




From the Editors

What Theory Is and Can Be: Forms of Theorizing in Organizational Scholarship

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Joep Cornelissen¹, Markus A. Höllerer² 
and David Seidl³ 

Abstract

Theory is at the very heart of organizational scholarship and a key criterion for evaluating the quality and contribution of our research. Focusing on conceptual rather than empirical work, this editorial essay highlights the wide range of forms that theorizing might take – and how it, in consequence, materializes in different types of theory papers. Next to the propositional form of theory building, which has so far dominated reflections in the literature, we discuss the particularities of process, configurational, perspectival, and meta-theorizing, as well as various forms of critique. We demonstrate how these forms of theorizing differ in terms of their aims, style of reasoning, their contributions, and the way in which they are written up as papers. In view of the rather different roles that each of these forms of theorizing serve, we propagate, in line with the ethos of *Organization Theory*, a pluralistic stance when it comes to advancing theory in organization studies.