Call for Papers for Qualitative Studies special issue on Hybrid Work

Since covid, hybrid work has become a new normal for how we work. During covid, we all became part of the world-spanning laboratory on how to use digital technology in or work, as well as new work forms. The massive use of technology to facilitate remote collaboration and distance management has generated an extensive body of experience, which we now need to scrutinize in order to build more effective, but also ethical and sustainable hybrid work arrangements.

There is little doubt that hybrid work arrangements and flexible work are here to stay. A study of 2700 employees from 106 countries (May 2020) found that 69% of respondents wanted to WFH at least half of the time (94% when including those wanting at least 25%)(Culturewizard, 2021). The big shift towards hybrid or remote work during covid (May 2020) included 35% of US employees (Brynjolfsson et al., 2020), and 80% (June 2020) of global companies (Eagle, 2020). To companies, advantages of remote work include reduced footprint, alleviating space concerns, assess larger talent pool and lowering business expenses (Zajac et al., 2022). Maurer (2020) found 80% of 800 responding companies planning to move forward with more flexible options post-corona. In their overview of Dax and international companies, (Steude, 2021) found 15 of 22 to project having flexible work arrangements in the future. Pauly and Markert (2020) found 11,3% of the German workforce (full-time equivalent) working from home pre-covid, while projecting 21,5% post-corona

Hybrid work combines traditional office presence with various degrees of remote work, e.g. combining a few days at the office and the remainder from home (Varma et al., 2022). Both Remote and hybrid work stem from a long tradition of telework research (Christea & Dinu, 2022; Kohont & Ignjatovic, 2022; Steude, 2021). Due to the evolving nature and impact of remote work, Gifford (2022) calls for a strong and contextualised research agenda to update and expand the body of academic research to inform the extensive discussion on hybrid work. However, as noted by pre-covid literature, the boundaries managed through hybrid work not only involve physical distance, but just as much technological, organisational, departmental, professional and cultural boundaries, as well as spanning across time zones, and even day- and nightshifts on a shared location. Building alignment and commitment across organizational fragmentations is no easy task, and more knowledge on the matter is needed to better deal with the problems emerging from such arrangements. Hybrid work offers a range of solutions to the problems encountered during covid but generate itself a range of challenges to be dealt with. Furthermore, the use of digital technologies in hybrid arrangements not only compensates for the shortcomings of not being face-to-face but allows for new and innovative ways of enhancing collaboration, organizing and management.

During covid, various shortcomings of digitally mediated collaboration and communication became evident, but so did a range of opportunities, which can be exploited for building better employee value propositions and sustaining competitive advantages. While much covid research emphasised the downsized of involuntary confinement and mediated collaboration, less emphasis has been placed on how to circumvent those disadvantages through effective use of hybrid work forms. Another line of emphasis has been on portraying advantages of flexible work, e.g., on employee well-being and personalised productivity. We find the exploitation of such benefits on a more permanent basis are important to study to make such advantages sustainable. Finally, we see a need for exploring the paradoxical dark horses of hybrid work, e.g., that employees enjoy the opportunity of working from home (WFH) to focus on their own tasks, but at the cost of informal knowledge sharing and organisational commitment. The complexity of hybrid work far exceeds the common conception of being a matter of working a few days at the office and the remainder

from home or some other location; hybrid work transgresses physical boundaries, but also office hours, institutional domains, and organisational boundaries. Numerous studies have shown how both employer and employee benefits from such combinations, as well as generating significant challenges in terms of coordinating, collaborating, innovating, socialising, sharing, and building commitment.

The exploration of hybrid work often relies on quantitative mass-assessment that explore comparable outcomes, like performance levels or employee well-being. Less emphasis has been put on the exploration, and namely the exploitation of covid experience turned into hybrid arrangements. As a phenomenon, hybrid work appears in a wide variety of organisational processes and is consequently in need of qualitative assessment and depiction across its various forms. To better understand hybrid as one, perhaps among several, future strategies of work, we call for papers that portray, analyse, discuss and reflect the qualitative distinctiveness of hybrid work. Such papers would address (but are not limited to):

- The emergence and management of communicative challenges in hybrid work situations
- Organisational change and change management in hybrid collaboration and organisations
- Enabling and sustaining organisational commitment across various hybrid arrangements
- Juxta-posted tensions in hybrid work, e.g., concerning flexibility contra collaboration
- Employee value proposition and building competitive advantages through hybridization
- Dealing with innovation, implicit and informal processes, or lack hereof
- The changed conception of employee well-being and the ideal employee in post-covid work-life
- Organisational Citizenship and -Behaviour in hybrid arrangements
- Boundary spanning and ambidexterity in hybrid work forms
- The innovative use or adoption of technology to deal either with various burdens of separation, or to enrich collaboration beyond face-to-face affordances.
- Building hybrid organisations and the hybrid work force
- Understanding, exploring or capitalising on hybrid work forms

Papers must emphasise the qualitative aspects of relevant themes central to hybrid work, providing the field with both rich descriptions and conceptualisations for better understanding hybrid work.

In this special issue in Qualitative Studies, we aim to publish 8-10 articles in English on hybrid work as a contribution to better understandings the depths of this emerging field. We accept proposals that either report on original, qualitative studies, or articles or commentaries that address current issues within the hybrid field.

To propose an article to this special issue of Qualitative Studies, please provide an abstract (max one page) to tdh@ikp.aau.dk no later than 1. November 2023.

Abstract deadline 1. November 2023

Invitations to write a full paper: 1. December 2023

Full paper deadline 1. Maj 2024

Deadline for submission of revised and finalized manuscripts: 1. November 2024

Publication date: 1. December 2024

Final papers submitted for peer-review should be 5000-7000 worlds (excluding a 150-word structured abstract, 4-6 keywords and reference list) and formatted according to APA7. All submissions should be in Word format, formatted with a standard margin, 12-point font and double spacing. All figures, models and

tables should be embedded into the text. Submission must take place through the journal's portal found here: https://tidsskrift.dk/qual/index. All full papers are subjected to double-blind review prior to publication. Qualitative Studies does not charge a publication fee.

Questions can be sent to the guest editors Thomas Duus Henriksen (tdh@ikp.aau.dk),, Rikke Kristine Nielsen (rikkekn@ikp.aau.dk) and Maria Hvid Bech Dille (mhd@ikp.aau.dk), Department of Communication and Psychology, Aalborg University.

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