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ARTICLE

Lost in translation? Implications of Theodore Schatzki's multifaceted ontology for organizational studies

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Abstract

This essay problematizes Theodore Schatzki's approach to practice within organizational studies, based on how *Dasein* and *Lichtung,* two concepts from Martin Heidegger's philosophy, are appropriated in the interpretation of the ontology of social sites. The re-reading of the philosophical link between Schatzki and the post-Heideggerian movement facilitates the appropriation of Schatzki's ontological approach in addressing today's major social crises. This prominent social philosopher's contributions have led the so-called 'Practice Turn' at the turn of the 21st century. This essay distinguishes the field of practices from practice-based studies and introduces notions from Heideggerian phenomenology, emphasizing its significance in understanding Theodore Schatzki's ontology. The study problematizes the translation of the philosopher's concepts into the context of organizational studies and highlights Schatzki's practice study methodology based on its potential in the face of the complexity of today's social crises.

Keywords: Theodore Schatzki. Site. Situated. Organizational studies. Practice-based studies.

Se perdeu na tradução? Implicações da ontologia multifacetada de Theodore Schatzki para os Estudos Organizacionais

Resumo

O objetivo deste ensaio é problematizar a abordagem da prática de Theodore Schatzki nos Estudos Organizacionais a partir da maneira como dois conceitos da filosofia de Martin Heidegger, *Dasein* e *Lichtung*, são apropriados na interpretação da ontologia dos sites do social. A releitura do vínculo filosófico de Theodore Schatzki com o movimento pós-heideggeriano propicia a apropriação da abordagem ontológica dos sites no estudo do enfrentamento das maiores crises sociais da atualidade. Theodore Schatzki é um importante filósofo social, cujas contribuições encabeçam a chamada "Virada da Prática" (*Practice Turn*) na passagem para o século 21. Ao longo do trabalho, distinguimos o campo das práticas dos Estudos Baseados em Práticas, e introduzimos noções da fenomenologia heideggeriana e sua importância na compreensão da obra de Theodore Schatzki. Problematizamos a tradução dos conceitos do filósofo para o contexto dos Estudos Organizacionais e destacamos a metodologia de estudo das práticas de Theodore Schatzki a partir de suas potencialidades frente à complexidade das crises sociais em voga na contemporaneidade.

Palavras-chave: Theodore Schatzki. *Site*. Situado. Estudos organizacionais. Estudos baseados em práticas.

¿Perdido en la traducción? Implicaciones de la ontología multifacética de Theodore Schatzki a los estudios organizacionales

Resumen

El objetivo de este ensayo es problematizar el enfoque de la práctica de Theodore Schatzki en los Estudios Organizacionales a partir de la manera en que dos conceptos de la filosofía de Martin Heidegger, *Dasein* y *Lichtung*, son apropiados en la interpretación de la ontología de los sitios de lo social. La relectura del vínculo filosófico de Theodore Schatzki con el movimiento post-heideggeriano propicia la apropiación del enfoque ontológico de los sitios en el estudio del enfrentamiento de las mayores crisis sociales de la actualidad. Theodore Schatzki es un importante filósofo social, cuyas contribuciones encabezan el llamado 'Giro de la Práctica' (Practice Turn) en el cambio hacia el siglo XXI. A lo largo del trabajo, distinguimos el campo de las prácticas de los Estudios Basados en Prácticas, introducimos nociones de la fenomenología heideggeriana y su importancia en la comprensión de la obra de Theodore Schatzki. Problematizamos la traducción de los conceptos del filósofo al contexto de los Estudios Organizacionales y destacamos la metodología de estudio de las prácticas de Theodore Schatzki a partir de sus potencialidades frente a la complejidad de las crisis sociales en boga en la contemporaneidad.

Palabras clave: Theodore Schatzki. *Site*. Situado. Estudios organizacionales. Estudios basados en prácticas.

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INTRODUCTION

The title of this essay pays homage to another study which also discusses the translation impacts of a theoretical approach. Entitled "Lost in Translation? Black Feminism, Intersectionality, and Emancipatory Politics," Collins' (2017) shows how translations conducted in the scope of studies on "intersectionality changed form and purpose as they were translated into different material, social, and intellectual contexts" (Collins, 2017, p. 6). We share the concern in studying these contexts in which a particular theoretical framework is reproduced. In this essay, we focus on how the ideas and approaches of Theodore Schatzki's contributions to Organization Studies (OS) confound with the diversity of schools of thought that make up the field of practices. This confounding is probably also an effect of the rapid diffusion of practice-oriented studies in the 2000s, which led to the loss of critical power as conceptualizations of practice were appropriated and shaped by OS orthodox characteristic (Gherardi, 2009). As we intend to add, this loss of critical power is also related to translation, which triggers, in the case of Theodore Schatzki theory of practice, a loss of the conceptual and methodological connection with the phenomenological philosophy.

Theodore Schatzki is a professor of geography, philosophy, and sociology. He has also served as senior associate dean in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, chair of the Department of Philosophy, and co-founder and co-chair of the University's Committee on Social Theory, which oversees a multidisciplinary program of teaching and research in social theory for graduate students. Schatzki earned a degree in applied mathematics from Harvard University (1977) and degrees in philosophy from the University of Oxford (1979) and the University of California, Berkeley (1982, 1986). His bibliography is extensive (Passos & Bulgacov, 2019; Santos & Silveira, 2015). Influenced by Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) and Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951), Theodore Schatzki is one of the main exponents of the Practice Turn in the 2000s. Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina, and Von Savigny (2001) is a relevant entry in defying the dualism which characterized social philosophy in the past 200 years, inaugurating a renewed chapter in the study of human activity with a multifaceted ontology based mainly on phenomenology. Schatzki is the author of five books: *Social Practices* (1996), *The Site of the Social* (2002), *Martin Heidegger: Theorist of Space* (2007), *The Timespace of Human Activity* (2010), and *Social Change in a Material World* (2019). He has also co-edited several volumes, including three on practice theory: *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory* (2001), *The Nexus of Practices* (2017), and *Questions of Practice in Philosophy and Social Theory* (2018).

There are different analyses of Theodore Schatzki's philosophy contributions to OS, such as the above-mentioned Santos and Silveira (2015) and Passos and Bulgacov (2019). What sets this essay apart from others, readings in Schatzki contributions, is its focus on the ontology of social sites, developed by the philosopher as a way of articulating consciousness with human activity (Schatzki, 2003, 2005). Our aim is to problematize Theodore Schatzki's approach to practice in Organizational Studies based on the way in which two concepts from Martin Heidegger's philosophy, *Dasein* and *Lichtung*, are appropriated in the development of the notion of social sites. Our hypothesis is that the philosophical tradition with which the American philosopher aligns—i.e., post-Heideggerian phenomenologists (Schatzki et al., 2001; Schatzki, 2017a)—was lost in translation, causing the idea of an ontological site to be treated analogous to, or convergent with, the situationality of human activity, common to Practice-Based Studies (PBS) (Gherardi, 2008). The reinterpretation of the philosophical link with the post-Heideggerian movement allows for the appropriation of Theodore Schatzki's ontological approach in the study of how to face the major crises of contemporary times, such as social inequality, economic crises, and environmental crises originating in a self-destructive social model.

The essay is organized into three main topics as follows: we first provide a broad overview of the field of practices, introducing some authors who contribute to the study of practices in the social sciences. We discuss practice in OS and its interaction with PBS in order to disambiguate the approach to practice in OS and practice in PBS. Then, in the second main topic, we explore the concepts that Theodore Schatzki adopts from Martin Heidegger to formulate his social ontology. We present a distinction between different approaches to practice, focusing specifically on the particularities that distinguish Theodore Schatzki's approach from that usual in PBS. We challenge the field of practices micro tendency and propose a way of conducting studies on practices based on the multifaceted ontological approach proposed by Schatzki (2019). Finally, we conclude the essay by highlighting that there is a matter of virtue in the facing of the social crises of our times, from which we dialogue with diverse ontological categories to study social phenomena with diverse natures.

Practice: trajectory towards practice-based studies

Interest in practices transverse the thought of significant contributors to social science, such as Michel Foucault, Anthony Giddens, Pierre Bourdieu, and Harold Garfinkel (Foucault, 1977; Garfinkel, 1967; Peters, 2006). According to Schatzki (2019), practice is organized action; what differs in the approaches of those known as "practice theorists" is the way in which this organization occurs. In Foucault (1977), for example, practice involves the way in which subjects articulate dynamics of forces, power, and resistance, which are organized in discourse. According to the author (Foucault, 2008), discourse is something expressed that defines the conditions in which social phenomenon exists (e.g., the way of dressing as an expression of the power/resistance dynamics of a subject's ways of life). In Bourdieu (1984, 1986, 2015, Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990), practice also involves power dynamics. However, in his approach, power is based on how materiality is signified in a field (e.g., how we signify a publication in academia). Unlike Foucault's idea of forces, Bourdieu treats power symbolically (Watson, 2016), and the organization of practice involves the field and the *habitus* (Schatzki, 2019). The field is a type of context for the social phenomenon (such as academia, in the previous example) and the *habitus* is a set of elements that signify doings in this field (as academic productions signify doings in the academic field).

Adjacent to discussions on power, which is a recurring topic in social science, agency is a subject of great interest among practice theorists. In this domain, Anthony Giddens, based on structuration theory, proposes a reconciliation between structure, which organizes rules, methods, and techniques of doing, and social agency, which can subvert the teleologies of the structure (Giddens, 2003; Schatzki, 2016). The sociologist explains practice as the skillful behavior of the agent within the social structure. Another relevant thinker regarding the study of agency is Harold Garfinkel, who postulated ethnomethodology (Whittle, 2018). Based on the ethnomethodological approach, Garfinkel offers a reinterpretation of Durkheimian social facts, proposing that "participants in social situations share methods […] that are constitutive of the meaning and social objects that they jointly produce" (Rawls, 2018, p. 445).

It is interesting to note, after these examples, that even contemporary theories of practice are based on philosophical traditions more than two centuries old, such as phenomenology, which considers the structure of conscious experiences, phenomena, and their real essences (Schatzki, 2017a; Smith, n.d.); Marxism, which focuses on the materiality of social phenomena; symbolic interactionism, which incorporates intersubjectivity; and Wittgensteinian philosophy of language, based on the production and reproduction of meanings through language (Nicolini et al., 2003). In fact, the interest in what people do is not new. The Ramayana, for example, is a Hindu epic that is more than 2,500 years old, a philosophical and cultural heritage of humanity and an ode to *dharma* (Buck, 2017). *Dharma* is a central expression of the philosophy of Hindu practice, aimed at proceeding in harmony with the ordering of life in all daily actions (Buck, 2017; Hacker & Davis, 2006).

Other long-standing examples of interest in human action include the Chinese Book of Changes (in which changes literally refer to the constant unfolding of life) (Cherng, 2015) and the Egyptian Book of the Dead (a practical ceremonial treatise for guiding the soul after life) (Matias, 2017), both also over 2,000 years old. Slightly more recent, 350 years before the common era, in the foundations of Greek philosophy, Aristotle's notion of movement (praxis) offers yet another example of long-standing interest in human action and, in this case, it also marks a milestone for the subject in the Western tradition (Reale & Antiseri, 2003; Valle, 2014).

It is, however, by the turn of the 21st century, with the so-called Practice Turn (Schatzki et al., 2001), that the field acquired its own contours, crossing disciplines, such as philosophy itself (Schatzki, 2019), sociology (Jonas & Littig, 2016), psychology (Turner, 2018), and education (Edwards-Groves et al., 2018). In addition to its transdisciplinarity, practice theories cover a varied array of topics such as organizations (Corradi et al., 2010; Gherardi, 2009), teaching (Kemmis, 2021), energy (Shove, 2017), culture (Reckwitz, 2007), gender (Poggio, 2006; Standfield, 2020), and several others (Schatzki, 2018).

The highlighted contributions of Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Anthony Giddens, and Harold Garfinkel are also present in the field of Administration. When combined with activity theories, in an approach that treats action based on the dynamics of cause and effect (Licoppe, 2008), the interest in practices institutionalizes the field called PBS (Corradi et al., 2010; Nicolini et al., 2003; Santos & Silveira, 2015). PBS encompasses interests that combine approaches convergent with the hegemonic functionalism of Administration, such as strategy as social practice (Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009; Tureta & Lima, 2011), as well as political understandings of organizational sociology, such as the researcher's attitude in organizing (Silva, 2020), and gender and sexuality in the practices of the body in organizations (Gomes & Fantinel, 2022).

In PBS, we, again, benefit from various ways of conceptualizing practice and explaining its organization, being a field that values knowing and learning as elements articulated by doing. For Gherardi (2019), for example, practice is a space-time achievement by practitioners who know what they are doing. For the author, the organization of practice involves communities of practice, from which practitioners learn to do and share knowledge of a practice that has its own meaning and time (Gherardi, 2012). In order to analyze where PBS is heading, Corradi et al. (2010) list seven strands of PBS, aligned with two perspectives, illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1
PBS Classification

Approach	In this approach practice is…	Description
Practice as an empirical object	… focused on context	In this approach, practice is the set of activities in a context. Action is differentiated from practice by the meaning that the latter acquires in a given context. Practice is the place to understand situated learning (Brown & Duguid, 1991).
	… focused on learning	The focus is on the set of processes that involve learning, whether academic or organizational (Corradi et al., 2010). This aspect involves a traditional field in the teaching area, which is directed to the study of the gaps between teaching and learning (Zabala, 2015).
	… focused on action	Practice is what people do. According to Corradi et al. (2010), in PBS, it is in this approach that strategy is developed as practice.
Practice as a way of studying social phenomena	… as a lens	Orlikowski (2000) initially used the lens metaphor to adopt alternative paths to the structuralist approach, which is hegemonic when dealing with technology. Gherardi (2009b) revised this metaphor, attributing to it the potential to explore practice in terms of its critical potential (Corradi et al., 2010; Rezende, 2019; Rezende & Faustino, 2023).
	… focused on knowing	In this approach, knowledge is a shared action in contexts of interaction. To follow the idea of knowing as a verb, this approach promotes a vocabulary that better conveys the impermanence of practice (Gherardi, 2000; Corradi et al., 2010).
	… focused on perspective	Also focused on the context, but different from the first, in which the context is the object of study, this approach considers the context as a theoretical category of doing dimensions (Corradi et al., 2010).
	… focused on the approach	Practice refers to the dimension in which know-how is constructed (Corradi et al., 2010).

Source: Elaborated by the authors based on Corradi et al. (2010).

Note that there is a certain common understanding that practice is a type of "situated activity." Moreover, the way in which understanding situatedness is different in both PBS and in Theodore Schatzki is key to distinguish practice approaches and its implications.

Gherardi (2008, 2019)—a key author to a PBS genealogy (Pagani, 2021)—shows how different philosophical approaches contributed to the production of a paradigm on the concept of something *in situ*. In her stance, Gherardi (2019) understands that "situated" refers to the "context" in which elements such as knowing and learning interact with doing (Gherardi, 2000, 2008). According to Gherardi (2008, 2019), the notion of "context" and "situation" in PBS was strongly driven by three special

issues aimed at the discussion of practice-based studies. The first was the 1994 special issue of the journal *Sociologie du Travail*, edited by Anni Borzeix, which brought together the perspectives of the North American, English, and French schools, in addition to predicting the advances that led to the creation of PBS (Borzeix, 1994). And two other special issues, in 2000 and 2002 (Gherardi, 2000; Heath & Button, 2002), with articles that converge distinct traditions such as ethnomethodology, distributed cognition, activity theory, workplace studies, actor-network theory and situated learning theory (Gherardi, 2000, 2008, 2019; Heath & Button, 2002).

It turns out that if, for example, we appropriate Silvia Gherardi's readings on the origin of PBS, the "situation" does not involve questioning the ontology of practice, but the way in which doing is institutionalized (Gherardi, 2019). The author does not even use "site" like Theodore Schatzki, but "situated", because her interest is not "what is", but "how" a practice happened. In Theodore Schatzki, there is, in a clear way, an ontological stance that questions what the site is; and since Schatzki (1996), the philosopher's notion of "context" derives from Heideggerian phenomenology and concerns to the clearing (Lichtung) situation (site) where we are – and not the elements of doing (Gherardi, 2000, 2008, 2019). Theodore Schatzki is a post-Heideggerian thinker, or, to put it differently, Theodore Schatzki's thought is guided by the question of being proposed by Martin Heidegger.

The *site* of the social: From Martin Heidegger to PBS

Martin Heidegger is a philosopher whose relevance involves the reopening of the question of being, displaced by Plato's philosophy and the sophists, and since then centered on the discussion of subjectivity (Quintilhano & Santos, 2018; Reale & Antiseri, 2006; Silva, 2020). Heidegger's phenomenology (1927) discards the modern denomination (the idea of subject) in favor of Dasein, by arguing that the being that we are cannot be understood in any other way than by existing; that is, the being that we are does not have a nature or essence separate from its situationality, as occurs in modern thought. The being that we are is directed and conditioned by existing (Schatzki, 2007).

In Heidegger (1927), being-there (*Dasein*) occurs (is left) in a clearing (*Lichtung*) that precedes any determinant of existence. *Dasein* literally means existence, but it is interpreted as a neologism by the author to allude to the being that we are, to the human being that, for example, Descartes' philosophy (cf. Bitencourt, 2017) denominates as the subject. *Das* is an adverb of place and *sein* can be translated as being, hence a translation of *Dasein* as "being-there." In this concept, Heidegger (1927), among other things (Schatzki, 2007, 2017a), deepens an idea shared among phenomenologists: pure intentionality, in which the conscious experience of existing, the thinking, does not have an essence (subjective/Platonic) in itself, but in its relationship with the object about/in/of which one thinks (Coelho, 2002). Heidegger, in this way, seeks to part with the modern dualism between subject and object (Smith, n.d.; Smith, 2018).

However, two things must be considered: (1) Heideggerian thought appropriated in the construction of Theodore Schatzki's notion of sites implies that human beings are not directly in the world; we are in the aforementioned state called *Lichtung*. In Heidegger (1927), *Lichtung* is where human existence (being-in-the-world) takes place. Heidegger (1927) uses several neologisms such as being-there (*Dasein*), clearing (*Lichtung*) and spatiality (*Räumlichkeit*) and produces particular arguments in his writings to talk about the being that we are, the place we inhabit, the things we do, etc. In this case, *Lichtung* is a neologism about a type of "consciousness" alternative to the theoretical and dualistic implications of the notion of consciousness developed since René Descartes (Bitencourt, 2017). Analogous to Martin Heidegger's approach of consciousness, Schatzki (2002, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2010, 2019) move away from a usual conceptualization of context when he affirms the site as a special type of "context." In Heidegger, consciousness, *Lichtung*, is not mediated by modern reason, thinking, but by pure intentionality, in which, as mentioned before, the conscious experience of existing is given immediately with the object about/in/of which one thinks (Coelho, 2002; Schatzki, 2003, 2007, 2017a).

According to Dreyfus (1995):

> Heidegger has told us from the beginning that Dasein is being-in-the-world [...] But human beings are never directly in the world; we are always in the world by being in some specific circumstances [e.g., in a kind of mental state, or as Schatzki (2019) puts it, a kind of context] [...] Heidegger calls this situation Lichtung. The word Lichtung literally means a clearing in the forest. We can capture some sense of the clearing by calling Dasein a field of revelation. For Heidegger this suggests an open space in which one can encounter things. Licht also means light. Things show themselves in the light of our understanding

> of being. Thus, Heidegger relates Dasein's revelation to the tradition of the equivalence of intelligibility and illumination that extends from Plato to the Enlightenment. Heidegger reminds us that Dasein is not a subject related to an object, nor is it any use saying, as Martin Buber does, that Dasein is "between" subject and object, since this still assumes that there are entities between what Dasein is to be. On the contrary, Dasein, as being-in-the-world, is always already outside itself, formed by shared practices, and absorbed in actively dealing (p. 163).

Heidegger (1927) relates *Lichtung* to the modern state of enlightenment and rational consciousness, while simultaneously making a dramatic distinction from it through the phenomenological approach of pure intentionality—it is what Schatzki calls "objective mind" (Schatzki, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006a). Note that Dreyfus (1995) moves away from locating being in a way that is not the being-there (*Dasein*) for the reason already explained above: being cannot be understood in any other way than there. In Schatzki (2003, 2005), in social theories, the idea of clearing (*Lichtung*) is brought as the field of intelligibility, or the field of the social possible meaning. This "place," the clearing, the field of intelligibility, is the concept that underpins the notion of site. The author justifies his choice of the term "site" due to its connotation that involves where something happens, this place being the situationality of our understanding of being (Schatzki, 2005).

(2) Therefore, pure intentionality—a phenomenological concept that proposes that human thinking is immediately and directly directed towards existing there (Schatzki, 2017a)—explains Schatzki's (2003) position regarding the approximations of his ontological approach with individualism. For the author, this approximation occurs because we are talking about thinking not as something abstract, but rather, again, as an objective mind (directly directed) (Schatzki, 2003), in which this thinking cannot be separated from the object focus of its intention.

In short, according to Schatzki (2019), *the site is where* the social happens. The author describes two connotations of "where": (1) the specific place in space and time (e.g., the Federal University of Espírito Santo during the COVID-19 pandemic); and (2) the "broad context" (e.g., education). Although, from then on, we use the free translation of site as "context," "relationship," or "space" (Passos & Bulgacov, 2019; Santos & Silveira, 2015)—to name a few—in reference to the site ontology, caution is needed. Even Schatzki (2005) uses "context" as a way of explaining the connotations of "where" for the site and not as a synonym. And even "where," as Schatzki (2019) argues is a rarefied approximation, as the author (2003, 2020) does not defend a Cartesian view of space and time, that is, the site is not a place on the street, nor in history, but in timespace of human activity, "consciousness" (Schatzki, 2010). Therefore, we understand that the philosopher's caution in explaining the connotations of site has, as one of its purposes, the maintenance of the link with Heideggerian philosophy, as for our beings to exist we have the condition of situationality of existence (Heidegger, 1927; Schatzki, 2005). More than that, the maintenance of the Heideggerian link implies the maintenance of the guiding question of Heidegger's phenomenological thought: what is (to be)?

Situated activity and the micro-directioning of practice approaches

We believe that revisiting the question of being, this time through the lens of Theodore Schatzki, may offer a different perspective on the practice approach in OS. Especially if we consider that the practice theories are well established and, as demonstrated by Pagani's (2021) state of the art and by the concerns of Gherardi (2009) and Nicolini (2009), it is an approach that tends to be reduced to a methodology for describing management activities. It is also an approach proposed to part from the primary ontological categories proposition in favor of the study of "macro" social phenomena (Schatzki, 2019). It is worth mentioning that our intention is not to invalidate or even disregard the diversity of readings made on Theodore Schatzki's work, nor on PBS. We are aware of the pedantic character with which we treat the North American philosopher's approach to OS, but we also recognize ourselves as another possible alternative. In order to achieve the ambition of advancing the approach to practice in relation to a "macro" approach to practices, we propose, in this reading, the disambiguation of practice in relation to PBS and the appropriation of the question of being over the situationality of practice. To do so, we start from one of the possible explanations for the micro-directioning of the practice approach.

As explained genealogically by Gherardi (2008, 2019), several conceptualizations of practice speak of a type of situated activity, and our hypothesis is that the way in which this is signified may be one of the factors that justify this micro-directioning of PBS in OS. According to Schatzki (2017a, 2018), after Bourdieu, theories of practices have focused mainly on a "micro" perspective and, therefore, have been criticized as a set of approaches incapable of dealing with large-scale phenomena. Although Schatzki (2017a, 2018) leaves open the reason why theories of practices present a tendency towards a localized

"micro" perspective, the author disagrees that this is a characteristic of the practice approaches. Especially because, for him (Schatzki, 2019), "situated" is related to the social site and there is considerable clarity regarding the expansiveness of his thought. His is a different meaning from the notion of "situation" present in PBS, which is proposed as micro-directioning. The philosopher even provokes, saying that "infinity is the site of spatial locations" (Schatzki, 2019, p. 26). Furthermore, in the same article in which he proposes the investigation of a social phenomenon based on the site, Schatzki (2005) also brings his ontology towards:

> those micro-approaches that do not deny the existence or efficacy of "macro" (or "meso") formations and structures, insisting only that the existence and efficacy of such phenomena be understood as and through sets of interrelated practices. There is no need to reify any macro-level institutions and structures beyond the interrelated sets (p. 479).

Note that, for Schatzki (2005), large-scale social phenomena do not need to be reified; they are bundles of practices and material arrangements. Furthermore, the author has been conducting "macro" analyses of bundles of practices and material arrangements since the 2000s, with his most recent work being the book Social Change in a Material World. In this book, Schatzki (2019) reaffirms the bundle as one of the most important elements of his theory, and with it, he analyzes an entire whiskey production chain. Furthermore, Schatzki (2019) defends the understanding of practice as a social phenomenon, considering being social as one of the characteristics that unites different approaches in the field of practices. The various examples that Schatzki (2019) presents throughout the book, and in his studies throughout the years—e.g., Schatzki (2001, 2003, 2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2010, 2012, 2016), among others—allow us to think that the fact that I am alone at home cooking, for example, does not imply the practice of cooking as something that (1) comes from me alone and micro-located; or that (2) I am the only person cooking in the world; and, further, (3) that there are no social implications of my activity, given by the materials used and the people involved with these materials, such as cooking gas, electricity, ingredients, etc. (Schatzki, 2017b).

If Schatzki (2005, 2006a, 2017a, 2017b, 2019) affirms and reaffirms the potential of practice in the study of large-scale phenomena, the microdirectioning of studies that appropriate the approach of practices may be the result of a question of delimitation and habit specific to the field of PBS. Moreover, if we assume that the different ways of signifying situationality reinforce the knot of this habit, we can propose a methodology for studying practice, not by describing how practice works situationally (Gherardi, 2019; Nicolini, 2009), but by seeking to understand social sites in the timespace of human activity (Schatzki, 2010, 2019, 2020). This methodological proposal transverses the discussion around the problematization of translation, which is the objective of this essay. Note, for example, how the translation of site into "context," "relation," or "space" in PBS is one of the factors that reinforces the idea that the nature/essence of the social in Theodore Schatzki are contexts, relations, spaces (or contextual, relational, spatial) when the multiplicity of meanings for "context," "relation," or "space" already involves something happening—in this case, the context itself, the relation itself, or the space itself. Furthermore, these concepts confound the contributions brought to PBS from other schools of thought, beyond the post-Heideggerian one. In Theodore Schatzki, and in other post-Heideggerians, the context, if it exists, is in that place (*Lichtung*/site) where the social happens. The site (*Lichtung*), by definition, is prior to whatever happens in it (Dreyfus, 1995; Heidegger, 1927; Schatzki, 2003).

In any case, to reclaim the approximations between Martin Heidegger and Theodore Schatzki does not mean to merely propose another word to translate "site", but to restore the Heideggerian philosophical link in the ontology of sites in OS. To do so, it is necessary to question whether contexts, relations, or spaces determine the primary nature/essence of the social, or whether they are ontological categories of it (Schatzki, 2016, 2019). As Schatzki (2019) himself summarizes, the nature/essence of the social is where the social happens, for an approximate and rarefied definition of "where," which concerns the timespace of conscious experience (Schatzki, 2010, 2020), and allows for a non-objective understanding of space and time (Schatzki, 2017a).

From this, we will be able to conduct a study on practices in OS, based on Theodore Schatzki's ontology of social sites, without necessarily depending on the specific characteristics of PBS, such as the microdirection and the ethnomethodological descriptiveness of activities. The value of this, when we consider Theodore Schatzki's work, especially from his multifaceted ontology (Schatzki, 2016, 2019), is the possibility of conducting studies on practices in OS that problematize contemporary

social "macrocrises." Unlike the appropriation seen in PBS, in which the interest involves studying how an activity happens (Bispo, 2015; Gherardi, 2019; Pagani, 2021; Rezende & Faustino, 2023), Theodore Schatzki, if asked about the "microdimension" of an activity, would probably answer that every practice is organized by understandings, rules and teleoaffectivities (Schatzki, 2005, 2019). And if the interlocutor insisted, the philosopher would indicate the appropriation of some ethnomethodology, but without being carried away by it (Schatzki, 2019).

The philosopher's proposal brings the Heideggerian question of being to the study of social phenomena, because "at any scale and with any conceptual apparatus that social subjects are studied, social phenomena are, ontologically, aspects or networks of arrangements of bundles of practices" (Schatzki, 2005, p. 477). Respecting this statement, Schatzki (2005) proposes three tasks to study practices with the ontology of social sites approach, namely: (1) identify the actions that make up an activity; (2) identify the bundles of practices and material arrangements of which these actions are part; and (3) identify other networks of bundles of practices and material arrangements along with which a specific social phenomenon is related.

Theodore Schatzki does not deny the study of things "as they happen"—situationally, as in PBS—but his approach, in addition to diverging from ethnomethodology, is also different from the so-called "processual ontology" and/or "relational ontology" (Braidotti, 2006; Slife, 2004). Schatzki (2005) is interested in much more pervasive implications of the existential and phenomenological condition of human activity. In his recent entry, Schatzki (2019) tackles the discussion on processes and presents a comparative analysis between different ways of approaching events, processes, and relations in social philosophy. Distinguishing himself from these approaches, the author presents his version in which events and processes are temporal occurrences in spatial continuums; and relations are an ontological component of phenomena, but not a primary categorical one. According to Schatzki (2019), events refer to something happening, whose duration in time varies. Process, for humans, is the time frame of consciousness. The difference between one and the other is that processes necessarily have duration, change and can be individualized by their results. Events can occur instantaneously and without changes. Schatzki (2019) discards a more radical processual ontology in order to maintain a multifaceted ontological approach, in which the site, as a place where the social happens, appears transversed by processual and substantial ontological categories (Schatzki, 2010, 2019).

The site is a non-Cartesian but phenomenological (spatiotemporal) place where distinct ontological categories—context, relation, process, substance, or any other ontological category, and most certainly several of them together—are realized in light of our understanding of being (Schatzki, 2016, 2019). Again, these ontological categories, whatever they may be, should not be understood as the primary ontological foundation of the social phenomenon. The main implication of this understanding for a study based on the practice approach is the questioning of the being of these ontological categories in relation to each other, whatever they may be. If, for example, a relation is not the primary ontological foundation of a social phenomenon, then we can subject it to the Schatzkian methodology (Schatzki, 2005, 2006a) to study what the relation is and what are its implications for our understanding of being in relation to other ontological categories that share a social phenomenon (Schatzki, 2019).

How to conduct a practice study in Organizational Studies?

In addition to distinguishing practice in OS from the version appropriated for the study of management in PBS, conducting a study on practices in OS using Theodore Schatzki also requires distinguishing "organization" in OS from "organization" in the writings of the North American philosopher. We know that, in OS, "organized" and "organization" have specific connotations. If we start from a realist paradigm, we can define organization in a positive way—as a palpable, tangible, and relatively stable structure. In contrast, an interpretivist thought can conceptualize the organization as the result of the intersubjective processes of signification of objects (Morgan et al., 1983). From the contributions of Critical Theory, we understand that the organization is also a palpable object, but its stability is apparent amid historical disputes (Grangeiro et al., 2020).

It is possible to expand organizational analysis based on a paradigmatic framework (Cooper, 1990; Cooper & Burrell, 2015; Hassard & Wolfram Cox, 2013). In fact, several studies serve as inspiration for us to talk about the production of paradigmatic maps for organizational theory (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Caldas, 2005; Hassard, 2012; Morgan et al., 1983; Morgan, 2012). However, after the paradigm boom, these discussions faced a movement of conformation and decline due to a supposed

impossibility or disinterest in paradigmatically demarcating production in the field. The existence of a kind of "paradigmatic soup" was assumed based on the contributions of Wittgensteinian philosophy of language in Organizational Studies and the problematization of the essentialist nature of schematizations addressed by postmodernist approaches (Hassard, 2012; Hassard & Wolfram Cox, 2013). The problem with this, in addition to paradigmatic obscuration (Hassard & Wolfram Cox, 2013), is the obscuration of ontological discussions, as if paradigm and ontology were equivalent.

It turns out that ontological obscuration is different. If, in relation to paradigmatic discussions, a "soup" is assumed to justify the impossibility of a satisfactory positioning (Hassard & Wolfram Cox, 2013), in relation to ontological positioning, we are led to a choice without problematizing the very value of choosing. Czarniawska (2014) and Gherardi (2019), notable references in the field, share a common philosophical approach, in which they move away from questioning the nature of social phenomena in favor of problematizing the way they occur. Gherardi (2019) even emphasizes that the important thing is to question how and not what. The author tells us that the ontological question brings us closer to essentialisms, which is why she defends an ontoepistemology.

In another direction, Schatzki (2019) defends the essence of reality, but problematizes the question of being. The essence of reality in Schatzki (2019) is multifaceted. The proposal of sites, as ontological clearings, does not deny the essences of reality, but neither does it define them as primary (Schatzki, 2019). There is a special type of virtue that is important to access in this ontological clearing. The philosopher tells us from the beginning that practice is organized action; more than that, he says that practice has three organizations, namely: understandings, rules, and teleoaffectivities. Several studies problematize, explain, unravel, and enrich these organizing elements of Theodore Schatzki's practices, so we will not saturate this aspect here. For those interested, Theodore Schatzki himself (2010, 2019) delves into his work to expand them and bring contributions and clarifications. Our purpose regarding the organization of practices is to address the non-discussed implications of the author's philosophical language when he states, for example, that "actions are components of a practice *by virtue* of expressing elements of the organization of practice" (Schatzki, 2019, p. 66). The recurrence with which the philosopher articulates the expressions "by virtue" and "organization of practices" in his writings is also noteworthy.

In Schatzki (2005, 2006a), the organization we know in OS is a type of social phenomenon, like many others, accessible via the approach of bundles of practices and material arrangements (Schatzki, 2005, 2006a, 2019). However, the organization of practices is something else. In Schatzki (2002, 2010, 2017a, 2017b, 2019), the organization of practices is a virtue of the social phenomenon. This is not about defining organizational character as an ontological category, but as an attribute, a virtue. Amidst a wide range of differences, the social remains cogent in the timespace of understandings, rules, and teleoaffectivities of our practices. In this regard, Theodore Schatzki's ontological thought aligns with other approaches to the real, such as Deleuze and Guattari (1992, 2010), who propose an immanent substantial metaphysics and view existence, in a phenomenological sense, as something dependent on the production of meaning on a surface that is chaotic by nature.

In Schatzki (2019) words:

> Social theory, I believe, is most flexible and most adequate to the often-alluded messiness of social life when it embraces the—to paraphrase Heidegger (1978 [English translation of 1927's "Being and Time," referenced in this essay])—equiprimacy of categories […] The social world is generically composed, at least, of substances, structures, relations, events, and processes, and none of these categories has priority over the others in the sense that what the others designate are attributes, properties, products, or modes of existence of the supposed primary entities (or otherwise gain their being in reference to them) (p. 13).

The cohesion of Theodore Schatzki's social phenomenon is maintained by various actions that share a virtue: organization (Schatzki, 2024). The study of this virtue allows us to connect different ontological categories, and it is achievable by the same questioning shared by several organizational scholars: How are practices organized? (Souza et al., 2024). Except that, when asking such a question from Theodore Schatzki's multifaceted ontological approach, the objective is not the "micro/internal/zoom in" description of the activity, but an overview that allows us to study the way in which different ontological categories (relations, processes, substances, structures, etc.) are organized in the timespace of a given social phenomenon—for a meaning of organizing as a type of ontological virtue, a component of social reality that maintains this cogent reality (Schatzki, 2024).

Schatzki (2006a) complements his methodology for studying what is a social phenomenon happening—a university department, in that case—by accessing the temporal dimension of human activities. For the philosopher, timespace is a human activity phenomenon based on the teleological characteristic of human life (Schatzki, 2010, 2019, 2020). This implies that time is not understood as a succession of events, instants, or any sequence of things; and that space is not a geographical location, such as a room in a building in the city center. Time and space exist in the experience of being in the world (Heidegger, 1927). Schatzki (2010, 2020) explains that past, present, and future are not understood sequentially, but as what is experienced from activity, thus revealing a phenomenon that happens. The American philosopher even uses this same methodology—identification of actions, sets of practices and material arrangements and the relationships between bundles of practices and material arrangements, combined with timespace analysis of the phenomenon (Table 2)—when analyzing a distillery to discuss the site of social changes, that is, where social changes happen (Schatzki, 2019).

Table 2
How to conduct a practice study in Organizational Studies?

Task	Goal	References
Production of the social phenomenon causal infrastructure	Characterize the actions that make up an activity.	(Schatzki, 2005, 2006a)
	Characterize the bundles of practices and material arrangements of which these actions are part.	
	Characterize other networks of bundles of practices and material arrangements to which a specific social phenomenon is related.	
Production of the social phenomenon memory	Access the timespace dimension of the studied phenomenon.	(Schatzki, 2006b, 2010, 2020)
	Characterize the organizations of practice in the studied social phenomenon.	
Production of the social phenomenon sites	Access the ontological categories of the studied phenomenon.	(Schatzki, 2010, 2016, 2017a, 2019, 2024)
	Characterize the organization of the ontological categories of the studied phenomenon.	

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

According to Table 2, conducting a study on practices based on Theodore Schatzki's phenomenological approach does not imply a processual description of activities, but rather a mapping of them in view of producing a causal arrangement of the bundle of practices in a given social phenomenon. We emphasize that, when we speak of causality, we are not referring only to the effects of chains of actions, but to the way in which the timespace of human activity is produced. As explained, timespace is formative in relation to causes and effects, as it concerns the way in which the motivations and normative tensions of actions express the teleology of practices. By understanding a social phenomenon through this approach, we can problematize its formative dimension and question what, ontologically, underlies the nexus of practices within a phenomenon. This is why Schatzki (2005, p. 477) proposes the study of practices in a way that privileges "general views of social phenomena and their functioning, in turn expressed in the form of references, not to the details of the bundles of practice and material arrangements, but to the entire formations and their relations." In this way, an approach to practice based on Theodore Schatzki focuses on the senses (teleology), emotions, temporality (motivations, continuity, effects), and the materiality that organize the sites of human activity.

DEALING WITH THE CRISIS IS A MATTER OF VIRTUE – FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

We ask the reader's permission, as there is no conclusion reclaiming the main ideas of this essay. While, since the mid-1800s, the field of practices has clashed with modern rationalism in search for a non-Platonic approach (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Dreyfus, 1995; Foucault, 1977; Heidegger, 1927; Nietzsche, 2017; Schatzki, 2019)— among others—the field of practices in OS is concerned with distancing itself from the prescriptive and technical excesses of "doing" in the face of the non-orthodoxy of action (Corradi, et al., 2010; Czarniawska, 2014; Duarte & Alcadipani, 2016; Gherardi, 2000, 2012; Thiollent, 2014)—among others. In other words, one of the things that separates Philosophy of Practice from Administration in Practice is that the latter subjects the former to a form of internal criticism, which questions the reason for doing things in favor of a "new" reason for doing things. This knot is the basis on which we problematize translation in this essay—not out of pedantry with terms used here and there, but as a provocation about the way we translate philosophical content in Organizational Studies. After all, are we bringing philosophy to Organizational Studies, or are we taking Organizational Studies to philosophy? Without answering this question directly, we reflect that all of us—researchers in the field of Organizational Studies—have already faced some type of resistance when addressing certain epistemological content in our studies. We are forced to adapt our work to the hegemonic demands of our discipline, and this movement of accommodation may be one of the main causes for losses in translation. If we use what was discussed about the field of practices in this essay as an example, bringing philosophy to Administration has often involved confining approaches, even discordant ones, to managerialist dynamics—see PBS. What we propose in problematizing philosophical translation follows the second path: bringing Administration to philosophy in order to construct other contributions to the field, especially with regard to the urgent demands of contemporary times that yearn for a rupture with the managerialist model. Therefore, instead of resuming the discussion of the essay, we understand the conclusion as a space where the discussion converges and, in this case, the convergence is the problematization of current social crises in light of the resumption of the philosophy of practices in OS.

People are sad, tired, stressed, anxious, depressed, distressed, and using more drugs. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2022) estimates that 970 million people suffer from some type of psycho-emotional disorder; 31% of these have anxiety and 28.9% have depression. The remaining 40.1% are distributed among idiopathic conditions, attention deficit, bipolar disorder, autism, schizophrenia, eating disorders, and conduct disorders (WHO, 2022). Cases of depression and anxiety alone increased by approximately 30% between 2019 and 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic. Considering the methodological limitations of the WHO, we know these numbers are underreported. Approximately 35% of all women in the world suffer sexual violence (Okabayashi et al., 2020). It is also worth mentioning the rise of authoritarianism (Lesgart, 2020) and the red alerts concerning planetary limits, which define the health of Earth and its regenerative capacity (Rockström et al., 2023). There are also several other equally desperate indicators omitted from this paragraph—not due to lack of concern, but because statistics on racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, and other forms of discrimination and dehumanization are underreported worldwide. Unsustainable practices continue to dominate (Scheurenbrand et al., 2024).

Despite the complexity and variety of factors implied by these data, a significant group of thinkers understands that these crises stem from the Anthropocene (Rockström et al., 2023; Zalasiewicz et al., 2017). In other words, the crises faced by humanity in contemporary times are developments of our own social model. In fact, Rockström et al. (2023), like Schatzki (2019) and Scheurenbrand et al. (2024), recognize that addressing a multifaceted crisis demands an equally diverse and comprehensive approach. For us, as social thinkers, this implies the need to recognize the study of the social phenomenon by adopting approaches capable of engaging with different ontological categories, rather than relying on insufficient ontological primacy in the face of a complex problem (Schatzki, 2016, 2019). It is a matter of organization—not as an organizational phenomenon, but as a dialogical virtue among distinct ontological categories that seek to explain the social phenomenon.

After analyzing Theodore Schatzki's writings, and comparing the way he uses the notion of virtue linked to the organization of practice, we conclude that one way of conceptualizing virtue involves how different ontological positions are expressed in organizations of practices, forming a social nexus (Schatzki, 2016, 2019) that crosses context, events, processes, relationships, discourses, habits, structures, substances, etc. We understand that, when questioning the crisis faced by contemporary society, it is essential to recognize that any response based on a singular lens would necessarily neglect the complexity of society itself—if not the very meaning of the term crisis. With war, social inequality, and climate change in the dispute, it is difficult to defend something as the greater evil. And perhaps that is exactly what we need to internalize: there is no way to choose a greater evil! What we can effectively do is to appropriate a multifaceted ontology, such as that of Theodore Schatzki, to study an ontologically multifaceted crisis.

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DATA AVAILABILITY

The entire dataset supporting the results of this study was published in the article itself.

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