Organizing Outside Organizations, Part I

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It is generally assumed that organizational studies began as an academic discipline in the 1890s, when Frederick Winslow Taylor launched scientific management, while the scholars could also revoke even earlier writings of Max Weber. Since that time, great many scholars have been studying formal organizations, to the point where there was scarcely anything new that could be said about them. Yet times change, and so do formal organizations. The recent phenomenon of the digital transformation has attracted much attention, and great many studies were and are being done, with interesting results. But digitalization opened also wide doors to organizing outside, oftentimes in spite of, and against, formal organizations. How do people organize demonstrations in Iran, in Russia, or, for that matter, how did The Proud Boys do it in the USA? We need to know more about such informal organizing, which was always present, but now has become widespread thanks to globalization and digitalization. After all, it is connecting collective actions, or "doings" to one another, which is the main trait of organizing.

"Organizations" are legal units; a "network" can exist, yet do nothing; in order to accomplish anything, good or bad, "doings" are necessary, and they have to be coordinated, connected, and stabilized – temporarily or for good. To this Special Issue, we invited texts based on studies that can throw some light on the phenomenon of organizing outside organizations.

Kurt Rachlitz addresses the new organizational form that was born in the digital age – the platform. He introduces an important distinction between the two concepts, often used synonymously: platform organizing versus platform organizations. While both exist, they are not necessarily identical. Platform organizations are formal organizations dependent on the infrastructure of a digital platform. Platform organizing, in Rachlitz's reading, is a new kind of social ordering, which combines organizing outside and inside of formal organizations.

Kelsie Nabben takes up a case of organizing against organizations within the world of blockchain and its ideal of "Decentralized Autonomous Organization" governed by and through algorithms. She describes and analyzes "Gitcoin", a blockchain-based funding platform that uses crowdfunding cryptocurrency donations to fund projects that are considered important for the growth of public blockchains. A new problem – of "sybil attacks", that is, donations made by fake accounts – is being addressed by the Gitcoin community, with humans and algorithms participating equally, organizing and governing the platform without a need for formal organization. The autonomy of the blockchain means both acting away from established actors, and designing governing algorithms in a participatory way that allows for decentralized and distributed decision-making. At present times, it is crucial to understand how algorithmic governance

unfolds.

New kinds of organizing are many. Monica Nadegger focused on non-human actors and analyzed the role of the hashtah *#wirsindmehr* in consolidating political action in the German-speaking communities. Showing how a neo-tribe has been constituted out of the usually ephemeral social media activism, she is relating communicative constitution of organizations to what she calls "organizationality". In order to capture the peculiarities of a social formation made of words and coordinated actions, she used a mixed method aproach, bringing together critical discourse analysis and social network analysis.

Andreas Diedrich brings immigrants centerstage by describing the "spectacularization" of their conditions after arrival to Sweden. Many local attempts to support the integration of immigrants consists of creation of dramatic spectacles, which become an end in themselves rather than helping immigrants to enter the labour market. His idea of "spectacled organizing" revamps Debord's work about spectacle society, reminding the readers that the reality beyond spectacle may be difficult to grasp. This approach helps to rethink the portrayal of immigrants in contemporary societies, which is especially relevant now in the face of the Ukrainian crisis. And, decades after Debord, it is worth asking if spectacularization can can be avoided, or if it will stay for good.

In a similar vein, Leo Bancou and Francois-Xavier De Vaujany argue that by increasingly doing remote work, workers are participating in a cinematographic experience upon which they have limited possibility of acting, being part of an assemblage of images. The authors use notions from Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze to introduce cinematography as a

central dimension of organizing remote work nowadays and discuss that, in this new context, workers have more difficulty reaching a true self at work.

Deirdre McCloskey ends claiming that even formal organizations need another look at their doings, as organizing – formal or not – is more like jazz improvisation rather than an orderly road to achieving strategic goals. Perhaps this is the analogy that should be more used in organization studies!

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