

Organizing in the Folding of Time Shaping Organizational Change Trajectories at Turning Points

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Organizing in the folding of time: Shaping organizational change trajectories at turning points

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	<p>understand the dynamics between ongoing change and the shaping of trajectories, we refer to change processes as turning points, arguing that turning points are immanent to – and formative of – trajectories. We define turning points in terms of their definitional, directional and curvilinear features, which we relate to the shaping of organizational change trajectories. Drawing on Deleuze’s concept of the fold and the distinction between actual and singular events, we theorize how actors connect past and future turning points of the trajectory as singular events into enacting the actual events of the current turning point. Inspired by Deleuze’s conception of the fold, we then develop a theoretical framework for the shaping of organizational change trajectories at turning points. This framework contributes to current change research by explaining how ongoing change processes give shape to long-term trajectories that subsequently shape the ongoing process of change. It also contributes to the literature by proposing a more dynamic and central role of continuity in change. Finally, our use of Deleuze’s concept of the fold enables us to suggest how theorizing actors’ movement through time may extend current process views of time.</p>

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Organizing in the folding of time: Shaping organizational change trajectories at turning points

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Abstract

Organizational change research has shown how change processes in organizations connect sequentially to form a trajectory of change through time; however, research has yet to offer an understanding of how ongoing organizational change integrates more distant change processes across time to shape the organization's long-term trajectory. To better understand the dynamics between ongoing change and the shaping of trajectories, we refer to change processes as turning points, arguing that turning points are immanent to – and formative of – trajectories. We define turning points in terms of their definitional, directional and curvilinear features, which we relate to the shaping of organizational change trajectories. Drawing on Deleuze's concept of the fold and the distinction between actual and singular events, we theorize how actors connect past and future turning points of the trajectory as singular events into enacting the actual events of the current turning point. Inspired by Deleuze's conception of the fold, we then develop a theoretical framework for the shaping of organizational change trajectories at turning points. This framework contributes to current change research by explaining how ongoing change processes give shape to long-term trajectories that subsequently shape the ongoing process of change. It also contributes to the literature by proposing a more dynamic and central role of continuity in change. Finally, our use of Deleuze's concept of the fold enables us to suggest how theorizing actors' movement through time may extend current process views of time.

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3 ‘The human mind cannot grasp the causes of events in their
4 completeness, but the desire to find those causes is implanted in the
5 human soul. And the human mind, *without considering* the
6 multiplicity and complexity of the conditions any one of which taken
7 separately may seem to be the cause, seizes the first approximation to
8 a cause that seems to him intelligible, and says: “This is the cause!”
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12 (Leo Tolstoy, *War and Peace* [emphasis added])
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16 Introduction

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18 Although Tolstoy’s *War and Peace* is regarded as a literary masterpiece, it is also an account
19 of how military strategy evolves through the interplay between seemingly disparate events of
20 change over time. As argued throughout the novel, the overall trajectory of change (in this case,
21 the reversal of Napoleon’s dream of conquering Russia) is not sufficiently well explained by
22 stringing together major events. Instead, Tolstoy relates how multiple disparate and ‘less
23 eventful’ events are connected to the major events that eventually led to Napoleon’s defeat and
24 demise as well as a changed Europe. Read through the lens of mainstream organizational
25 change research, Tolstoy’s account may be interpreted as a story of how change processes
26 accumulate and amplify to sequentially form a trajectory through time. However, such a
27 successive approach to change would overlook how the reversal of Napoleon’s Russian
28 campaign is explained by the Russian general Kutuzov’s adherence to the trajectory of war as
29 multiple battles and retreats at different points in time. On this account, each battle or retreat
30 would be understood in light of an overall trajectory of disparate events and not in light of their
31 succession.
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42 Mainstream research has mainly considered change as the succession of change
43 processes (e.g. Brown & Eisenhardt, 1997; Cappellaro, Compagni & Dacin, 2024; Jian, 2011;
44 Sonenshein, 2010; Swider, Yang & Wang, 2023). This approach has allowed scholars to show
45 how ongoing change processes emerge from preceding change and connect to ensuing change
46 (e.g. Plowman et al., 2007). However, it does not account for how *disparate* change processes
47 connect *across* time, nor does current change research account for how ongoing change
48 processes integrate more-distant past and future change processes. As our alternative reading
49 of Tolstoy’s *War and Peace* demonstrates, it is crucial that organizational scholars address this
50 conceptual and empirical challenge to deepen our understanding of the temporal complexities
51 of change processes across time. Research focusing on time and temporality has revealed that
52 actors do not always have the luxury of connecting change processes sequentially (Hatch &
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3 Schultz, 2017). They are sometimes faced with the challenge of relating ongoing change
4 processes to possible future changes imposed by emerging technologies or institutional
5 frameworks (Feuls, Hernes & Schultz, 2024) or to changes in a more-distant past (Feddersen,
6 Koll & Geraldi, 2023; Ybema, 2010, 2014). Actors also need to connect different *types* of
7 change processes across time. For example, scholars have shown how identity changes that
8 have taken place in the more distant past may support ongoing strategic change processes
9 (Cloutier & Ravasi, 2020; Schultz & Hernes, 2020). Such examples illustrate the need for
10 scholars to consider a wider temporal reach of change processes and a wider heterogeneity of
11 change processes than usually considered. They also underscore the importance of moving on
12 from limiting organizational research to successive change processes.

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20 To theorize how actors connect ongoing change processes to temporally distant change
21 processes, we draw on a trajectory view of change, and to better understand how actors integrate
22 change processes across time, we define change as turning points. Turning points exhibit the
23 gradual and directional characteristics that make them formative of trajectorial shapes, which
24 allows us to discuss how trajectorial shape helps actors connect more-distant change processes
25 to ongoing change processes. We are mindful of Tolstoy's warning about the fallacy of defining
26 overall change in terms of major events to avoid overlooking seemingly smaller yet significant
27 events. Therefore, we define any change – small or large – as a turning point and interpret its
28 impact in terms of its part in shaping the overall trajectory of change. A major conceptual
29 challenge we tackle in this paper is how past and future turning points are brought to bear on
30 the ongoing process of enacting a turning point. Actors likely experience a turning point along
31 their trajectory as a series of tightly interconnected and complex sets of events, whereas past
32 and future turning points are seen as aggregates of such sets of events. How to integrate these
33 two temporal experiences remains a challenge in organizational change research.

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44 We draw upon Deleuze's (1991, 2006) conception of the fold to theorize the temporal
45 dynamics that take place within and between turning points. Deleuze's metaphysical approach,
46 which is particularly visible in his treatment of time, matter, form and creativity, allows for
47 exploring the multiplicity and complexity of conditions that Tolstoy mentions in our opening
48 quote. Deleuze's discussion about the fold shows how change may be directional, indivisible
49 and continuous rather than a step-wise process. Deleuze shows how the process of folding is
50 inextricably linked to the shape of multiple folds, such as expressed in origami; the art of
51 folding paper into shapes such as animals or flowers. Origami is illustrative of how the process
52 of folding gives shape to an emerging figure while the emerging figure simultaneously guides
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3 the process of folding. The dynamics between folding and the emerging shape help us theorize
4 the interplay between turning points and temporal trajectories of change.
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7 Our study contributes to research by advancing a temporal trajectory perspective of
8 organizational change. It addresses a current lacuna in organizational change research, which
9 is how disparate change processes connect across time to form trajectories of change. Defining
10 change as turning points enables us to discuss how the process of enacting turning points gives
11 shape to trajectories and how the shape of trajectories influence the process of enacting the
12 turning point. This is made possible by drawing upon Deleuze's distinction between singular
13 and actual events, which helps explain how actors connect multiple turning points into
14 trajectories. Besides contributing a temporal trajectory perspective to organizational change
15 research, our paper invites reflection on a more dynamic and central role of continuity in
16 change. Our discussion dissolves the often assumed dualism between continuity and change
17 and illustrates how the enactment of turning points, rather than representing change and/or
18 continuity, involves processes of 'changing continuity'. Finally, our discussion extends
19 temporal theorizing in organizational research by considering actors' movement through time.
20 Whereas extant temporal theorizing has focused on how actors construct the present through
21 their projection of past and future events, our discussion sheds light on how actors consider the
22 folding shape of past and future trajectories as they move through time.
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34 The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. We begin by introducing turning
35 points as a basis for shaping trajectories and define turning points as exhibiting definitional,
36 directional and curvilinear features. We then introduce Deleuze's concept of the fold and the
37 distinction between actual and singular events, which we use to develop a framework for
38 analysing how actors connect multiple turning points into temporal trajectories of change. The
39 paper concludes by discussing suggested implications of our investigation for organizational
40 continuity and change, temporal trajectories and temporal theorizing.
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48 **Turning Points and Temporal Trajectories**

49 *Defining turning points*

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51 Mainstream views of change tend to depict change as a difference in state between two different
52 points in time (Van de Ven & Poole, 2005). An advantage of such a view is that it emphasizes
53 the before-and-after states of change processes. However, as Langley and Tsoukas (2010) point
54 out, such a view says little about the actual process of *changing*. A trajectory view of change
55 offers a combination of a before-and-after and process view of change, whereby the difference
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3 before and after is described as a change of direction of a course of events, and the process of
4 changing unfolds as a movement throughout turning points. However, although several
5 organizational scholars (e.g. Blagoev & Schreyögg, 2019; Engwall & Westling, 2004; Guérard,
6 Bode & Gustafsson, 2013; Putnam & Fuller, 2014; Sklaveniti, 2020) have discussed turning
7 points, they have tended to reduce turning points to singular pivotal events. Scholars who have
8 studied turning points more in-depth (e.g. Abbott, 1997; Elder, 1985) have discussed turning
9 points as immanent to – and formative of – trajectories. These scholars have asserted that
10 turning points represent a key aspect of temporal trajectories by giving them their particular
11 shape (see also Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). For example, Abbott (1997) argues that a temporal
12 trajectory necessitates turning points; otherwise, the trajectory would amount to a linear process
13 without change. From this perspective, the role of a turning point is not assessed on the basis
14 of perceived impact, but on how it takes part in shaping the temporal trajectory observed at
15 emerging events along the trajectory.

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Another undertheorized aspect of turning points, is how they forms part of trajectories
of change. With few exceptions (e.g. Sklaveniti, 2020) organizational scholars have not
considered turning points as constitutive of trajectories of change. Recalling Tolstoy's
argument about the connecting of disparate events across time, it becomes important to
understand how turning points taking place months, years, decades or even centuries apart may
connect into a recognizable trajectorial shape. In this study, we assume that turning points
unfold differently through time and consequently shape temporal trajectories in different ways.
This demands a definition of turning points that enables us to understand how they shape
temporal trajectories as they unfold. To this effect, we will work from the previously introduced
definition of turning points as exhibiting definitional, directional and curvilinear features of
temporal trajectories.

Definitional. Turning points become definitional of temporal trajectories by changing
the course of events in certain ways. While individual turning points represent a change in the
course of events at a certain point in time, a succession of multiple turning points becomes
expressive of the shape of the overall temporal trajectory. As Sklaveniti (2020) concluded in
her observations of a succession of turning points in leadership development, 'On its own, each
turning point could not say anything; combined, they form a leadership trajectory' (p. 563).
Temporal trajectories may be shaped in different ways as turning points become interrelated.
For instance, successive turning points may represent an overall shift towards a new logic of
organizing, such as complete production process automation, with each turning point
reinforcing the trend towards complete automation. Alternatively, successive turning points

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3 may represent a reversal in a course of events. For instance, banks that have attempted to shift
4 to almost entirely digital customer service may encounter customers who prefer to interact with
5 humans, causing banks to add a turning point along their trajectory that embraces a mixture of
6 online and people-based services. Schultz and Hernes (2020) discussed how the Carlsberg
7 Group evolved through distinct shifts in its identity between 2000 and 2015 to form a temporal
8 narrative of its evolution through time, where major turning points included moving from a
9 craft-based to a fast-moving consumer goods philosophy in 2009 to moving away from that to
10 a combined craft-based and climate-oriented philosophy in 2015. The Carlsberg case shows
11 how turning points may combine to demonstrate reversals of the direction of events across
12 time.
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20 *Directional.* Turning points confer a particular shape upon temporal trajectories by
21 marking a change in direction from an existing one to a new course of events (Abbott, 1997;
22 Guérard et al., 2013; Hareven & Masaoka, 1988). Hareven and Masaoka (1988) defined turning
23 points as ‘process[es] involving the alteration of life path, of a “course correction”’ (p. 274),
24 while Guérard et al. (2013) defined turning points as occurring when the *direction* the course
25 of a process changes (p. 783 [italics added]). The perceived difference between the existing
26 and the emerging direction of a course of events defines the degree of directional change, which
27 scholars have demonstrated to differ from case to case. In their analysis of turning points in
28 negotiations between organizational actors Putnam and Fuller (2014) show how new
29 developments at turning points would signify varying degrees of change from existing
30 negotiations. Some developments would lead to a sudden break in the negotiations, whereas
31 others would affect the direction less radically such as when the actors engaged in routine
32 negotiations.
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43 *Curvilinear.* The curvilinear features highlight how turning points extend through time
44 to allow a gradual change in the direction of the trajectory to take place (Abbott, 1997). From
45 this perspective, turning points consist of transitional processes of interlocking events (Elder,
46 1985) that enable directional change to occur. The curvilinear aspect of turning points has
47 received scant attention in organizational research, with some exceptions (e.g. Carlsen, 2006;
48 Engwall & Westling, 2004). The curvilinear nature of turning points implies that even if events
49 at a turning point result in a radical change of direction, such change is accomplished through
50 a gradual process of interlinking events through the turning point. For instance, organizational
51 change processes involve multiple meetings throughout the organization, with each meeting
52 representing minor yet significant change because plans are progressively drawn and redrawn,
53 as shown in Plowman et al.’s (2007) study of a church breakfast. During such processes,
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3 meetings and encounters may occur in a chain-like fashion, as Skov, Bjerregaard and Hansen
4 (2022) observed in their study of interactions in and between meetings during a strategy
5 formation process in Danish schools. Different turning points may exhibit different degrees of
6 curvature in terms of angularity or smoothness. For example, an organization's identity may
7 evolve as a smooth curvature over several years or decades, as shown in the above case of
8 Carlsberg, whereas trajectories of organizational practices reveal how sharp turning points
9 mark transitions between relatively stable periods (e.g. Geiger, Danner-Schröder and Kremser,
10 2020).

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12 The directional feature of turning points also has implications for how events are
13 connected within turning points. For example, a radical change of direction in a trajectory at a
14 turning point may arise from strongly interconnected events within that turning point.
15 Sklaveniti (2020), who studied successive meetings in real-time among participants in a
16 leadership development programme, provided an example of this, citing how participants
17 would try to connect past and future meetings (events) to define a directional change in the
18 trajectory. Research has also revealed how events at turning points may involve high
19 emotionality or conflict (Engwall & Westling, 2004) and trigger a radical change of direction
20 in a trajectory.

21 22 *Multiple turning points and temporal trajectories*

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24 The above discussion suggests the importance of considering multiple turning points in the
25 analysis. Applying the three features to multiple turning points can offer a potentially rich
26 analysis of how actors connect multiple turning points to constitute their temporal trajectory.
27 With few exceptions (e.g. Sklaveniti, 2020) the turning point literature has predominantly
28 focused on turning points as one-off occurrences. As part of a trajectory, a one-off turning point
29 would look like the one illustrated in Figure 1 in the case of the adoption of Artificial
30 Intelligence (AI) for data processing.

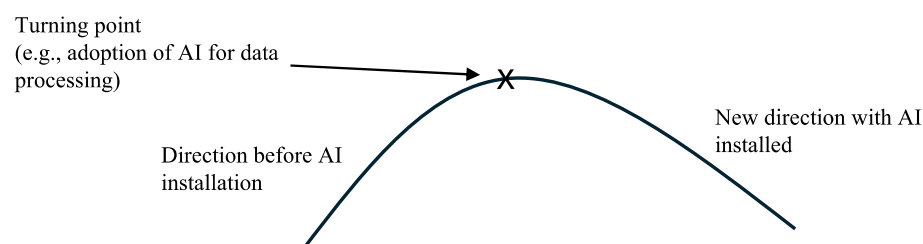
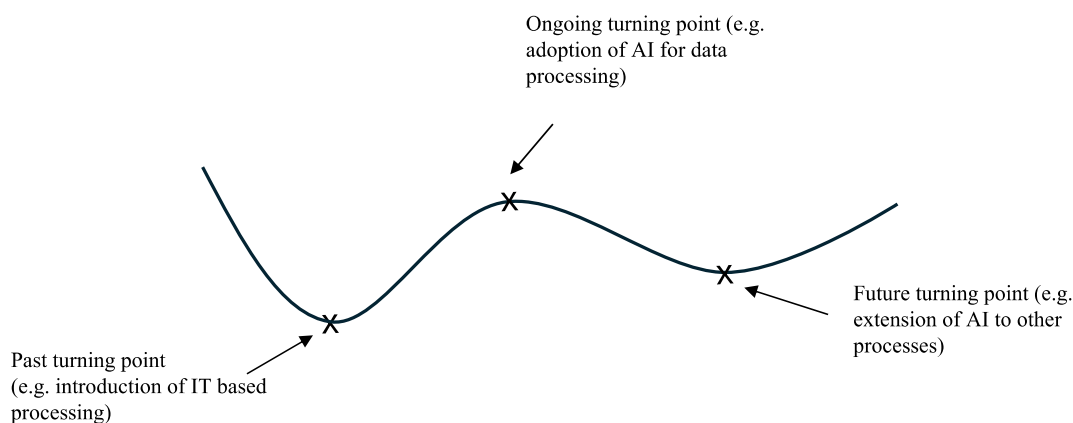


Figure 1. Singular turning point trajectory

However, actors confront multiple turning points along their temporal trajectory, as argued by organizational scholars (Bothello & Salles-Djelic, 2018; Carlsen, 2006; Guérard et al., 2013; Kraemer, Whiteman, & Banerjee, 2013). Examining multiple turning points enables richer accounts of the change trajectory than one-off turning points because it can offer accounts of how temporal trajectories change direction at different points in time, which may stimulate reflection on the coherence and implications of those changes across time. Figure 2 presents a hypothetical case of three turning points representing three different yet related change processes involving the introduction of a new technology in an organization. Multiple turning points, as Figure 2 indicates, form a trajectory shape that indicates the introduction of different technologies over time as well as how the organization moves towards and away from different technologies at different turning points over time to form the overall shape of the trajectory.

**Figure 2.** Multiple turning point trajectory

Given that turning points give shape to trajectories as they take place, it is crucial to consider trajectories as being in a state of becoming; that is to say as ongoing accomplishments (Weick, 1995) of emerging events. As Hernes (2017) argues, events or changes along a trajectory are not just mere happenings, but each event or change adds to and modifies the trajectory and changes actors' sense of where the trajectory is leading (see also Reinecke & Lawrence, 2023). This implies that trajectories are shaped and reshaped at turning points, and consequently that turning points constitute trajectories (see also Abbott, 1997). For example, efforts to implement artificial intelligence (AI) at the ongoing turning point in Figure 2 may be influenced by the

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3 ways in which the actors involved draw a line between the past turning point of integrating IT
4 solutions to a possible future turning point of integrating AI into other processes in the
5 organization. In addition, their efforts may be guided by the ways they imagine the movement
6 towards, away from and beyond the three turning points.
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10 Given our intention to theorize how actors connect multiple turning points into temporal
11 trajectories, a crucial issue to explore is how past and future turning points become integrated
12 into processes of navigating the ongoing turning point. As curvilinear processes, turning points
13 evolve through connecting events to create a change in the trajectory's direction. But once a
14 turning point fades into the past, the complex and dynamic processes of interconnecting events
15 that took place at the time of navigating the turning point need to be translated into an aggregate
16 form (as 'the event'). The same principle applies to future projected turning points that need to
17 be considered as events in aggregate form rather than complex and dynamic processes of
18 connecting events through the turning point. As we will discuss below, although an emerging
19 turning point may be experienced as the connecting of imminent events, turning points become
20 increasingly experienced as singular and pivotal events with expanding temporal distance from
21 the present. For example, Feddersen, Koll and Geraldi (2023) show how the energy company
22 Ørsted (formerly DONG Energy) began to expand offshore wind farms in the late 2010s.
23 According to the authors the establishment of the world's first offshore wind farm, Vindeby,
24 two decades earlier inspired this expansion, in combination with imagining future events of an
25 expanding offshore wind energy market. Between the Vindeby event in the past and anticipated
26 future events of offshore wind energy markets, the company undertook a substantial change
27 process which integrated numerous interconnected events that led to a change of direction from
28 a primarily onshore wind energy trajectory towards an offshore wind energy trajectory. Figure
29 3 shows how the introduction of a new technology may be experienced as a gradual
30 implementation process, marked by various interconnected events and how past and future
31 turning points may be integrated into the ongoing turning point in an aggregate form as one
32 event.
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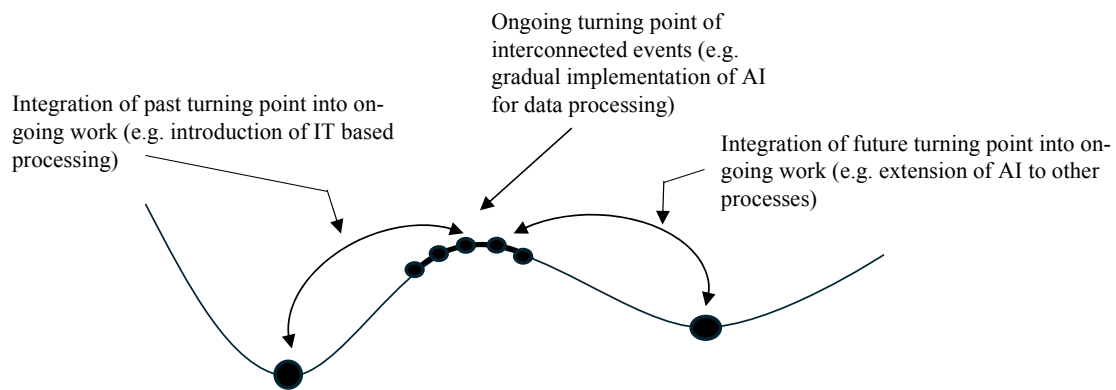


Figure 3. Ongoing turning points and the integration of past and future turning points

However, having illustrated the integration between ongoing turning points and past and future turning points, we are still faced with the challenge of theorizing *how* such integration shapes temporal trajectories. We argue that this challenge may be overcome by drawing upon Deleuze's (1991) construct of the fold. In the next section, we detail the temporal assumptions behind his concept of the fold, then discussing how his notions of actual and singular events can form the foundation of a framework for theorizing the shaping of organizational change trajectories at turning points.

Deleuze's Concept of the Fold and Events

Deleuze's (1991) concept of the fold is particularly interesting for this study because it represents a geometry similar to turning points¹. Drawing on Deleuze's work and some of his interpreters we outline the concept of the fold and its origins in more detail. We then explain Deleuze's understanding of events and his distinction between actual and singular events, which is helpful for developing our framework for theorizing the shaping of organizational change trajectories at turning points in the next section.

The fold

Based on his study of philosophy, mathematics, art, music, design, architecture and cinema, Deleuze depicts movement through time using various geometries of folds, the argument being that folds express infinity in ways that a straight line cannot (see in particular Deleuze, 1991, 2006). The radicality of his metaphysics lies in the idea of expressing both the infinity and indivisibility of time². Time, he argues, can be folded in an infinite number of ways while

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3 preserving the feature of time as indivisible rather than separated events. Taking inspiration
4 from Bergson (1911) and Whitehead (1929), Deleuze (1991) insists that unlike straight lines,
5 movement is seamless and has no endpoints, no starts and stops, no separations and no
6 privileged vantage points. He then uses the fold to express infinite continuity, movement and
7 change across all forms of matter. Any matter, whether organic or inorganic, may be
8 understood as folding and unfolding, whether it moves, grows or transforms. His concept of
9 the fold seeks to explain how matter is ‘defined less by its heterogeneous and genuinely distinct
10 parts than by the manner in which, by virtue of particular folds, these parts become inseparable’
11 (Deleuze, 1991, p. 245).

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19 Deleuze’s concept of the fold is a subtle way to understand the relationship between
20 indivisibility and change. Indivisibility suggests that no separations can be made because that
21 would destroy the essence of movement. Yet, change occurs, otherwise nothing would form.
22 The imagery of folds demonstrates how change may be directional rather than step-wise,
23 although the change process is indivisible and continuous. We recognize directional change as
24 folds in folded sheets of paper or clothing (see Serres and Latour’s (1995) dialogue about a
25 crumpled handkerchief for example). Deleuze (2006) suggests that a material expression of the
26 fold is origami; the art of folding paper into shapes such as animals or flowers. Each fold can
27 be seen as a process of change that relates to the emerging shape as new folds of varied
28 geometries are added to the emerging figure. The resulting shapes are produced by folding a
29 single sheet of paper without adding any external elements, which implies that every part gets
30 its shape (and hence meaning) from its immanent relationship with all the other parts. Deleuze’s
31 focus on movement-as-folding invites an understanding of how indivisibility and change are
32 two sides of the same coin. One cannot exist without the other; their coexistence can only be
33 expressed through folding.

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Once we accept the fold as a line (or plane; see Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) of
indivisibility and change we can explore the fold as movement through time. Importantly, we
can understand the fold as a way to comprehend the multiplicity of change. Deleuze (1991)
noted that ‘The multiple is not merely that which has many parts, but that which is folded in
many ways’ (p. 228). In other words, multiplicity refers to different shapes and not different
parts. The above example of an organization introducing new technology provides a suitable
illustration of the multiplicity of folding. Figure 4 illustrates how three different change
processes of introducing technological change can be represented as three different folding
shapes. The narrowest fold depicts the introduction of new IT systems, which we imagine
represents the smallest departure from the current circumstances. In this case, the space

between moving away and coming towards represents the narrowest space for implementing change. At the other end of the scale, full-scale AI implementation represents the most radical change, with the difference between ‘moving away’ and ‘coming towards’ representing the widest space for implementing change.

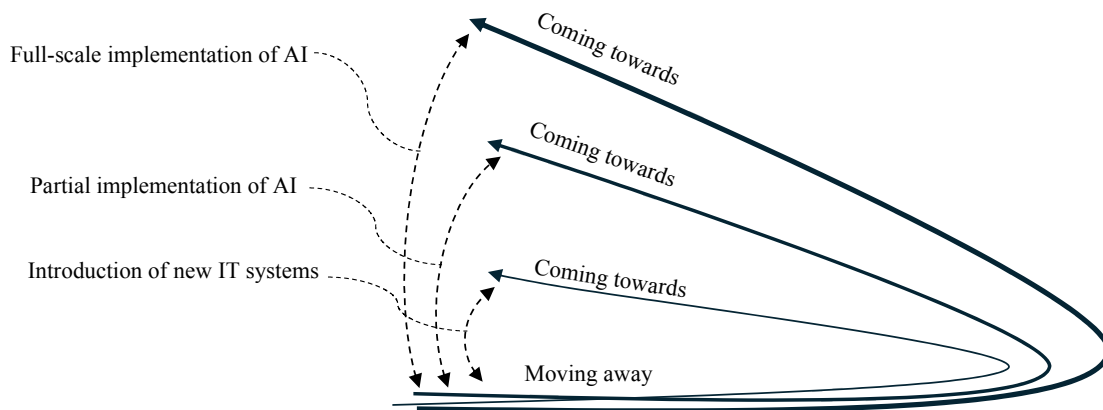


Figure 4. The multiplicity of folding: Three different folding shapes

Figure 4 also depicts how folds may contain other folds. As Deleuze (1991) explained, folds ‘do not separate into parts of parts, but rather divide infinitely into smaller and smaller folds that always retain a certain cohesion’ (p. 231). The introduction of new IT systems and partial implementation of AI represent coherent parts that form the folding shape of the full-scale implementation of AI; however, this also indicates that some folds may become hidden. For example, Cappelen and Strandgaard Pedersen (2020) show how actors integrate certain pasts (e.g. the Spice Road and the Silk Road) to shape a culinary movement’s trajectory (the New Anatolian Kitchen movement) while folding other pasts (e.g. Ottoman palace cuisine) into obscurity.

Although the concept of folds may seem abstract, it is important to emphasize Deleuze’s (1991) idea of why we use concepts, which he argues are not to be seen as representations of phenomena but as a means to make new knowledge available about phenomena, i.e. to make something new come into existence (Kristensen, Lopdrup-Hjorth, & Sørensen, 2014). Deleuze offers a different view of ‘theories’ than found in dominant organizational research by arguing for understanding their immanence rather than how they are separated from one another. We will next discuss how Deleuze’s use of events and folds can

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3 help establish a different understanding of the dynamics between turning points and
4 organizations' temporal trajectories compared with previous conceptions.
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8 *Events*

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10 Events are central to Deleuze's work (Robinson, 2010). In our interpretation of Deleuze, we
11 apply the concept of events to explain how folds exhibit features that are similar to turning
12 points. First, folds are *definitional* in that they comprise interconnecting events, which is also
13 based on Deleuze's reliance on Whitehead's (1929) notion of events as constitutive of time and
14 mutually interrelated through time. Second, folds exhibit geometric properties. They are
15 *directional* in the sense that they represent shifts between courses of events. Third, folds are
16 *curvilinear*. According to Deleuze (1991), folds comprise interconnected events that form a
17 swirling movement through time. He refers to folding as a "labyrinth of continuity", where 'a
18 piece of fabric or a sheet of paper [...] divides into an infinite number of folds or disintegrates
19 into curvilinear movements, each one determined by the consistency or the participation of its
20 setting' (1991, p. 231).
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29 An important aspect of folds is how events interrelate as distinct entities yet enable a
30 sense of indivisible movement through time. According to Deleuze (1991), events do not exist
31 as isolated occasions stretching along a line from the past to the present to the future. On the
32 contrary, events *extend* over one another through time in an 'infinite relation of continuity
33 between wholes and parts' (Robinson, 2010, p. 124). His treatment of events echoes
34 Whitehead's (1929) point about events being immanent to one another (Hernes, 2014).
35 Although this may seem abstract, multiple examples in organizational research have shown
36 how events extend through other events in time to give other events their distinctive features.
37 For example, Hatch and Schultz's (2017) account of the 'golden words' of the Carlsberg
38 founder is a case in point that appears in their study of how actors at Carlsberg Group evoked
39 an event from more than a century ago when Carlsberg's founder coined the phrase *semper*
40 *ardens*, which means always burning and stems from an anecdote from Ecole de Rome in Italy.
41 Following the original event, this motto was reintroduced at various times over the years and
42 reinforced when it appeared carved in stone over the portal of Carlsberg's head offices:
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53 The stone carvings embodied what today is part of Carlsberg's past, where Semper Ardens
54 lay captive for over a century before a group of master brewers set the motto free in the
55 name of a micro-brewed line of beer they developed in the late 1990s. This first
56 contemporary use of Semper Ardens was active for less than 10 years before it fell into
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3 disuse and lay hidden again for almost another decade, following which a team working
4 on Carlsberg's corporate identity statement brought it to the forefront once again (Hatch
5 & Schultz, 2017, p. 661).
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8 This example of the origin of a company motto underpinned by a material inscription,
9 illustrates how certain events may prove resilient through time and extend over other events
10 through time, despite falling into oblivion at times. However, theorizing the simultaneous
11 connection of adjacent events at turning points and the distant connection of events between
12 turning points requires concepts that relate events *at* turning points to events at past and future
13 turning points. Put more succinctly, how can we express past and future turning points as events
14 that may be brought to bear on events that make up the movement through the current turning
15 point? We will next discuss how Deleuze's (1990) distinction between actual and singular
16 events makes this possible. We will consider actual events as those events that make up a fold
17 as it takes place, and singular events as descriptive of 'aggregate', temporally distant folds, as
18 perceived from the current fold.
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29 *Actual and singular events*

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31 Actual events include the myriad encounters of various durations between people in an
32 organization in which they innovate, improvise and modify existing solutions and routines (see,
33 e.g. MacKay & Chia, 2013; Orlikowski, 1996; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Weick & Quinn, 1999).
34 Actors experience such events first-hand, as concrete existence, according to Deleuze (Rose,
35 Bingley & Rioseco, 2022). Actual events succeed one another at short time intervals, overlap
36 or take place at the same time at turning points. Their content (such as who said what, who was
37 present and what the event's outcome was) is carried over from event to event to form an
38 ongoing change process. The mutual interlocking of events throughout the turning point may
39 be reflected in statements such as: 'Since the majority of us attended yesterday's meeting, it
40 makes sense to pursue that matter in this meeting' or 'Having decided this and drawn up an
41 agreement, we need to make sure that the next meeting reflects our agreement'.
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50 In Deleuze's framework folds comprise a series of distinct but intrinsically connected
51 actual events. The immanence between events enables movement through the fold to be
52 considered indivisible. But as actors move through time, actual events such as yesterday's
53 meeting and today's will gradually fade from memory as distinct events. As a fold is
54 accomplished, it fades into the past and other folds appear on the horizon, presenting the
55 challenge of considering how more distant folds become aggregates of actual events. For
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3 example, weeks or months into the future we no longer remember the actual flow of meetings
4 or the ensuing encounters. The lack of vividness also makes it difficult to re-establish how the
5 various meetings and encounters became connected. Nevertheless, the need remains to
6 represent the fold that took place as *an event*. Hence the following conundrum: folds proceed
7 through a series of tightly interconnected actual events, but for the fold to be immanent in past
8 and future folds it cannot be expressed through the actual events that comprise it. Still, those
9 folds must be considered events that are expressive of the fold in singular terms, which is where
10 Deleuze's (1990) notion of *singular events* becomes useful. A singular event, according to
11 Deleuze, is not a tangible event that can lend itself to description (such what happens at the
12 events, for how long, etc.) is a form of immanently connected actual (lived) events. The process
13 of immanently connected actual events that make up a fold become aggregated into a singular
14 event when the fold is observed from a distance. By defining a fold as a singular event, Deleuze
15 makes the fold available as an object of analysis as observed from distant folds. Although we
16 may refer to the 2008 financial crisis as one (singular) event, we share a tacit understanding
17 that it consisted of numerous interconnected events on multiple levels. Similarly, we may refer
18 to the arrival of a new school president as a singular event, although their arrival consisted of
19 a complex series of actual events.
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32 Singular events distinguish themselves from actual events by expressing aggregates of
33 interconnected actual events (Figure 5) in the singular form. They may be seen as proto events
34 or generic events, which are expressive of the process of actual events connecting through a
35 fold. Hence, singular events are a way to express a series of actual events while retaining the
36 notion of an event. They may be represented as past folds or as imagined future folds
37 'sufficiently real to enable actors to perform "actual time travel" into the past and the future'
38 (Williams, 2011, p. 8). Williams's point suggests that singular events are not just imagined
39 events in the past or the future but that they are also instrumental to the shaping of actual events
40 as they occur. Singular events may represent a vision, a narrative or a sort of ideal solution to
41 enable the connection between actual events at current folds.
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50 Whereas the actual events of a past fold may be aggregated into a singular event that
51 expresses that fold, future imagined singular events associated with a fold may enable actors
52 to imagine actual events of that future fold. By extending over and giving rise to actual events,
53 they enable those actual events to emerge and interconnect. This was the case when the *semper*
54 *ardens* motto helped Carlsberg achieve a turning point along its trajectory. The initial
55 inscription of the motto over the company's door may be considered a singular event that
56 epitomized an early turning point along Carlsberg's temporal trajectory, although it
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3 undoubtedly consisted of multiple actual events when it occurred in the late 1800s. On the other
4 hand, the process of reintroducing the motto more than 100 years later may be seen as a way
5 to use the *semper ardens* singular event to establish the actual events of the (then) future turning
6 points, which eventually helped put the organization back on course with craft-based brewing
7 (Hatch & Schultz, 2017).
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12 Singular events may be alternatively defined as an imaged pivotal event of a fold that
13 enables the interconnection of actual events. For example, large public projects may be defined
14 as the accomplishment of numerous actual events, but to make those events possible the overall
15 ‘singular’ event of the project may be defined in terms of certain features that the actual events
16 converge towards. For example, Pitsis, Clegg, Marosszeky and Rura-Polley (2003) examined
17 how the 2000 Sydney Olympics were planned as a ‘future perfect’ event, which spurred many
18 related events and was subsequently shaped by those events. The case illustrates how the
19 singularity of an event cannot be seen in its entirety in any actual event but may be grasped as
20 the intersection of converging features of the event, such as infrastructure design, technical
21 solutions and the competitions and ceremonies at the event, as shown in the middle part of
22 Figure 5. Although an event may be considered a major turning point, it can also be argued that
23 it became an origami of related folds along separate trajectories.
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33 As the above examples illustrate, although singular events persist, they should not be
34 considered static. Singular events emerge and change in response to the actual events they give
35 rise to. While we may perceive the arrival of a new school president as a singular event, as we
36 move through time, we may invoke the new president’s arrival on successive occasions as a
37 singular event that changes according to the context in which it is evoked. As Figure 5
38 illustrates, when aggregated, singular events enable new folds to emerge with new actual events
39 throughout the temporal trajectory. Importantly, turning points along the temporal trajectory
40 emerge through the interaction between singular events and actual events, neither of which
41 remain constant (Williams, 2012).
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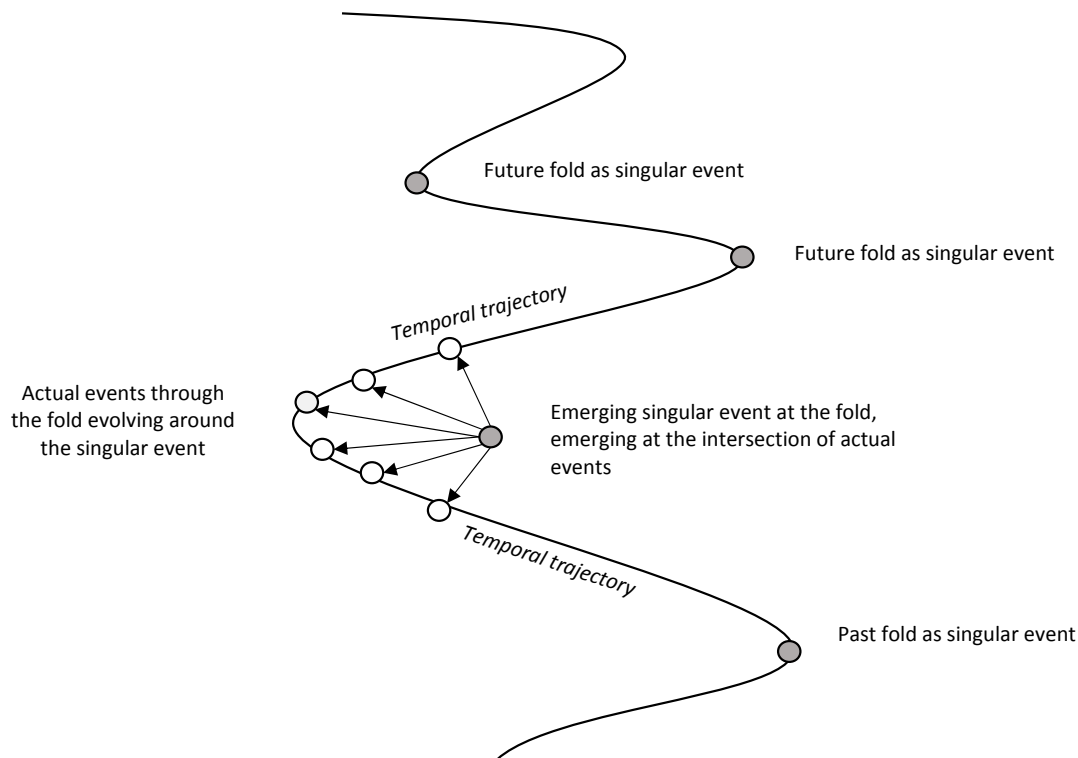


Figure 5. Folding as a process of emerging actual and singular events

Towards a Framework for the Shaping of Organizational Change Trajectories at Turning Points

We now return to the issue that inspired our research, which is how actors give shape to trajectories of change by connecting multiple turning points. Our framework aims to account for how actors integrate past and future turning points into the ongoing processes of enacting turning points. As argued above, turning points make up the shape of trajectories, which implies that once accomplished, a turning point modifies the shape of the overall temporal trajectory. Inversely, the shape of the trajectory is integrated into an ongoing turning point by integrating past and future turning points. Our framework for the shaping of temporal trajectories at turning points introduces a perspective on change whereby turning points are defined as gradual and definitional change of direction in the course of events (Guérard et al., 2013). An important aspect of theorizing how trajectories are shaped at turning points is that a turning point may harbour multiple possible temporal trajectories, such as is found in temporal identity studies (Carlsen, 2006). We next draw on Deleuze’s concept of the fold and the distinction between actual and singular events to discuss trajectory shaping within and between turning points. Table 1 provides an overview of the framework.

Table 1. Framework for trajectory shaping within and between turning points.

	Event focus	Temporal depth considered	Roles of actual and singular events
Within turning points	Connecting consecutive and simultaneous actual events through the turning point such as during planned change processes.	Limited to the duration of the turning point or parts thereof.	Actual events make up the process of navigating turning points as concrete, experienced events. Singular events emerge as pivots to provide focus for actual events to enable their connection through turning points, while becoming modified by actual events.
Between turning points	Connection of turning points associated with singular events across time.	Limited to the temporal depth into the past and future that actors consider; can be years, decades or centuries.	Actual events occur when actors evoke past turning points or enact future turning points through situated actions. Singular events persist between turning points to serve as a basis for enacting actual events.

Trajectory shaping by connecting events throughout turning points

Within turning points, processes consist of actual events connecting to shape the curvature of the trajectory at the turning point. Organizations typically structure change processes that consist of closely interlinked events aimed at changing the direction of the trajectory. For example, Weick and Quinn (1999) suggest that sometimes actors improvise change, in which case the change unfolds quickly with planning and implementation running almost simultaneously. Such processes are designed for events to follow one another in a dense and sometimes highly structured temporal pattern, although such patterns may break down or change in response to unexpected events. However, actual events cannot readily feed into one

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3 another throughout a curve without a pivotal singular event to prevent the events at the turning
4 point from falling out of orbit. To understand how actual events become interlocked in a
5 curvilinear movement, it is useful to think of a singular event as an emerging pivot for the
6 turning point that guides the interconnecting between actual events throughout the turning point
7 (see Figure 5).
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11 An illustration of how a turning point of multiple actual events may form around a
12 pivotal event can be found in Plowman et al.'s (2007) study of a change process at a church.
13 The change they studied may be considered a turning point as they referred to the directional
14 change caused by the change several times. The authors emphasized how the various change
15 processes (which they refer to as events) connected to form an eventual radical change,
16 summarizing the overall change as follows:
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22 Someone suggested offering hot breakfast to the homeless people who walked by the
23 church on Sunday mornings, and the idea took hold. The group served its first breakfast
24 five weeks later and, within a short time, church volunteers were feeding over 200
25 homeless people on Sunday mornings. A few months after the first breakfast, a physician
26 volunteer opted out of the food serving line and began seeing anyone who wanted to
27 discuss a medical problem. Within a short time, full-scale medical, dental, and eye clinics
28 emerged as part of the Sunday morning program and, within a few years, a 501(c)(3) spin-
29 off (a tax-exempt organization) of the church was receiving city grants, providing a 'day
30 center' for several thousand homeless people and serving over 20,000 meals a year. Legal
31 assistance, job training, laundry services, and shower facilities are a few of the programs,
32 in addition to the clinics that emerged from the initial idea of a hot breakfast' (pp. 515–
33 516).
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43 The case illustrates how multiple interconnected events (Table 1) emerge to form a turning
44 point that marks a change of direction. The duration of the turning point is defined in terms of
45 the events that enable a change in direction to occur. It is possible to interpret evolving actual
46 events in light of an emerging singular event. Much of the case narrative is about the event on
47 Sunday mornings, which changed radically and eventually led to a redefinition of the
48 organization's (an African American church founded by enslaved people in 1866) identity.
49 We can interpret the change process as pivoting around an emerging singular event that
50 started as a Sunday breakfast to encompass a more elaborate set of interconnected events that
51 marked the overall transition of the church. In our interpretation of the case, although other
52 developments ended up eclipsing the Sunday breakfast, the church expressed its mission as
53 the efforts to meet *with* homeless people (p. 533) to transform their lives. The turning point in
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3 question may be considered definitional in the sense of shaping the church's trajectory
4 particularly if interpreted in the light of the origin of the church.
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7 While enabling the trajectory of connected events through the fold, singular events are
8 also subject to change or redefinition in the process of folding. The imminent connection to
9 upcoming events and immediate past events means that the activity during emerging events is
10 likely to exhibit considerable improvisation to align tightly connected events. This means that
11 the activity in the emerging event is focused on aligning ongoing activity with the activity of
12 adjoining events. The activities in the case described by Plowman et al. (2007) emerged from
13 the breakfast concept, but they also subsequently modified the breakfast concept as the singular
14 event. Moreover, by modifying the overall idea, novel and surprising initiatives such as a dental
15 clinic became possible.
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24 *Trajectory shaping by connecting turning points*

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26 Actual events at turning points are closely interwoven as they follow in succession around an
27 emerging singular event, whereas actual events at previous or future turning points take place
28 at a distance from the current turning point. To describe the temporal distance of reaching into
29 the past and the future it is useful to apply the concept of temporal depth (Bluedorn, 2002).
30 Bluedorn (2002) defined temporal depth as 'the temporal distances into the past and future that
31 individuals and collectivities typically consider when contemplating events that have
32 happened, may have happened, or may happen' (p. 114). If we apply this definition to an
33 organization's trajectory of change, temporal depth describes the part of the temporal trajectory
34 that is framed by the earliest and last turning points that the actors typically consider. The
35 temporal depth of a turning point is typically limited to the duration of the turning point or parts
36 thereof, whereas the temporal depth of a trajectory may span turning points taking place years,
37 decades or centuries apart (Table 1). Hence, the temporal depth attributed trajectories
38 considerably influences the outcome of the analysis (e.g. Feddersen et al., 2023).
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49 Turning points, as argued above, are represented by singular events across time. They
50 constitute the shape of trajectories while also being influenced by the shape of the trajectory.
51 Above, we discuss how Hatch and Schultz's (2017) analysis of the *semper ardens* Carlsberg
52 motto exemplifies how the long-ago turning point of defining the motto was used as a basis for
53 future brewing in the late 19th century and became integrated into the actual events that made
54 up the turning point towards craft-based brewing more than a century later. To exemplify the
55 connection between turning points we extend the Carlsberg case with a study (Hernes,
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3 Feddersen & Schultz, 2020) on how Carlsberg brewed and commercially launched beer from
4 120-year-old yeast cells in 2017, allowing the brewery to aim towards the future turning point
5 of achieving 100% sustainable brewing. Figure 6 presents the trajectory of the brewery's
6 turning points over time. In 2013, when workers at Carlsberg came across old beer bottles that
7 were still intact and contained yeast cells from a bygone era, the idea was born to reproduce
8 beer from that era, which scientists at Carlsberg believed was around the time of the company's
9 founding in 1847. They then began testing 130-year-old barley seeds from the Svalbard Global
10 Seed Vault and experimenting with how to grow them. While the beer was produced in small
11 quantities, their efforts led to the launch of future novel beers based on a brew that was more
12 than a century old.

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21 The rebrew process can be broken down into three actual events: discovery of the
22 bottles, growing the barley and rebrewing the original beer, which we dub the rebrew event.
23 Once the rebrew process materialized into a singular event, i.e. as the process drew to a close,
24 the actors were able to connect the event to past and future singular events. On the one hand,
25 they integrated the initial turning point of founding the organization in the 1840s. On the other
26 hand, the search for ways to reproduce past brews yielded outcomes that were more decisive
27 than the symbolic process of rebrewing as the crops could serve as a foundation for brewing
28 organic beer, which became part of the organization's trajectory towards sustainable brewing.
29 This became part of the organization's 'Together Towards ZERO' programme developed from
30 2016 (Schultz & Hernes, 2020). Taken together, the three turning points (the founding of the
31 company, the rebrew process and the future turning point of sustainable brewing) can be
32 considered as provisionally shaping the temporal trajectory within a temporal depth of close to
33 200 years.
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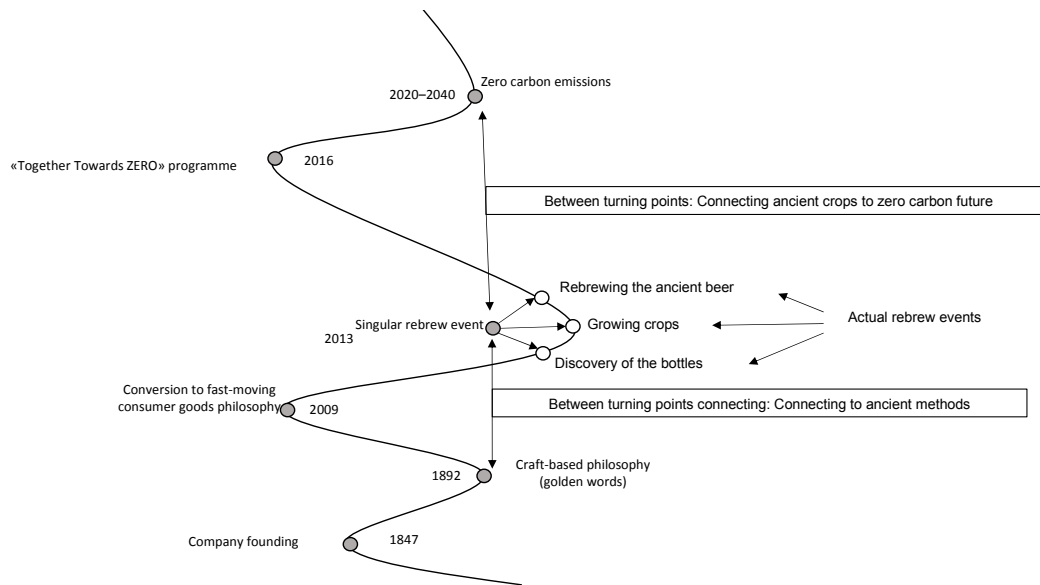


Figure 6. Trajectory shaping from the rebrew event at Carlsberg Group

When actors in organizations connect turning points that are years or decades apart, those turning points are depicted as singular events around which actual events are connected. From this perspective, while actual events take place with the participation of a singular event within turning points, temporal trajectories are shaped by connecting singular events across time. This is where turning points serve to define the organization's long-term temporal trajectory and are brought to bear on the ongoing processes of enacting turning points. While the rebrew event was a singular event in the making, it also became part of the shaping of Carlsberg's long-term trajectory. Although remaking a 130-year-old recipe was initially intended as an experimental idea, it became increasingly consequential over time, and the successful recreation of the beer resulted in a turning point of actual events. A video produced by Carlsberg shows how multiple activities (materializing as actual events) went into the brewing process, e.g. seeds had to be obtained, crops had to be cultivated and the production process had to be adapted to technology from the late 1800s. All of these activities were connected with the help of the emerging singular event, which connected to other singular events across the temporal depth considered by the actors to redefine the shape of that trajectory.

The rebrew case exemplifies how trajectory shaping is selective and influenced by the temporal depth across which actors consider turning points. As it began to take form, the rebrew (singular) event became a turning point that can be considered coherent with Carlsberg's distant craft-based past and the company's intended sustainable future. The case also suggests how

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3 achieving coherence between distant singular events is a process that emerges through
4 activities in actual events (Table 1). Making the brew made Carlsberg realize that challenges
5 other than brewing, such as future sustainability, might also be tackled. The case also suggests
6 that creating a sense of coherence between distant turning points may involve creative and
7 potentially uncertain processes.
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13 **Discussion and Implications**

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15 This paper develops a temporal trajectory perspective of organizational change. We have
16 worked from the idea that change processes defined as turning points give rise to the shape of
17 trajectories through time while simultaneously influenced by the trajectorial shaping. We have
18 introduced Deleuze's (1991, 2006) concept of the fold to establish a perspective from within
19 the temporal trajectory – both in the interconnecting of events throughout turning points and in
20 the integration of past and future turning points into ongoing processes. We have drawn upon
21 Deleuze's distinction between actual and singular events to theorize the connecting of events
22 within and between turning points. We next discuss how our theorizing has implications for
23 the study of organizations and change.
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33 *Change and continuity at turning points*

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35 Mainstream perspectives of sequential change processes still dominate organizational change
36 research (Van de Ven & Poole, 2021). A contribution of our discussion is to theorize the
37 connections between change processes across time that shape the organization's long-term
38 trajectory. This view implies that actors are in a continuous process of effecting change, both
39 as the change of direction at the turning point and in shaping the overall trajectory of change
40 as represented by singular events. Our definition of turning points as directional, definitional
41 and curvilinear is a way to describe how continuous change (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002) at turning
42 points shapes the trajectory while also being shaped by the trajectory. In this way, we
43 temporalize change by placing turning points in imminent *and* long-term contexts. By relating
44 change to shaping temporal trajectories, we respond to previous calls to explore the potential
45 of trajectories for explaining change (Kunisch, Bartunek, Mueller & Huy, 2017). As discussed,
46 examining the shaping of trajectories may aid in understanding how actors imagine and enact
47 various shapes through their activities. For example, we discuss how some organizational
48 trajectories may exhibit sharper and more frequent turning points, whereas other trajectories
49 may exhibit more gradual turning points that unfold over longer periods such as the Carlsberg
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3 Group case. We argue that such considerations are important for planning and implementing,
4 for instance, strategic change processes because they affect how human, financial and
5 technological resources are deployed over time.
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9 Although we do not focus on continuity in this paper, our framework makes a strong
10 case for specifically studying the dynamics of continuity in change. Typically, continuity has
11 been considered as a given state that may hinder or enable change. In most research, as Sminia
12 (2011) noted, continuity tends to be relegated to the status of a background of routinely
13 connected acts or events and, as such, does not need to be explained. However, although
14 continuity is frequently examined in organizational research, it remains undertheorized. Recent
15 studies have suggested that continuity may take different forms and may entail effortful
16 processes with uncertain outcomes (Feuls & Hernes, 2023). Drawing inspiration from Deleuze,
17 we suggest that connecting events within and between turning points crucially demands
18 effortful and creative processes to establish a sense of as coherence between actual events
19 within turning points as well as between turning points. According to Deleuze (2006, p. 20),
20 continuity consists of the distances between points of view and the length of an infinite number
21 of corresponding curves. In this perspective, continuity is not a backdrop to change but an
22 integral aspect of the change process.
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33 Our framework of temporal trajectory shaping offers a view whereby the continuity–
34 change interplay can be studied through a more dynamic lens than has been the case previously.
35 Viewed as a temporal imaginary, the fold dissolves important dualisms such as those between
36 change and continuity and between difference and repetition, by considering them as different
37 sides of the same coin. As suggested above, gradually enacting a turning point involves the
38 enactment of continuity, which is nevertheless aimed a resulting change of direction once the
39 turning point is accomplished. In such cases, the turning point represents processes of
40 ‘changing continuity’, where change is the change of direction of the course of events rather
41 than a difference in state between two different points in time (Van de Ven & Poole, 2005).
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49 The continuity–change interplay becomes even more complex if we consider that actors
50 enact multiple turning points, each of which gives a sense of change as it occurs but also
51 contributes to a sense of continuity between turning points. Importantly, the shape of the
52 trajectory may offer actors a sense of *coherence* (Kaplan & Orlikowski, 2013) between turning
53 points. Coherence, we hasten to add, is not to be seen as consistency. Whereas consistency
54 implies sameness, coherence may harbour tensions, contrasts or opposition. For example, it
55 may seem coherent for an organization to temporarily shift towards a technology that is not
56 expected to exist in the distant future, but the shift may nevertheless offer the time required to
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3 adapt to future technologies when actors look at related change processes in the past. Therefore,
4 by seeking coherence in connecting change processes through time, scholars can use
5 trajectories to show how more distant change processes may connect across time.
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8 By extending Deleuze's concept of the fold further, continuity and change may also be
9 understood rhythmically. Gherardi (2023) notes how Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) notion of
10 refrain can be used to understand how actors both reproduce and modify their temporal realities
11 as they move through time. She then contributes a temporal view of rhythm consistent with our
12 perspective of folding time, discussing how the concept of refrain 'ties together critical,
13 rhythmic moments, those threshold moments in which repetition and difference are nested' (p.
14 67).
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22 *Trajectorial shape*

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24 Scholars have discussed how organizations perform directional change along temporal
25 trajectories, illustrated by studies that have focused on how organizations responded to major
26 events in their external environments such as natural disasters, financial crises or disruptive
27 technological change (e.g. Feldman, Worline, Baker & Bredow, 2021; Johnsen, Olaison, &
28 Sørensen, 2018; Tourish & Hargie, 2012). However, thus far, trajectories and turning points
29 have largely remained separate in the organizational literature. The articles drawing explicitly
30 on trajectories reviewed for this paper make little or no mention of turning points.³
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32 Nevertheless, trajectories have been increasingly used to analyse time-related organizational
33 phenomena such as organizational or strategic change (Kaplan & Orlikowski, 2013; Stensaker
34 & Langley, 2010), organizing processes (Scheller, 2020), organizational resilience (Hernes,
35 Blagoev, Kunisch, & Schultz, 2024), organizational learning (Berends & Lammers, 2010),
36 organizational identity (Cloutier & Ravasi, 2020; Ybema, 2010) and narratives (Hernes &
37 Obstfeld, 2022). Alongside this literature, an emerging body of research has addressed turning
38 points in organizations (e.g. Blagoev & Schreyögg, 2019; Engwall & Westling, 2004; Guérard
39 et al., 2013; Putnam & Fuller, 2014; Sklaveniti, 2020), but without making turning points
40 immanent to trajectories.
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51 By integrating turning points and trajectories into the same framework, we have taken
52 the challenge of theorizing how actors shape trajectories by confronting multiple turning points.
53 We have discussed how trajectories are shaped by integrating turning points across time, which
54 may help explain how actors can select or deselect singular events in their past or future to give
55 temporal trajectories a different shape. There are multiple examples of how actors may focus
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3 on some events in their trajectory while backgrounding others to create a sense of coherence
4 between events. Investigating the events surrounding the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011,
5 Danner-Schröder (2020) shows how actors created a greater sense of wholeness by
6 simultaneously focusing on and backgrounding actual events to form a joint temporal
7 trajectory. Examining actors' selection and deselection of events can elucidate how missed
8 opportunities, i.e. near and distant past events that have not been actualized, may be restored
9 (Miller, Gomes, & Lehman, 2019), and how actors connect an organization's future to a
10 forgotten past (Howard-Grenville, Metzger, & Meyer, 2013) or distance themselves from a
11 competing or undesired narrative (Cappelen & Strandgaard Pedersen, 2021). Furthermore, the
12 distinction between actual and singular events may also inform theorizing of what does not
13 (yet) exist (Gümüşay & Reinecke, 2022) in terms of events and how such events may or may
14 not influence imagined change (Augustine, Soderstrom, Milner, & Weber, 2019). Finally,
15 turning points may confer important narrative dimensions upon trajectories (Abbott, 1997;
16 Hernes & Obstfeld, 2022). In particular, the definitional feature of turning points introduced at
17 the beginning of the paper may enrich the notion of temporal narratives, particularly as some
18 turning points may carry powerful symbolism (Gabriel, 2008, p. 191) and take on mythical
19 proportions in a narrative.
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34 *Theorizing time as folds*

36 Our theorizing concerning organizational change processes as shaping of temporal trajectories
37 is closely affiliated with the process lens on time (Blagoev, Hernes, Kunisch & Schultz, 2023).
38 Although previous research has examined the successive unfolding of periods or moments, a
39 process lens assumes that actors are embedded in the present in which they enact different
40 patterns of past and future events through ongoing activity. Empirical studies have built on this
41 premise to a greater or lesser extent (e.g. Kaplan & Orlikowski, 2013; Schultz & Hernes, 2013)
42 and theoretical works have extended the implications of such assumptions (Emirbayer &
43 Mische, 1998; Hernes, 2014, 2022; Hussenot & Missonier, 2016; Reinecke & Lawrence,
44 2023). Underlying the process view of time is the assumption that time is constitutive of
45 organizing and not a backdrop against which organizing is understood. The process view of
46 time is ontologically distinct from recent views that have distinguished between subjective and
47 objective understandings of time (e.g. Shipp & Jansen, 2021) and has important methodological
48 consequences for the study of organizational processes as phenomena that take place in and
49 through time (Feuls, Plotnikof & Stjerne, 2022).
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3 While the process view of time has focused on the dynamics by which past and future
4 events are reinterpreted and reimagined in the present, it nevertheless represents what Hernes
5 (2022) called a stationary view of time. According to Hernes, this perspective implies that
6 future and past events are empty space waiting to be filled by projections from the present but
7 does not account for how ongoing projections are the means by which actors *move* through
8 time (Feddersen et al., 2023). The folding imagery challenges actors to imagine movement
9 through time as a complex and dynamic process of connecting events not yet addressed in
10 process views of time. Applying the imagery of the fold allows us to appreciate how it falls
11 back on itself (Deleuze, 1991, p. 234) in a way that both differs from and repeats previous and
12 future folds (Williams, 2011). It invites actors to imagine the future as moving beyond the
13 present, which then comes towards them as a different yet recognizable shape of the future
14 trajectory. Similarly, it invites reflection on past change processes as a trajectory of events that
15 moves beyond them as the present becomes a past event, which will turn back on itself in a
16 different yet recognizable shape of the past trajectory. While the temporal imagery of folds
17 invites viewing the projection of future and past events as folded lines of different shapes, it
18 also invites reflection on the process of enacting such shapes while moving through folds. This
19 is important for studying organizational change as turning points through a temporal process
20 lens as it helps ask important questions about the activities through which actors bring more-
21 distant turning points to bear on ongoing processes of enacting a turning point, as well as how
22 they are confronted with how their ongoing processes give shape to their overall trajectory of
23 change.
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41 **Conclusion**

42 Irreversible exogenous changes related to climate, finance, technology and politics will likely
43 make turning points a norm, rather than an exceptional occurrence in the future. If turning
44 points are to be defined as part of a new normal in the future, theories that describe the
45 dynamics of enacting multiple turning points are needed and we must better understand how
46 organizational actors experience and navigate turning points as they occur while reflecting on
47 previous or possible future turning points. The effects of moving through time are represented
48 by movement along a trajectory of events in which the trajectory is created and recreated. A
49 trajectorial view of change as proposed in this paper invites reflections on how actors project
50 present–past–future dynamics onto an emerging trajectorial shape and how that emerging shape
51 is also brought to bear on ongoing processes. Not only does the trajectory view introduced in
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3 this paper invite reflection on the dynamics of moving through time, but it also invites further
4 examination of how actors imagine their movement through time. We think that Tolstoy's
5 novel conveys the importance of this point.
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11 ¹ In fact, Deleuze referred to turning points in his earlier work, before making folds central. He drew the
12 distinction between the actual and the singular in the original 1969 version of *The logic of sense* in which he
13 referred to singular events as turning points or points of inflection (Deleuze, 1990, p. 52)
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15 ² Other organizational scholars have used the fold to discuss space and organization (e.g., Kuismin, Wickström,
16 Hietanen, & Katila, 2024).
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18 ³ We analysed approximately 350 papers in organizational journals discussing topics related to organizational
19 change, process and time. From this sample, we identified 13 journal articles that mentioned trajectory or
20 trajectories in the title or abstract and also explicitly used the trajectory concept as a basis for theorizing.
21 Although many authors referred to trajectories in papers on change, the vast majority referred to it as a concept
22 that was peripheral to the thrust of the analysis. Among these works, turning points were primarily described as
23 pivotal events that marked a consequential change in the direction of a course of events (Engwall & Westling,
24 2004; Fairhurst, Cooren & Cahill, 2002; Guérard et al., 2013), leaving how turning points shape trajectories and
25 are also shaped by trajectories unexplained.
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53 Author biographies

54 **Tor Hernes** is Professor of Organization Theory at Copenhagen Business School (CBS),
55 Denmark and is Adjunct Professor at University of South-Eastern Norway. His research
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3 time theorizing to different aspects of organizations, including narrative, materiality, identity,
4 strategy, disruption, and resilience. Tor co-directs the Centre for Organization and Time at
5 CBS. His book, *A Process Theory of Organization*, won the George R. Terry Book Award at
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15 **Miriam Feuls** is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Organization and Co-Director
16 of the Centre for Organization and Time at Copenhagen Business School. Miriam's research
17 draws on insights from organization studies, process studies, and cultural and social studies to
18 advance understanding of processes and practices of organizational change, innovation, and
19 transformation. Her work is motivated by a profound interest in time and temporality, with a
20 focus on advancing both the theoretical and methodological approaches to this area of study.
21 Empirically, she has explored a process view of time in the study of creativity and innovation
22 as well as environmental and social sustainability.
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