



39th EGOS Colloquium

## Organizing for the Good Life: Between Legacy and Imagination

University of Cagliari

July 6–8, 2023

Cagliari, Italy



EGOS - European Group for Organizational Studies / 2023 Cagliari / SUB-THEMES: Call for Short Papers

[Back to list](#)

[Program](#)

## Sub-theme 58: Organizing Risk for Better Futures

### Convenors:

Tommaso Palermo

London School of Economics, United Kingdom

[t.palermo@lse.ac.uk](mailto:t.palermo@lse.ac.uk)

Julie Mayer

École polytechnique, France

[julie.mayer@polytechnique.edu](mailto:julie.mayer@polytechnique.edu)

Steve Maguire

University of Sydney, Australia

[steven.maguire@sydney.edu.au](mailto:steven.maguire@sydney.edu.au)

### Call for Papers

Recent years have dramatically shown how certain low probability, high impact events such as a pandemic can radically reshape how (western) societies (re)think what a “good life” means, particularly in terms of taken-for-granted assumptions about enjoying low exposure to health, economic and other risks. The COVID-19 pandemic is an exceptional event. And yet, in general terms, it is a powerful reminder that risk is a prominent feature of contemporary organizing. Indeed, it can be argued that all contemporary organizing takes place in an era of “riskification” (Hardy & Maguire, 2016) – a period in history when risk plays an increasingly prominent role in both organizational and personal lives. As a result, policy makers, organizational leaders and other members of organizations increasingly engage in “riskwork” (Power, 2016): everyday actions, practices, and routines through which they make sense of risk, themselves, and their roles, as well as try, collectively, to enact institutional scripts associated with the appropriate identification, assessment and management of risk.

On this basis, organizational and management studies of risk (Hardy et al., 2020) help us to understand how organizational leaders address complex challenges, including how to strike a balance between preserving legacy values and cultural practices and the need to continuously adapt to changing contexts by re-imagining organizations and institutions. The notion of “riskwork” challenges prevailing

[Login myEGOS](#)

concepts of risk and offers exciting research opportunities to illuminate the challenges of improving organizational and individual lives. It sheds light, for example, on the day-to-day practices enacted as organizations and institutions seek to promote a “good life” through both anticipation-focused *and* resilience-focused strategies (Williams et al., 2017). It also highlights how organizational leaders and policy makers must deal with a variety of “risk objects” (Hilgartner, 1992) simultaneously – often with potentially catastrophic interdependencies among them and, therefore, requiring complex trade-offs.

A “riskification” perspective (Hardy & Maguire, 2016) encourages us to critically examine the role of formally recognised experts and established scientific disciplines providing the codified principles, methods and frameworks that inform the actions and governance of organizations of all types (Aven, 2016; Power, 2007, 2016). In the contemporary “Anthropocene” (Wright et al., 2018), scientists and other experts construct a wide range of undesirable futures to be avoided, providing compelling reasons to take action in the face of global challenges such as climate change, geopolitical conflicts, and the pandemic crisis. Nevertheless, it always seems that not enough is being done to preserve the “good life” of future generations.

Certainly, there is lots of “riskwork” to be done by practitioners and studied by academics. And such “riskwork” continues to increase in various domains (Hardy et al., 2020; Power, 2016), as societies experience the effects of interdependent risks that go to the heart of a Western “good life”. We are interested in papers that examine empirically, theoretically and/or critically these issues and the role of risk in contemporary organizing. As issues of risk cut across traditional disciplinary boundaries, we particularly welcome papers that draw on multiple perspectives to better understand the complex relationship between risk and organizing, including organization theory, strategy, and accounting as well as social studies of finance or of science and technology. More specifically, we invite contributions that explore risk in and around organizations in terms of the overall EGOS colloquium theme, as shown in the indicative questions that follow.

*Organizing risk for a “good life”:*

- How can risk reconcile (or not) inherited “legacy” pasts and “imagination” of the future?
- How does the attempt to address heterogeneous, future unknowns affect organizations’ ability to build on, or maintain, their cultural values?
- How does “riskwork” mask and/or reproduce pre-existing cultural values?
- How does organizing risk contribute or detract from going “back to normal”?
- What legacy from prevailing ways of managing risk do we want to perpetuate? From what prevailing ways of managing risk should we emancipate ourselves?
- How does the pursuit of innovative practices pose new risks? To what extent does it challenge dominant risk discourses and paradigms?
- What kind of new interdependency risks and requirements for accountability emerge from the design of workplaces that promote imagination and wellbeing?
- To what extent is the growing regulation of risk facilitating or hampering organizations’ capacities to build better futures through continuous innovation?

*Leveraging risk and “riskwork” as a frame of inquiry to enrich organization studies:*

- How can studies of “riskwork” navigate multiple levels of analysis?
- How do individuals and organizations address the tensions inherent in “riskwork”, such as that between reducing versus absorbing complexity or that of balancing anticipation and resilience?
- How can we articulate multi-disciplinary perspectives to build a comprehensive and integrative framework of risk? Is such a framework desirable?
- What does “riskwork” tell us about individuals’ and organizations’ understandings of responsibility and accountability?
- How does “riskwork” mask and/or reproduce power relations?
- How might research on risk inform research on stakeholder theory, corporate social responsibility, and organizations and the natural environment? How might these literatures inform research on risk?
- How might research on risk inform institutional theory? How might institutional theory inform research on risk?
- How do social values, norms, symbols and emotions shape risk organizing processes? How do they challenge risk management “scientism” and expert work?
- How might organizational research on risk more effectively inform practice?

---

References

- Aven, T. (2016): “Risk assessment and risk management: Review of recent advances on their foundation.” *European Journal of Operational Research*, 253 (1), 1–13.
- Hardy, C., & Maguire, S. (2016): “Organizing risk: Discourse, power, and riskification.” *Academy of Management Review*, 41 (1), 80–108.

- Hardy, C., Maguire, S., Power, M., & Tsoukas, H. (2020): "Organizing risk: Organization and management theory for the risk society." *Academy of Management Annals*, 14 (2), 1032–1066.
- Hilgartner, S. (1992): "The social construction of risk objects: Or, how to pry open networks of risk." In: J.F. Short, & L. Clarke (eds.): *Organizations, uncertainties and risk*. Boulder: Westview Press, 39–53.
- Power, M. (2007): *Organized uncertainty: Designing a world of risk management*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Power, M. (2016): *Riskwork: Essays on the organizational life of risk management*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Williams, T.A., Gruber, D.A., Sutcliffe, K.M., Shepherd, D.A., & Zhao, E.Y. (2017): "Organizational response to adversity: Fusing crisis management and resilience research streams." *Academy of Management Annals*, 11 (2), 733–769.
- Wright, C., Nyberg, D., Rickards, L., & Freund, J. (2018): "Organizing in the Anthropocene." *Organization*, 25 (4), 455–471.

Tommaso Palermo is an Assistant Professor of Accounting (post-Major Review) at the London School of Economics and Political Science, UK, and Research Associate at the Centre for Analysis of Risk and Regulation (CARR). His main research interests include the design and use of enterprise risk management and performance management systems, risk culture in financial sector organizations and risk regulation in new markets for contested commodities such as cannabis. Tommaso has published in international journals, such as 'Accounting, Organizations and Society', 'Journal of Management Studies' and 'Research in the Sociology of Organizations'.

Julie Mayer is an Assistant Professor in Strategy and Organization at École polytechnique, France. Her research focuses on organizational responses to emerging risks, particularly climate risk, in the context of energy and ecological transition. Julie's research has been published in 'Revue Française de gestion', 'M@n@gement', 'Energy Policy', 'Gérer & Comprendre', and 'Academy of Management Proceedings'.

Steve Maguire is Professor of Strategy, Innovation & Entrepreneurship at the University of Sydney Business School, Australia. His research focuses on institutional and technological change resulting when commercial, scientific and political struggles intersect around emerging risks to human health or the environment. Steve has published numerous academic articles and book chapters including articles in the 'Academy of Management Annals', 'Academy of Management Journal', 'Academy of Management Review', 'Strategic Management Journal', 'Organization Studies', 'Journal of Management Studies', 'Health Care Management Review', and 'Global Governance'.

---

Follow EGOS on [in](#), [f](#) and [t](#)

© EGOS 2022

Login myEGOS