge about the employing company. Note that the question is not seeking confirmation of him having knowledge. Rather, it assumes that the applicant already knows something. The question is a standardized question often asked at the beginning of interviews to gauge applicant’s knowledge and motivation.

In terms of alignment, this case presupposes the same as excerpt (3). The interviewer orients towards the interactional questioning-answering routine by asking the question, which presupposes that the applicant will take on the role of answerer and assume speakership at the relevant point. In terms of his deontic stance and related to how the interviewer constricts the next action the applicant is going to produce, the interviewer assumes the applicant has knowledge. In doing so he invokes a moral aspect on the interview: *You should know the company you apply to.*

In order to produce an aligning and affiliative response, the applicant will then have to assume speakership and produce the preferred next action. He does assume speakership but not the preferred next action:

Excerpt (4b) L2_1 – What do you know

2 (1.6)

3 *AP: Frankly speaking I don't know about it too much_ Because
 4 #i:'m in u:h a:h# They never come to (CITY)_ They don't
 5 have too much activities in (CITY).

The first sign of a problem is the noticeably long 1.6-second gap (l. 2) between the initial question (l. 1) and the answer (l. 3-5). Long pauses have previously been argued to indicate potential disagreement (Pomerantz, 1984). That a problem exists is confirmed in l. 3-5. Here, the applicant answers, “Frankly speaking I don’t know about it too much”, which is not the preferred next action. Answering that he does not know is, as Levinson (1983, p. 336), an unexpected answer as the question expects, as argued above, that the applicant knows something about the company.

Considering alignment, the applicant does support the ongoing activity. He assumes speakership thereby orienting towards his role as answerer and the role of the interviewer as asker. He also partially affiliates by saying he is unknowledgeable, “frankly speaking” (l. 3), displaying awareness of his violation of the routine due to the fact he did not provide the preferred next action, which is the disaffiliative aspect.

The interviewer acknowledges his answer and proceeds to produce a second question searching for a possible alternate source of information:

Excerpt (4b) L2_1 – What do you know

5 (0.3)
 7 *I1: °Yea:h_°
 8 (1.3)
 9 → [[Have you had any chance to go through our web↑si:te?
 10 *AP: [[()

In line 7 the interviewer acknowledges the applicant’s answer followed by noticeably long 1.3-second pause. The interviewer, then, asks if the applicant has had “any chance to go through” their website. This type of question demands a *yes/no*-answer depending on its preference (Schegloff & Lerner, 2009). The question in the case above is framed positively meaning that it prefers a confirming *yes*-answer. Similar to

the immediately prior question, this question assumes a stance related to job interview routine namely that you do research on the company before coming to the interview.

In responding, the applicant does something particularly interesting. He apologizes (l. 14):

Excerpt (4c) L2_1 – What do you know

```
11          (1.4)
12          No actually because: (0.2) #u:h# No
13          (0.8)
14          Sorr[y_
15 *I1:      Yes (.) ↑okay.
```

Note however first that a long pause indicating trouble precedes the ensuing answer (l. 12) where the applicant first produces the disconfirming “No” before attempting a justification as evidenced by “because”. He then cancels his endeavor before repeating “No” at the end of l. 12. Another noticeable pause ensues (l. 13) before the applicant produces “Sorry” (l. 14).

In this excerpt, in relation to the two questions and the applicant’s two responses, not providing a preferred question is something to which one can be held accountable. This can be observed in the attempts at justifying (l. 3-5 and 12) as well as the apology (l. 14). There is then an orientation towards the deontic rights of the interviewer in that he is the one who decides over the activity. The interviewer is someone you apologize to when you are not doing the preferred next action that his initial action projected. He is a person you are accountable to if you do not do what, by deontic rights, he decides.

In sum, it can be observed by close analysis of the ways in which people relate to each other that it is possible to maintain routine even though its preferred outcome is not provided. In analyzing these answers, a moral order can be observed in the interactional job interview routine: Via their deontic rights, the interviewers constrict the relevant next action and project what this should look like. If the applicant is

unable abide these constrictions, the interviewer's authority becomes challenged, which makes relevant justification and apologizing. Thereby, the applicant affiliates with the stance, but disaffiliates with the action.

4.3. *Case 3: Disalignment and disaffiliation*

The present section presents a perplexing instance of how disruption and confusion can bear down on the interactional routine causing disruption. Excerpt (5) exemplifies how interviewers orient towards interactional routines as being bounded entities but able of reopening. This practice can leave, as in the case below, applicants confused as he orients towards the interactional routine as closed. This leads to problems that ultimately cause disalignment and disaffiliation. This excerpt is important to the study of organizational routines because it shows how participants have ownership over interactional routines while they progress. Additionally it shows how prior routines can be reopened due to another agent displaying a problematic orientation towards an action inside it. This indicates that actions interactional routines are negotiable due to subjective understandings and orientations towards the presuppositions that underlie what constitutes an adequate next action. This then relates to modification of routines, how it is done, and the pitfalls that are concerned with such an act (Feldman & Pentland, 2003, p. 108)

The case at hand is from an interview for a rig manager position. Interviewer One is a senior manager, Interviewer Two is an HR manager, and the applicant is a middle-aged male having previously held managing positions (information from CV). Below Interviewer One is inquiring into the applicant's professional weaknesses. It is important to note how the question is asked:

Excerpt (5a) – L1_1@00:25:03 – Weaknesses

1 *I1: → [#Wha- whe-# (.) Where would you think your weaknesses
((I1 looks at AP through asking question))
2 are. [=What is it that we don't get °if we: (0.3) if we°
((AP shifts gaze away and looks up at ceiling))
3 (0.4) #get you on board,# (0.3) Whe- where would we need
4 to sup[ort you:.=Or where would we need to .hh
((AP nods))
5 (0.5)
6 *AP: M[m:::
7 *I1: [back you up.

While having his gaze fixed on the applicant, the interviewer poses a series of *wh*-headed questions. He uses “Where”, referring to location, and “What”, referring to objects (Schegloff & Lerner, 2009). In doing so, Interviewer One orients towards weaknesses as being concrete objects that are traits or skills an employee does not have and do not bring to the employer. However, these weaknesses are not treated as a problem. They are simply areas where the company would support the employee, as the interviewer states, “where would need to back you up” (l. 4-7).

The applicant at this point orients towards what it is that he has to do. He turns his head looking away (l. 2) nodding (l. 4) and in doing so displays recognition of the question. Additionally in line 6, the applicant produces a long “Mm”. He ultimately heads into an answer talking about feeling strong in his career before proceeding into a sequence containing an example before providing his relevant answer (l. 59-60):

Excerpt (5b) L1_1 – Weaknesses

8 [(2.3)
((AP is still looking away))
9 *AP: So far in my career #i- i-# i've felt very [strong?
((AP gazes at I1))
10 (0.2)
11 But i was a bit (.) unhappy: when i was working: with
12 aron mac[neil.
((I1 nods))

((47 lines omitted during which the AP explains how he was not included in some tasks, how he tried to show initiative but was denied, and how it left him frustrated))

59 → [So i: i think if i cannot be: involved[in in (0.4) in
((AP looks away)) ((AP looks at I1))

questioning-answering routine and is in the process of looking for a new issue to enquire about. He does this by moving a number of different objects that are in his way such as pen and phone in order to get to a particular piece of paper, perhaps the CV. He looks at this piece of paper (l. 68-70) before orienting towards Interviewer Two as a potential source of questions. Second, and this is a crucial point about the rights to interactional routines, the applicant does not do anything. He looks at Interviewer One when he speaks words or utters some sound (l. 64, 66, and 69). However, once transition relevance places (Schegloff & Sacks, 1969) occur (as in l. 65, 67, and 68) he disengages his visual connection with the interviewers. He even reaches for a drink of water (l. 69-70). This embodied behavior is indicative of no responsibility for progressing the interaction. He waits for the interviewer, who has the authority, to do this. The third point, closely related to the second, deals with the fact that the Interviewer One shows the exact same orientation. Despite not being shown in the transcript, the fact is also that Interviewer Two is not doing anything in the excerpt. There are numerous points at which he could have taken the floor. He only reacts when Interviewer One orients towards him.

Keeping in mind that the previous interactional routine has been closed by Interviewer One and an orientation towards a new topic is being made, Interviewer One initiates a perplexing stretch of talk that calls into question the applicants answer to the prior question:

Excerpt (5d) L1_1 - Weaknesses

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74  *I2:      [That is one thing (.) but not being involved. [=>But on
              ((I2 looks at AP))                               ((I2 turns
                                                                head away))
                                                                ((AP nods))
75          the:< i mean being
76          (0.7)
77          being a rig manager.=Being u:h (.) you know
78          (0.5)

```


duce the relevant next action to the initial, has to do something else, which in the case above is requesting explication concerning the interviewer's action. In terms of alignment, then, the applicant has to claim a new interactional role that was not anticipated or projected by the interviewers. He is thereby no longer supporting the activity that Interviewer Two projected and the format of the interviewer's question has left the applicant unable to match the formal design of the interaction. With regards to affiliation it is explicit that the applicant is unable to cooperate with the preference organization of the interviewer's action.

This particular piece of routine interaction informs a number of things. First and foremost, it displays the problematics of transitioning from one interactional routine into another when one party problematizes the prior interactional routine. In the case here, both Interviewer One and the applicant have closed the prior routine and are orienting towards new matters. Interviewer Two however does not see the prior routine as concluded and when given the floor for potential new questions he reiterates an old one consequently attempting to open up the old routine. The second point relates to the fact that Interviewer Two does stick is not making the question relevant within the confines of the routines. There are opportunities at which it could have been relevant earlier, before Interviewer One concluded the matter, to ask his question. However due to the orientation towards Interviewer One as being the one to progress the interaction this does not happen in this instance. This means, and this is the third point, that due to his ownership over the interactional routine, Interviewer One is the authority to progress the interaction. Interviewer Two cannot do this before being allowed to, which he eventually does. It may be the case the Interviewer One and Two practice this routine in this manner. However, the fourth point is that the applicant does not know about the fine-tunings of what the interview routine is like in

this company with these particular interviewers. He is therefore left with very little time to adapt to and orient towards the presuppositions the interviewers bear down on the interaction.

5. Conclusion and discussion

The present paper has investigated interactional routines that are interactional sequences of recurrent, multimodally concerted, social actions with which a social actor constricts and limits possible next actions by another actor for the achievement of some organizational outcome. The interactional routine focused on here is questioning-answering, which is central to the organizational routine of job interviewing. I now answer each of research questions that initiated this research endeavor:

What social factors indicate cooperation in interactional routines? A number of different factors have been found central to the maintenance and sustaining of the questioning-answering routines. These different factors can be categorized in terms of alignment and affiliation (Steensig, 2012; Stivers et al., 2011; Stivers, 2008).

In terms of alignment, it has been found that the acceptance of interactional roles, matching of formal design preference of the routine, and acceptance of speaker-ship at the appropriate point. In terms of affiliation, the endorsement of deontic stance and adherence to the preference organization of the first action of questioning has been found central above. Additionally, applicants have to abide by the moral order that permeates the routine contextually and that may be invoked or simply presupposed by the interviewers. An overview of these factors can be found in figure 1.

In what ways are interactional routines susceptible to disruption? With cases 2 and 3, it was shown how the applicants and even interviewers might be able to disrupt the routine. In case 2, the applicant was unable to abide by the preference

Factors of cooperation in the interactional questioning-answering routine	
Alignment	Affiliation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Accept the context's predetermined interactional roles</i> - <i>Orient towards ownership of routines</i> - <i>Match formal design preference of questioning-answering</i> - <i>Assume speakership at appropriate point</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Endorsement of deontic stance</i> - <i>Abide by preference organization of question action</i> - <i>Acceptance of moral order</i>

Table 1 - Overview

organization of the question basically resulting in a disaffiliative next action. In the complex case 3, the applicant was, when faced with Interviewer Two's reopening of the interactional routine, immediately unable to match the formal design preference of questioning and thus did not produce the second action that the initial action projected. This also consequently means that he is entirely unable to match the formal design preference of the question. This renders his answer both disaligning and disaffiliative. The interactional routine is at the point in time entirely disrupted and it needs to be fixed, which is an entirely other study in and of itself.

What does this then tell us about organizational routines and what does it offer theory? A number of aspects of this analysis supports the practice perspective on organizational routines (Parmigiani & Howard-Grenville, 2011). However, it also contributes with a number of considerations to take into account when investigating routines at different levels. For this I will return to the composition of the performative and ostensive aspects of organizational routines (Feldman & Pentland, 2003).

Starting with the ostensive aspect, Feldman & Pentland (2003, p. 101) argue that it consists of individual subjective understandings depending on his/her role in the routine. This microethnographic investigation contributes to this and adds more detailed understanding of the ways in which participants orient towards each other and the context. For example interactional roles play a central part in organizational

routine of job interviewing. If participants do not take on roles of answerer and asker of questions, then basically the routine would not function. Additionally, participants need to orient towards their responsibilities in the interaction. Interviewers in the interview routine are oriented to as having the deontic right to progress and constrict the interactional routine, whereas applicants have to endorse and affiliate with this stance.

Additionally, in terms of what expectations an interviewer may have of an applicant, a moral order permeates the job interview routine that is brought down on the interactional routines. This we saw in case 2 where Interviewer Two expected of the applicant that he had sought out information. It also showed that the applicant orients towards what it is that he should do even though he did not. The fact that he apologized is unquestionable evidence that this moral order had been breached.

A major contribution is that of understanding action and interaction as being dependent on alignment, as Dionysiou and Tsoukas (2012) have already highlighted, and affiliation. The term affiliation allows us a much more detailed understanding of what kinds of actions are acceptable in relation to other kinds of action. Preference organization has here been argued to be central and its connected ideas of preferred and dispreferred next actions. Additionally linked to affiliation is the term of deontic stance and who has the rights to project and constrict other participants' relevant next actions.

In relation to the performative aspect (Feldman & Pentland, 2003, p. 102), reflective monitoring and the link to the ostensive aspect, it was shown in the analysis of case two that the interviewer and applicant oriented towards a moral order. Especially the applicant oriented reflectively towards having violated the order of the interview through his actions. In other words he takes his interactional contribution

from the performative aspect and orients to them related to the ostensive aspect. This shows how individuals engaged in face-to-face interaction adjust towards the order of the ostensive aspect through their performative contributions and in doing so enforce the ostensive aspect. This would then suggest that the ostensive aspect is assembled by performances and reflective monitoring at the level of interactional routines in their performative aspect.

An additional central contribution is the role of the applicant as an external agent in the interactional routine. The fact is that people from outside the organization frequent job interviews. Arguably, this has a number of implications and far from all has likely been elucidated here. It may be part of the ostensive aspect of the interactional routine among the interviewers that they can reopen a prior routine as was observed in the analysis of case 3. However the applicant has very little time to adapt and get used how they adapt. This may causatively lead to confusion that temporarily disrupts the routine, and in turn likely results in a negative assessment of the applicant.

Lastly, this paper represents an early attempt at eliciting some of the interpersonal relations and social mechanics of routines. A large corpus of data has at this point not been analyzed. But this study exemplifies the wealth of detail and information about organizational/interactional routines that can be extracted from conducting a close sequential analysis of multimodal interaction in practice. However, more work is definitely needed for a more in-depth understanding of the constitution of routines.

Appendix:

<i>Transcription conventions</i>	
<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Explanation</i>
[Indicates embodied and verbal overlap.
=	Indicates latching, which means that there is no hearable (or measurable) gap between two turns or within a turn of talk.
(0.5)/(.)	Indicates a pause. A period within parenthesis indicates a micro-pause of less than two-tenths of a second
. , ; ? _	Indicates intonation contour. A period marks a falling, a comma slight rising, a semicolon a slight fall, a question mark a high rise and an underscore a flat intonation.
<u>Stress</u>	Underlined word syllables, e.g. “rephrase”, indicates stress or emphasis.
°Quiet°	Degree signs indicate that the talk produced within their boundaries is noticeably quieter than the surrounding talk.
>Fast talk<	This particular combination of greater-than and less-than symbols indicates that the talk produced within it is produced fast.
<Slow talk>	This particular combination of greater-than and less-than symbols indicates that the talk produced within it is produced slow.
-	A hyphen indicates that a cut-off.
#Creaky voice#	Indicates glotalization
£Smiling voice£	Indicates that the talk produced within the symbols is produced with a smiling voice.
()	Empty parentheses indicate that the transcriber could not discern what was being said.
(YEAR)	Uppercase words in parentheses indicate that something has been edited for anonymity’s sake.
((Nodding))	Double parentheses greyed out in the transcripts contain description of multimodal behavior.
.hhh	Indicates in-breath.
hhh	Indicates out-breath.

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