

Synthesis
Reading & Writing in WOP

**ON THE SOCIAL UTILITY OF READING AND
WRITING IN WORK AND ORGANIZATIONAL
PSYCHOLOGY**

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ABSTRACT IN ENGLISH

In this paper, we wish to reflect on the social utility of reading and writing academic texts in work and organizational psychology (WOP). On the surface, academic texts represent the cumulative body of perspectives and evidence-based knowledge of WOP. All the very forms of academic texts (e.g., research articles, and reviews) are meant to provide services to the WOP community and benefit the broader society. Implicitly, writers of academic texts in WOP produce papers to communicate to a broader range of readers and to circulate ideas about the psychology of work and organization, which can ultimately contribute to the social wellbeing. However, pressures on writing academic texts, the organization of the university system, the privileging of certain perspectives and methods (e.g., mainstream models) and the instrumentalization of papers demystify such a view of academic texts. In our experience as writers and readers in the field of WOP, we can do nothing but acknowledge the variety of experiences that we have had with difficulties in writing and reading academic texts. In this paper, we use an unconventional writing style to take into account all these experiences with the wish to reflect on the social utility of writing and reading academic texts in WOP. This unconventional approach allows us to realize a scientific discussion about ethical, ontological, epistemological and socio-political aspects of research and practice in WOP. Moreover, this unconventional approach to writing allows us to imagine possible alternatives that can contribute to developing the social utility of WOP.

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KEYWORDS: reading, academic writing, epistemology, critical psychology, work and organizational psychology.

SUR L'UTILITÉ SOCIALE DE LA LECTURE ET DE L'ÉCRITURE EN PSYCHOLOGIE DU TRAVAIL ET DES ORGANISATIONS

ABSTRACT IN FRENCH

Dans cet article, nous souhaitons proposer une réflexion sur l'utilité sociale de la lecture et de l'écriture de textes académiques dans le domaine de la psychologie du travail et des organisations (PTO). Au premier abord, les textes académiques représentent l'ensemble des perspectives et des connaissances factuelles de la PTO. Les textes académiques dans toutes leurs formes (i.e., les articles scientifiques et les revues) sont censés fournir des services à la communauté PTO et bénéficier la société civile dans son ensemble. Implicitement, les auteurs de textes académiques en PTO produisent des études pour communiquer avec un plus large public de lecteurs et pour diffuser des idées sur la psychologie du travail et de l'organisation qui peuvent éventuellement contribuer au bien-être collectif. Cependant, les pressions exercées quant à la rédaction des textes académiques, l'organisation du système universitaire, le fait de privilégier certaines perspectives et méthodes (i.e., les modèles mainstream) et l'instrumentalisation des travaux scientifiques démystifient une telle perception des textes académiques. D'après notre expérience en tant que rédacteurs et lecteurs dans le domaine de la PTO, tout ce que nous pouvons faire c'est constater la diversité des expériences que nous avons eues concernant les difficultés d'écriture et de lecture des textes académiques. Dans cet article, nous utilisons un style d'écriture non conventionnel pour prendre en compte toutes ces expériences dans le but de réfléchir à l'utilité sociale de l'écriture et de la lecture de textes académiques dans la PTO. Cette approche non conventionnelle nous permet de mener une discussion scientifique sur les aspects éthiques, ontologiques, épistémologiques et sociopolitiques de la recherche et de la pratique dans le domaine de la psychologie du travail et des organisations. De plus, notre approche à l'écriture nous permet d'imaginer des alternatives possibles qui peuvent contribuer à développer davantage l'utilité sociale de cette discipline.

KEYWORDS: lecture, rédaction académique, épistémologie, psychologie critique, psychologie du travail et des organisations.

I INTRODUCTION

Dear reader, you just happened to take this paper. You found it on the journal website, or a colleague of you has just sent it to you. Maybe, you found this paper on one of those many social media where academic authors disseminate their publications. You could have found the paper under the pile of papers you printed during the last months. Maybe you found the paper within your emails: you forgot your subscription to a certain international association of Work and Organizational Psychology (WOP), but today, you decided to read its newsletter, and you saw this new, weird paper appearing in the news section of the WOP association. Maybe you found this paper while you were cleaning the folder of your downloads – and maybe you do not remember why you downloaded this paper.

It is possible that you noted this paper in the middle of the multiple piles of papers that live in your house, your laptops or pen drives. In your career as a scholar and/or a practitioner in the field of WOP, you organized the disparate and various papers in different piles of papers. There are

- a) the pile of papers that you must read,
- b) the pile of papers that you will never read,
- c) the pile of papers that if you do not read them, it is fine,
- d) the pile of papers that you can decide not to read because they do not say anything you need to know... but you never know, so you keep them. There are
- e) the pile of papers for the study you are going to start,
- f) the pile of papers that you must read because the reviewers of the manuscript you submitted strongly recommended you to read them,
- g) the pile of papers that you reviewed for the journals you are editor or ad hoc reviewer,
- h) the pile of papers of your students that you would like to read,
- i) the pile of papers you collected at conferences,
- j) the pile of papers that you should have read, but you only read the title, and the abstract and you cited them in your last publications,
- k) the pile of papers of your friends who showed off with you because they published their papers in a high-ranked journal,
- l) the pile of editorials of editors from high-ranked journals where you want or you have to publish – you have to read those papers because you never know if these papers could be useful for your career –,
- m) the pile of papers on methodology in WOP,
- n) the pile of papers that speak about the social utility of WOP,
- o) the pile of papers on critical psychology and the pile of papers against critical psychology,
- p) the pile of papers on trend topics that you would like to read in order to start a new avenue of research which can boost your academic position,
- q) the pile of papers on training interventions that you do not read because you find those interventions as meaningless, but it is important to know that they

exist and maybe you are going to present a work on them at the next international conference,

- r) the pile of reviews of books that you will never read, but book reviews might help you in pretending that you read those books. And then there are
- s) those papers that you planned to read many years ago,
- t) the papers that you downloaded just because you wanted to download them, even if you do not know why,
- u) the pile of paper you are confronted with because of all the last seminars or summer schools you attended,
- v) the pile of papers that you keep reminding you of the pressure and the uncertainty of your previous academic career,
- w) and the pile of papers that are there just on your bookshelves because they are there and you do not know the topic, the author, the journal, or the reason why they are there ...

No matter where you find this paper, you are a reader, and perhaps a writer of academic texts, and it happened that you decide to read this paper.

Now that we have shown that you are a reader of academic texts, it is perhaps time to make it clear what this paper is about. Then, unsurprisingly, the paper is about the social utility of reading and writing in WOP, as the title and the abstract report. You know that this paper speaks about WOP, and it is part of a collection of papers that reflect on the social utility of WOP, and that this paper is an attempt to *criticalizing* WOP (Abrams et al. 2022). To make it clear, in this paper, we wish to reflect with you about reading and writing in WOP. We want to do so by using our shared experiences of reading and writing to imagine possible alternatives that can potentially contribute to the development of the social utility of WOP. By considering our experiences as readers and writers in this way, we can create a space, a community of practice. Firstly, we enact a writing mode of post/authorship that reframes notions of authorial intentionality and origination. In these, we are together readers and writers thinking about the social utility of WOP (Taylor & Benozzo, 2023). Second, we can advance potential ideas and suggestions for a better future for our discipline but also for our work as psychologists. Moreover, we don't need to engage in a serious and theoretical way; we are talking about our own experiences, so let's let our experience literally be as its Latin etymology expresses⁵.

Maybe you did not expect that this paper would be so unconventional and it would speak directly to you. Considering our daily work as readers and writers, we believe that using your experience can better help us understand the social utility of reading and writing academic texts. On the surface, we, as WOP scholars, believe in the myth that academic texts represent the cumulative body of perspectives and evidence-based knowledge of WOP. As such, the social utility of reading and writing academic texts stands in providing services and benefits to the broader society. However, you also know very well the pressures of writing academic texts, which are largely documented (Lee, 2014). You also know the organization of the academic system very well and

⁵ *experiri/e* where *ex-* is the proposition for “out of”, *-per-* stands for “through” and *ire* is the verb “to go”.

how important it is for one university to have its name in certain journals (Orhan, 2020). You also know that journals might privilege certain perspectives and methods (e.g., mainstream models). You know that papers have become an instrument, i.e., a capitalistic technology, that does not have a lot in common with the social utility of your discipline. Some authors have also questioned what WOP scholars can actually bring the public and, in turn, how they can realize WOP social utility (e.g., Orhan et al., 2022).

Taken together, all these elements might have made you wonder about the social utility of writing and reading. That is, which services and benefits do reading and writing provide to society? In this paper, we wish to reflect with you on these elements and use our shared experiences of reading and writing to imagine possible alternatives that can potentially contribute to the development of the social utility of WOP.

II EXPERIENCES OF READING AND WRITING ACADEMIC TEXTS IN WOP

As a reader and writer of academic texts, you have expectancies when you decide to read one paper. What do you expect from the present short piece? Do you think that we are going to answer those timely questions on the social utility of reading and writing in WOP? Do you think that we are going to explain which services and benefits reading and writing provide to our society? We wrote that our wish is to circulate ideas and questions by imagining possible alternatives and setting possible actions for the future of WOP. These ideas and questions come directly from our experience and your expectations for a better future for our discipline and also for our work as psychologists caring for the social utility of WOP.

So, it would be clear that this is not a usual paper. Let us warrant you that the present paper is not the last paper by one Author and their colleagues who discuss the benefit of a certain WOP model. You might be taught that you don't need a paper as the present because we are not going to propose a specific argument or data, analysis, and future perspectives that could inform you about your next data collection. Also, this is not a paper about certain interventions for the promotion of workers' wellbeing, performance, and organizational engagement. Maybe you would have preferred to invest your time in reading the last paper of those famous Authors who have high H-index and can inform you about the trends in WOP methodology. However, you gave a chance to the present paper that is trying to unpack your reader and writer experience in WOP. We take the risk of being delusional, but we want to profane your work as a reader and writer in order to imagine possible alternatives.

Then, to demystify your work as a reader and perhaps your work as a writer of academic texts and let our experience as readers and writers speak about the social utility of WOP, maybe it is worth doing to connect again with your reader's experience with some questions. It is worth beginning by asking you the reasons behind your reading.

- a) Why do you read academic texts?
- b) What do you expect by reading a paper?

- c) Do you believe in what is written in each row of the papers you read, use, and cite?
- d) And if you are also a writer, let's connect with your writing experience. Let us ask you why you write academic texts.
- e) What do you expect when writing a paper?
- f) Do you believe in what you write in each row of your paper?

First, speaking about reading, it is always part of the reading experience to have expectations about reading. In WOP, we should expect to find something that we can use, something that we can apply, something that we can discuss, interpret, and judge. You might expect that readings can serve you in your practice and teaching. You might expect that all the readings are socially useful by their nature. Are you one of those people who do not read papers entirely? Maybe you are one of those who do not read the introduction of the papers because introductions are made only to convince reviewers. So, you are one of those who limit your reading to hypotheses, methods and results. Conversely, maybe you are one of those who only read introductions because introductions have all the elements you need to cite a paper and support your argument. Against them, maybe you are one of those who don't believe in what is written in WOP academic texts, yet you have to read them because you need those papers for your career, and maybe you have to teach about certain models, methods, variables, theories and perspectives. In parallel, you read them because in your career, you have to publish on certain topics using diary studies and test moderated mediation models, and reach the ultimate result that positive psychological states at work lead to positive outcomes in the workplace. Maybe you are so bored by the things you do that you cannot do them anymore, but you depend on a system that forces you to publish, and you know that for publishing in specific journals, you have to conduct certain studies on certain models with particular methods. In approaching your reading in this way, you think about the idea that publishing in highly ranked journals might be easier if you could have one big name as a co-author. You know all these things, and sadly, you decide to dedicate your time to reading those papers.

Second, speaking about writing, it is always part of the writing process to think about what services you are providing to society by sharing your discoveries. You might expect that the reader has to understand the background of your study, your hypotheses and the methodology you used to test them. You might expect that the ultimate point of your paper will serve at least one of your colleagues who is working on similar topics, and together, you can benefit society. You might expect that everything you write has a social utility by nature. Are you one of those writers who write only when you have the ultimate results of your study? Do you write by beginning with your introduction, literature review, hypotheses, and methodology? Or are you one of those who wait for the results to develop your hypotheses? Between you and us, are you one of those fans of the HARKing (hypothesizing after the results are known) practices? Maybe you are not familiar with quantitative approaches, and you prefer to use qualitative methods. However, you realized how difficult it is to publish in a WOP journal an academic text reporting qualitative data. Maybe you opted for other journals that are not in the field of WOP. Maybe you decided to involve quantitative methods,

and you started to write academic papers that report mixed-methods studies. Maybe you are not a fan of quantitative or qualitative methodologies, but you are a fan of mainstream topics. You prefer to write about trends in academia. There is nothing wrong with all these disparate experiences. Your individual experiences probably reflect the pressure of publishing academic texts, the need for citations for your academic career and national qualification, and the need for publishing in high-ranked journals. It doesn't matter if the paper can serve and benefit society; you have to pursue a certain number of publications, a certain number of citations and a certain number of academic texts in specific journals. You don't like to write papers anymore, especially because of your rejection experience and the length of the peer-review process. It is still in your memory that the paper you submitted in 2018 received five rejections, and it is still under review. It would be socially worthwhile and meaningful not to publish it. However, if it is published, it will add one additional publication to your career and eventually support your ego as a writer – even though you don't like writing anymore.

III SOME DOUBTS IN READING AND WRITING ACADEMIC TEXTS IN WOP

Are you exhausted by our lists of experiences? We know that you can join some of them. Our lists are long because we are isolated islands with different experiences, but we live in the same sea of reading and writing academic texts in WOP, and it is worth knowing all the very different and desperate experiences that each of us can have.

Despite the fact you are feeling tired by our list, we imagine that a smother light appeared to you. Our lists made you have some implicit and explicit associations of the elements characterizing current tendencies of reading and writing academic texts in WOP. We consider them as elements that feed your critical spirit. Your experiences as a reader and writer are becoming doubts about reading and writing. Notably, these doubts remind us of the questions that are relevant to our work here on reading and writing in WOP:

- a) What are you reading and writing?
- b) What services do academic texts provide?
- c) Who is excluded from academic texts?
- d) Who or what determines what you read and write?
- e) Who or what benefit do you have from reading and writing?
- f) And ultimately, what is the social utility of WOP in the view of academic texts as communication channels?

On the surface, we cannot do anything but recognise that contemporary society is crossing an age of grand challenges (European Environment Agency, 2023) among which environmental crisis, social inequalities, the extreme suffering of countries in the Global South (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2022), the cost of inflation, increasing poverty and the work intensification and overload resulting in higher stress, and negative wellbeing outcomes for workers or the great resignation (Tessema et al., 2022). What is WOP doing to address these grand challenges?

Publishing papers? Which readings have helped you to understand how you could contribute to addressing these grand challenges? What can you write to address these grand challenges? Limiting to work-related phenomena, you might have wondered what is wrong with WOP if, after two decades of positive psychology publications about workers' wellbeing we continue to witness negative wellbeing outcomes and great resignation? For example, against hegemonic models in the literature of WOP, you might have realized that those most cited WOP models and connected training interventions might not be sufficient for understanding and supporting workers in their daily work experience. You realized that strikes, protests, the great resignation, and forms of organizational resistance tell you a story that is completely different from the reality of WOP journals and models. Maybe you protect this reality as it is our intellectual reality, but when you have to write the applied implications, you realize that the contemporary conditions of work, employment and society you witness do not really apply to WOP reality. The question now is why reading and writing WOP papers. Maybe you have had the feeling that you are forced to read and write academic texts to feed the fantasmatic reality of the WOP publishing machine. You might claim that you want to read and write different papers, a different story from the one by hegemonic trends in WOP, yet there are two additional concerns with the academic publishing machine that we still have to discuss, namely a) the democracy and global perspectives, and b) the idea of science and social utility in reading and writing academic texts.

III.1 DOUBTS ABOUT DEMOCRACY & GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES IN READING AND WRITING ACADEMIC TEXTS IN WOP

In collecting your readings and in writing your papers, maybe you had the assumption that reading and writing are democratic. Maybe you have never wondered if reading and writing academic texts is democratic, inclusive and representative. Maybe as a Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic, person you have never been interested in the quest for democracy. However, there is a weird feeling behind all we know about journals and reading and writing in WOP. Some of us are convinced that

- a) if they do not attend certain conferences, they cannot publish their papers or
- b) if they do not belong to a specific international association, they cannot publish in journals sponsored by the association or
- c) if they do not have a good level of English. they cannot publish in international journals,
- d) or also, if they are not on the Editorial Board of specific journals, they cannot publish their academic papers or
- e) if they do not have funds, they cannot publish papers at all because of the predatory system of publishers...
- f) and somewhat extremely, there are also some of us who think that if they are not American, they do not have an American sample or do not have an

American co-author, or they just do not do American stuff: they cannot publish their papers in American journals.

You have probably tried several times to submit academic papers that have been rejected, but you still don't understand why. And maybe you had the feeling that you have been excluded for certain reasons that you cannot report. Sometimes it happens, sometimes not. However, in reading papers, perhaps you noted the high H index of the authors, where these authors work, what these authors do and which ideas they have, and you asked yourself why you should read their papers and why you should write papers like theirs.

Recently, Orhan and colleagues (2023) showed that there are some biases in WOP journals. It seems that big names in the field have higher chances to publish a paper than others. It seems that editors accept papers from big names even if the paper has controversial points. It seems that if you had written the same paper, you might have had little chance of being published. That is, Orhan and colleagues compared WOP with management and human resources journals and found that WOP "journals allocate significantly more space to the most prolific authors than two other fields' journals, the super-elite scholars [in WOP] do not only publish more articles on average than their counterparts in neighbouring fields, but they also dominate journals to a greater extent." (Orhan et al., 2023, p. 1). Recent explicit attempts to make WOP journals inclusive and democratic made you aware that you don't know anything about South American, African or Asian perspectives on WOP; it seems that the body of knowledge of WOP discoveries is Eurocentric or American and the centrality covers a few popular names in the field of WOP and that's it. The hegemony established by academic journals and editors is probably now making you feel a bitter symphony that plays about the pity that the academic discourse is not democratic despite being declared as international in nature and characterized by blinded peer review. Maybe this depiction of the anti-democratic and non-inclusive academic publishing machine of WOP is making you wonder that there might be things that you will never know. For example, what else is there out of the existing academic publishing machine, i.e., beyond academic texts and the popularity of hegemonic models of WOP?

III.2 DOUBTS ABOUT SCIENCE & THE SOCIAL UTILITY IN READING AND WRITING ACADEMIC TEXTS IN WOP

Reading and writing academic texts are legitimated by the idea of the social utility of WOP. However, our lists of experiences as scholars and practitioners are demystifying reading and writing, and we might have some points also on the legitimation of reading and writing academic texts because of the idea of the social utility of WOP. It is perhaps worth listing some additional experiences that remind us of words like clients and science. *Client* is a nice term for discussing WOP as a science and its social utility. Work and organizational psychology do not exist for patients, and the term client reminds us that our work always has an applied implication behind reading and writing. There are a number of clients who live under the surface of our reading and writing. Ultimately, we can say that speaking/writing/reading about the

psychology of work and organizations implies speaking/writing/reading about the lived experience of individuals at work who might benefit our knowledge and find ways to cope with their daily working struggles. It seems worth making some additional questions for WOP:

- a) What kind of science WOP is?
- b) What does it mean WOP as an applied science?
- c) And if WOP is an applied science, what is its impact on society?
- d) And if WOP is meant to impact society, what is the political position of WOP scholars in society?
- e) For whom do we work, and what is our responsibility toward them?

These questions have a long history in WOP as the concerns “about the disconnect between published research and the interests of the wider public (Lindblom & Cohen, 1979)” (Arnold et al., 2021, p. 329) are longstanding in the field. According to the recent work by Arnold and colleagues (2021), we might consider our doubts about science and social utility in reading and writing academic texts in WOP in terms of the impact “of scientific research [...] as the effect on, change, or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment, or quality of life, beyond academia” (HEFCE, 2014, p. 6)” (cited in Arnold et al., 2021, p. 329). Following the contents of special issues papers edited by Arnold and colleagues, the authors presented some ideas of impact (i.e., science and social utility in reading and writing academic texts in WOP) and suggested indications by which WOP can pursue its societal mandate. That is:

- a) WOP research should follow principles and questions regarding the possibility of making a difference in society.
- b) WOP research is co-produced by the researcher(s) and their users (e.g., science and social utility in reading and writing academic texts stand in the relationships between the writer(s) of academic papers writer and their readers).
- c) WOP research can be socially impactful in the sense that researchers are engaged within the contexts they are working in.
- d) WOP research can benefit more from non-traditional/marginal approaches for WOP (e.g., “those approaches be seen as “radical” or “unscientific” by many work and organizational psychologists” Arnold et al., 2021, p. 336).
- e) WOP research can be inhibited by the power of organizational and societal factors, which means that WOP as an applied science needs to be framed into the societal context.
- f) WOP researchers have the responsibility of building trust in the audience (e.g., writers of academic papers need to work on their credibility with their readers).

Despite the centrality of these insights into the real world of the impact of WOP research, the special issue editorial by Arnold and colleagues scores two citations on the journal page (i.e., European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology), a faith that is not far from the papers included in the special issues (e.g., Alvesson, 2021; Mallory, 2021). We might expect the same for those discussions on WOP in our

society, such as those calling for more social and political responsibility (e.g., Abrams et al., 2022; Bal et al., 2019; Cadet & Chasseigne, 2010; Clot, 1997; 2009). It seems that something has been written about these topics. However, questions on science and social utility in reading and writing academic texts in WOP still remain unanswered: has WOP ever played a role in political decision-making concerning workers' right? Has the WOP field ever taken a political orientation? What does the term science of WOP imply for the social utility?

It might be that WOP, as an academic discipline, needs to reintegrate the notion of science. It has to develop its own epistemology, its own ontological background, and, above all, its ethical approach. But in parallel, it is possible that WOP, as an academic discipline, needs to reframe its way of communicating knowledge and the way we write and read about WOP. It is helpful to set a series of questions, such as what is worth doing in WOP? Except you, who read and use WOP papers? Which science for a WOP that offers services and benefits to society? To answer these questions, we can still recall our experience. We know that WOP, as a scientific applied discipline, comprehends national and international associations, journals, communities, associations of practitioners, yearly meetings for networking, associations of clients, and unions of clients and terms such as public engagement and paper development. Considering such an environment, the question of the scientific value of WOP reminds us of the quest on which truth we believe. However, the way WOP realizes itself as a scientific applied discipline is caused by a process of heterogeneous influences which are determined by the spirit of the time, journal trends, methodological trends, cases of luck, the influences of research meetings, etc. Unfortunately, taken together, these aspects characterizing WOP as discipline leave us without an answer ...

IV CONCLUSIONS & WAYS FORWARD

Dear reader, we used our experiences as readers and writers to point out the implications of the legitimacy of WOP. Our short piece has considered the social utility of reading and writing in WOP to discuss the ultimate social utility of WOP. We implicitly pointed out how the differences between WOP researchers and WOP practitioners and the status of work, employment and society have grown considerably. We discussed these aspects by setting a series of questions and ideas to provoke feelings and debates. And you and we probably need an alternative now. This paper cannot leave us without answers. But there is not an ultimate answer. It is possible that the social utility of WOP stands in the possibility of reading and writing. However, it could also be more selfish when doing self-referential work. Internally, WOP has a social utility. Those who read and write have the possibility to justify their work, the work of editors, journals, associations, communities, the meaning of networking, meetings, summer schools, conferences, etc. But if we intend social utility as the potential implications that WOP should have externally, we might all agree that there is no social utility in reading and writing academic texts. Who benefits from the billions of moderated mediation models on work engagement? Who trusts the content of

academic texts? Who believes that academic texts from WOP as an applied science can serve and benefit society?

Against our exaggerated allegations demystifying the myth of reading and writing papers, we are idealistic. We continue to believe that every single subject which is part of WOP has its own values, feelings, and ethical and political orientation. It is only the existing WOP environment and publications system characterized by hegemonies and undemocratic capitalistic values that make us live the tensions described above. It is the environment in which we might lose hope that our discipline cannot have any social utility. Indeed, no one of the above sentences was targeting anyone but rather reported a series of tensions that we all might have had in our experience as humans working in the field of WOP. If you, as a scholar, practitioner, editor of a journal or student, have been offended by the present work, please apologize: the paper had to use provocations for their merit to unpack the myth of reading and writing and discuss the social value of WOP. If you understand our pure intention, it might be clear that we have some ideas of the social utility of WOP, which does not correspond to current conditions with reading and writing academic texts. In sharp contrast, our view of the social utility of WOP corresponds to a vision of the discipline that is never neutral but always political in terms of the impact that WOP can make on an individual, organizational and societal level. Therefore, our question is how we can resist the spiral of publications. Are we brave enough to stop reading and writing academic texts to realize our social and political mandate? Are we brave enough to reinvent WOP as an applied scientific discipline whose ultimate goal stands in social utility?

At this point, we might say, “[it] appears to be very pessimistic, like “well, this is the situation; we’re caught in the system, so after we’ve expressed our displeasure, let’s put all that aside again and keep on doing like before”. We want to remind you of some alternatives. We want to reflect on some ideas for an alternative future with you.

First, although it is not possible to imagine our discipline without reading and writing, it is possible to imagine alternatives to reading and writing. In this, we can be informed by some attempts, such as the recent short essay by Parker (2023) in which the author points out the use of magazines, i.e., to render academic journals as magazines that a variety of audiences can approach. Suppose we want our ideas and discoveries in WOP to circulate. In that case, we need to think about other ways of communication in which we can prioritize our purpose beyond methodological, theoretical regulations and self-referential writings. If we want to not be hidden away in academic texts, we must think about alternatives to encounter the needs of society by which we can show the services and the benefits that WOP can provide (Arnold et al., 2021; Koller, 1951; Lindblom & Cohen, 1979). In these terms, we also need to rework how reading and writing academic texts has become the only expression of our work as WO psychologists. Academic texts present a fixed speech which, in Foucauldian terms, might not always take into account the materiality, i.e., the actual realization of WOP in society. However, academic texts communicate elements that might have potential implications for our society. It is worth asking if everything that is published in an academic journal is something that we, as a community, need to have.

Are there any other ways to express what we want to express as WO psychologists?
Are there any other forms of WOP texts?

Second, as noted by Brembs and colleagues (2021), a large portion of traditional academic publishing is unequal, exclusionary, unsustainable and opaque. Most academic journals are locked behind paywalls. Taken together, this implies that knowledge is not accessible; rather, only a specific kind of knowledge is accessible. Such an aspect limits democracy and global perspectives of reading and writing academic texts but also provides justification for only one idea of the science and social utility of reading and writing academic texts. One second alternative is to think of reading and writing academic texts as a public good. Infusing more ethics, free-to-read and free-to-write communications supported by non-commercial funded infrastructure can be one first step. One exceptional example is represented by Latin America, in which ninety-five per cent of academic journals are diamond open access with community-driven and collaborative platforms and no article processing charges (Becerril-García et al., 2018). This initiative struggles to be recognized as it is the case of initiatives for multilingual academic publishing because of academic indexing platforms. To this end, we might recall some worthy examples at the institutional level. The Sorbonne Université and the French CNRS have recently unsubscribed from the Scopus and Web of Science publications database with the idea of finding alternative ways to recognize the intrinsic value of research rather than the prestige academic journals. These examples remind us that we cannot think about our work without reading and writing academic texts. However, our reading and writing cannot be synonymous with impact and status and reading and writing cannot remain the privilege of a few with self-referential work. In WOP, if we want our reading and writing to be democratic, to represent the global perspectives, to be scientifically oriented and socially useful, we need to think about ways for creating dialogue and not distribution.

Third, the standardization of reading and writing academic texts can also be renovated. The present paper is one example in which the use of provocations helped to interrogate the theme of social utility in WOP. More interestingly, contributions written with reflexive and reasoned rather than with automatic or muzzled styles (Teo, 2015) can contribute to combating hegemonic systems in academic journals. Reflection can help us to understand what has been done in WOP. This can be the case of social utility but also of other themes. Reflexive writing can help to unpack established theories and models while also allowing us to take the license of letting our own experience interrogate the implicit purposes of academic text production. This also entails creating space for dialogue without the ambition of providing a solution but rather creating impact thanks to co-constructive and participatory writing. Moreover, the writing in reflexive and reasoned styles reminds us of the aspect of reflexivity. Following Teo's (2015) description, reflexivity is the ability to assess critically the way we make knowledge and its application. Considering the social utility of reading and writing academic texts, this reminds us of the responsibility of readers and writers of academic texts. Reading and writing academic texts, WOP knowledge is placed within and shaped by the social context. Acknowledging the social advocacy according to

which we can realize the social utility of WOP requires us to problematize the current status of reading and writing in the field. Rather than conferring scientific authority, readers and writers of WOP can promote reflexivity by overlapping the ways of knowing academics and practitioners (Amis & Silk, 2008).

Lastly, we believe that one pragmatic way to combat this hegemony stands in the development of alternatives that start from our work as a community made by individuals who share the vision of psychology contributing to society with research, practices and writings. In broader terms, people in WOP can benefit from neighbouring branches of psychology, e.g., community psychology. For example, following community psychology tenets and values (e.g., social justice, community empowerment) can represent one ethical and epistemological step forward for a WOP interested in pursuing the mandate for social utility. With this inspiration, academic texts might be realized in such a way that knowledge and practices are participated in and co-constructed with the wish to contribute to the individual and society at large. In the WOP context, the above-mentioned initiatives, such as the special issue for the European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology edited by Arnold and colleagues (2021) or the Innsbruck Group on Critical Research in Work and Organizational Psychology (Hornung et al., 2023) are also examples of communities of scholars envisioning alternatives for the field. There are also non-anglophone initiatives, such as those from the Global South (Painter et al., 2006; Pulido Martínez, 2019) or the French tradition of critical psychology (Dejours & Deranty, 2010), which can provide some impetus. These are mere examples of how people in WOP can collectively work to question hegemonic logic in the field and pursue a more responsible and socially useful approach. For an international dialogue and movement, one interesting example is offered by the Future of Work and Organizational Psychology (FoWOP), in which allied scholars and practitioners are working to develop alternatives to established hegemony in our field with the wish to contribute to society following a series of responsibilities (Bal et al., 2019). It is worth concluding with the words of Islam and Sanderson, whose work on critical perspectives can support the initiative of work and organizational psychologists to contribute to the ethical-onto-epistemological value of WOP and understand its social utility, namely “connecting with others who have attempted similar initiatives is one of the ways to meet this challenge and one of the pleasures of engaging in academic activity. A key message of socially conscious work psychology may be that reaching for dialogue with others can be one of the best ways to develop our own work (Islam & Sanderson, 2022; p. 26)” and discipline.

And now, we are ready to pass on another paper, to begin new sentences, to meet new people, to think of new research ideas, to attend new classes of academic writing, to join new editorial boards of scientific journals ... but we are also stronger thanks to a series of questions, doubts, and some ideas for alternatives that, socially, organizationally, and individually, can help us resist, subvert, and renovate our discipline.

ETHICS

The study does not have data nor is based on data sources. Research ethics is not applicable.

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