



Organization Studies
Special Issue Call for Papers

The Future of Strategizing and Organizing as Practice: Extensions and Connections

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Strategy-as-Practice (SAP) has added a new perspective on how strategic and organizational phenomena are studied (Johnson, Langley, Melin, & Whittington, 2007; Whittington, 2006). In contrast to more conventional research on strategy, it focuses on the activities and interactions of actors in and around organizations, both in terms of what they do in practice and how they accomplish strategy work (Jarzabkowski, 2004; Sillince & Mueller, 2006). This focus on activities has directed researchers to examine strategizing and organizing often simultaneously, since the doing of strategy (e.g., conducting a strategy workshop) inevitably involves various organizing activities (e.g., coordinating actors, schedule, and space for the workshop). Therefore, in SAP research strategizing and organizing are “treated not as two discrete practices, but as inextricably linked together, a single duality rather than separable building blocks” (Whittington & Melin, 2003, p. 35). In this sense, SAP started as a promising approach to bridge and integrate strategic management and organization studies. This special issue aims to further build this bridge between strategizing and organizing as practice (SOAP) through empirical and conceptual research that links strategizing research into broader theoretical fields and phenomena.

Over the last two decades, Strategy-as-Practice has flourished and established itself as a distinctive approach to strategy and organization research with over 500 publications (Jarzabkowski, Seidl, & Balogun, 2022) and with *Organization Studies* (OS) among its key outlets (Seidl & Whittington, 2014; Sillince & Mueller, 2006). During this rapid development, SAP research has produced many new insights into understanding a wide range of strategizing and organizing activities by drawing on practice and other theories from organization studies including broader social theories (Golsorkhi, Rouleau, Seidl, & Vaara, 2024; Spee & Jarzabkowski, 2009; Vaara & Whittington, 2012). Having grown into a distinctive field of strategy and organization research, SAP has now reached a phase of maturity. As is typical of research fields in this phase (e.g., Helfat et al., 2023; Vera, Bonardi, Hitt, & Withers, 2022), researchers have started to ask what is the future of SAP? In other words, after twenty years of

development, how can the field remain vigorous in the next twenty years (Jarzabkowski, Kavas, & Krull, 2021; Rouleau & Cloutier, 2022)? We argue that the answers reside in keeping and enhancing SAP's empirical and theoretical relevance in future strategy and organization research. Hence, in this special issue, we call for studies that contribute to reinvigorating strategizing and organizing as practice by extending its scope of inquiry and by forging connections with other fields of research.

Objectives and scope

With this special issue, we aim to inspire and encourage scholars to go beyond conventional thinking in strategy and organization research by expanding the scope of SAP. We suggest four promising avenues for future expansion. First, future research could mobilize the SAP approach to investigate how organizations deal with societal and critical challenges. In this regard, there are a multitude of new and formidable strategic challenges for organizations and society that the SAP approach could address. These challenges encompass areas like diversity, equality and inclusion, climate change, extreme contexts, and armed conflicts that are often overlooked in existing strategy research despite their consequentiality for organizations. Notably, these issues not only open exciting avenues for strategy research but also hold profound implications for organizations and society at large.

Second, we encourage researchers to explore new forms of strategizing and organizing. These encompass emerging forms of organizing to incorporate greater sustainability as well as the role of new technologies (e.g., AI), which are increasingly taking center stage on the strategic agendas of organizations. Third, another avenue of expanding SAP research is to explore strategizing in new geographic contexts. So far SAP research has been relatively concentrated on Europe and North America, thereby offering limited insights into strategizing and organizing practices in other regions across the globe. Lastly, building new bridges and connections between SAP and other streams of research can generate important new insights and advance the field of strategy and organization research as a whole. Below we will outline potential topics related to these four avenues for expanding SAP research.

Potential themes and topics

Possible topics for contributions include, but are not restricted to the following themes and questions:

(1) Investigating societal and critical challenges

Organizations are increasingly confronted with rapidly evolving challenges that affect how they strategize and what they consider strategic. Adopting an SAP approach to studying how organizations deal with new societal and critical challenges promises enormous potential to delve into the interplay between micro-level activities and macro-level concerns. These challenges relate to among others, rapidly advancing climate change, tensions around diversity, equality and inclusion, fracturing globalization, and organizing in extreme contexts (Bouty & Godé, 2022; Cloutier & Couture, 2023; Delbridge, Helfen, Pekarek, Schuessler, & Zietsma, forthcoming; Jarzabkowski, Bednarek, Chalkias, & Cacciatori, 2022; Post, Muzio, Sarala, Wei, & Faems, 2021). Questions that might be pertinent for investigation include:

- How can SAP shed light on the dynamics of climate change adaptation strategies within and among organizations, or on the absence of such strategies?

- What novel practices of strategizing and organizing emerge in response to societal challenges like poverty, war, and conflict? But also, which micro-level practices might (unintentionally) contribute to the emergence of conflict and poverty?
- How do organizations deal with diversity, equality, and inclusion (DEI) in strategizing and organizing activities? What practices contribute to the promotion or hindrance of DEI?
- Are there discernible changes in the way organizations formulate their strategies as a result of evolving societal norms and expectations, particularly regarding Environmental, Social, & Corporate Governance (ESG)?
- How do organizations strategize and organize in extreme contexts, such as war and natural disasters?

(2) Exploring new forms of strategizing and organizing

SAP has thus far predominantly focused on conventional forms and activities of strategy making in organisations. However, recent changes in the business landscape (e.g., competition within and among ecosystems), the emergence of new technologies, and the development of new working practices have given rise to innovative forms of strategizing and organizing (Splitter, Dobusch, von Krogh, Whittington, & Walgenbach, 2023). For example, advancements in new technologies, in particular AI (Bailey, Faraj, Hinds, Leonardi, & von Krogh, 2022; Beyes, Chun, Clarke, Flyverbom, & Holt, 2022), are reshaping human-technology interactions in organizations and leading to decentralized and virtual management. These developments have a significant impact on the forms of strategizing and organizing, which future SAP research could explore. Questions might include:

- What practices are involved in the establishment, maintenance, and alteration of ecosystems?
- How do digital-intensive technologies such as AI and other new technologies shape the form of strategy making and organizing?
- What are the practices of virtual strategizing and organizing and their implications?
- How can potentially new forms of strategizing and organizing enhance creativity and innovation within and outside organizations?
- What practices lead to, maintain, and dissolve disorganization and unsettlement?

(3) Discovering new geographic contexts

While examining various strategizing and organizing activities, SAP research has primarily focused on European and North American contexts (Prashantham & Healey, 2022). Due to the limited attention to other geographic settings, there may be strategizing and organizing practices that have yet to gain scholarly attention or awareness. Expansion of inquiry into new geographical contexts is vital because it enables a better understanding of the context-specific nature of strategizing and organizing practices. Questions here could include:

- Which strategizing and organizing practices do actors in organizations from other world regions, such as Africa, Asia, and South America, and the specific countries within them, develop, enact, and modify?
- Are there distinct challenges or opportunities in the strategizing and organizing process when organizations operate in diverse global regions?
- What unique cultural and/or indigenous influences shape strategizing and organizing practices in different world regions, and with what implications for our understanding of strategy?
- How do practices transfer between different geographic and cultural contexts?

(4) Developing connections and dialogues with other research streams

Establishing new connections with other streams of research in strategy and organization studies holds enormous potential to broaden and deepen our understanding of strategizing and organizing activities and their impact on organizations. SAP has drawn upon practice theories and related theories, such as discourse and sensemaking (Kohtamäki, Whittington, Vaara, & Rabetino, 2021). Engaging in dialogue with other fields within organization studies and introducing novel theories into SAP offers intriguing avenues for SAP to generate fresh insights into managerial activities. For instance, SAP has successfully incorporated other theories, such as institutional theory (Smets, Jarzabkowski, Burke, & Spee, 2015), routine dynamics (Kremser & Sydow, 2022), upper echelons (Ma & Seidl, 2018), framing (Kaplan, 2008), and future making (Pettit, Balogun, & Bennett, 2023). Moreover, given the shared focus on activities in and around organizations, SAP can also benefit from connecting with other practice-based management research, among others, Entrepreneurship as Practice (Thompson & Byrne, 2022), Leadership as Practice (Raelin, 2017), and Knowing as Practice (Nicolini, 2011). Because such cultivation of new connections has led to highly compelling and insightful findings, we encourage scholars to build more bridges between different fields (Nicolini & Korica, 2021).

The previously listed avenues and questions are illustrative rather than exclusive; imagination beyond them is invited. The presented questions may also naturally overlap, and we encourage studies at the intersection of two or more avenues. We welcome empirical papers on these topics, as well as methodological, theoretical, and epistemological papers.

Our aim in this Special Issue, is to inspire exemplary studies that showcase how Strategizing and Organizing as Practice (SOAP) can be used to explore new and challenging issues that the world is facing. These studies will delve into contemporary phenomena, intersect with other research streams, and harness innovative methodologies.

Submission process

Please submit your manuscript through the journal's online submission system (<http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/orgstudies>). You will need to create a user account if you do not already have one, and you must select the appropriate Special Issue at the "Manuscript Type" option. The Special Issue Editors handle all manuscripts following the journal's policies and procedures; they expect authors to follow the journal's submission guidelines (<https://journals.sagepub.com/author-instructions/OSS>). You can submit your manuscript for this Special Issue between September 15 and September 30, 2025. Contact Sophia Tzagaraki, Managing Editor of Organization Studies, for administrative support and general queries at osofficer@gmail.com.

Workshops

The guest editor team is planning a series of workshops (onsite, online or during conferences) to further facilitate the practice approach to strategy and organizing. The Organization Studies Summer Workshop 2025 (May 23-25, Chania, Crete) will be dedicated to this theme. Authors who plan to submit a paper to this special issue are invited to participate in the workshop and develop their ideas through the feedback that would be provided. However, participation in this or other PDWs is not required and authors who did not attend the PDW are welcome to submit papers to the special issue.

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