Let’s talk about time! - Temporal talk as a coordination mechanism in institutional work

Abstract:
Agency is a focal and contested issue in studies on institutional change. One aspect that is not understood very well yet is how multiple dispersed actors achieve distributed agency when engaged in institutional work. Conceptualizing agency in its temporal orientation, we propose that effective distributed agency depends in a large part on how multiple actors talk about, align, and link their interpretations of past, present and future. Institutional theory needs to account for actors' time orientations in distributed agency and institutional work to gain a better understanding of the underlying mechanisms of coordination.
The Nano-Papers “Institution – Organization – Society” enable a pointed as well as profound examination of theoretical questions in the area of sociological Neo-Institutionalism. They thus serve both the exchange of theoretical ideas and the development of conceptual foundations. The goal of the short contributions is to present, critically examine and further develop theoretical concepts. The Nano-Papers, then, should not be understood as conclusive theoretical contributions, but rather as an invitation to exchange conceptual positions.