



Call for Papers for an *ephemera* Special Issue on:

Governing work through self-management

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It is well established that employee self-management is a way of governing work through subjectivity. In a very broad sense, self-management seems to require that the employee thinks, feels, and acts in ways that contribute to the realization and improvement of the individual worker while also anticipating and contributing to the organization's various needs. But what is the content of and limits to self-management today? What are the implications of the significant displacement of the objects of organizational control "from external to inner attributes of the subject who is urged to self-manage" (Costea et al 2008: 673)?

Although articulated along different lines within diverging political and theoretical contexts, a common feature of self-management discourse is to understand what it means to govern work through the subjectivity of employees. Self-management appears to be both a problem and a solution that relates to a variety of managerial, organizational, and existential issues, ranging from discussions of team-working and employee-empowerment (Manz and Sims 1989), questions regarding the production of the appropriate individual (Alvesson and Willmott 2002) and normative control (Kunda 1992), and issues such as cynicism (Fleming and Spicer 2007) and 'decaf' resistance in liberal workplaces (Contu 2008).

Within the last decade, attention has increasingly focused not only on the self-managing capacities of employees in public and private organizations, but also on mobilizing what is outside these organizations. Whether one speaks of co-creation (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004), wkinomics (Tapscott & Williams 2006), or the wealth of networks (Benkler 2006), self-managing and self-organizing capacities present themselves as necessary for the creation of value, and hence as practices that must be taken into account. Self-management is thus linked to new forms of management, which now stretches beyond and acts upon what lies outside the formal and juridical boundaries of the organization in order to exploit the capacities of (predominantly unpaid) labour.

This special issue calls for papers that investigate the content and limits of self-management from theoretical as well as empirical perspectives. We particularly encourage contributions that deal with the characteristics and implications of self-management, and how it challenges and reconfigures ways of understanding work and organizations. Is self-management limited to certain kinds of industries and organizational settings, or does it produce new types of social bonds that can be tracked from online communities to more formalized managed organizations? Is self-management a road to 'industrial democracy' and 'well-being', or simply the strategic manipulation of

workers that produces “the illusion of making decisions by choosing among fixed and limited alternatives designed by a management which deliberately leaves insignificant matters open to choice” (Braverman 1974: 39)? To what extent is self-management a form of organizational control? To what extent is it a way of resisting it? Is self-management reducible to autonomy, or does it imply specific organizational obligations or normative guidelines? Should self-management be considered a mere managerial buzzword, or must it be seen in connection with a more deep-seated shift towards a new form of ‘cognitive capitalism’ (Moulier Boutang 2001) – or perhaps as the sign of a new social ontology of work?

Other equally important topics could be:

- How do issues such as leadership and self-management intertwine?
- What kind of worker subjectivity does self-management entail, and is this kind of subjectivity restricted to a work-life context?
- How does self-management relate to other contemporary topics in organization studies such as self-help, authenticity or identity management?
- What are the pathologies of self-management and what kind of well-being might it entail?
- How do different management technologies interact with self-management (e.g. Coaching, Lean, Performance Management)?
- What does management have to do to manage self-management?
- To what degree is self-management a necessity for innovation processes?
- What kind of productivity does self-management entail? How does one measure self-management activities both as an employee and an organization?
- How does self-management undermine and/or extend our understandings of management and organizations?

Deadline for submissions: 1 May 2010

All contributions should be submitted to the special issue editors via email to either mip.lpf@cbs.dk or tlh.lpf@cbs.dk. Please note that three categories of contributions are invited: *articles*, *notes* and *reviews*. If you are considering writing a review please contact Michael Pedersen first. Information about these different types of contributions can be found at: <http://www.ephemeraweb.org/journal/call.htm>. Articles and notes will undergo a double blind review process. All submissions should follow *ephemera's* submissions guideline, available at: <http://www.ephemeraweb.org/journal/submit.htm>.

About the editors

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