

This Is an Eventful Era: Exploring Event-Oriented Approaches to Organizational Research

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This special issue explores the transformative role of discrete events in fostering changes at different organizational levels, challenging traditional feature-oriented approaches that focus on stable attributes of individuals, groups, and organizations. Joining the growing body of event-oriented research in diverse settings, the nine published articles evoke a novel theoretical lens (i.e., Event System Theory) to examine a number of discrete events (e.g., everyday change events, organizational downsizing, merger, corporate scandal, technology implementation, the U.S.–China trade war, the Black Lives Matter movement). Their findings demonstrate the interesting ways discrete events disrupt routines, prompt adaptation, and impact individual and collective behaviors across various levels within organizations. Our further analysis underscores the importance of adopting an event-oriented perspective for a better understanding of management

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issues, offering new insights and directions for future research. We hope this special issue provides a robust foundation for integrating event-centric research approaches into organizational theory, emphasizing the need for continued empirical investigation and theoretical refinement in a variety of management research domains, such as strategic management, organizational behavior, entrepreneurship, and human resource management.

Keywords: *event-oriented research; Event System Theory; discrete events; multilevel changes; strategic management; organizational behavior; entrepreneurship; human resource management*

We live in an era shaped by and defined through significant events, which break entities (e.g., individuals, teams, organizations, and environments) out of their routines and conventions (Morgeson, Mitchell, & Liu, 2015). In innumerable ways, events matter to everyone and everything in the organizational context. Events are ubiquitous and essential. Events can create change, produce uncertainty, require adaptation, and beget new events (Liu, Morgeson, Zhu, & Fan, 2023). For example, the COVID-19 pandemic has substantially changed people's experiences in the workplace and at home, and the Black Lives Matter movement (following a number of tragic deaths) has reignited a variety of organizational diversity and inclusion initiatives. As Pillemer (2001: 123) emphasizes, "in every life, the ongoing stream of mundane daily occurrences is punctuated by distinctive, circumscribed, highly emotional and influential episodes."

In the management literature, there is a growing acknowledgement of the importance of events in shaping individual and collective behavior, ranging from such things as career shocks (Seibert, Kraimer, Holtom, & Pierotti, 2013), stigma disclosure events (Johnson, Joshi, & Hogan, 2020), interruptive events in teams (Zellmer-Bruhn, 2003), chief executive officer (CEO) succession (Graffin, Boivie, & Carpenter, 2013), firm reputational events (Paruchuri, Pollock, & Kumar, 2019), mega-events and natural disasters (Tilcsik & Marquis, 2013), terrorist attacks (Bacharach & Bamberger, 2007), regional political conflicts and wars (Dai, Eden, & Beamish, 2013), and technological discontinuities (Tushman & Anderson, 1986). As these examples show, events emerge at different levels, including individuals, teams, organizations, associations, societies, countries, regions, and globally. As such, they represent a potentially different way to explore and develop a multilevel organizational science.

Various theoretical perspectives have been developed to explain how events come to impact individual, team, and firm outcomes (e.g., Anderson & Tushman, 1990; Connelly, Certo, Ireland, & Reutzel, 2011; Lee & Mitchell, 1994; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). More recently, Event System Theory (EST) has introduced the construct of event strength (composed of event novelty, event disruption, and event criticality) to explain why events are so impactful (Morgeson et al., 2015). Depending on their strength, events can create change across space and time, as well as interacting with spatial and temporal processes to elicit changes at different organizational levels. An increasing number of empirical studies have provided support for EST's propositions (e.g., Chen, Liu, Tang, & Hogan, 2021; Lin, Shao, Li, Guo, & Zhan, 2021; Liu, Chen, & Li, 2021).

Although this emerging body of event-oriented theory and research is promising, the field of management continues to be dominated by what can be termed feature-oriented research in which the focus is on the relatively salient and stable features of individuals, groups, organizations, and environments. Event-oriented research offers an alternative approach, where science is devoted to studying dynamic and discrete events (i.e., those punctuating episodes in context) rather than the relatively static features of entities. We believe that an understanding of events as causes of behavior—especially changes in behavior—combined with enduring features and subsequent events, is a more accurate reflection of entities' functioning and development. As Weiss and Rupp (2011) remind us, one's experience of work combines dynamic episodes (i.e., events) and stable individual, collective, and environmental features.

Why Event-Oriented Research Is Important

Event-oriented research is more important than ever for at least three reasons. First, because events form the foundation of human experience, they have implications for any domain that involves people or collective social structures. Organizations and organizational research is thus a prime area in which events and their impact can be explored to better understand individual and collective phenomenon. Events are central to the processes behind organizational change and evolution. In fact, it is difficult to imagine an organizational research domain for which focusing on events and taking an event-oriented approach would not be helpful.

Second, collective social structures and collective actions are built upon interdependent interactions which themselves are discrete events. As Morgeson and Hofmann (1999: 252) describe, "The structure of any given collective . . . can be viewed as a series of ongoings, events, and event cycles between the component parts [and] this structure, in turn, forms the basis for the eventual emergence of collective constructs." Thus, any understanding of collective phenomenon can ultimately be traceable to the events occurring within that context.

Third, event-oriented research is important to both micro (i.e., human resource management and organizational behavior) and macro (i.e., strategic management, entrepreneurship, and organizational theory) domains. Event-oriented research is important to organizational behavior research because so many individual and team level constructs and processes are affected by and affect the events that occur in the organizational context. For example, event-oriented research has a natural fit with career research because people's career paths unfold over time and have discrete choice points that are often influenced by specific, discrete experiences (e.g., promotion events). Career counseling theorists have long recognized the role of chance events in career decision-making (e.g., Akkermans, Seibert, & Mol, 2018; Bright, Pryor, & Harpham, 2005), but the emergence of the career shock construct sparked considerable interest among both quantitative and qualitative scholars. Research has linked career shocks to career choice, career development and self-management, career resilience and adaptability, and employability.

Event-oriented research is important to corporate strategy, entrepreneurship, non-market strategy, and international business for a number of reasons. For example, executives play central roles in organizational responses to events. Mature organizations run on repetitive processes that require minimal maintenance on a day-to-day basis. Events mark a break with the past, signaling that the processes that were effective in the past are unlikely to be effective in the future. Events "rewrite the basic rules" and make punctuated change necessary. When

the environment changes sharply, so too must the firm, and strategic leaders are central to those substantive changes. In addition, isolating the performance implications of any given strategy utilized by complex multi-geographic or multi-product firms is nearly impossible without a clear unanticipated “event” that can be linked to it. Finally, by identifying specific events, the spillovers between and within firms (e.g., product and geographic, directly and indirectly affected) can be directly examined, and individual effects statistically isolated.

Summary of Articles in the Special Issue

This special issue was created to encourage, highlight, support, and promote event-oriented organizational research. Because events are ubiquitous and occur and exist at any organizational level, event-oriented research has the potential to be integrative and multi-level, and to be an important foundation for the next major movement in organizational research. The special issue received 68 submissions, and the nine articles published were subject to an extensive review and development process. Author teams from around the world and from different disciplines (e.g., strategic management, entrepreneurship, organizational behavior, international business, human resource management, operations management) contributed to the special issue, highlighting the global and cross-disciplinary importance of event-oriented research. The published articles are summarized in Table 1 (organized alphabetically by lead author).

In “Corporate Scandals as Punctuating Events That Change Human Resource Roles,” authors Elaine Farndale, Jaap Paauwe, Paul Boselie, and Sven Horak apply the EST framework (Morgeson et al., 2015) to a set of five qualitative case studies of multinational corporations experiencing a corporate scandal to better understand the role events play in the evolution of the strategic human resource management (HRM) function. The paper shows that the scandals, while always strong events, differed in important ways in terms of the time over which they unfolded and their spatial dispersion throughout the organization. However, in each case, the HRM function took on new responsibilities as the corporations sought to recover from the scandal, shaping the compliance culture of the organization through the implementation of strategic staffing, training, and performance management HR practices. These findings raise questions regarding the transformation of the HR function within organizations, both in terms of the process and the outcome. Previous theorizing depicts the transformation of the HR function as a gradual and universal process driven by the development of HR professional competencies, but the current work shows that discrete events punctuate an otherwise static equilibrium to shape the idiosyncratic pace and direction in which the role of the HR function develops within specific firms.

The rich qualitative analysis of these scandal events also highlights some limitations of the EST framework. For example, when a CEO initiates an unethical organizational practice or when operational level employees engage in formally sanctioned and rewarded behavior that is nevertheless seen by society as unethical, it is hard to identify the level of origin or the direction of dispersion for the crisis event. Rather, behavior is embedded across multiple levels simultaneously, with policies, reward structures, and actors each enacting the event. While EST provides a necessary perspective on the importance of discrete events, this work reminds us that actors at all levels retain agency and at least the potential to shape events and their consequences.

Table 1
The Nine Articles Published in This Special Issue

Authors	Author Location(s)	Title	Event	Level of Analysis	Research Domain	Sample	Methodology	Analytical Technique
Elaine Farndale, Jaap Praauwe, Paul Boselie, & Sven Horak	United States, Netherlands	Corporate Scandals as Punctuating Events That Change Human Resource Roles	Corporate scandal	Organization	Human resource management	Five multinationals in financial services, chemicals, and pharmaceutical sectors	Qualitative	Case study analysis
Patrick J. Flynn, Amrou Awaysheh, Paul D. Bliese, & Barbara B. Flynn	United States, Brazil	From Intent to Impact: A Proactive Event Approach for Amplifying Sustainability Across Time	Technology implementation	Organization	Strategic management	87 manufacturing units of Fortune 200 multinational	Quantitative	Discontinuous growth modeling
Michael Halinski, Janet A. Boekhorst, David Allen, & Jessica R. L. Good	Canada, United States	Creativity During Threat to Organizational Survival: The Influence of Employee Creativity on Downsizing Survival Selection	Product launch; threat events	Individual	Organizational behavior	186 employees (Study 1) of a high-tech organization; 410 and 565 scenario experiment participants (Studies 2 and 3)	Quantitative	Structural equation modeling (Study 1); ANCOVA (Studies 2 and 3)
Tina Kiefer, Laurie J. Barclay, & Neil Conway	United Kingdom, Canada	Applying Event System Theory to Organizational Change: The Importance of Everyday Positive and Negative Events	Merger	Individual	Organizational behavior	195 employees from two public sector organizations	Quantitative	Path analysis
Jane Wenzhen Lu, & Xiaoyu Zhou	Hong Kong, Mainland China	Event Space and Firm Value: Chinese Listed Firms in the US-China Trade War	Trade war	Organization	Strategic management	2,157 publicly traded firms	Quantitative	Event study method
Maria Minniti, Zachary Rodriguez, & Trent A. Williams	United States	Resilience Within Constraints: An Event Oriented Approach to Crisis Response	Crisis (COVID-19)	Environment and Organization	Organizational theory	3,097 U.S. counties	Quantitative	OLS fixed effects regression
Cole E. Short, & Michael D. Pfarrer	United States	Managing Asymmetric Events With Anticipatory and Reactive Strategies	Clinical trial termination events	Organization	Strategic management	238 terminated Phase 3 clinical trial events in pharmaceutical industry	Quantitative	Ordinal probit regression and linear regression
Alexander D. Stajkovic, & Kayla Stajkovic	United States	A Summer of Protest: Using Event System Theory to Test an Intersectional Leadership Advantage	Protest events	Event	Organizational behavior	11,540 protests in 3,338 cities, 1,418 counties, and 50 U.S. states	Quantitative	ANCOVA; linear-mixed-effect-model
Jarrod P. Vassallo, Yoonji Seo, & Shahzad (Shaz) Ansari	Australia, United Kingdom	Reputation-Damaging Events Over a Long Time Horizon: An Event-System Model of Substantive Reputation Repair	Reputation-damaging events	Event	Strategic management	47 reputation-damaging events in the property services industry	Qualitative	Theory-elaborating qualitative approach

In “From Intent to Impact: A Proactive Event Approach for Amplifying Sustainability Across Time,” authors Patrick Flynn, Amrou Awaysheh, Paul Bliese, and Barbara Flynn focus on a more positive and proactive form of event: Implementing a new sustainability monitoring system. Using longitudinal archival data from 87 manufacturing units in a Fortune 200 multinational firm, they test several important propositions of EST regarding how event duration, timing, criticality, and disruption impact energy consumption patterns before and after the implementation of the monitoring system. Findings show that while the system generally reduces energy use, the extent of this reduction varies significantly among units, depending on event duration and criticality. Units with longer durations and higher levels of managerial engagement demonstrate greater reductions in energy consumption, therefore validating several key propositions of EST (Morgeson et al., 2015).

This study uncovers the potential benefits of planned sustainability initiatives, and increases scholarly understanding of how organizations can effectively manage energy consumption to meet sustainability goals. Moreover, the research provides novel insights into how organizations can strategically design and implement proactive events to achieve desirable outcomes through tailored event management strategies and interventions. Although EST and related conceptual work have underscored the importance of delving into proactive events (Liu et al., 2023; Morgeson et al., 2015), this study is among the first to empirically examine how event attributes can shape initial and long-term organizational changes resulting from such organizational events.

In “Creativity During Threat to Organizational Survival: The Influence of Employee Creativity on Downsizing Survival Selection,” authors Michael Halinski, Janet Boekhorst, David Allen, and Jessica Good examine how employee creativity impacts managers’ performance evaluations during organizational crises (e.g., downsizing). Leveraging EST and Threat Rigidity Theory, the authors distinguish between incremental and radical creativity and demonstrate that the two forms of creativity have opposing effects on managers’ evaluations of employee performance during threats to organizational survival. Through a three-wave field study and two experimental studies, the paper provides consistent evidence that incremental creativity leads to positive job performance evaluations, therefore enhancing employees’ chances of retention. Conversely, radical creativity, which disrupts existing processes and rules, receives negative evaluations, therefore decreasing the likelihood of employee retention during downsizing.

This research shows the critical contingency effect of events on the relationship between employee creativity and outcomes (e.g., job security and turnover) in the context of crisis. Although creativity is generally valued, the authors reveal that its impact on employee job security varies significantly depending on the type of creativity and the event context. Managers under threat and pressure tend to favor incremental creative behaviors that align with established procedures and stability, whereas radical creative behaviors are seen as risky and destabilizing. The findings provide novel insights into how creativity should be managed and assessed in the context of events and how employees might balance creative contributions and organizational needs during times of crisis.

In “Applying Event System Theory to Organizational Change: The Importance of Everyday Positive and Negative Events,” authors Tina Kiefer, Laurie Barclay, and Neil Conway make an important contribution to the organizational change literature by focusing on the effects of a merger of two public-sector organizations. Of course, the organizational

change literature has long recognized the importance of events, in part because organizational change always entails some sort of event that contrasts with a previous organizational state. Yet, this research is important and novel for at least three reasons. First, it introduces the idea of the “everyday change events” construct. These events result from the broader organizational change and have a shorter duration than the larger change event. The authors show how these events not only affect the performance of day-to-day work tasks but also show how more common events can impact fairness perceptions and overall evaluations of the broader organizational change. This exploration of top-down, single-level, and bottom-up effects is important because it emphasizes the complex impact events can have over time as their effects emerge across levels.

Second, this research theorizes and measures different facets of change as the effects of the broader event unfold across time. This includes reactions to the merger announcement as well as reactions to the changes as time passes and specific changes are implemented. This kind of longitudinal measurement is uncommon but important to understand how events and reactions to events might evolve over time. Third, this research explicitly focuses on both positive and negative events. Although this focus is uncommon in event-oriented research (Liu et al., 2023), it is crucial that event-oriented research focus on events that vary in favorability. There is good reason to believe that event favorability matters (Laulié & Morgeson, 2021) and Kiefer and colleagues’ empirical research demonstrates that negative and positive events function differently for those experiencing them.

In “Event Space and Firm Value: Chinese Listed Firms in the US–China Trade War,” authors Jane Wenzhen Lu and Xiaoyu Zhou utilize a natural experiment of the 2018 U.S.–China trade war to unpack the effects of an international event/crisis on affected firms. Working from the observation that even firms not subject to tariffs in the trade war experienced declines in stock prices, the authors push us to consider multiple dimensions of proximity beyond the traditional crisis management focus on the role of an organization’s geographical and physical proximity. By integrating EST with crisis management and inter-organizational spillover literatures, their study provides us with a more comprehensive framework that includes product market (spatial or industry proximity) and geographic market (firms exporting to the United States) and the role of key stakeholder management by the firm in managing an exogenous shock—the 2018 U.S.–China trade war. What we learn from this study is substantial. Both directly affected firms and those that are close to them are affected by the event. Further, the authors examined the role of political connections and a firm’s corporate social responsibility on these effects, and that these two strategies mitigate the effect of the crisis more for firms within the same industry (product market spatial direction) than for those exporting to the United States (geographic market spatial direction).

Lu and Zhou’s work has significant importance for the future of event-oriented research by adding new spatial dimensionality to our conceptualization of proximity and potential impact of events. For organizational researchers, their findings broaden our conceptualization of who is impacted by events and that the effects of events can spillover beyond those directly affected. What is particularly intriguing is the “insurance”-like effects of political connections and corporate social responsibility in the face of the event dependent on spatial dimension. In addition to important contributions to the scholarly literature going forward, their work suggests heretofore unexplored benefits of non-market strategies, such as political connections and corporate social responsibility, for dealing with geopolitical issues. Thus,

their findings provide practical guidance for firms dealing in today's increasingly polarized international business environment.

In "Resilience Within Constraints: An Event Oriented Approach to Crisis Response," authors Maria Minniti, Zachary Rodriguez, and Trent Williams present important evidence about the nature of organizational resilience when faced with highly disruptive crisis events. Crucially, they show how macro-level decision-making constraints ultimately impact lower-level resilience, with distributed or autonomous decision-making structures related to greater resilience to crisis events. This finding is powerful for at least two reasons. First, it shows that there are important system level features such as decision-making structures that can impact the efficacy of lower-level responding to highly disruptive events. This suggests that it is important to fully understand the broader context within which events are occurring in order to understand the most efficacious organizational response to events.

Second, these results suggest that decision-making centralization, a common response to crises, is perhaps not always the best option. Of course, centralization may be appropriate, but Minniti and colleagues' findings suggest that the appropriate response is more complex, and decentralization might sometimes be the best option. This is a tantalizing possibility and one that should be explored in future research. Crucially, it will be essential to understand the boundary conditions around decision-making centralization, and exploring a range of different types of events and crises will help us to better understand the limits of both centralization and decentralization.

In "Managing Asymmetric Events With Anticipatory and Reactive Strategies," authors Cole Short and Michael Pfarrer explore an interesting temporal element of negative events. Many event-oriented studies consider events that are simultaneously experienced by all. In this study, the authors consider "information asymmetric negative events," which are negative events that are known first to company insiders, but which will become known to others at some point—usually soon. The time window between when executive insiders find out about the event and outsiders find out about the event gives the insiders time to select and enact some impression management strategies. The intent of the impression management, of course, is to blunt the reactions of outsiders when the event is revealed to them. In the context of U.S. publicly traded firms, executives have a duty to reveal negative information to investors, but exactly when it has to be revealed is not always clear, so there is often some wiggle room.

The authors describe two impression management strategies—anticipatory and reactive—and develop theory around using these in an interrelated effort. Anticipatory impression management (AIM) strategies are enacted before the event becomes known to outsiders, and involve "proactively revealing information such as disclosures that point to other positive or negative firm actions." Reactive impression management (RIM) strategies are enacted after the event becomes known to outsiders and involve shaping perceptions by "revealing information, such as disclosures that accept responsibility and outline efforts to address a negative event's impact." These proactive and reactive strategies parallel earlier leadership event management strategies described by Morgeson (1998, 2005).

The information asymmetric negative event that they study empirically is the termination of publicized late-stage clinical trials by pharmaceutical companies, where they examine how evaluators' reactions to AIM strategies moderate RIM strategy selection following asymmetric events. They further assess the effectiveness of different combinations of AIM

and RIM strategies on investor reactions to the release of information on the event. To test the theory, they use a sample of 238 late stage, publicized clinical trial termination events in the pharmaceutical industry from 2003 to 2017.

In “A Summer of Protest: Using Event System Theory to Test an Intersectional Leadership Advantage,” authors Alexander Stajkovic and Kayla Stajkovic focus on a relatively more macro event: the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. They explore how the intersection of race and gender influenced leadership effectiveness in such a mega-threat event. Utilizing data from 11,540 protests across 3,338 U.S. cities, they show that Black women police chiefs are more effective in reducing protest-related violence. Although prior research has shown the role of leader gender in coping with mega-threat events (Sergent & Stajkovic, 2020), this research makes a unique contribution to the leadership and diversity literature by unveiling the synergistic effects of gender and race. The findings highlight the critical role of intersectional identities in shaping leadership styles that are particularly effective in navigating highly novel, disruptive, and critical events like the BLM protests.

The Stajkovic and Stajkovic study generates several important theoretical and practical implications. For example, it highlights the need for situating leadership research within the context of external events. Conceptual work has indicated that leader behaviors and attributes may exert varied impacts on firm outcomes across different event contexts (Liu, Fisher, & Chen, 2018). The evidence from this study advances this notion by showing that a police chief’s gender and race may interface to determine his or her effectiveness in curbing violence. Thus, future research should adopt an event-oriented intersectional perspective rather than centering on a single identity, and should consider the nature of events when analyzing leadership effectiveness. Leadership and diversity training can also attend more to the unique leadership styles and crisis management strategies of Black women leaders during crises. Overall, a more nuanced approach to leadership development and crisis management should capitalize on diverse identities and event characteristics.

In “Reputation-Damaging Events Over a Long Time Horizon: An Event-System Model of Substantive Reputation Repair,” authors Jarrod Vassallo, Yeonji Seo, and Shahzad (Shaz) Ansari provide a new way of understanding serial events that are less impactful individually, but when considered in sequence can create great pressure for executive intervention. Such a focus on event cycles, event clusters, and event chains (Morgeson et al., 2015) is interesting because the interconnection of events has rarely been examined. The authors describe the setting as “reputation damaging events” (RDEs) and develop an EST lens for studying them. However, one can imagine several types of events that organizations encounter across time that the authors’ approach would be useful for.

The authors conducted a qualitative study of a multinational firm over a 10-year period, analyzing 47 RDEs that culminated in a substantive intervention by executives to initiate repairs to the company’s reputation. The study reveals that managers think of reputation management as a complex process with self-correcting subsystems. Most of the time they avoid intervention because they expect that the subsystems already in place will make adjustments without intervention by executives. As long as these subsystems are resolving the damage done by individual RDEs, executives do not intervene. However, non-linear, transformative intervention is sometimes needed—typically when a subsystem experiences a breakdown.

Essentially, the authors describe two phases. In the first, executives are confident of the hierarchy of adaptive event cycles (the organizational processes already in place to resolve

damage done by individual RDEs). As a result, executives purposefully avoid intervention following most RDEs. Put simply, executives trust in the existing processes to resolve the concerns generated by individual RDEs. This phase is closely linked to classical organization theory. In the second, when executives conclude that the adaptive organizational processes in place are not effectively repairing the damage done to the firm's reputation, they intervene with top-down initiated substantive repair.

Opportunities for Future Event-Oriented Research

By adopting an event-oriented perspective, the articles in this special issue offer exciting theoretical and empirical insights in their respective research domains, as well as pointing to new areas of study. In addition to the research opportunities highlighted above and in the articles, there are a number of cross-cutting research opportunities that are important to highlight.

Several of the manuscripts in the special issue focused on events that are not apocalyptic but do represent a discrete break in the continuity that characterizes organizations in stasis. Studying events with a strategic management lens highlights the importance of managerial attention. Events, nearly by definition, attract and hold managerial attention. While it is well understood that apocalyptic events demand managerial attention, smaller events, which have comprised the most common context for event research, also demand significant attention. Most evolutionary change processes can be described as long periods of convergence (and accompanying stability) that are interrupted periodically by short periods of substantial change and upheaval (e.g., O'Reilly & Tushman, 2021). Thus, the event literature can be extended by research on how smaller events (e.g., everyday change events proposed in Kiefer et al.) lead to larger, more disruptive events.

Event-oriented research is in its early stages, with the potential to contribute to many management sub-domains, including job search, human resource management, entrepreneurship, and diversity management, as explored by Akkermans, Rodrigues, Mol, Seibert, and Khapova (2021). Several theoretical issues will need to be elaborated on to allow event-oriented research to contribute to these areas. For example, to what extent is EST a theory rather than a family of related theories, each with its own assumption, processes, and outcomes specific to its own area of event research? At this time, several sub-theories applicable to specific areas appear to have already developed, including turnover, careers, and teams. It is likely that each of these will need to develop as relatively independently *unit* theories and yet articulate together in a *programmatically* way if EST is to make strong contributions to management theory and practice (Cronin, Stouten, & van Knippenberg, 2022). For example, should all event-oriented theories incorporate the strength, spatial, and temporal dimensions of events as proposed in EST?

EST is used in all of the papers in the special issue. As a general theoretical system, EST can be used regardless of the specific domain of inquiry. The papers highlight the broad applicability of EST, as it was used in more micro domains like human resource management and organizational behavior, and more macro domains like organizational theory and strategic management. In addition, EST was used for both qualitative and quantitative research designs. Yet, it is important that EST continues to evolve and develop. The papers in this special issue identify many refinements and advancements that can enhance EST and

event-oriented research more generally. For example, scholars should more thoroughly investigate different forms of spatial proximity (Lu & Zhou) and study multiple events as cycles, clusters, and chains (Vassallo, Seo, & Ansari).

Organizational research is often organized by major topics based on the features of research phenomena (e.g., work design, leadership, and emotions). To generate more refined and novel theories, future research should develop an event taxonomy focused on the range of distinct types of events that are important in organizational settings. For example, the papers in the special issue focused on such events as corporate scandals, technology implementations, product launches, mergers, trade wars, crises, clinical trials, protests, and reputation-damaging events. This is a diverse set of events, but many more possible kinds of events exist that impact organizations in different ways.

Relatedly, as the special issue papers demonstrate, the event construct is complex and different kinds of events might require their own unique theories to fully account for the nuances of a given domain. For example, specific event-oriented theories have been developed to understand the turnover phenomenon (Laulié & Morgeson, 2021; Lee & Mitchell, 1994). Our field is filled with these kinds of feature-oriented middle-range theories (Merton, 1957) and there is no reason why we might not expect to witness a proliferation of event-oriented middle-range theories. One can imagine that EST (and other event-oriented theory) can, “enable the development of more fine-grained organizational theories” (Morgeson et al., 2015: 530). This has begun to occur in the organizational sciences, with multiple middle-range theories about the effects of other specific events such as mega-events (i.e., negative, large-scale diversity-related episodes; Leigh & Melwani, 2019), organizational change events (Oreg et al., 2018), stress events (Lerman, Munyon, & Carr, 2020), and work–life shock events (Crawford, Thompson, & Ashforth, 2019), among others. These theories are needed because they provide detailed theoretical explanations of how distinctive types of events are linked to meaningful outcomes.

An increasing number of studies have become event-driven (e.g., the articles published in the special issue on the COVID-19 pandemic by the *Journal of Applied Psychology*). However, the majority of the current event studies are somewhat “passive,” focusing on events that emerge in the external context. For example, while no one wishes for geopolitical crises like trade wars to facilitate organizational research, we can in this case be grateful for the opportunity posed by the U.S.-China trade war for advancing our collective knowledge through Lu and Zhou’s work. To benefit more from event-oriented research, scholars should not wait for events to happen, but should rather actively engage in organizational development to identify and even facilitate the emergence of significant events. For instance, scholars can play a meaningful role in helping organizations to design and implement Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities. This involvement allows scholars to observe the dynamics and impacts of these events in real-time, leading to richer insights and more practical recommendations for future organizational strategies. Engaging directly in the planning and execution phases of events also enables scholars to apply theoretical frameworks in real-world settings, thus bridging the gap between theory and practice. This hands-on approach can lead to the discovery of new phenomena and variables that might otherwise go unnoticed in purely observational or retrospective studies. Moreover, it fosters stronger relationships between academia and industry and promotes a collaborative environment that benefits both parties.

More sophisticated event research methodologies need to be developed to better align with event-oriented studies. For instance, event history analyses have been successfully used in competitive dynamics research. Individual moves by rival firms are often treated as events. However, much of this research methodology treats any discrete action intended to benefit the attacking firm at the expense of targeted firms as an “event.” This treatment is fine for event history analyses, but does not align with the tenets of EST or the widely accepted view that events are substantive and disruptive, and typically prompt discrete changes. Put differently, a competitive move like the introduction of the iPhone may qualify as a disruptive event (relative to a more ordinary competitive move) but currently competitive dynamics research does not have clear methodologies for separating everyday competitive moves (e.g., price changes, product upgrades) from those that are more disruptive and demanding of substantive change among the rivals. It may be that dynamic capabilities at the firm level are rooted in both everyday competitive moves as well as punctuated strategic shifts (e.g., O’Reilly & Tushman, 2021). Additionally, more advanced research methodologies are needed to examine multiple events nested in cycles, clusters, and chains (Liu et al., 2023). For example, scholars still struggle to develop empirical studies regarding how more routine competitive events, reflecting a give and take among rivals, can lead to a large and disruptive event that prompts discontinuous change across the competitive field.

As event-oriented theory continues to develop, the issue of prediction over description will need to be clearly confronted. Shocking events break actors out of the status quo, virtually by definition, but it is less simple for prospective research to predict what new behavior, feature, or subsequent equilibrium will be reached. Retrospective work, on the other hand, risks being selective and even tautological if, for example, the analyst considers turnover shocks as the set of those shocks they already know resulted in turnover. The identification of clear theoretical mechanisms is required for prediction accuracy, but this is likely to develop within unit theories that are specific to the level of the actor or the nature of the shock. Prediction has perhaps been most successful when shocks are positioned as a kind of trigger within a known model or process, and affect rate or direction. Shocks, for example, lead to predictable outcomes when they trigger a pre-existing schema, for example in turnover (Lee et al., 1996) or entrepreneurship (Seibert, Nielsen, & Kraimer, 2021). Situating events within other known process models seems an important direction for future work. For example, there remain many avenues for future research at the intersection of careers and events, including the “ecology” of career shocks, the theoretical mechanisms underlying the effects of career shocks, resource buffers against shocks, and the role of career shocks as triggers for other career behaviors.

Conclusion

In our call for papers we indicated that the aim of the special issue was to solicit and encourage event-oriented organizational research—regardless of hierarchical level—with no limits on theoretical approach, and to stimulate the use of diverse research methods. The nine articles in the special issue helped us far exceed these goals. Not only does the special issue help highlight the diverse event-oriented organizational studies that are being conducted, it also shows the incredible possibilities of event-oriented research regardless of research domain or topic of interest. It is our new hope that this special issue will help motivate scholars

to continue to develop novel theoretical and empirical research for enhancing our understanding of the impact of events on individuals, teams, and organizations.

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