

# ORGANIZATION STUDIES

## Call for Papers for a Special Issue on

### **Organizational control and surveillance of new work practices**

#### **Guest Editors :**

François-Xavier de Vaujany (Université Paris-Dauphine, France)

Aurélie Leclercq-Vandelannoitte (CNRS, LEM UMR 9221, IESEG School of Management, France)

Iain Munro (Newcastle University Business School, United Kingdom)

Yesh Nama (RMIT University, Australia)

Robin Holt (Copenhagen Business School)

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*Organization Studies*, the official journal of the European Group for Organizational Studies (EGOS), invites submissions for a Special Issue that seeks to advance research on **organizational control and surveillance of and through new work practices**.

#### **Introduction**

*Agnès, a young new startupper at the ‘Coworking Space’ in Berlin, explains<sup>1</sup>:*

*Convivial, flat, free, fun, effective, adaptable, remarkable, transparent...this is how this coworking space described itself. In reality, I've never had the impression to be in an environment freed of hierarchy. We were all installed in a large, open space, separated from each other of only some meters... .. except our CHO (Chief Happiness Officer), who had his own office, and could suddenly burst in. There was no overtime, only flexible hours. Actually overtime was considered the norm. We were all together in the same space, looking at each other's' comings and goings. When a coworker left at 6 pm, we all ironically (and legitimately) asked him if he was having a break! Fortunately beers and pizzas were distributed after 7 pm to motivate us to stay... we all seemed to enjoy this kind of stomach control. The rule for those who arrived late in the morning - 9 was the norm - was to bring pastries ... However over time, I had the feeling that being late was met with disapproval. After all, maybe it was a sign that people were less motivated by, less confident in, or less passionate about their projects? One day, I felt ill at ease with this climate, it stifled me... I isolated myself in the restrooms, took my smartphone, and called my boyfriend to get some kind of support...*

The emergence of new work practices and workplaces, as shown by the joint search for more mobility, openness (e.g. with open innovation), horizontality (e.g. with

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<sup>1</sup> Inspired and adapted from the story of Ramadier M. (2017) *Bienvenue dans le nouveau monde, comment j'ai survécu à la coolitude des startups*, Premier Parallèle.

coworking practices and collaborative entrepreneurship), digital and collaborative practices (including more and more external stakeholders, e.g. customers and citizens, in the co-production of services), has raised new questions of organizational control, and surveillance. In a global context marked by the invisible revolution of surveillance capitalism (Zuboff, 2015) and the resurgence of risk (Beck, 1992), security fears and terror, which have re-legitimized the need for close surveillance and control, new work practices and workplaces have transformed the ‘premises of human involvement in organizations’ (Kallinikos, 2003, p. 595), as well as the mechanisms and conditions of control and surveillance. In particular, work transformations (project-based work, teleworking, distributed work arrangements, collaborative entrepreneurship and the emergence of third and collaborative practices and spaces, e.g. coworking spaces, maker spaces, innovation labs) are revealing how work increasingly gets performed outside the typical physical, spatial and temporal boundaries of the organization or within the context of third spaces and liminal spaces (Oldenburg, 1989; Garrett et al., 2017; Sewell and Taskin, 2015; Spinuzzi, 2012; Waber et al., 2014; Johns and Gratton, 2013).

These work transformations and new ‘sites’ (Schatzki, 2005) of work alter the structure of ‘presence’ and ‘visibility’ of employees and consequently affect the nature of the **control of work practices** (from supervision to more reporting, from technocratic to more social, peer- and self- control): both horizontal relationships (with co-workers) and vertical relationships (with supervisors) are transformed. These new work practices imply a ‘dispersal’ and ‘distantiation’ (Beyes and Stayaert, 2012; Sewell and Taskin, 2015) in the time and space of control (Bauman and Lyon, 2013; Orlikowski, 1991), and raise singular and often paradoxical challenges. On the one hand it entails collaborative forms of management control that extends beyond direct visual sight (Dambrin, 2004; Halford, 2005; Sewell, 2012), and on the other, forms of self-disciplining and transformation in which autonomy becomes almost a synonym for governance. Under the impress of both trends, surveillance has become increasingly mobile, flexible, pervasive and unbounded (Bauman and Lyon, 2013), and in turn encourages them.

It is important, however, not to limit understanding of control and surveillance to the digital and immaterial. Indeed, it seems they are more than ever constituted by, embedded in and infused in the **materiality, corporeity, spatiality and temporality** of new work practices and workplaces. Organizational control and surveillance should be conceived of not only as digital, virtual, fluid, flexible and discursive, but also as ever more deeply grounded in the concrete, material, spatial, embodied underpinnings (e.g. work practices, spatial practices, places, bodies, technologies in use, information tactics) of everyday life (Munro and Jordan, 2013; Leclercq-Vandelannoitte, 2011). New work practices and recent work transformations enhance the complexity of situations to control and highlight the ambiguity of spaces, instruments, objects, artefacts, management systems (Miller, 2008, 2009; Dale, 2005; Dale and Burrell, 2008; Lorino, 2013; de Vaujany and Vaast, 2014; Munro, 2016). The evolution of organizational **control and surveillance through new work practices** also points to the versatility of the uses of technologies in control and surveillance efforts (Orlikowski and Scott, 2008); some research for example emphasize a resurgence of ancient, bureaucratic forms of administration in new work settings, as managers seek to compensate for the distance, absence, and lack of visibility of their subordinates (Sewell and Taskin, 2015; Orlikowski and Scott, 2008; Halford, 2005). These new

practices, coupled to evolving IT uses, constitute a new kind of organising of employees, placing them on an almost permanent front stage (Goffman, 1959). Such evolutions thus call for a deeper investigation of the materiality, corporeity, spatiality and temporality of control and surveillance through new work practices and work settings.

Furthermore, the continuous evolution of work practices and emergence of new work practices (e.g. remote work, digital mobility, collaborative entrepreneurship, coworking practices, Do It Yourself, makers, corporate hacking...) characterized by a potential shift—from static, central oversight to untethered, dispersed (auto)organization, embedded in material technologies—raises important tensions in terms of power relations, morality and ethics, with potentially paradoxical consequences. Novel types of control and surveillance find increasing legitimacy among those being subjugated, who may cooperate willingly, in a relation that raises new tensions between technology and human flourishing (Bauman and Lyon, 2013). Developments of consumer surveillance, biometrics, workplace surveillance, and ubiquitous computing constitute the embodied individual not only as a target of continuous oversight, but also as a subject of (self) exposure, through a process of data representation, interpretation and sharing, so that games of visibility (exhibitionism), observation (voyeurism) and secrecy (hiding one's work) now abound in the workplace (Brivot and Gendron, 2011).

Thus, the tensions between the material, the virtual, the social, the embodied individual, and their implications, have never been so crucial to theories of control and surveillance. Emerging practices and organizational forms fuel tensions between our notions of freedom and security, physical and virtual or digital spatiality, the material with the social, the visible with the invisible, the continuous with the discontinuous, the reified with the virtual, the mind with the body, political (domination and oversight) with cultural or ideological control (persuasion and consent), and manipulation and collaboration.

With this special issue, we seek to rethink **control and surveillance** by developing a **more materialized, spatialized, embodied and temporalized view in relation to new work practices** that can supplement and so counterbalance a vision these being purely virtual and digitally enabled. By such we refer to theoretical analyses and contributions that emphasize the entanglement of social and material dimensions of control and work practices and the importance of ontological questions (i.e. what should be the main – ‘real’- focus of analysis: objects, activities, processes, perceptions, practices...?); issues of space, time, corporeity, embodiment, visibility and materiality involved in control devices and new work practices (Dale, 2005), as well as their relationships with organizations and organizing (Robichaud and Cooren, 2013); and broader ontological debates (Leonardi et al., 2012; Carlile et al, 2013; Orlikowski, 1991; Orlikowski, 2007; Scott and Orlikowski, 2012), across different ‘epistemic communities’ (Holt and den Hond, 2013; Boxenbaum et al., 2015; de Vaujany and Mitev, 2015).

### **Potential approaches and questions to be addressed in the special issue**

To summarize, this special issue seeks to advance the study of organizations and organizing by exploring the **materiality, meaning, nature and forms of control and**

**surveillance of and through new work practices in contemporary society.** We hope to involve a diverse range of scholars and scholarly traditions in debate. We welcome submissions that address control and surveillance from **different ontological vantage points**, in different contexts, using different methodologies.

Authors intending to submit papers to this special issue are encouraged to focus on some of the broad issues in the following far from exhaustive list:

- Philosophical, historical and sociological roots of societal and organizational control and surveillance of work practices;
- The unexpected presence and emergence of control and surveillance in the context of new work practices (e.g. sharing economy, remote work, digital mobility, collaborative entrepreneurship, coworking practices, Do It Yourself, makers, corporate hacking...);
- Semiosis and digital infrastructure of control and surveillance processes in organizations and organizing;
- The role of corporations and the ‘security–industrial complex’ in the deployment of new techniques;
- Materiality, ontologies, politics of control and surveillance, and new agencies for such;
- Concern for materiality, spatiality, liminality and temporality in control, discipline and surveillance;
- Critical perspectives on new work practices and the emergence of control;
- The rise of terrorism (often in the city) and challenges for control and surveillance in the public and private spaces;
- Accomplishments and failures of control and surveillance;
- The role of risk-management culture and risk-management tools in the emergence of surveillance capitalism and its material, corporeal, spatial and temporal forms;
- Relations between control and surveillance in new work practices and governance;
- The disciplinary nature of control and surveillance in new work practices;
- New work and collaborative practices (e.g. coworkers, digital nomads, makers, hackers);
- Managerial and leadership techniques of control and surveillance.

### **Submissions**

Please submit papers through the journal’s online submission system, SAGE track, by visiting <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/orgstudies>. Create your user account (if you have not done so already), and for “Manuscript Type,” choose the corresponding Special Issue. All papers that enter the review process will be double-blind reviewed, following the journal’s normal review process and criteria. You may submit papers for this Special Issue through SAGE Track **between June, 15<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> 2018**.

For further information about this CFP, please contact:  
[oscontrolwork@gmail.com](mailto:oscontrolwork@gmail.com)

For administrative support and general queries, please contact:  
Sophia Tzagaraki, Managing Editor, *Organization Studies*: [sofficer@gmail.com](mailto:sofficer@gmail.com).

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