



Future Making: Towards a Practice Perspective

Matthias Wenzel^a , Laure Cabantous^b  and Jochen Koch^c

^aLeuphana University of Lüneburg; ^bESCP Business School; ^cEuropean University Viadrina

ABSTRACT Management scholars are increasingly interested in ‘future making’, observing and theorizing how organizational actors produce and enact the yet-to-come. However, the rapid growth of the conversation runs the risk of emptying the notion of future making, calling into question its meaning and relevance. In response to these concerns, our *Point* is that there is value in understanding future making from a practice perspective. A practice perspective, we argue, is empirically sufficiently open to account for the plurality and open-endedness of futures and future making amidst the continual emergence of interrelated crises, large-scale challenges, and intractable technologies. Thus, it reinforces the relevance of research on future making as a central part of contemporary organizational life. At the same time, the four practice-based dimensions elaborated in this *Point* provide sufficient conceptual specificity to discern what counts as future making and what does not, thereby providing solid ground for cumulative theory-building and research in this area. Our *Point* extends research on future making in management studies by substantiating the relevance of examining and theorizing future making, and by articulating and clarifying a practice perspective on future making that directs scholarly attention to important areas for future research.

Keywords: future making, futures, performativity, practice theory, relationality

[These days], we are constantly talking about [futures]. Evidently, there is a multiplicity of demands for them. (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 7 May 2024)

INTRODUCTION

Concerns about the future implications of large-scale challenges such as climate change (Bansal et al., 2025, p. 2) and intractable technologies such as artificial intelligence (Lindebaum et al., 2024, p. 2725) have given rise to research on future making as an organizational phenomenon (e.g., Comi and Whyte, 2018; Wenzel et al., 2020). By ‘future

Address for reprints: Matthias Wenzel, Leuphana University of Lüneburg, Universitätsallee 1, 12335 Lüneburg, Germany (matthias.wenzel@leuphana.de).

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making', we refer to ways in which organizational actors produce and enact the yet-to-come. Among other things, management scholars observe and theorize organizational actors' conventional attempts to predict, plan, preempt, and prepare for the future, as, for instance, manifested in attempts to reach the Sustainable Development Goals formulated at the United Nations (see Lantz et al., 2025). They also explore how organizational actors adopt more or less deliberate alternatives to planning such as agile organizing (Stjerne et al., 2024) as well as experimental ways of imagining (Thompson and Byrne, 2022). In contrast to earlier research on planning and prediction (Wolf and Floyd, 2017), a distinctive feature of research on future-making is the idea that organizational actors cannot predict or manage the future as if it were a pre-existing, objective category. Instead, organizational actors 'make' the future as a socially constructed category in the present. In this view, planning and prediction are no more than two of potentially many other ways through which futures come into being.

Notions of future making are now used to discuss a profusion of futures, such as (un)desirable (e.g., Alimadadi et al., 2022; Van Elk et al., 2024), (un)sustainable (e.g., De Cock et al., 2021; Nyberg et al., 2020), actionable and visionary (e.g., Pettit et al., 2023; Rindova and Martins, 2022), as well as utopian and dystopian (e.g., Jarvenpaa and Välikangas, 2020; Rauch, 2025). They have also inspired research into the role of tools and technologies (e.g., Glaser et al., 2021; Wenzel, 2022; Whyte et al., 2022), affects and ethics (Kuepers et al., 2023; Plotnikof and Pors, 2024), frames and knowledge (Munshi et al., 2024; Thompson and Byrne, 2022), paths and events (Feuls et al., 2024; Hernes et al., 2025), expectations and hype (Beckert, 2021; Logue and Grimes, 2022), as well as social movements and alternative economies (Reinecke, 2018; Schiller-Merkens, 2024) in turning to the future. Furthermore, well-established topic areas such as entrepreneurship (Berglund and Dimov, 2023) and innovation (Spanjol et al., 2024) have been recast as future making. To some extent, the notion of future making even penetrates scholarly practices. Some management scholars are increasingly interested in making futures themselves in the world that they aim to understand and explain (e.g., Bridoux et al., 2024; Gümüşay and Reinecke, 2021, 2024; Muñoz and Dimov, 2023; Rindova and Martins, 2021; Sharma et al., 2022; Wickert, 2024).

Given the centrality of the yet-to-come even in the public sphere (as evidenced by the quote above), we welcome the overall trend in management studies towards engaging with futures. However, we are concerned that the rapid growth of the conversation may dilute this line of inquiry by emptying the notion of future making, *calling into question what future making is (not) and whether it is really a relevant phenomenon to be examined and theorized*. If future making is *everything*, in the sense that it can even be used to reframe well-theorized, open-ended organizational phenomena, it is *nothing*, a vacuous debate that is doomed to perish. However, management scholarship on future making is too big to fail. Amidst a diagnosed 'imaginary crisis' according to which actors in organizations and society could resolve many contemporary large-scale challenges by exploring alternative ways of making futures (Mulgan, 2022), the demand for scholarly insights into future making seems stronger than ever, not only from a theoretical but also practical perspective. In fact, as Hilbolling et al. (2022) highlighted, one of the greatest grand challenges in contemporary organizations and society is to

understand and implement ways of producing futures that mobilize and contribute to the coordination of collective efforts. The field of research on future making affords to deliver these insights. Yet, for the field to stay relevant, it needs more solid conceptual foundations so as to discern what counts as future making and what does not, and why it is relevant to examine and theorize this phenomenon, if at all.

In response to these concerns, our *Point* is that there is value in understanding future making from a practice perspective, namely, as ‘a set of practices through which actors produce and enact the future’ (Wenzel et al., 2020, p. 1441). While fragments of such a perspective have latently appeared in previous management scholarship (e.g., Pettit et al., 2023; Thompson and Byrne, 2022), it has yet to be articulated and clarified in order to decipher its value. Building on the agenda of practice theory (e.g., Reckwitz, 2002; Schatzki et al., 2001), the practice perspective that we articulate here draws attention to situated performances of manifold and interconnected streams of activity through which organizational actors bring futures into being. This perspective, we argue, reinforces scholarly attention on future making by doing justice to its importance in contemporary organizational life, while counteracting tendencies to empty future making through its proliferating but undertheorized use.

We elaborate our argument in three steps. First, we reconstruct contemporary dynamics that constitute the open-endedness of the yet-to-come as a timely, relevant, and important organizational phenomenon. In doing so, we explain why debates on future making inevitably embrace a plurality of futures, as well as ways of producing and enacting them. Second, by articulating and clarifying key dimensions of a practice perspective on future making, we elaborate on how this perspective is well-positioned to do justice to this plurality. Specifically, as we argue, this perspective is empirically open to the manifold, interconnected, and partly subtle and mundane streams of activity through which futures come into being on the one side, while providing sufficient conceptual specificity to discern what counts as future making and what does not on the other. The contemporary manifestations of futures and future making, however, have yet to be more systematically substantiated to build, elaborate, and refine theoretical insights into future making. Hence, third, we use the elaborated dimensions of a practice perspective on future making to advance directions for future research.

Taken together, our *Point* underscores the relevance of research on future making in and around organizations while providing conceptual clarity amidst a proliferating but emptying interest in it. That is, from a practice perspective, future making is neither *everything* nor *nothing*. It is not *nothing* because a practice perspective does justice to the contemporary prevalence and plurality of future making in organizational life. And it is not *everything* because the succinct practice-based conceptual apparatus provides sufficient conceptual clarity to extract specific ways of producing and enacting the yet-to-come in theory building and research on future making.

THE TURN TO FUTURE MAKING IN MANAGEMENT STUDIES

Prior work has argued that the future matters in and for contemporary organizations because actors experience it as a problematic, open-ended temporal category, one that no longer provides guidance for organizational activity (Wenzel et al., 2020). In this

section, we justify the growth of management scholarship on future making as an important organizational phenomenon by reconstructing dynamics that constitute this open-endedness, as well as the ensuing needs for ‘making’ futures in organizational life (see Figure 1).

Specifically, as we argue, the continual emergence of interacting crises, large-scale challenges, and intractable technologies undermines planning as a long-established way of reaching closure about what is to come, thereby contributing to an experienced open-endedness of the future. The erosion of planning renders the ‘making’ of the yet-to-come imperative for restoring the future’s capacity to serve as guide for organizational activity, leading organizational actors to explore, experiment with, and perform alternative ways of producing and enacting futures. Through the largely uncoordinated performance of varying ways in which organizational actors produce and enact the yet-to-come, a plurality of futures comes to life. This plurality, then, reproduces and intensifies experiences of the open-endedness of the yet-to-come and, again, manifests in emerging and reemerging crises, large-scale challenges, and intractable technologies. In this view, the problem with future making is not the

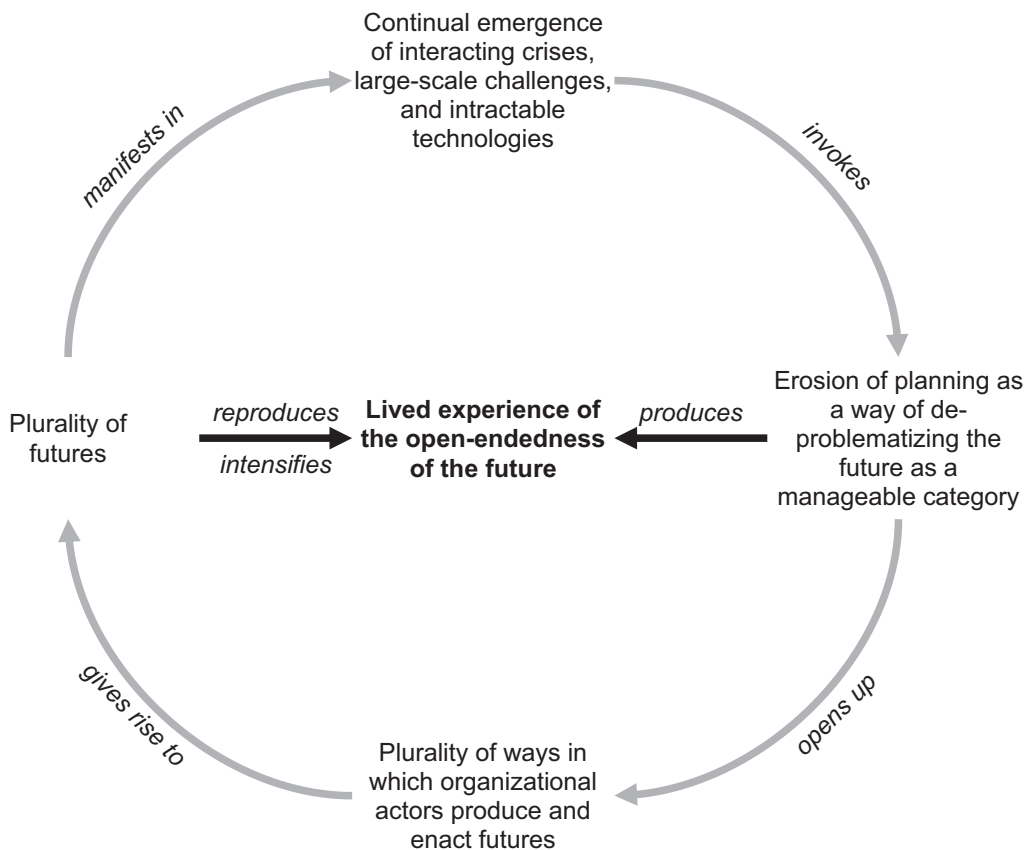


Figure 1. The reproduction and intensification of the open-endedness of the future as a prevalent feature of contemporary organizational life

proliferating interest in a great variety of futures and ways of making them as such, but the need for a theoretical foundation that is empirically open enough to do justice to this plurality on the one side, and conceptual specificity to be selective about what counts as future making and what does not on the other – a tension that, as we will argue below, the practice perspective on future-making is well positioned to accommodate.

Organizational Actors Devote Growing Attention to the Future

Organizations and society have recently been hit by crises of various sorts (Muzio and Doh, 2020; Wenzel et al., 2021). Among others, these include public health crises, as well as financial and economic crises that have put entire nation states at risk; a migration crisis that has revealed the vulnerability of bureaucratic organizing; a climate crisis that, amidst extreme weather conditions, exhorts more sustainable ways of living and working; a war of aggression at the heart of Europe that few would have believed to be possible; and terrorist action and armed conflicts in the Middle East. Simultaneously, ever-more salient large-scale challenges such as hunger, poverty, and inequality call for much-needed improvements or even their resolution (George et al., 2016; Voegtlin et al., 2022). In addition, as the digital transformation ventures into intractable technologies such as artificial intelligence, not just certain jobs, but work overall is at stake (Deranty et al., 2023; Dries et al., 2024). What does it mean to ‘work’ if parts of it are augmented or automated by artificial intelligence (Beane and Leonardi, 2022; Raisch and Krakowski, 2021)?

While crises, large-scale challenges, and artificial intelligence are somewhat difficult to compare, they do have at least one aspect in common: all of them draw organizational actors’ attention to the future as an open-ended temporal category. For example, financial and economic crises have raised questions about dominant economic systems, as well as alternatives that may replace them in the future. Likewise, attempts to tackle inequality as a large-scale challenge question systemic distortions in organizations and society. This, then, raises questions about the regimes and orders that will eventually emerge once these distortions are overcome. In all of these instances, the past is not absent, in that the present, past, and future are always performed simultaneously in any one moment (Hernes, 2014, 2022). Yet, the past seems to enter in a specific way, namely, as breaking with it. Moving on as before, then, becomes just one among many possibilities, and one that is not innately attractive. As a result, the recent emergence of crises, growing attention to large-scale challenges in organizations and society, as well as the ramifications of artificial intelligence and other intractable technologies have led organizational actors to engage with the yet-to-come.

Yet, it is not the emergence of these challenges alone that draws organizational actors’ attention to the future. As Kumaraswamy et al. (2018) aptly wrote, ‘It is hard to deny that we are living in an age of *continual* disruptions’ (p. 1025, emphasis added). In this spirit, the recently popularized notion of ‘polycrisis’ aims to capture that contemporary crises such as armed conflicts as well as resource and energy shortages continually emerge and reemerge, overlap, interact, and reinforce each other, giving rise to ever-new crises (Klyver and McMullen, 2025). Likewise, it has become all too evident

that large-scale challenges such as climate change and social inequality cannot be fully 'resolved' precisely because they are wicked and intractable, and that attempts to resolve them may give rise to further large-scale challenges (Howard-Grenville, 2021). Furthermore, it is the very open-endedness of using artificial intelligence and other intractable technologies, such as platforms for coordinating gig work and the ensuing lack of clarity about associated future outcomes, that should raise organizational actors' scepticism about embracing such technologies in an unchallenged way (Moser et al., 2024).

The Erosion of Planning as a Dominant Way of Making Futures

The continual emergence and reemergence of crises, large-scale challenges, and intractable technologies turn the open-endedness of the future from a philosophical idea into a problematic lived experience by actors in and around organizations. Specifically, from a process-philosophical perspective, the future, like other temporal categories, has always played a role at any point in human existence, but has it always mattered in the same way?

Wenzel et al. (2020) argue that future making is actually a rather young phenomenon that emerged in modern times. In the late 18th century, humans began to form a will to shape the course of history by *making the future*. This required the possibility that – in contrast to pre-modern times – the future could and, in fact, should differ from the past. However, in modernity, when statistical measurement and projection were on the rise (e.g., Cabantous and Gond, 2015; Hacking, 1975), future making was dominated by planning – that is, the formulation and pursuit of goal-based projections – as a central means for efficiently synchronizing many, if not all parts of organizations and society, for example, from assembly work in production facilities to global supply chains. Hence, for the sake of efficiency, actors in and around organizations marched lockstep towards goal-based projections. This lockstep implied that futures described as goal-based projections performatively came into being, at least to a minimally satisfactory extent. For instance, in supply chains, business partners jointly oriented towards and tended to keep agreed-upon delivery goals. As such, planning contributed to taming and, in a way, de-problematizing the open-endedness of the future (Wenzel, 2022) by reaching closure about what is to come: if partners within supply chains agreed on shared goals and had a legacy of delivering on them, there was no reason to expect the future to differ from goal-based projections.

Certainty about the realization of goal-based projections has, however, recently eroded in the light of crises, large-scale challenges, and intractable technologies. The proclaimed 'fall of planning' (Mintzberg, 1994) implies that it is now risky to rely on goal-based projections alone because planning does not sufficiently allow for the unexpected. This riskiness is also salient in today's global supply chains, disrupted time and time again by, among others, fleeting parameters in politically unstable regions. Continual disruptions like these, then, erode the sense of certainty about the future that planning might have conveyed. Consequently, futures are problematic in contemporary times. Their open-endedness has become part of the 'new normal' (Bridoux et al., 2024) experience of actors in and around contemporary organizations, such

that the yet-to-come can no longer be taken for granted based on goal-based projections: the yet-to-come has to be made, and it has to be continually made anew.

The Rise of Manifold Ways of Making Futures

If organizing and organizations are responses to what may come (Luhmann, 1976), and if planning is not the predominant way of producing and enacting futures anymore, how, then, do actors in and around contemporary organizations make futures?

Empirical evidence suggests that organizational actors explore, experiment with, and perform alternative ways of making the yet-to-come. Some of the trending alternatives are agile (Stjerne et al., 2024), foresight (Wenzel, 2022), lean tools and methods (Leatherbee and Katila, 2020), and approaches inspired by design thinking (Knight et al., 2020). All of these ways of making futures promise to provide alternatives to goal-based projections, while at least partly sustaining the technical and efficiency-driven character of planning. For example, agile's detailed technical procedures around continually sharpened and revised short-term targets enable the efficient coordination of work across organizational departments (Stjerne et al., 2024).

These ways of making the yet-to-come are, however, just some of the overt ways in which organizational actors may produce and enact futures. There might also be more subtle and perhaps even mundane ways of making futures that are hidden behind the noise of trending alternatives (Wenzel, 2022), and which may not reproduce the technical and efficiency-driven character of planning in all cases. For example, counterfactual reasoning (Feduzi et al., 2022), heuristics (Atanasiu et al., 2025; Vuori et al., 2024; Wenzel and Stjerne, 2021), effectual approaches (Sarasvathy and Botha, 2022), and judgment (Tsoukas et al., 2024), as well as emotional–cognitive combinations of gut feel and analysis (Baldacchino et al., 2023) in day-to-day sensemaking around the yet-to-come, the bodily crafting of prototypical material artefacts (Bell et al., 2021), the creation of atmospheres that “set the tone” for future interactions’ (Knight et al., 2024, p. 25), narrating the yet-to-come (Myllykoski and Rantakari, 2022), and perhaps even spiritual sensations (Brandt and Vankilde, 2023; Ganzin et al., 2020; Maclean et al., 2024) are a few of the less overt alternatives to planning, many of which management scholars have not even begun to explore.

Hence, nowadays, organizational actors produce and enact the yet-to-come in a plurality of rather overt or hidden ways, without necessarily building on the logic of goal-based projections.

The Emergence of a Plurality of Futures

Given the manifold ways in which organizational actors produce and enact the yet-to-come, futures emerge in the plural. Specifically, as a manifestation of ‘the simultaneity of the non-simultaneous’ (Koselleck, 1988, p. 51), the manifold ways of producing and enacting the yet-to-come are performed in vastly uncoordinated ways, thereby giving rise to multiple, partly even conflicting futures (Wenzel et al., 2020). For example, foresight's structured approach to producing and enacting futures (Wenzel, 2022) contradicts observations of future-related spiritual encounters (Ganzin et al., 2020). As in agile, structured and spiritual ways of producing and enacting futures even may

be enacted side by side (Stjerne et al., 2024). Yet, the futures that come to life through them may diverge significantly, ranging from smaller scale evolutions of ‘what is’ to eureka-like sensations about ‘what might be’. Which futures will, then, prevail?

In other words, the plurality of ways of producing and enacting futures and, by implication, the plurality of futures produced through them further erodes actors’ sense of certainty about the yet-to-come, thus reproducing and perhaps even intensifying the open-endedness of the future. This uncertainty, then, partly manifests again in emerging and reemerging crises, large-scale challenges, and intractable technologies.

Examinations of Future Making Are both Timely and Challenging

This dynamic of reproducing and intensifying the open-endedness of the future (see Figure 1) offers both an explanation and justification for management scholars’ recent ‘turn to the future’, that is, massive interest in the yet-to-come and ways of producing and enacting it. If this dynamic does indeed constitute the prevalence of futures in organizational life, engaging with the future is a central area of concern for organizational actors. If it is clear that recipes of the past no longer work, but it is unclear what *will* work in the future, what do organizational actors decide to do in the present, and how do they enact the yet-to-come? Amidst a profusion of futures produced through the manifold ways of making them, the yet-to-come does not provide guidance for organizational activity anymore, rendering the production and enactment of futures a central concern for organizational actors. Hence, insights into ways of producing and enacting futures are timely, important, and relevant. We therefore need a vibrant field of future making in management studies that systematically builds, elaborates, and refines relevant theoretical insights.

These reconstructed dynamics also draw attention to the challenges involved in attempts to examine and theorize future making. On the one side, the plurality of futures and ways of producing and enacting them implies that management scholars interested in future making need an approach that is open enough to identify not only the overt ways of producing and enacting futures but also the less overt, emergent, subtle, and perhaps even mundane ones that might fall outside the scope of rigid conceptualizations. On the other side, if engaging with the yet-to-come is indeed a contemporary problem for organizational actors, it likely permeates many, if not all, parts of organizational life. Empirical openness may, then, create ambiguity about what counts as future making and what does not, thus exhorting greater conceptual specificity. Understandably so, the absence of an approach that enables management scholars to identify and theorize ways of producing and enacting futures more clearly has contributed to the proliferation of debates around future making and concerns about the dilution of these debates as described above.

Next, we elaborate on how a practice perspective on future making is well-positioned to accommodate the tension between empirical openness and conceptual specificity. As we argue, a practice perspective does justice to the plurality of futures and future making in contemporary organizational life by sharpening scholars’ empirical sensitivity to the manifold, interconnected, and partly subtle and mundane streams of activity through which futures come into being. At the same time, the key dimensions

of that perspective provide useful conceptual handles to discern what counts as future making and what does not.

TOWARDS A PRACTICE PERSPECTIVE ON FUTURE MAKING

When fields of research such as strategy as practice (Vaara and Whittington, 2012), entrepreneurship as practice (Thompson et al., 2020), leadership as practice (Raelin, 2023), and practice-based research on organizational routines (Feldman and Pentland, 2003) emerged, they had to grapple with mainstream depictions of their phenomena of interest as static things. These practice-based fields, then, offer more dynamic, processual understandings of their phenomena of interest as ‘not something that an organization *has* [resources, capabilities, networks, personality traits, etc.] but something its members *do*’ (Jarzabkowski et al., 2007, p. 6, emphasis in original). This is not fully the case for extant research on future *making* in the gerund. From the outset, this line of inquiry is committed to a dynamic, processual understanding of how organizational actors produce and enact the yet-to-come (e.g., Comi and Whyte, 2018; Feuls et al., 2024; Wenzel, 2022). Hence, in extant theorizing, future making is not considered a static thing that has yet to be reconceptualized ‘as practice’. However, what is absent is a shared conceptual foundation for identifying and theorizing those dynamics. This absence turns out to be particularly problematic in light of the plurality of futures and ways of making them, as well as the associated challenges of examining and theorizing future making elaborated above.

As we argue in this section, a practice perspective focused on the ‘doing’ of future making is a promising candidate for such a conceptual foundation. Portions of it have latently appeared in previous work (e.g., Pettit et al., 2023; Thompson and Byrne, 2022; Wenzel et al., 2020). Yet, in order to decipher its value as a conceptual foundation for research on future making, this perspective has yet to be articulated and clarified. Therefore, in what follows, we elaborate our perspective on future making along four key dimensions that prominently appear in practice theory (see Table I). Although these dimensions are intertwined, analytically distinguishing them allows us to surface the value of a practice perspective on future-making.

Practice Theory and Future Making

Performativity. Practice theory is made up of a ‘family’ (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 244) of varying theoretical perspectives that all focus on the performance of practices as the smallest unit of social life (Nicolini, 2013). Practices are the ‘temporally unfolding and spatially dispersed nexus[es] of doings and sayings’ (Schatzki, 1996, p. 89). They could include the ‘meeting practice’ as an age-old way of organizing social interaction, or ways of preparing food in our everyday lives. Either way, practices unite action and structure (Giddens, 1984). That is, on the one side, they structure and give meaning to streams of activity in distinctive forms. For example, food preparation practices for fine dining tend to be organized differently and can be distinguished from domestic cooking. On the other side, such structures are produced and recreated in act, that is, in and through performed activities. For example, food preparation practices for

Table I. Practice-based dimensions of future-making

<i>Features of practices</i>	<i>Understanding future making</i>	<i>Directions for future research</i>
<i>Performativity.</i> Social life comes into being through the performance of practices	Futures and presents are ‘made’ through the performance of future-making practices, that is, practices of producing and enacting the future	Ways of bringing futures into being The types of futures that are made Power and politics in future-making The world of future work
<i>Situationality.</i> Practices are performed in response to the situation at hand, such that their performance may vary	Futures are continually made anew in the present and can be (re)negotiated Future-making practices may morph in and through their performance	Subtle and mundane ways of making futures Flexibility, transformation, and change of future-making practices (Re)Negotiating futures Path dependence of future making
<i>Heterogeneity.</i> Practices are parts of broader bundles and constellations of practices	Future-making practices form bundles and constellations of future-making practices, and they reveal themselves as parts of other bundles and constellations of practices	Varying contributions to future making Commonalities and differences between future-making practices Typologies of future-making practices
<i>Relationality.</i> Practices shape, and are shaped by other practices; practices’ discursive, bodily, and material parts are interconnected	Future-making practices participate in interconnected webs of practices Futures are accomplished through the enmeshed totality of discursive, bodily, and material parts of future-making practices	The mutual shaping of future making and other practices Connecting and disconnecting future-making practices Dynamics of reinforcement and amplification Intertwinement of discursive, bodily, and material parts

fine dining do not pre-exist; these practices must be performed through activities such as fineblanking, vacuumizing, and foaming to come to life (e.g., Koch et al., 2018). Hence, through the lens of practice theory, social life performatively comes into being in and through the performance of practices (Schatzki et al., 2001).

Given that futures are part of social and organizational life, a practice perspective implies that they do not pre-exist but also come into being. That is, they come into being in and through a specific class of practices that we refer to as ‘future-making practices’, that is, ‘a set of practices through which actors produce and enact the future’ (Wenzel et al., 2020, p. 1441). Hence, from a practice perspective, the *making* in future making may possibly, but does not necessarily mean the production of futures in a literal sense – such as the creation or transformation of a building (Giovannoni and Napier, 2023) or the generation of product concepts (Gillier et al., 2024). It rather relates to the ground idea of performativity as ‘bring[ing reality] into being’ (Cabantous et al., 2018, p. 409) in general, and to an interest by some performativity scholars in dynamics that ‘constitute reality through actors’ practices’ (Gond et al., 2016, p. 444) in particular. For example, the futures of less unequal societies that collectives, cooperatives, or communes strive for come into being in and through their enactment ‘in practice’ (Gümüşay and

Reinecke, 2021). As such, the notion of ‘future-making practices’ draws attention to ways through which organizational actors produce and enact the future: centuries-old ways such as planning, trending practices such as agile, and less overt ones that have yet to be explored.

Situationality. As the existence of practices as a unit of analysis cannot be separated from observable streams of activity through which they are performed, situationality enters as another important dimension of the practice perspective (Reckwitz, 2002). ‘Situationality’ means that actors perform streams of activity in the present and in response to the material, bodily, and discursive situation (Knight and Wenzel, *in press*) at hand. For example, the meeting practice might be performed differently in rooms with round versus rectangular tables or in virtual settings where participants are positioned differently in relation to one another (see Whyte et al., 2022), and ways of preparing food are likely performed differently within the affordances of professional versus domestic kitchens. Hence, in this view, practices are not fixed entities with describable properties. They are continually produced and recreated anew as actors perform and reperform them in the situation at hand. Such situated performances, as well as the seemingly small-scale performance variations that responding to situations at hand entail, may then even contribute to transforming practices ‘from within’ (see Feldman and Pentland, 2003). For example, when performing the meeting practice, fleeting adjustments such as a sharper tonality may create a shift from calm and affirmative to tense and dismissive interactions, affecting not only the situation at hand but also subsequent meetings (Knight et al., 2024).

For future-making practices, situationality implies that futures are, somewhat paradoxically, an accomplishment of the present. They are continually produced and reproduced anew through future-making practices in response to these practices’ discursive, bodily, and material features, and they are never fully fixed. For instance, in design projects, futures for buildings, products, or neighbourhoods produced through future-making practices of ‘imagining’ and ‘testing’ do not merely stick; they must continually be reproduced through future-making practices of ‘stabilizing’ and ‘reifying’ by means of sketches, drawings, cardboard models, PowerPoint slides, etc., and may also be adjusted in this process (Comi and Whyte, 2018). Likewise, peacekeeping officers’ idealized futures come to life as they are enacted in specific situations of war, but they are also partially adjusted to the specific situation at hand (Rauch, 2025). As such, situationality means that futures, even idealized ones, can at least potentially be renegotiated and revisited at any time. For example, participants in planning practices painstakingly do this when goal-based projections do not meet the ‘realities’ as they unfold; and actors performing agile do so by working through shorter ‘sprints’ of developing, validating, and enacting projections (Stjerne et al., 2024). Hence, from a practice perspective, students of future making should expect future-making practices not to be the same every time they observe them – just as planning and agile have been adjusted and transformed in and through their performance (Stjerne et al., 2024; Whittington et al., 2017).

Heterogeneity. Through a practice lens, social life is produced and recreated in and through the performance of webs of practices and material arrangements (Schatzki et al., 2001).

For example, a meeting can include a broader array of practices, such as scheduling, preparing, running, and ending a meeting (Jarzabkowski and Seidl, 2008). Such arrays are, then, part of even broader webs of practices (Schatzki et al., 2001). For example, meeting practices are typically part of management practices more generally. Some webs of practices are 'dispersed', in that they are performed in varying areas, whereas other practices and bundles are 'integrated', in that they are intertwined with specific historically developed fields (Schatzki, 1996). For example, meeting practices in the worlds of corporations and neoliberal business schools may be strikingly similar in some respects (see Fleming, 2020), but one may hardly ever find counterparts to the profusion of meetings in boards, committees, and councils outside the world of universities, business schools, and government organizations. Either way, the performance of a practice rarely, if ever, happens alone. In one way or another, it is part of broader webs of practices that together constitute social life.

Hence, to the extent that futures are part of the social and organizational life that is produced and recreated in and through the situated performance of practices, future-making practices as ways of producing and enacting the yet-to-come are not standalone units either. Together, they form webs of future-making practices that may be more or less dispersed or integrated (Wenzel et al., 2023). For example, despite its erosion, planning remains a widely performed array of future-making practices (Wenzel et al., 2020). In turn, due to its origins in software development, agile continues to be attached mainly to technical domains (Stjerne et al., 2024). Furthermore, the web-like performance of future-making practices implies that these practices may be a less overt part of broader webs of practices. For example, 'rescheduling' as part of a bundle of meeting practices involves postponing items to future meetings (Jarzabkowski and Seidl, 2008) and, thus, participates in extrapolating futures through procrastination. Likewise, in the context of large-scale societal challenges, seemingly unique and small-scale future-making practices of advocacy hubs participate in broader arrays of storytelling so as to gain stakeholders' commitment for the tackling of these challenges (Stjerne et al., 2022). Therefore, a practice perspective on future-making exhorts scholars to be open to identifying a multitude of future-making practices, even in unexpected areas.

Relationality. While practices are heterogeneous, they are not performed in unrelated ways. That is, practices do not reveal themselves in loose arrays. They are intertwined in multiple ways. Within broader webs of practices, their performance shapes and is shaped by other practices (Schatzki, 1996). For example, a meeting (e.g., around a table vs. a bonfire) is inspired by, but also forges and structures the broader webs of practices within which they are embedded (e.g., the world of top management teams vs. summer camps). Likewise, the discursive, bodily, and material parts of practices are inseparably intertwined (Reckwitz, 2002): one shapes and is shaped by the other in ways that it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to disentangle them. For instance, in strategy meetings and events, articulated meanings of strategy may only be understood in concert with observing speakers' bodily movements (Wenzel and Koch, 2018) and their specific use of material artefacts (Nathues et al., 2025). Hence, in their performances, practices are enmeshed in complex webs of interconnected practices, just as much as the parts within practices are enmeshed.

Consequently, an exclusive focus on the performance of one future-making practice, for example, planning or other overt ways of producing and enacting the yet-to-come, does not do justice to interactions with the performance of other, perhaps less overt future-making practices, as well as other practices included in broader webs of practices. For example, borrowing Goffman's (1959) terminology, planning – often considered legitimate because of its seemingly rational appeal – might serve as a symbolic 'front stage' for engaging with futures, while future making features differently on the 'back stage'. In turn, when performed in concert, varying future-making practices such as planning and agile may implicate and colonize each other, such that agile as a proclaimed alternative to planning may eventually include goal-based projections as well (Stjerne et al., 2024). Likewise, from a practice perspective, future-making is not just either a discursive or narrative, bodily, or material accomplishment. For example, in advocacy hubs around large-scale societal challenges, credible and persuasive accounts of futures are a product of not only stories but also bodily and material demonstrations (Stjerne et al., 2022). Hence, while it is analytically useful to zoom in on one or another part of future-making practices, it is their enmeshed totality of discursive, bodily, and material parts – speculative conversations about what may come, gestures that symbolize possible futures, the use and modification of PowerPoint slides that represent and reify the yet-to-come, etc. – through which futures are accomplished.

Future Making from a Practice Perspective: Empirical Openness and Conceptual Specificity

Taking the four dimensions together, we argue that a practice perspective on future making is particularly useful for understanding the contemporary prevalence of futures and future making in organizational life. If contemporary organizational and social life is indeed characterized by the open-endedness of the yet-to-come, if futures (in the plural) are *performatively* brought into being through *heterogeneous* bundles and constellations of *relationally* intertwined future-making practices, and if the performance of future-making practices is *situationally* embedded as a phenomenon of the present, it follows that examining and theorizing future-making practices helps us understand the emergence and reproduction of this open-endedness as a distinctive experience that characterizes contemporary organizational life amidst the continual emergence of interrelated crises, large-scale challenges, and intractable technologies. Moreover, with these four dimensions, a practice perspective on future making stands out not for providing an overly complex and inflexible theoretical approach, but for advancing a succinct conceptual apparatus. Through this succinctness, the practice approach, we argue, does justice to contemporary manifestations of futures and future-making in at least two ways.

On the one side, a practice perspective is open to examining a plurality of futures and ways of making them as they are performed in contemporary organizations and societies. By design, this perspective draws scholarly attention to the *heterogeneity* of future-making practices as parts of broader webs of practices, and it renders their *relationality*, that is, the ways in which they are interconnected, accessible to investigation. In doing so, a practice perspective enables scholars to unpack the world of 'future work', that is, a web of overt

future-making practices such as agile, foresight, and design-led approaches, around which a billion-dollar business of consultants and ‘futurists’ has formed, as well as practices performed by meteorologists, tech evangelists, business analysts, economists, journalists, and other self-proclaimed experts of economic, technological, financial, meteorological, or other futures (Wenzel et al., 2023). Yet, *situationality* as a dimension of practice theory also raises management scholars’ sensitivity to subtle and partly even mundane ways of producing, enacting, and renegotiating futures continually anew, ones that easily pass unnoticed in the fabric of day-to-day work. This sensitivity, then, enables scholars to look behind the façade of the performance of legitimate or trending ways of producing and enacting the yet-to-come such as planning and foresight on the front stage, by examining and theorizing how future making is actually performed (Wenzel, 2022).

On the other side, we argue that a practice perspective – with future-making practices as the focal unit of analysis – offers enough conceptual specificity for identifying and theorizing ways of producing and enacting the yet-to-come as an organizational phenomenon and, thus, for building a cumulative body of work that can attract sufficient agreement on what counts as future making and what does not. Put concisely, the *performativity* of future-making practices draws scholarly attention to observable, recognizable streams of activity through which futures are brought into being. Hence, from this perspective, those streams of activity through which futures of various sorts – desirable or undesirable, actionable or visionary, utopian or dystopian, etc. – come to life can be considered ‘future making’. This may sound tautological, but it isn’t. The performativity of practices implies that social phenomena are simultaneously a process and an outcome, as they come into being in recognizable forms (outcome) through the performance of distinctive practices (process) (Schatzki et al., 2001). Therefore, observing the emergence and reemergence of futures (outcome) allows scholars to identify those streams of activity as ‘future-making practices’ that bring these futures into being (process). For example, in rather overt cases, futures that manifest as negotiated scenarios point to scenario planning as a future-making practice (Brandt and Vankilde, 2023). In more subtle cases, such as by the end of scenario-planning meetings, futures that manifest as the prefiguring of ‘next steps’ may hint at ways of producing and enacting futures at the end of and between meetings that are consequential but often overlooked (Bowman and Parks, 2024).

Consequently, in this view, identifying future making in theory-building and empirical examinations is neither dictated by prior academic or esoteric literature nor by elite actors or self-proclaimed experts. Rather, what counts as future making emerges from identifying those streams of activity through which futures come into being and which may or may not be performed by a broad range of organizational actors as well as in varying areas of organizational life. For example, efforts to accomplish the desirable future of ‘zero hunger’ as one of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are not restricted to projections based on goal formulation and implementation within small elitist circles, which prior literature on planning, preemption, and preparation may highlight. As Sjerne et al. (2022) showed, practices of sharing and connecting varying narratives about the future in ‘hubs’ as fluid sites with the flexible participation of a broader array of stakeholders are central to working towards ‘zero hunger’, which prior literature would not have prioritized due to the challenges of mobilizing and sustaining

commitment for collective action. A practice perspective not only displays sensitivity to these ways of producing and enacting futures but also enables scholars to identify and theorize them as ‘future making’.

Examining and Theorizing Future Making from a Practice Perspective: Problem Solved?

Despite its benefits, we note that the succinct conceptual apparatus provided by practice theory does not altogether eliminate the challenges of examining and theorizing future making. As ways of producing and enacting the yet-to-come may be enmeshed in webs of practices that are not overtly future-related (e.g., as part of meeting practices), identifying future-making practices requires that scholars effortfully sift through webs of practices by continually ‘zooming in’ and ‘zooming out’ (see Nicolini, 2009). Furthermore, against the background of practice theory (Schatzki, 2010), one may argue that each and every practice is a future-making one, given that all activities are performed before and after others, and given that all performances of practices in the present are interconnected with both pasts and futures (see Figure 2a). For example, performing a meeting practice reproduces an age-old history of organizing social interaction, while also having a bearing on the future of social interaction by bringing certain ways of meeting into being. In other words, if future-making practices are indeed a distinctive set of practices, scholars must also be able to discern them as such amidst the totality of observed practices.

Yet, against the elaborated simultaneity of process and outcome in the performance of future-making practices, we argue that emerging and reemerging futures reveal future-making practices in distinctive ways (see Figure 2b). Specifically, the past is not absent within future-making practices. Rather, it shows up in these practices in certain ways, namely, by backgrounding or even breaking with the past so as to open up the possibility that the future can differ from it – as, for example, in the case of the climate crisis, in the light of which actors increasingly conclude that unsustainable business practices can no longer be performed. Alternatively, future making may build on the past as a source of inspiration (Hatch and Schultz, 2017; Ravasi et al., 2019) or strategic resource (Suddaby et al., 2010) for futures that differ from the present – as, for example, in family businesses that ‘innovat[e] through tradition’ (De Massis et al., 2016, p. 93; De Massis and Rondi, 2020). Either way, performances of future-making practices foreground the yet-to-come in that they contribute to the emergence and reemergence of futures. Among others, this equally holds true for planning as a quasi-rational attempt to redirect established courses of action by developing goals to be reached in the future, and spiritual ways of connecting with the yet-to-come by temporarily letting go of the past (Brandt and Vankilde, 2023).

Hence, we argue that the foregrounding of the yet-to-come in and through future-making practices allows management scholars to discern them as a distinctive set of practices. The prevalence of the yet-to-come in future-making practices differs from the more general take on practices in which all situated streams of activity reproduce pasts and futures. It also opens and distinguishes future-making practices even more clearly from the rarely considered possibility that the performance of some practices makes no substantial contribution to the emergence of the yet-to-come, if at all (see

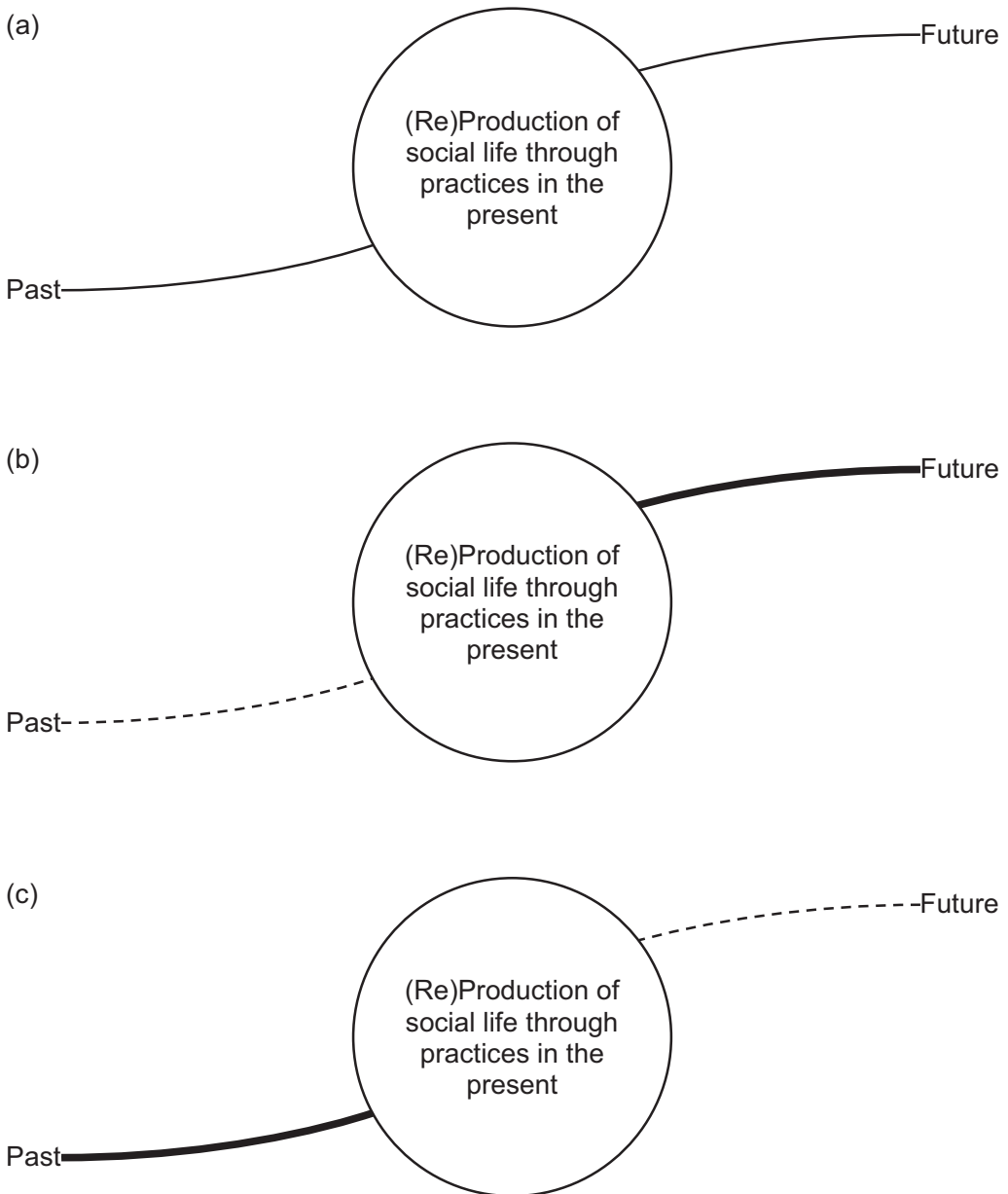


Figure 2. The temporality of (a) practices, (b) future-making practices, and (c) non-future making

Figure 2c). Specifically, returning to the distinction between front stage and back stage, some future-making practices might be symbolically performed and yet overshadow other practices that make more substantial contributions to the emergence of futures. For example, actors in organizations that have adopted agile may make futures in shorter, iterative cycles while intendedly or unwittingly disguising these dynamics behind planning or foresight practices that make little, if any, difference to the

yet-to-come (see Stjerne et al., 2024; Wenzel, 2022). Likewise, when refugee entrepreneurs participate in linear new venture creation programs to prepare for a future entrepreneurial career, they may either simultaneously engage in nonlinear future-making practices to form their ‘entrepreneurial readiness’ (Fathallah et al., 2024), or amidst repeated setbacks within those linear programs, they come to see no future for their ventures and themselves (Harima and Plak, 2024; Kodeih et al., 2024).

AVENUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH ON FUTURE MAKING

In light of the continual emergence of interacting crises, large-scale challenges, and intractable technologies, the prevalence of futures and future making in contemporary organizational life renders past, present, and future inquiries into ways of producing and enacting the yet-to-come both timely, relevant, and important. The practice perspective elaborated in this *Point*, we argue, provides exciting opportunities for cumulative theory-building and research on future making. It offers the minimal structure needed to embrace the multifaceted ways in which organizational actors make futures in contemporary times, while providing four key dimensions – performativity, situationality, heterogeneity, and relationality – as a conceptual basis for discerning what counts as future making and what does not.

Furthermore, the elaborated dimensions translate into four interesting areas for future research (see Table I). In each of these areas, research on ways of producing and enacting the yet-to-come is still at a nascent stage, providing multiple opportunities for the further building, extending, and refining of understandings and explanations of future making. As crises, large-scale challenges, and intractable technologies are all drivers and manifestations of the prevalence of futures and future making in contemporary organizational life, we expect that deeper and more systematic insights into future making in these four areas will offer more nuanced guidance on tackling these challenges through ways of producing and enacting the yet-to-come.

Examining the Performativity of Future-Making Practices

The performativity of future-making practices draws attention to the limited understanding of performativity in management studies more generally (Gond et al., 2016), as well as in research on topics such as crises, large-scale challenges, and intractable technologies in particular (e.g., Marti and Gond, 2018; Wickert, 2024). The ‘bringing into being’ of futures through future-making practices is more often assumed than analysed and theorized. How exactly does that happen? Are there qualitative differences between the making of varying futures, for example, near versus distant (see Augustine et al., 2019)? Which futures are made and which ones aren’t? For example, how is it possible that idealized, utopian futures are partly enacted and do gain traction (Gümüşay and Reinecke, 2021) although accomplishing them seems impossible by definition? What implications does striving for such futures have for organizing and management, such as an organization’s identity or strategy? These questions, then, also focus particular attention on the power and politics of future making (Hungnes et al., 2024; see also Simpson et al., 2021). Whose futures are enacted, and whose

futures are marginalized (see Skade et al., 2024)? Why are some futures produced and enacted, while others are backgrounded or do not come into being at all (see also Wickert, 2024)? Relatedly, although the world of ‘future work’ (Wenzel et al., 2023) around overt future-making practices such as agile and foresight has become a powerful billion-dollar business, we know little about this world. How do self-proclaimed experts in the world of future work, such as consultants and ‘futurists’, create a sense of credibility around the futures that they advance so that others buy into them? And how do these actors accomplish positions of expertise relative to the yet-to-come as a temporal category that is open-ended and, thus, neither ‘predictable’ nor ‘manageable’ with certainty? Likewise, given that crises, large-scale challenges, and intractable technologies are all future-related (e.g., Lantz et al., 2025; Moser et al., 2024; Wenzel et al., 2021), which futures come into being as these challenges are enacted, and how does that happen?

Examining the Situationality of Future-Making Practices

The situationality of future-making practices draws attention to the subtle, day-to-day, and partly even mundane sides of producing and enacting the yet-to-come, many of which we have not even begun to explore. What are the future-making practices that organizational actors perform in the shadows of trending future-making practices? If disruptions through crises, large-scale challenges, and intractable technologies are an inseparable part of organizational life, and if these disruptions constitute the experienced open-endedness of the future in contemporary organizational life, how does the moment-to-moment performance of future-making practices absorb the uncertainties and complexities associated with such experiences so as to allow organizational actors to proceed and, thus, establish a sense of continuity amidst disruptions? How can situated performances of future-making practices, themselves, be drivers of disruption (Stjerne et al., 2023)? If flexible performances of a future-making practice in response to situations at hand may culminate in changes in that practice, how are future-making practices transformed and changed? And if such flexible performances imply that futures can continually be renegotiated, how do such renegotiations occur, and on what grounds? Conversely, are there limits to the extent to which futures can be renegotiated? Can futures even become ‘path-dependent’ (Sydow et al., 2009) in ways that they are continually reproduced anew from moment to moment? If so, how are futures protected and defended?

Examining the Heterogeneity of Future-Making Practices

The heterogeneity of future-making practices directs attention to the plurality of these practices performed in broader webs of practices. How do these varying practices contribute to the production and enactment of futures? In which ways do they differ, if at all? Does the continual emergence of interacting crises, large-scale challenges, and intractable technologies give rise to a new, distinctive web of future-making practices? Conversely, given that planning practices have colonized many, if not most parts of modern organizations and societies (Wenzel et al., 2020), one may also find goal-based projections as one persistent theme in examinations of future making –perhaps

even among future-making practices such as agile and foresight that proponents proclaim to be superior to planning (see Wenzel, 2022), as well as within established webs of practices for enacting crises and large-scale challenges (Bundy et al., 2017). Hence, despite the heterogeneity of future-making practices, are there patterns across such practices that allow us to categorize and distinguish them more broadly as webs of varying future-making practices, for example, relative to the ways in which they treat futures? For example, organizational actors performing ‘precaution’ versus ‘preemption’ versus ‘preparedness’ (Anderson, 2010; Lantz et al., 2025) may find themselves with less versus more agency in future making. Relatedly, future-making practices may differ in their temporal direction, either as future–present, in which ‘the future is coming upon us’, or as present–future, in which ‘we are moving towards the future’ (Stjerne et al., 2022).

Examining the Relationality of Future-Making Practices

Finally, the relationality of future-making practices foregrounds the interconnectedness of practices within broader webs of practices, as well as the intertwining of discursive, bodily, and material parts of practices themselves – which, again, are more often presumed than examined and understood. How do future-making practices shape, and how are they shaped by other practices in and through their performances? Given the prevalence of crises, large-scale challenges, and intractable technologies, are future-making practices associated with these challenges becoming the standard repertoire within all broader webs of practices performed in and around organizations? How so, or why not? How do organizational actors connect and disconnect varying future-making and other practices? Do some future-making practices mutually reinforce and amplify each other, while others compete and clash with each other? If so, why, and with what effects? How do social movements as carriers of varying interrelated future-making practices (see Reinecke, 2018) contribute to these dynamics? In turn, how do the discursive, bodily, and material parts of future-making practices implicate each other? How do they jointly contribute to making futures, how do they give rise to affects and emotions (Plotnikof and Pors, 2024) such as hopes and fears, and with what implications for organizing and management? How does the emergent use of technological artefacts such as artificial intelligence, algorithms, and big data (Glaser et al., 2024; Moser et al., 2024) participate in future-making practices? Do they reinvigorate hopes for predicting the future (see Lindebaum et al., 2024), or do some of them contribute to shifting from predictive to preventive ways of engaging with futures by helping actors avoid the emergence of undesirable futures?

CONCLUSION

In response to the proliferation of research on future making, which risks diluting this notion, the objective of our *Point* was to propose a practice perspective as a conceptual foundation for future-making research. We argued that a practice-based approach to future making does justice to contemporary dynamics around future making because it is open enough to account for a plurality of ways in which organizational actors make futures. At the same

time, with its four key dimensions – performativity, situationality, heterogeneity, and relationality –, it is conceptually specific enough to discern what counts as future making and what does not, thus providing a solid foundation for cumulative, fruitful debates on future making in management studies.

Taken together, we believe that our *Point* underscores and substantiates the importance of continuing scholarly interest in future making in and around organizations, while helping to counteract the dilution of this notion through a proliferating research interest that puts the field of research on future making at risk. We explain next how our *Point* extends the burgeoning field of future making in management studies in three ways.

Embracing the Proliferating Interest in Future Making

First, our *Point* substantiates the recent ‘turn to future making’ in management studies. That is, while this proliferation constitutes a threat to the field of future making, we argue that the contemporary plurality of futures and future making rightly has to translate into a plurality of futures and future making examined in management studies. Specifically, we do agree with Wright’s (2025) *Counterpoint*, which motivates a communicative and interactionist approach to future-making, among others, by arguing that ‘the future’ is not a new phenomenon per se, and that it is worth reviewing and seeking inspiration from prior work in that area. However, as we argue in this *Point*, the yet-to-come has recently turned into a key organizational challenge; and this challenge has encouraged organizational actors to transform, complement, or replace their ways of producing and enacting futures – with planning, including scenario planning, being no more than one among many ways in which organizational actors produce and enact the yet-to-come. These dynamics, then, rightly exhort management scholars to gain a deeper and more systematic understanding of the plurality of futures and future making in organizational life.

Hence, the problem is not the proliferating interest in future-making per se. Rather, as we have argued in this *Point*, the field of future making needs a theoretical foundation that is open enough to embrace the contemporary plurality of futures and future making, while being conceptually specific enough to discern what counts as future making and what does not, without, however, relying on overly rigid and exclusive conceptualizations.

Embracing a Practice Perspective on Future Making

Second, in response to the elaborated need for a conceptual foundation, our *Point* advances a practice perspective on future making by articulating and clarifying its key dimensions. In doing so, we do not seek to argue that a practice perspective on future making is innately better than others, given that theoretical perspectives always foreground some aspects of examined phenomena while backgrounding others. In this regard, we also see value in the pragmatic approach developed in Comi et al.’s (2025) *Counterpoint*. By arguing that a practice perspective on future making is too broad, they make a case for understanding future making more specifically as actors’ engagement with the people, places, and materiality at hand. In a way, our approach somewhat subsumes theirs as one among many possible ways of producing and enacting futures – like

‘craft work’ in which the ‘making’ of desirable futures is understood in a very literal sense, rather than, as in our *Point*, in the performative sense that the performance of any future-making practice brings certain futures into being.

Our *Point* is that doing justice to the plurality of futures and future making practices enables us to realize the analytical utility of understanding ways of engaging with futures from a practice perspective. It is the very openness to a plurality of overt, subtle, and partly even mundane ways of producing and enacting futures, as well as the provision of sufficient conceptual specificity, that enables scholars to understand how organizational actors make futures.

Methodological Implications

Finally, our *Point* also adds methodological clarity to research on future making. Some management scholars are increasingly interested in prospective, prescriptive, and designed approaches to theory-building as future-oriented alternatives to past-based description and explanation (e.g., Gümüşay and Reinecke, 2024; Hanisch, 2024; Muñoz and Dimov, 2023; Rindova and Martins, 2021; Sharma et al., 2022). These approaches allow for or even demand the explicit pursuit of normative or impact-oriented interests in theory-building. Specifically, they aim to ensure that our research contributes to the emergence of desirable futures (Gümüşay and Reinecke, 2021) and that these futures are cocreated with and meaningful to those who are affected by them (Sharma et al., 2022).

One may presume that attempts to unpack future making as an organizational phenomenon necessarily require future-oriented approaches to theory-building and research. However, the perspective that we advance in this article clarifies that this is not the case. From a practice perspective, the future is a phenomenon of the present in that it comes into being as organizational actors perform future-making practices. Therefore, the increasingly adopted and partly established approaches to understanding and explaining situated streams of activity – ethnographic inquiries, video-based methods, etc. – are well suited to addressing research questions around future making.

Furthermore, though venerable, research on future making does not necessarily pursue prescriptive ambitions, as claimed in Wright’s (2025) *Counterpoint*. As we see it, the field of research on future-making is devoted to understanding ways through which organizational actors produce and enact the yet-to-come. As Comi et al.’s (2025) *Counterpoint* rightly highlights, these ways may also include practices through which undesirable or even harmful futures come into being. They criticize this broad scope, arguing that management scholars should rather focus on practices of making ‘better futures’. We, however, argue that insights into practices of making desirable or harmful futures are no less relevant for understanding contemporary organizational life and its partly adverse societal implications. This is because enabling some futures to emerge and working against others to come into being exhorts scholars to understand and explain how that happens (see Wickert, 2024). Practice-based inquiries are particularly useful in this regard.

Yet, when deployed with due caution (Horner et al., 2024) and if one’s research interest is indeed normative or impact-oriented, we do see merit in the use of future-focused approaches to theory-building and research in the area of future making. In fact, centering the use of these approaches on questions around future making may not only

produce futures that participants consider desirable, but also open up pathways for alternative ways of making futures – which, as Mulgan (2022) argued, are desperately needed to tackle many of the large-scale challenges of our time. Therefore, we also encourage proponents of future-focused approaches to theory-building and research to pay greater attention to future making as a timely, important, and relevant part of organizational life.

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