

EGOS 2023 Sub-theme 06

Performing the Future Communicatively:

How Does What Does not Yet Exist Already Make a Difference

Festina lente: Organizational Patience as Future-making Practice

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Abstract

Surprised by the absence of research on the virtue of patience, and intrigued by the idea that inactivity can become a virtue, we present conceptualizations of *patience in organizations* and of *organizational patience* as future-making practices. We describe four manifestations of patience, i.e. waiting, restraint, forbearance and persistence, and their virtuous outcomes: mindfulness, growth, collaboration, and mastery. We develop a communicative perspective on patience for organizational and professional practice. Ultimately, we introduce the concept of organizational patience, defined as a virtuous text that appreciates patience as organizational quality which emerges in an organization through the patient actions of organization members. Through this exploration, we hope that researchers and practitioners will consider patience as a viable alternative to the immediacy that has become dominant in our daily and organizational lives.

Keywords: organizational patience; future making practices; strategy; virtues; virtuous text.

Festina lente: Organizational Patience as Future-making Practice

Patience matters in academia. A quick scan of the occurrence of the word patience shows that many papers and books published within research on the communicative constitution of organizations (CCO) acknowledge patience. Literally. That is, almost all of the references can be found *in the acknowledgment section*, where authors thank editors, subtheme convenors and family for their patience. Of course, patience is more than the gratitude academics express toward editors for missed deadlines, and to family for missed birthday parties or general absent-mindedness. However, patience is almost absent in our texts outside of these acknowledgment section. But imagine what we would miss, had there been no patience whatsoever. There would be neither strategy nor service, neither collaboration nor craft, neither text nor team. The present depends on our patience. And so does the future.

There was a specific moment in a board meeting that started the thinking process that ultimately led to this paper. In his role as academic consultant, the first author (Mark) was hired as project leader for strategy development in a non-profit organization. Halfway during one meeting with the executive board, Mark explained something about decisions as social events (Luhmann, 2003): it is not within the board's authority to just make a strategic decision. Only in retrospect it can be seen whether their decision was an actual decision or not. If no one followed up their decision, well, it was not a decision. Only time will tell. One board member responded: "So, this means that we will have to be patient now." Mark nodded in agreement, but another board member rose from his chair and said loudly: "Every time you say "patience", I hear passivity and laziness!" This was a fascinating exchange for Mark, for multiple reasons. Eventually, they managed to turn this small conflict into a productive meeting. But after the meeting, Mark kept wondering: how is patience communicatively accomplished? And how can we identify it through observations? We are seeing someone

doing nothing. How do we know whether we are witnessing the virtue of patience or the vice of passivity? That intriguing puzzle was our starting point.

This paper fits within a larger project exploring the communicative constitution of virtues in organizations. The project aims for a better understanding of the ways in which a positive character, excellence and virtuous performance in organizations are accomplished in and through interactions. Given the current subtheme's interest in the future, we chose the virtue of patience. Many other virtues have a future-dimension, such as hope (a feeling and desire for a future state or outcome that is yet uncertain; Sawyer & Clair, 2021), resilience (positive adjustment under challenging conditions to make the future look better than the present; Vogus & Sutcliffe, 2007), and generosity (which is promoted by future-oriented thinking; Sjøstad, 2019). We chose to focus on patience here, as it provides us with a specific conceptual, methodological, and practical puzzle: how apparent *inactivity* is performed - and deemed virtuous! This led to our initial research question: How is patience communicatively accomplished, and what is so specific about such an interaction that it constitutes a particular organizational quality we miss when the inactivity is just passivity? Ultimately, our aim is to work towards a conceptualization of *organizational patience*. While our initial interest lies in the communicative accomplishment of patience in organizational settings (i.e. patience in organizations), we wonder whether such situational accomplishments of this virtue can eventually shape the character of an organization (i.e. organizational patience). Is it possible to identify a consistently virtuous form of collectively dealing with the future, to the point where we can talk about an organization becoming a patient organization?

We have to start at the beginning, though. There is almost no academic attention to patience in organizations (see Comer & Sekerka, 2014, for an exception), let alone organizational patience. In what follows, we will sketch the outline of our reflections about the ways in which patience can be seen as a future-making practice in organizations. We start

with a conceptual description of patience, proposing four different manifestations of patient behavior: waiting, restraint, forbearance and perseverance. Second, we reflect on the ways in which these manifestations play out in organizational contexts, in dialogue with the organization studies literature. More specifically, in that section, we will explore how patience becomes manifested in communication within organizations. Third, we zoom in on the communicative actions that cultivate organizational patience. We conclude with some final reflections.

Manifestations of Patience: A Conceptual Reflection

It might seem strange to explore how patience is performed, as it is typically the absence of activity that we associate with a patient person. Patience is a particular way of dealing with the future that seems to be accomplished through mere waiting. That does not look like a strikingly effortful activity, does it? However, patience is seen throughout history and in every culture as a virtue, providing the present with a quality that will somehow pay off in the future. The fact that we refer to *exercising* patience shows that it is more of an activity than it initially looks. As we will see, it turns out that patience takes a lot of work. Patience is the action of waiting, but is not accomplished through mere inaction.

Patience is generally treated in literature as a virtuous form of individual actions, covering a range of forms. We reviewed many sources: from philosophy (Pianalto, 2016) to psychology (Schnitker, 2012), from strategy (Clark, 2021) to spirituality (Balentine, 2015), and from routine (Geiger et al., 2021) to resilience (Turkmenoglu, 2018). Based on this review, we propose that patience can have four different manifestations: *waiting*, *restraint*, *forbearance*, and *persistence* (cf. particularly Pianalto, 2016, chapter 2). To clarify these four manifestations, we follow Aristotle's conceptualization of virtues as being the "golden mean" between two vices, where too little (a deficit) and too much (an excess) of a strength can be found (cf. Grant & Schwartz, 2011). Table 1 summarizes these four manifestations of

Table 1: *Four Manifestations of Patience, Their Communicative Expressions, and Qualities of Future Making Practices*

Manifestation of Virtue	Deficit (D) & Excess (E)	Communicative Expressions	Quality of Future-making Practice
Patience as Waiting	D: Restlessness E: Apathy	Mindful listening and observing, while accepting that something has not happened yet	Choosing to be mindful , remaining open to alternative futures not yet unfolded
Patience as Restraint	D: Impetuosity E: Indifference	Explicitly delaying instant gratification, by envisioning what can be gained later by discipline and control now	Allowing growth through dismissing short-termism in favor of future gains
Patience as Forbearance	D: Cowardice E: Doggedness	Accepting the unavoidable limitations of others (and oneself), Staying with the trouble, (self-)forgiving	Cultivating the awareness of mutual dependence where limitations call for collaboration as the right actions cannot be expected from this person
Patience as Persistence	D: Spinelessness E: Addiction	Concentration, dedication, and grit, appreciating efforts, celebrating progress, looking for feedback	Pursuing mastery as excellence in action, craftsmanship

patience and their communicative expressions, including the deficit and excess, a translation to patience in organizations, and the quality of future-making practices of each of these four manifestations.

Patience as waiting. Patience manifests itself firstly as calmly waiting for things to happen—before they are happening. Waiting for a response to a message just sent. Waiting for an app to download. It is attentive engagement with the moment-by-moment continuation of the present while the future unfolds. “Waiting takes place during the time when an employee is unable to proceed with one or more aspects of their work-related activity due to the temporary, semi-permanent or permanent unavailability of required information or resources” (Bailey, 2019, p. 593). Deliberately letting developments around you move faster than you go yourself. The quality lies in the attention given to its unfolding. Distracted patience is superficial, and actually no patience at all. In its virtuous sense, patience is a form of life, rather than the mere “killing” of time. Patience-as-waiting manifests itself in mindful calmness. Its deficit entails restlessness; its excess, apathy. Impatient waiting looks like a frustrated struggle. But patience-as-waiting is serene. One abides.

Patience as restraint. Second, patience involves restraint, the capacity for endurance. Self-discipline calls for holding back a range of things that one would like to say or do. Instead of giving in to act, one consciously restrains oneself. “It is to accept our current situation as the material from which we must work toward [the] future” (Pianalto, 2016: 50). The difference with patience-as-waiting is that you could act, but decide to restrain yourself. *Waiting* is needed when you wait for an app to download. You have to wait, it is impossible to start it before it is finished. But you *restrain* yourself to drink coffee before it has cooled down sufficiently. Here the option to act earlier is available, but the experience will be better after some restraint. Still, restraint can involve action. A farmer needs to be patient while the seeds are growing. Watering plants is an action, as well as an indication of restraint. Patience-

as-restraint manifests itself in withholding the actions that a tempered person would perform (like pulling a seedling out of the ground to see whether it has developed roots already). Its deficit entails impetuosity; its excess, indifference. There are times when things take time, and patience-as-restraint is strong in courageously holding on in difficult times. Impatient restraint can be identified in forms of aggressive behavior that targets something else than the source of restraint. It is like kicking a door while walking away from a scene.

Patience as forbearance. Third, patience is a heavy-lifting exercise. You have to bear whatever is piled up while remaining in one's place. Long-suffering under provocation, the tolerance of the limitations of others, seem unbearable now and then, but still, we accomplish patient forbearance. Patience-as-forbearance can be seen in interaction with people, while patience-as-restraint is exercised in relation to things and situations. Its deficit entails cowardice; its excess, doggedness. But patience-as-forbearance is resistant. Forbearance can also be done in an impatient way, in which case it is accompanied by grumbling, cursing, or bitterness. Patience-as-forbearance is resistant in not looking at the loss, but at the potential gain of tolerating the situation as it is. Working in teams require this kind of patience—as we all know. We are all limited and we have to collaborate in order to achieve goals. Forbearance thus entails “tolerating less than ideal circumstances” (Markóczy et al., 2009, p. 324).

Patience as persistence. Finally, while the previous three manifestations deal with not-doing (waiting for something that is not there, restraint in dealing with a situation that is still improving, and forbearance of carrying the load of a person's imperfection), the fourth is about perseverance, the constancy or diligence in work. Apprentices have to patiently hone their skills in order to master their craft. It requires practicing and failing many times, embodied in dutiful persistence in the face of life's complexities. Patient commitment to tasks is inevitable for every good endeavor. In complex environments, caring for completeness

means deliberately slowing down and being patient while mapping the entire terrain. It is a long obedience in the same direction, without jumping to conclusions. The rush to make sense of a situation can become lethal. Weick (2022) called this *arrested sensemaking*, where the captain of the ship El Faro jumped to conclusions about the nature and position of the hurricane. This misinterpretation, due to rush decisions based on wrong and incomplete information, led to the death of everyone onboard. In contrast to the arrest stands the freedom of dedicated patience. Patience-as-persistence manifests itself in continuing to do something that is challenging. Its deficit entails spinelessness; its excess, addiction or obsession. Impatient persistence cherishes the goal, but considers the time it takes to get there as a loss. In contrast, patience-as-persistence is determined in its goal-orientation as well as the appreciation for the activities when working toward the goal. In describing the patience of a craftsman, Sennett (2008, p. 221) insists on “the temporary suspension of the desire for closure.”

To refrain from the deficit and the excess, as well as the impatient forms of waiting, restraint, forbearance, and persistence, you need to be strong. One has “to overcome oneself” (Janouch, 1971, in Pinalto, 2016, p. 2/3). Indeed, Aristotle wrote that “patience is so like fortitude that she seems either her sister or her daughter.” Interestingly, here we sense an assumed femininity of patience. As Pinalto (2016, p. 67) observed,

the Victorians named their daughters, not their sons, Patience. (...) But this would also then suggest that patience is a virtue of the home, of private life, and those who must embody this virtue should remain in the sphere proper to its practice. Thus, the patient woman stays at home, while the brave man goes out into the world to enter its military, political, and entrepreneurial battlefields.

While we disapprove of such cringy-worthy stereotypes nowadays, we observe that there is not much place for patience in contemporary organizations. It is not surprising,

therefore, that few organizational scholars have written on this subject. Our aim is to address this issue by exploring how patience is essential in processes of organizing.

Patience in Organizations and Professions: Towards A Communication Perspective

As an outcome of this initial exploration, we can now define patience as *the active engagement with a situation where a delay in the satisfaction of a desire is accepted, manifested through waiting, restraint, forbearance and/or persistence*. While this may indeed be virtuous, contemporary organizations cherish speed more than patience. Nowadays, immediacy is preferred over delay, and instant gratification trumps slow growth (Tomlinson, 2007). In contrast, patience assumes that there something one decides *not* to do. In terms of future-making, one had a choice between a more patient and a more impatient response. Impatient responses typically involve immediacy, as Tomlinson (2007) explains. Immediacy refers to “a culture of instantaneity” where you are accustomed to rapid delivery [closing the gap between now and later], ubiquitous availability [closing the gap between here and elsewhere], and the instant gratification of desire [closing the gap between desire and its satisfaction] (paraphrasing Tomlinson, 2007, p. 74, pp. 97-98). In contrast to immediacy, patience leaves the gap open. Choosing patience over immediacy is a choice for an alternative future. Future-making starts with making sense of possible and probable futures (Wenzel et al., 2020); with evaluating, negotiating, and giving form to preferred ones. Therefore, although patience is not the typical core value of the current century, we argue that cultivating patience would benefit organizations, as the performative power of waiting, restraint, forbearance and persistence carry specific qualities for future-making. The silence on patience, then, is no reflection of its importance. Of course, there are a few exceptions in the organizational literature.

For example, Comer and Sekerka (2014) provide a conceptual review of patience and translate their propositions to the organizational context. They summarize the personal benefits of patience (more rational behavior, openness to cooperation, and health), particularly by explaining the negative effects of impatience (jumping to conclusions, ignoring others, and stress). As organizational benefits from individual patience, they mention potentially higher quality of products and services (“prevent shoddy work processes,” p. 9), lasting prosperity, ethical behavior, pleasantness and productivity.

Haque, Liu, and TitiAmayah (2017) explore patience in the context of leadership and decision-making, based on a series of interviews with leaders. For these researchers, patience is a way to make better decisions, for calm and open-minded leaders interact in a constructive way. Patient leaders observe and listen well, and they ensure that they understand what is going on. Haque et al. report a range of immediate positive outcomes resulting from such interactions, including diversity, trust, empowerment of others, and the building of stronger relationships.

Furthermore, Pyon (2011) explores the policy of ‘strategic patience’ that the Obama administration pursued in dealing with North Korea’s nuclear arsenal. This meant an open invitation at the negotiation table, and pressure when international agreements were violated, rather than the one-dimensional aggressive diplomacy of the Bush administration, who demanded serious improvements before talks could start. However, while Pyon remains diplomatic, he is not positive about the effects of this patience: “there is a perception that the strategic patience approach reflects the ‘reality’ of the North Korean nuclear situation rather than something like North Korea ‘policy’” (p. 75). The notion of strategic patience is also acknowledged by Pianalto (2016), but in a slightly different context. Insisting that patience is a virtue, this author makes the distinction between *strategic patience* and *tactical patience*. Strategic patience refers to the virtuous aim you seek to achieve. Tactical patience, in turn,

refers to the patience you need to show in order to accomplish this aim. Pinalto (2016, p. 108) emphasizes, in this regard, that a “thief is tactically patient, but strategically impatient”; while it may take the right timing to rob a bank, “there is a deeper sort of impatience at work,” for the thief wants to get money by robbing a bank, rather than by doing an honorable job.

Finally, research on boredom also could be read as indirectly referring to patience. Phillips (2015), for example, observed the patrolling behavior of police officers and found how much down time is part of their daily routine. Interestingly, though, Phillips does not treat patience as a virtue, but highlights the detrimental effects of boredom and maps strategies of doing other things while witnessing non-events and time passing.

What can be seen from these articles is that patience is primarily dealt with conceptually: interviewed leaders who stress the importance of their patience (Haque et al., 2017), the categorization of a policy as more patient than its alternative (Pyon, 2011), and reflections on the assumed benefits of patience (Comer & Sekerka, 2014). However, these articles take the accomplishment of patience for granted. We don’t gain insight into the interactions between leaders and other organization members that are typically patient interactions, nor do we see what certain absence of activities (boredom, strategy of patience) makes it so virtuous.

A clearer picture emerges from analysis of patience in professional work settings, as many professions rely on patience in the product or service they provide. Zhang (2022, p. 2), for example, provides a lively portrait of *teacher patience*, defined as a “teacher’s endurance throughout the teaching process, tolerance for the unexpected, and perseverance to the end of an instructional goal.” Quoting the diary of a teacher called Corey, Zhang illustrates how difficult it can be to practice forbearance: “For the first version, I try to stand in their shoes with them. But their second version is still not good? Is it really that difficult?! I felt I could

not stand it anymore” (p. 6). Persistence is needed to cope with the setbacks: “When my patience had collapsed at this time, another side of me was still shouting at me, reminding me of my professional role. It is like many rounds of battles in my mind between giving up and picking myself up” (p. 7). Anyone who has ever took a teacher role can empathize with Corey.

Although the image that arises from Corey’s diary is already more specific than the organizational examples, neither the professional nor the organizational impressions show us how patience is actually accomplished. Professionals talk about their behavior, but only on reflecting refer to it as patience. An avowed communicative approach to patience would need attention to 1) the active engagement with a situation, 2) where acceptance of delay in satisfying a concrete desire takes place, through 3) manifested waiting, restraint, forbearance and/or persistence. As can be seen in Table 1 (column three and four), particular communicative expressions would be observable. When preferring not to fill the experienced gap with immediacy, patience fills the gap interactively by expressing something virtuous that differs between the four manifestations of patience. These expressions includes mindful listening (while waiting), postponing satisfying a desire with reference to larger gains down the road (through restraint), acceptance of limitations (forbearance), and dedicated persistence in pursuit of acquiring a skill. It is striking how active patience actually is. Initially, the idea was that observing patience was “seeing someone doing nothing” (p.3 of this paper). On the contrary, the acts of listening, postponing, collaboration and dedication are readily observable. In turn, as we have proposed, such activities have stronger tendencies than impatience to lead to mindfulness, growth, mutual dependence and mastery. With that in mind, we can conclude that patience in organizations deserves attention from researchers and professionals alike.

Still, while we are interested in exploring what we do when people express *patience in organizations*, our second aim for this exploration was to see in what ways we enable organizations to develop more *patience as organizations*. This is where we turn to now.

The Communicative Accomplishment of Organizational Patience as a Virtuous Text

Thus far, we explored the accomplishment of different manifestations of patience in organizational contexts. Organizational patience adds a particular quality to future-making, as it assumes a virtuous characteristic of an organization. Again, our four manifestations of patience will serve as a guide here. Organizational patience involves a negotiated order (i.e. an organization) that expresses the characteristics of patience. This cannot be a one-instant situation, as patience can only become a character trait over time. So, in order to identify an organization as patient, memories of patient organizing needs to be cherished in their conversations, where its outcomes are deemed virtuous and typical for the organizational way of working. In line with our four manifestations of patience, people make reasonable identity claims (cf. Dobusch & Schoeneborn, 2015) about the patience of their organization in different ways. Waiting is identified as a key for a particular organizational success and a core element of the service provided by the organization. Restraint in strategies is considered to be wiser than immediate action. Forbearance created work connections that are still helpful. Persistence led to a level of expertise or accomplishment that are seen as key features of the organization. Through patient communication, certain experiences are created that collectively cultivate a *virtuous text*, which is authoritative in its nature as a recognized virtue (cf. Koschmann, Kuhn & Pfarrer, 2012) and provides the organization with a sense of direction in the way it prefers patience over immediacy. This virtuous text translates into the

Table 2 *Organizational Patience: Four Manifestations and their Future-making Practice*

Manifestation of Virtue	Elements of the virtuous text	Examples of patient organizations	Examples of patient professionals
Organizational Patience as Waiting	Providing service that is characterized by attentive listening and observing	Lifesaving society: Not forcing to act, but alertly waiting for the right moment. Being on guard for the moment that rescue is needed	Police or military on patrol: attention is paid to make sure that if someone is needed, they are ready.
Organizational Patience as Restraint	Doing what is needed to create the circumstances under which developments can optimally occur	Farm: Disciplined care for letting nature follow its generative process. Timing is wisdom.	Firefighters: doing teamwork calls for task division and restraint from those who do not lead the operation
Organizational Patience as Forbearance	Inviting non-perfect people and helping them to learn and make their contribution.	School: Disciplined care for letting people grow. Teamwork to complement each person's limitations.	Social service workers: providing care for people in need
Organizational Patience as Persistence	Dedication to a higher cause that is hard to achieve, in the pursuit of cumulative, incremental victories.	Activist organization: deployment of a "politics of patience" which allows a movement to cultivate strength and incremental shifts to their future advantage (Beck, 2022)	Goldsmith (and other craftspeople): mastery of working with difficult material, creation of beauty

organization's actions and conversations as patient coorientation. So, building on our conceptualization of patience thus far, we define organizational patience as *a virtuous text that appreciates patience as organizational quality that emerges in an organization through the waiting, restraint, forbearance and/or persistence of organization members*. Our conceptual view of organizational patience is summarized in the four manifestations of organizational patience, and their specific elements of the virtuous text, with examples of patient organizations and patient professionals (see Table 2).

Organizational Patience as Waiting. When organization members consistently provide services that are characterized by attentive listening and observing, we could call this organizational patience. It is hard to remain inactive in the face of non-action. Still, we are glad that lifeguards of the life-saving society remain alert all the time. That is their job, but it takes dedicated effort. The uniqueness of lifesavers is that they “primarily respond based upon their own observations of people in distress [while] other public safety providers (...) typically respond to reports of emergencies conveyed by others” (Tipton & Wooler, 2016, p. 20). Organizational patience must be a crucial virtuous text for those organizations, as visual search behavior is especially challenging “when the target behavior is rare, as in perception of drownings” (Schwebel et al., 2007: 863). Also, police and military on patrol embody organizational patience. As Hockey (2013: 95) wrote about the embodied phenomenology of infantry: “The individual's mind and body are combined via intensive training to produce a particular kind of corporeal engagement with the world. This engagement is exemplified by the infantry's subcultural phrase 'switch on'. To switch on means being alert to an employing particular sensory practices (smelling, touching, seeing hearing, and moving).” Apart from organizations that are established to wait, other organizations can also cultivate organizational patience. Most sent emails do not receive an immediate response. Sometimes

you just have to wait. Rather than doing whatever is in your power to pull the response towards you (e.g. calling the recipient asking for a reply to the email), the gap between now and later remains void of visible action. The activities that patience consist of then are typically calm, abiding in the moment, probably listening and observing.

Organizational Patience as Restraint. In contrast to the serene silence of waiting, restraint is a response while things are happening. The moment a professional decides to restrain herself rather than jump in, she actively accepts to let the situation evolve without her interfering in it. While possible, she withholds her agency. For particular organizations, this can be virtuous as leaving these moments evolve without intervening provides information where a future intervention is more fruitful. For example, as Geiger et al. (2021) describe, sometimes restraint is called for when a situation is hectic, and the best way of action is not yet clear. Such patience secures that organization members make proper sense of possible futures in their interactions. They can restrain themselves, as was described by a training for firefighters: “Learning to suppress the impulse to start acting immediately after arriving was an important part of these training sessions. In an interview, a leadership instructor explained: So we rather let them all wait in the truck until we have an overview and know what to do and how” (Geiger et al., 2021, p. 245). Here, patience makes a growth-orientation possible when organization members collectively avoid short-termism. Growth in a more literal sense can be expected in agricultural settings where restraint is necessary to let crops and animals grow. The virtue of organizational patience here prevents premature harvesting.

Organizational Patience as Forbearance. Bearing with inherent limitations of oneself and others, with this patience one accepts those limitations without complaining (Markóczy, Vora, & Xin, 2009). Immediacy would ignore an imperfection, or look for a way to get what is wanted somewhere else. Of course, one can hope for arriving at a future state that is yet uncertain (Sawyer & Clair, 2021), but for the moment accepting the struggle of people’s

shortcomings or one's own limited capacity for dealing with a situation. Sawyer and Clair (2021) present a case study of the foundation Light for the Future, which provides a residential, trauma-based rehabilitation program for survivors of commercial sex exploitation. The hard part of forbearance here can be that one is patient with a future that may never arrive, as every person has limitations due to traumatic experiences or the simple fact that no one can be an expert in everything. Over time, imperfect people may learn to provide something else, or we gain strength to carry our loads easier, or someone else will step in (cf. Nelson & Dyck, 2005). But for the moment, patience-as-forbearance gets accomplished by leniency for the unpleasant situation one finds oneself in. Hanging in, and staying with the trouble is sometimes the subtext of organizational patience as a virtuous text.

Organizational Patience as Persistence. Fourth, the grit of dedicated actions to pursue mastery calls for activities that are typically not seen as patience. Still, the accomplishment of patience as waiting, restraint and forbearance will provide the conditions for achieving mastery too. While learning a craft (Sennett, 2009), or managing to continue when facing setbacks call for patience. The gap between desire and fulfillment is not filled with immediate satisfaction, but with carrying on towards mastery and the overcoming of adversity. Inomata (2001), for example, showed how elite craft specialists created their crafts and how specialized their skills needed to become. Some literature connects persistence to entrepreneurship, where entrepreneurial persistence is seen as a “continuous, lifelong identification with entrepreneurship, and continuous and deliberate development as an entrepreneur through and beyond venture failures” (Duening, Metzger & Stock, 2019: 43). Here patience gets accomplished the moment one does not give up while experiencing incompetence or setback. The end goal is seen as meaningful enough to accept suffering. In another direction, activist organizations needs to cultivate organizational patience as the type of change longed for is oftentimes hard to accomplish. The Guatemalan Women's Movement

is a case in point (Beck, 2022). Here an explicit reference is made to “[a] politics of patience [which] is rooted in the pursuit of cumulative, incremental victories, pragmatic partnerships, alongside conscious efforts to build movement cohesion, networks, and knowledge” (p. 1044). Organizations that profess a politics of patience can teach us many things about how organizational patience is put into practice and how it defines the virtuousness of the organization.

Final reflections

We had two main aims with this paper. Observing how inactivity could be deemed a virtue, we embarked on a journey to find a conceptual description of patience in general and organizational patience in particular. After identifying four manifestations of patience, we define patience as the active engagement with a situation where a delay in the satisfaction of a desire is accepted, manifested through waiting, restraint, forbearance and/or persistence. In the next step, we explored how -apart from patience in organizations- we could identify organizational patience, which we defined as a virtuous text that appreciates patience as organizational quality that emerges in an organization through the waiting, restraint, forbearance and/or persistence of organization members. With these explorations, we believe we have pointed at a direction for very exciting research.

First of all, we found that patience warrants more research attention. Organizational research has remained almost silent on the subject of patience, which is not in line with its impact and attention in philosophy and other fields. Initially a bit scared by the potentially problematic observation and identification of patience as inactivity, it turned out that patience is hard work that can be readily observed.

Second, we believe that organizational patience is a new concept that could guide research into uncharted territory. Most research on patience takes the activities needed to

accomplish it for granted. We propose that through many interactions a virtuous text can emerge, being an outcome of organizing with a comparable pattern as authoritative texts (i.e. coorientation, conversations and distanciation). Where authoritative texts (Kuhn, 2008) refer to the power of future moves, a virtuous text expresses the building of character. It sets a norm (the low bar) and expresses the pursuit of a value (the high bar). This also raises a challenge for the CCO-community. In the creative and often brilliant attempts within the CCO-community to develop an analytical toolkit for analyzing how organizations are talked into existence, have we remained somewhat silent on the normative and teleological aspects of organizing?

Thirdly, "Patience is about being impatient about one thing for a long time" (James Howell, cited in Wells, 2023). That impatience is at the core of patience points at one element of patience that we have left aside, namely its temporality. Most virtues remain virtuous, and sometimes become even more honorable the longer they last. Loyalty, love and generosity, to name a few, do not need to end. Patience's temporality is a fascinating characteristic, it is patience *for* something. Achieving closure by completing a goal conflicts with the willingness and the ability to remain patient (Roberts & Fishbach, 2022). Participants in an experiment often choose inferior products or more painful treatments that were available earlier than superior or painless options, especially when people are close to finishing a goal (Roberts & Fishbach, 2020). So timing can be hard. While ending patience too early it violates the virtue, ending too late does violate the virtue, too.

Finally, when thinking about the future, patience is a helpful lens for identifying where to act and where to wait. It is not only that patience potentially shapes the future, the future also creates patience: organizational patience can only be identified over time, when we will learn whether it was really patience or passivity in disguise.

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