

---

# Guest editorial: Organizational ethnography and practice theories in the digital transformation of work

Digital and AI technologies increasingly permeate work activities and workplaces. Under conditions of remote and hybrid work especially, social practices become entangled with various digital forms such as data flows, digital devices and online platforms (Southerton and Halford, 2025). As these developments reshape the material arrangements, temporal rhythms and modes of coordination in everyday work, questions of how such configurations stabilize and change take on renewed relevance. This special issue places these enactments at the centre of analysis. By bringing practice theory into dialogue with organizational ethnography, it seeks to deepen our understanding of the digitalization of work and workplaces. More specifically, it highlights the potential of practice theory for understanding (organizational) change (Shove *et al.*, 2012), as well as for providing theoretical and methodological frameworks to reconstruct these transformations through everyday doings and sayings. Accordingly, it examines the conditions that ethnographic fieldwork encounters in – and the insights it generates about – digitalized work environments and emphasizes its potential to study practices beyond traditional in-person observation.

## Practice theories and organization research

The notion of practice has long played a central, often implicit, role in organization and management studies. From early concerns with routines and situated action in workplace studies to later debates on strategy and knowledge, scholars have repeatedly drawn on practice approaches to understand how social order is accomplished through everyday work in organizations (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011). With the interpretive turn, these concerns became more explicitly articulated in practice-theoretical terms, challenging rational choice models centred on instrumental reason as well as the Weberian image of the bureaucratic-hierarchical organization (Reckwitz, 2003, p. 285). Rather than conceiving organizations as rule-bound systems populated by calculating actors, practice theories redirect attention to the recurrent activities through which organizational life is enacted and reconfigured (Orlikowski, 2002; Schubert and Röhl, 2019).

Practices can be defined as routinized, socially shared configurations of doings and sayings that integrate bodily activities, practical understandings, material arrangements and normative orientations (Schatzki, 1996, 2010; see also Reckwitz, 2003). In Schatzki's conceptualization, they encompass both enduring and momentary dimensions. The notion of "practice-as-entity" refers to a culturally organized arrangement of actions, rules and material resources that persist across situations, while "practice-as-performance" captures their moment-to-moment enactment (1996, pp. 89–90). As performative repetitions, practices connect actors, their bodily competences, artefacts and meanings across space and time, forming patterns that travel, endure and evolve (Schäfer, 2021, p. 10; Shove *et al.*, 2012). Thus, research informed by practice theory attends to how these configurations are carried out and reconfigured in everyday work (Mol, 2002; Schatzki, 2005, 2006).

This understanding resonates with foundational contributions by Anthony Giddens and Pierre Bourdieu, both of whom reject rigid dualisms such as structure versus agency (Bourdieu, 1977; Giddens, 1986). Everyday activities are central to the ongoing reproduction of social order and analytical attention to practices highlights how social structures emerge from, and are sustained through, ongoing activity. At the same time, this view emphasizes that agency is always relational and embedded: actors enact, negotiate and modify practices within



patterned configurations of material, social, and normative elements. A key implication of this approach is the decentring of the individual subject: practices, rather than actors alone, become the primary unit of analysis (Laube and Schönián, 2013; see also Alkemeyer, 2025).

This has methodological consequences. Following Polanyi's (1997) insight that we know more than we can tell, many practice scholars emphasize tacit knowledge and embodied competencies enacted in performance that exceed explicit articulation (Collins, 2001). However, as Shove (2017) suggests, what matters is not whether people can articulate practices or whether observation or participation is required as a methodological rule, but what researchers aim to discover and how their chosen methods enable that focus. From this perspective, practice theories foreground situated activity without imposing overly rigid explanatory frameworks (Hirschauer, 2016). By emphasizing the interplay between moment-to-moment performance and enduring structures, a practice approach enables scholars to trace how patterns of action are reproduced and altered across contexts.

In organization and management studies, this orientation has highlighted the observation of routines and interpretive frames that guide decision-making and coordination. For instance, research by Weick and Roberts (1993) demonstrated how sense-making and distributed cognition are ongoing accomplishments embedded in practice. Workplace studies have shown how collaboration emerges through the fine-grained coordination of humans, technologies and wider infrastructures (Heath *et al.*, 2000). With its conceptual focus on how practices stabilize and change over time, practice theory provides a nuanced account of organizational transformation, making this analytical sensitivity a compelling orientation for studying digitalized work settings (Gherardi, 2012a; Orlikowski and Yates, 2006; Schäfer, 2013; Shove *et al.*, 2012). Today, practice-theoretical research is well established and has reconceptualized phenomena such as strategy and knowledge not as static resources but as situated accomplishments woven into everyday work (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011; Gherardi, 2012b; Seidl and Whittington, 2014; Whittington, 2007). Within this perspective, much of what sustains organizational life resides in embodied skills, affective attunements and coordination with artefacts and infrastructures (Gherardi *et al.*, 2018). It is precisely this sensitivity to situated, embodied and materially mediated activity that informs the contributions to this special issue, shaping how they approach and investigate digitalized work.

### **Ethnographies on/of the digital transformation of work**

These insights are particularly valuable for an ethnographic and practice-theoretical understanding of the digital transformation of work. Here, the starting point is not “the digital” as a technological domain but the situated use of digital technologies in everyday work (Duggan, 2017). Research in Science and Technology Studies (STS) has long emphasized that technologies must be understood through their enactment and that artefacts acquire agency and significance only within concrete interactions (Suchman, 2000, 2005). Following this research, Wanda Orlikowski has conceptualized sociomateriality as the inseparability of the social and the material in organizational practice (2007; Orlikowski and Scott, 2008). Digital work practices are therefore not simply “virtual”; they are materially accomplished through devices, interfaces, infrastructures and bodies, even when geographically dispersed (Schönián, 2011; Orel and Dahles, 2025; Eckhardt, 2023a). They may necessitate new work skills and development programs, thus reconfiguring tasks and practices. But rather than assuming a sharp divide between analogue and digital work, practice theory sensitizes us to examine the gradual integration of data, technologies and infrastructures into work practices – an orientation also captured in recent discussions of “sociodigital practices” (Southerton and Halford, 2025) – where old and new media coexist and shape practices in tandem (Klausner and Eckhardt, 2023; Orlikowski and Scott, 2021; Schönián, 2022).

The shift of workplace ethnographies toward digital and hybrid settings is not new and has been extensively discussed in previous special issues of this journal (Orel and Dahles, 2025; Verver *et al.*, 2024). Drawing on insights from digital ethnography and related fields

(Hine, 2020; Pink *et al.*, 2015), organizational ethnography has developed a rich methodological repertoire to grasp the dynamics of work going digital, from “following” and “shadowing” to digital walkthroughs (Czarniawska, 2007; Hine, 2000; Light *et al.*, 2018; Ritter, 2022). As scholars underline, writing fieldnotes remains central to ethnographic knowledge production even when research objects and methods are digital (Eckhardt, 2023b; Karhapää *et al.*, 2025). At the same time, digital fields change the conditions and techniques of documentation, requiring flexible strategies for recording and organizing observations (Eckhardt, 2023b; Karhapää *et al.*, 2025). Fieldnote writing can therefore be understood as an adaptive work practice that connects observation, documentation and analysis (cf. Ploder and Hamann, 2021).

Likewise, ethnographic immersion and sustained observation remain central in digital research fields, but they also pose methodological challenges. Long-term, co-located and continuous fieldwork is not always feasible, particularly in digitally mediated or distributed work settings. Access may be restricted, visibility partial and infrastructures opaque (Karhapää *et al.*, 2025). Capturing the tacit and material dimensions of work practices becomes challenging under these conditions, thus calling for methodological innovation without sacrificing the depth, reflexivity and sensitivity central to a practice approach (Rabinow *et al.*, 2008). Reliance on traditional forms of direct observation alone can therefore be limiting, prompting the exploration of approaches such as multi-sited ethnography, asynchronous observation or collaborative methods that involve different partners in documenting practice (Bieler *et al.*, 2021; Marcus, 1995).

However, investigating practices entails specific standards and obligations associated with the “epistemological requirement[s] of practice theory” (Rosell, 2024, p. 7), which are not always easily met; most notably, first-hand observation and experience of practices. This requirement reflects a genuine epistemological concern mentioned above: practices, as embodied and tacit accomplishments, are understood to resist being captured through purely discursive means. At the same time, as already noted, practice theory does not prescribe a single methodological approach; instead, it raises specific questions that should guide and methodological choices, depending on what researchers seek to understand – for example, how work unfolds through digital technologies (cf. Shove, 2017). Thus, the practical demands of conducting empirical research in hybrid and distributed work settings often necessitate more adaptive methodologies, potentially moving beyond the “gold standard” of observation. Understandings of what constitutes (participant) observation have long been more diverse (Spradley, 1980), and ethnographic approaches have been adapted to technologically mediated work contexts for decades (Grigoryan, 2024; Knoblauch, 2005). Following this idea, current research demonstrates that practices can also be investigated through forms of observation embedded in interviews that centre, for example, specific technologies and workplaces *in situ* (Schönian, 2026, 2022; Waizenegger *et al.*, 2023; Ritter, 2022; see also Reckwitz, 2008). Adapting the methodological repertoire to specific field conditions thus enables the empirical investigation of practices in contexts where prolonged immersion is difficult or impossible.

### Overview of the special issue

The contributions to this special issue take up some of these challenges. By mobilizing organizational ethnography and practice theory, they illuminate how digital transformation – often initially catalysed by the COVID-19 pandemic – is enacted in the embodied, relational and materially mediated practices of work. Digital and hybrid work appear not as abstract phenomena but as arrangements shaped by organizational change as an ongoing achievement: fragile, contested and continuously made and remade in practice. At the same time, the contributions reflect the reconfiguration of fieldwork from physically bounded sites toward more mobile and digitally mediated formats. Taken together, they examine digital, hybrid and physical work environments across diverse sectors, including journalism, waste work, finance, education and interdisciplinary research. In doing so, the authors foreground shifting

sociomaterial arrangements of work, attending to how material configurations, performances, identities, presences and embodied experiences are enacted and reconfigured in transitions toward partially or fully digital modes of working.

Uhlin and Crevani's (2026) contribution, "Verbal, visual and affective work when chairing digital meetings: a micro-ethnographic study," examines the forms of sociomaterial work involved in chairing digital meetings. Mobilizing practice theories and drawing on a digital micro-ethnographic approach, the authors show that chairing entails the ongoing performance of visual, verbal and affective work that contributes to "orchestrating" the space of the meeting. Rather than analysing digital meetings in relation to face-to-face meetings, the article argues for treating digitalized meetings as phenomena in their own right, a claim that resonates with Döbler's (2026) argument elsewhere in this special issue. Empirically, this is demonstrated through identifying six specific sociomaterial characteristics of chairing digital meetings.

The specific dimensions of facilitation practices in hybrid and digital work environments are further explored in Simon's (2026) article, "Making process work visible: enacting facilitation in digitally mediated interdisciplinary research teams." Conceptualizing facilitation as a set of enacted practices, the author examines how these practices unfold and become entangled with content-related work within a digitally mediated, multi-institutional and interdisciplinary research project. Drawing on sociomateriality, articulation work and facilitation literature, the contribution foregrounds moments of delineation, contestation and reconfiguration around process- and content-related responsibilities under novel working conditions. Adopting an autoethnographic approach, Simon reflects on his dual role as researcher and facilitator, tracing facilitation practices across sites and mapping their situated enactment. The analysis shows how the ambiguity arising from overlapping process- and content-related roles points to multiple forms of invisible work that is emerging in digital and hybrid environments, highlighting the need for new forms of institutional recognition in interdisciplinary research.

The third contribution to this special issue is Döbler's (2026) article, "Studying hybrid meetings in remote collaborations." Rather than focusing solely on how hybrid meetings are facilitated through hidden and invisible work, the study provides important insights into how specific sociotechnical arrangements, such as virtual reality technologies and telepresence robots, produce different modes of "being there" among participants in digital and hybrid meeting settings. Drawing on interactionist perspectives and practice theory, Döbler's ethnographic research, conducted both as a participant and observer of two types of digital and hybrid meetings, shows how participants enact "multiple presences" to compensate for the absence of bodily co-presence or for technological disruptions. In this context, seemingly mundane activities – such as charging the telepresence robot's battery or repositioning cameras – emerge as integral to the accomplishment of meetings. By zooming in on these practices, the study foregrounds the significance of presence in contemporary workplace environments and demonstrates how such an analysis moves beyond conventional analogue/digital or online/offline divides.

Employing a more classical on-site ethnographic approach, Ayeh *et al.*'s (2026) article, "Making digital work flow: accomplishing waste collection through practices of repair," takes the reader into two waste management companies in Germany and their attempts to transition from analogue and paper-based to digital and AI-based tools. Grounded in the analysis of mundane human-material interactions, the authors examine how digital technologies are put to work in and through everyday practices of waste collection to accomplish organizational digitalization. By foregrounding the sociomaterial dimensions of organizing, they propose repair as both a theoretical and methodological lens for studying and understanding organizational change. As they emphasize, innovation in practice is less about abrupt, fundamental transformation than about ongoing adaptation and repair work, involving employees across organizational hierarchies who care for people, technologies and workflows. Similar to online facilitation, the identified repair practices in digitalized waste

work point to emerging, often invisible forms of additional work, raising questions about how tasks and responsibilities are currently distributed within organizations.

By highlighting the continued importance of physical space for embodied learning in digitalized workplaces, Schropp's (2026) article, "'Like in a cathedral': how novice journalists embrace silence and emptiness in the digitalized newsroom," explores learning practices in contemporary journalism. Based on extensive ethnographic fieldwork in a Canadian newsroom – where work has become increasingly remote and news production is no longer tied to the spatial confines of the office – the study examines how novice journalists learn under conditions of silence and spatial emptiness. Drawing on the concepts of "embodied learning" and "knowing-in-practice", Schropp highlights the role of the senses and the body, particularly for early-career journalists whose skills depend heavily on peer interaction and supervisory knowledge sharing. In doing so, the article reaffirms the value of classical on-site ethnography and reintroduces the significance of physical space into debates on the study of digitalized workplaces.

The final contribution to this special issue is an autoethnographic reflection on how technology workers experience and make sense of digital transitions within a financial institution. Byrne *et al.*'s (2026) article, "Crafting connection in digital transformation: An autoethnographic study of technology work in banking," examines how pandemic-induced disruptions materialized in everyday routines and socially situated practices in an Irish bank. Combining practice-theoretical insights with job crafting theory, the authors identify relational job crafting as a central mode of organizing, enacted as a collective set of practices. Their insider ethnographic approach further shows how digitized and remote work environments give rise to specific forms of relational connection among software engineers, shaping shared senses of identity and belonging within the organization. Beyond this case alone, the focus on everyday work performance offers broader insights into how online environments shape job-related identities and professional subjectivities in remote work contexts.

### Concluding remarks and implications for future research

Despite the vitality of practice-theoretical studies and organizational ethnography for examining digital and hybrid work, certain blind spots remain. While the contributions in this special issue advance our understanding of how practices shape digitalized workplaces and organizational settings, they also highlight opportunities for further inquiry.

One important area for future research concerns relations of power. From a practice-theoretical perspective, power and domination are not external to practice; they are inscribed in configurations of relationally connected elements (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011; Watson, 2016). Practices, artefacts and infrastructures generate, support and stabilize other practices, thereby sedimenting asymmetries in and of action (Nicolini, 2016). For instance, dashboards, algorithmic classifications and platform architectures shape what can be done, seen and valued (Schönian, 2026). Organizational change toward digitalization thus frequently reconfigures power relations while shaping and being shaped by existing dominant power structures (Watson, 2016). In sum, we believe that engaging more thoroughly with questions of power provides a means of advancing ethnographic and practice-theoretical understandings of the transformation of work and organizational change.

A second and related key area for further inquiry concerns the embeddedness of practices within organizational structures and wider political contexts. Practices within, between and beyond organizations are not enacted and reconfigured in a vacuum. Rather, processes of accumulation, conflict and inequality on a macro-scale are both outcomes of and constitutive of interrelated practices (Hönke *et al.*, 2024; Nicolini, 2016; Shove and Spurling, 2013). While all articles in this special issue focus on organizational and professional contexts in the Global North, the analysis of practices across organizational structures and hierarchies is only addressed to a limited extent, if at all – a recurrent issue in and for practice-theoretical research.

Indeed, micro-ethnographic approaches to online meetings and collaboration through digital technologies are of limited explanatory power when it comes to examining organizational change and the endurance of practices. In line with the importance of “zooming in” on practices, we advocate for a practice-theoretical approach that increasingly also engages in “zooming out” (Nicolini, 2016) by interrogating how particular configurations become dominant, how they marginalize alternatives and how possibilities for change emerge within and against established practices.

Third, this call to extend the analytical scope also relates to the increasing use of autoethnographic approaches in digitalized work environments. Contemporary workplaces are characterized by multisituatedness, with research sites dispersed across physical and digital spaces, thereby transcending the online-offline dichotomy and becoming “phygital” (Karhapää *et al.*, 2023). Several articles in this special issue reflect the profound shift in social scientists’ working conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic, when their own work environments were increasingly reconfigured through the use of digital tools as well as remote and hybrid forms of work. As ethnographers and practice theory scholars seek to understand the practices of professional communities from within, autoethnography can offer valuable access to otherwise hard-to-reach fields, facilitate the development of trusting relationships with interlocutors and enable the study of everyday work with digital technologies (Orel, 2023). While this approach provides proximity, it also entails an embedded and partial perspective. Moreover, autoethnographic accounts are necessarily bounded by the researcher’s situated experience, which constrains the scope of claims that can be made beyond the immediate field context. This dual position – as both participant and analyst – enhances empirical insight but may limit analytical distance and critical reflexivity. For this reason, autoethnographic approaches are often complemented by additional forms of data and analysis to mitigate these limitations and enhance interpretive robustness.

The prominence of autoethnographic approaches in this special issue also raises broader methodological questions about how and to what extent practices can be studied under conditions of limited access. From a practice-theoretical perspective, some degree of methodological flexibility is crucial; otherwise, ethnographic studies risk being confined to autoethnographic modes, thereby limiting the range of observable practices and organizational contexts. Building on this need for methodological flexibility, we therefore suggest that researchers remain reflexive about their immersion in familiar work environments, the extent to which the data generated represent the phenomenon under study and how selected digital environments capture dimensions of organizational embeddedness, power and hierarchy. As noted above, under conditions of digital work, partial or temporary immersion may in some cases be adequate to observe particular work practices (Rabinow *et al.*, 2008; Vindrola-Padros, 2021), for instance, in relation to the specific application of digital or AI technologies. Moreover, if we take the inherent “sociomateriality” (Orlikowski, 2007) of organizational practice seriously, technologies can be understood as carriers of practices that span both digital and physical dimensions beyond single field sites. Following sociomaterial entanglements within, between and across organizational contexts thus offers another methodological approach, highlighting the capacity of ethnographic methods to capture the enactment of practices across heterogeneous and digitally mediated settings.

**Katja Schönián**

*Institute of Sociology, Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nürnberg,  
Erlangen, Germany, and*

**Diana Ayeh**

*Department of Environmental Politics,  
Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research – UFZ, Leipzig, Germany*

---

**References**

- Alkemeyer, T. (2025), "The subjects of practices: an invited response to the question: 'what is the significance of the human being in practice theories?'", *The Journal of Practice Theory*, Vol. 1, pp. 37-50, doi: [10.71936/wdmd-8275](https://doi.org/10.71936/wdmd-8275).
- Ayeh, D., Benedix, C., Biedermann Camposano, S. and Bleicher, A. (2026), "Making digital work flow: accomplishing waste collection through practices of repair", *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, Vol. 15 No. 2, pp. 243-256, doi: [10.1108/JOE-06-2025-0066](https://doi.org/10.1108/JOE-06-2025-0066).
- Bieler, P., Bister, M.D., Hauer, J., Klausner, M., Niewöhner, J., Schmid, C. and von Peter, S. (2021), "Distributing reflexivity through co-laborative ethnography", *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, Vol. 50 No. 1, pp. 77-98, doi: [10.1177/0891241620968271](https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241620968271).
- Bourdieu, P. (1977), *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge University Press, New York.
- Byrne, D., Tuite, A. and Organ, J. (2026), "Crafting connection in digital transformation: an autoethnographic study of technology work in banking", *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, Vol. 15 No. 2, pp. 270-285, doi: [10.1108/JOE-06-2025-0068](https://doi.org/10.1108/JOE-06-2025-0068).
- Collins, H. (2001), "What is tacit knowledge?", in Cetina, K.K., Schatzki, T.R. and Savigny, E. von (Eds), *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*, Routledge, pp. 107-118.
- Czarniawska, B. (2007), *Shadowing, and Other Techniques for Doing Fieldwork in Modern Societies*, Liber, Copenhagen Business School Press, Malmö, Herndon, VA, Oslo.
- Döbler, M.-K. (2026), "Studying hybrid meetings in remote collaborations", *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, Vol. 15 No. 2, pp. 224-242, doi: [10.1108/JOE-06-2025-0077](https://doi.org/10.1108/JOE-06-2025-0077).
- Duggan, M. (2017), "Questioning 'digital ethnography' in an era of ubiquitous computing", *Geography Compass*, Vol. 11 No. 5, e12313, doi: [10.1111/gec3.12313](https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12313).
- Eckhardt, D. (2023a), *Woran Arbeiten Wir? E-Commerce-Plattformen Ethnografisch Verstehen*, Campus, Frankfurt am Main.
- Eckhardt, D. (2023b), "Ethnografisches Feldnotieren in digitalen Feldern: Perspektiven einer Wissens- und Arbeitspraxis", *Kultur- und Sozialanthropologie Notizen*, Vol. 85, pp. 52-77, doi: [10.21248/ka-notizen.85.21](https://doi.org/10.21248/ka-notizen.85.21).
- Feldman, M.S. and Orlikowski, W.J. (2011), "Theorizing practice and practicing theory", *Organization Science*, Vol. 22 No. 5, pp. 1240-1253, doi: [10.1287/orsc.1100.0612](https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1100.0612).
- Gherardi, S. (2012a), "Why do practices change and why do they persist? Models of explanations", in Hager, P., Lee, A. and Reich, A. (Eds), *Practice, Learning and Change: Practice-Theory Perspectives on Professional Learning*, Springer Netherlands, Dordrecht, pp. 217-231, doi: [10.1007/978-94-007-4774-6\\_14](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-4774-6_14).
- Gherardi, S. (2012b), *Learning and Knowing in Practice-Based Studies*, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham, Northampton, MA.
- Gherardi, S., Murgia, A., Bellè, E., Miele, F. and Carreri, A. (2018), "Tracking the sociomaterial traces of affect at the crossroads of affect and practice theories", *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, Vol. 14 No. 3, pp. 295-316, doi: [10.1108/QROM-04-2018-1624](https://doi.org/10.1108/QROM-04-2018-1624).
- Giddens, A. (1986), *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*, University of California Press.
- Grigoryan, T. (2024), "Short essay: current issues in digital ethnography: is all ethnography digital?", *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, Vol. 13 No. 1, pp. 19-28, doi: [10.1108/JOE-02-2024-0008](https://doi.org/10.1108/JOE-02-2024-0008).
- Heath, C., Knoblauch, H. and Luff, P. (2000), "Technology and social interaction: the emergence of 'workplace studies'", *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 51 No. 2, pp. 299-320, doi: [10.1111/j.1468-4446.2000.00299.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-4446.2000.00299.x).
- Hine, C. (2000), *Virtual Ethnography*, Sage Publications.
- Hine, C. (2020), *Ethnography for the Internet: Embedded, Embodied and Everyday*, Routledge, London, doi: [10.4324/9781003085348](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003085348).

- Hirschauer, S. (2016), "Verhalten, Handeln, Interagieren: Zu den mikrosoziologischen Grundlagen der Praxistheorie", *Praxistheorie*, transcript Verlag, pp. 45-68.
- Hönke, J., Cezne, E. and Yang, Y. (2024), "Infrastructure globalities: emerging practices at the African Frontier", in Honke, J., Cezne, E. and Yang, Y. (Eds), *Africa's Global Infrastructures: South - South Transformations in Practice*, Oxford University Press, doi: [10.1093/osof/978019775363.003.0001](https://doi.org/10.1093/osof/978019775363.003.0001).
- Karhapää, A., Hämäläinen, R. and Pöysä-Tarhonen, J. (2023), "Digital work practices that promote informal workplace learning: digital ethnography in a knowledge work context", *Studies in Continuing Education*, pp. 1-18, doi: [10.1080/0158037X.2023.2274596](https://doi.org/10.1080/0158037X.2023.2274596).
- Karhapää, A., Pöysä-Tarhonen, J., Rikala, P. and Hämäläinen, R. (2025), "Being an ethnographic researcher in a modern workplace: advantages and challenges of digital ethnography", *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, Vol. 14 No. 2, pp. 233-247, doi: [10.1108/JOE-11-2024-0085](https://doi.org/10.1108/JOE-11-2024-0085).
- Klausner, M. and Eckhardt, D. (2023), "Digitalität und Ethnografie: Eine Einführung in Forschungsmethoden für mehr-als-digitale Felder", *Kulturanthropologie Notizen*, Vol. 85, pp. 2-19, doi: [10.21248/ka-notizen.85.44](https://doi.org/10.21248/ka-notizen.85.44).
- Knoblauch, H. (2005), "Focused ethnography", *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, Vol. 6 No. 3, doi: [10.17169/fqs-6.3.20](https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-6.3.20).
- Laube, S. and Schönian, K. (2013), "Same, same but different. Review of EASST/4S conference track 'comparing and connecting concepts of practice'", *EASST Review*, Vol. 32.
- Light, B., Burgess, J. and Duguay, S. (2018), "The walkthrough method: an approach to the study of apps", *New Media and Society*, Vol. 20 No. 3, pp. 881-900, doi: [10.1177/1461444816675438](https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444816675438).
- Marcus, G.E. (1995), "Ethnography in/of the world system: the emergence of multi-sited ethnography", *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 24 No. 1, pp. 95-117, doi: [10.1146/annurev.an.24.100195.000523](https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.an.24.100195.000523).
- Mol, A. (2002), *The Body Multiple: Ontology in Medical Practice*, Duke University Press, Durham.
- Nicolini, D. (2016), *Knowing in Organizations: A Practice-Based Approach: A Practice-Based Approach*, Routledge, New York, doi: [10.4324/9781315290973](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315290973).
- Orel, M. (2023), "Autoethnography in the modern workplace: a reflexive journey", *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, Vol. 13 No. 2, pp. 144-160, doi: [10.1108/JOE-06-2023-0038](https://doi.org/10.1108/JOE-06-2023-0038).
- Orel, M. and Dahles, H. (2025), "Guest editorial: beyond traditional fieldwork: digital ethnography's role in understanding modern work(places)", *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, Vol. 14 No. 2, pp. 159-166, doi: [10.1108/JOE-07-2025-112](https://doi.org/10.1108/JOE-07-2025-112).
- Orlikowski, W.J. (2002), "Knowing in practice: enacting a collective capability in distributed organizing", *Organization Science*, Vol. 13 No. 3, pp. 249-273, doi: [10.1287/orsc.13.3.249.2776](https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.13.3.249.2776).
- Orlikowski, W.J. (2007), "Sociomaterial practices: exploring technology at work", *Organization Studies*, Vol. 28 No. 9, pp. 1435-1448, doi: [10.1177/0170840607081138](https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840607081138).
- Orlikowski, W.J. and Scott, S.V. (2008), "Sociomateriality: challenging the separation of technology, work and organization", *The Academy of Management Annals*, Vol. 2 No. 1, pp. 433-474, doi: [10.1080/19416520802211644](https://doi.org/10.1080/19416520802211644).
- Orlikowski, W.J. and Scott, S.V. (2021), "Liminal innovation in practice: understanding the reconfiguration of digital work in crisis", *Information and Organization*, Vol. 31 No. 1, 100336, doi: [10.1016/j.infoandorg.2021.100336](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.infoandorg.2021.100336).
- Orlikowski, W.J. and Yates, J. (2006), "ICT and organizational change: a commentary", *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, Vol. 42 No. 1, pp. 127-134, doi: [10.1177/0021886305285130](https://doi.org/10.1177/0021886305285130).
- Pink, S., Horst, H., Postill, J., Hjorth, L., Lewis, T. and Tacchi, J. (2015), *Digital Ethnography: Principles and Practice*, SAGE.
- Ploder, A. and Hamann, J. (2021), "Practices of ethnographic research: introduction to the special issue", *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, Vol. 50 No. 1, pp. 3-10, doi: [10.1177/0891241620979100](https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241620979100).
- Polanyi, M. (1997), *The Tacit Dimension*, Routledge.

- Rabinow, P., Marcus, G.E., Faubion, J.D. and Rees, T. (2008), *Designs for an Anthropology of the Contemporary*, Duke University Press, doi: [10.2307/j.ctv11g9705](https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv11g9705).
- Reckwitz, A. (2003), "Grundelemente einer Theorie sozialer Praktiken. Eine sozialtheoretische Perspektive", *Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, Vol. 32 No. 4, pp. 282-301.
- Reckwitz, A. (2008), "Praktiken und Diskurse. Eine sozialtheoretische und methodologische Relation", in Hirschauer, S., Kalthoff, H. and Lindemann, G. (Eds), *Theoretische Empirie: Zur Relevanz Qualitativer Forschung*, Suhrkamp Verlag, pp. 188-209.
- Ritter, C.S. (2022), "Rethinking digital ethnography: a qualitative approach to understanding interfaces", *Qualitative Research*, Vol. 22 No. 6, pp. 916-932, doi: [10.1177/14687941211000540](https://doi.org/10.1177/14687941211000540).
- Rosell, T. (2024), "Short essay: the risks of choosing practice theory for ethnographic research: experiences of epistemological and methodological failures", *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, Vol. 13 No. 1, pp. 1-12, doi: [10.1108/JOE-11-2023-0064](https://doi.org/10.1108/JOE-11-2023-0064).
- Schäfer, H. (2013), *Die Instabilität Der Praxis: Reproduktion Und Transformation Des Sozialen in Der Praxistheorie*, Velbrück Wissenschaft, Weilerswist.
- Schäfer, H. (2021), "Der Gebrauch des Digitalen. Zur praxeologischen Analyse digitaler Kultur", *Digitale Praktiken*, Vol. 1.
- Schatzki, T.R. (1996), *Social Practices: A Wittgensteinian Approach to Human Activity and the Social*, Cambridge University Press.
- Schatzki, T.R. (2005), "Peripheral vision: the sites of organizations", *Organization Studies*, Vol. 26 No. 3, pp. 465-484, doi: [10.1177/0170840605050876](https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840605050876).
- Schatzki, T.R. (2006), "On organizations as they happen", *Organization Studies*, Vol. 27 No. 12, pp. 1863-1873, doi: [10.1177/0170840606071942](https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840606071942).
- Schatzki, T.R. (2010), "Materiality and social life", *Nature and Culture*, Vol. 5 No. 2, pp. 123-149, doi: [10.3167/nc.2010.050202](https://doi.org/10.3167/nc.2010.050202).
- Schönian, K. (2011), "From 'virtuality' to practice. Researching the intranet as a socio-material assemblage", *Graduate Journal of Social Science*, Vol. 8 No. 3, pp. 142-160.
- Schönian, K. (2022), *Just \A Machine for Doing Business(? Sociomaterial Configurations of the Intranet in a Post-Merger Telecommunications Company*, 2022nd ed., transcript, Bielefeld.
- Schönian, K. (2026), "Important but not urgent: exploring e-learning at work", *Journal of Workplace Learning*, pp. 1-19, doi: [10.1108/JWL-06-2025-0203](https://doi.org/10.1108/JWL-06-2025-0203).
- Schropp, R. (2026), "'Like in a cathedral': how novice journalists embrace silence and emptiness in the digitalized newsroom", *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, Vol. 15 No. 2, pp. 257-269, doi: [10.1108/JOE-06-2025-0072](https://doi.org/10.1108/JOE-06-2025-0072).
- Schubert, C. and Röhl, T. (2019), "Ethnography and organisations: materiality and change as methodological challenges", *Qualitative Research*, Vol. 19 No. 2, pp. 164-181, doi: [10.1177/1468794117744748](https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794117744748).
- Seidl, D. and Whittington, R. (2014), "Enlarging the strategy-as-practice research agenda: towards taller and flatter ontologies", *Organization Studies*, Vol. 35 No. 10, pp. 1-15, doi: [10.1177/0170840614541886](https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840614541886).
- Shove, E. (2017), "Practice theory methodologies do not exist", *Practice Theory Methodologies*, 15 February, available at: <https://practicetheorymethodologies.wordpress.com/2017/02/15/elizabeth-shove-practice-theory-methodologies-do-not-exist/> (accessed 30 March 2026).
- Shove, E. and Spurling, N. (2013), *Sustainable Practices: Social Theory and Climate Change*, Routledge.
- Shove, E., Pantzar, M. and Watson, M. (2012), *The Dynamics of Social Practice: Everyday Life and How it Changes*, Sage Publications, London.
- Simon, S.T. (2026), "Making process work visible: enacting facilitation in digitally mediated interdisciplinary research teams", *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, Vol. 15 No. 2, pp. 201-223, doi: [10.1108/JOE-05-2025-0054](https://doi.org/10.1108/JOE-05-2025-0054).

- Southerton, D. and Halford, S. (2025), "Sociodigital practices: mobilising and challenging social practice theory", *The Journal of Practice Theory*, Vol. 1, pp. 79-86, doi: [10.71936/16w1-x211](https://doi.org/10.71936/16w1-x211).
- Spradley, J.P. (1980), *Participant Observation*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Suchman, L. (2000), "Making a case: 'knowledge' and 'routine' work in document production", in Heath, C., Hindmarsh, J. and Luff, P. (Eds), *Workplace Studies: Recovering Work Practice and Informing System Design*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 29-45, doi: [10.1017/CBO9780511628122.003](https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511628122.003).
- Suchman, L. (2005), "Affiliative objects", *Organization*, Vol. 12 No. 3, pp. 379-399, doi: [10.1177/1350508405051276](https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508405051276).
- Uhlin, A. and Crevani, L. (2026), "Verbal, visual and affective work when chairing digital meetings: a micro-ethnographic study", *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, Vol. 15 No. 2, pp. 187-200, doi: [10.1108/JOE-06-2025-0079](https://doi.org/10.1108/JOE-06-2025-0079).
- Verver, M., van den Ende, L. and Dahles, H. (2024), "Guest editorial: new directions in workplace ethnography", *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, Vol. 13 No. 2, pp. 137-143, doi: [10.1108/JOE-07-2024-101](https://doi.org/10.1108/JOE-07-2024-101).
- Vindrola-Padros, C. (2021), *Rapid Ethnographies: A Practical Guide*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, doi: [10.1017/9781108623568](https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108623568).
- Waizenegger, L., Schaedlich, K. and Doolin, B. (2023), "Sociomateriality in action", *Business and Information Systems Engineering*, Vol. 65 No. 3, pp. 1-23, doi: [10.1007/s12599-023-00796-w](https://doi.org/10.1007/s12599-023-00796-w).
- Watson, M. (2016), "Placing power in practice theory", in *The Nexus of Practices*, Routledge.
- Weick, K.E. and Roberts, K.H. (1993), "Collective mind in organizations: heedful interrelating on flight decks", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 38 No. 3, pp. 357-381, doi: [10.2307/2393372](https://doi.org/10.2307/2393372).
- Whittington, R. (2007), "Strategy practice and strategy process: family differences and the sociological eye", *Organization Studies*, Vol. 28 No. 10, pp. 1575-1586, doi: [10.1177/0170840607081557](https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840607081557).

### Further reading

- Herrmann, T. and Pfeiffer, S. (2023), "Keeping the organization in the loop: a socio-technical extension of human-centered artificial intelligence", *AI and Society*, Vol. 28 No. 4, pp. 1523-1542, doi: [10.1007/s00146-022-01391-5](https://doi.org/10.1007/s00146-022-01391-5).