WORKING TOGETHER: UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES, RELATIONAL PROCESSES & SOCIOMATERIAL PRACTICES

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The only way to learn is to ask those silly questions.

Jonathan, a group member I came to know during my fieldwork, once said that to me. I too, during my PhD journey, have asked many such silly questions. What I learned during these three years is because of all of you who helped my with my questions, challenged them and made me ask new ones.

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I'm walking home from the playground pushing Leonora in the buggy with one hand and holding Augusta's hand in the other. It's one of those days where I'm down; I'm completely lost, stuck in my data and seriously questioning how I'll make it.
Then Augusta asks me: 'What have you been doing today at work, mummy?'
'I've been speaking with my Professor (that's you, Mark)', I reply.
'Oh, your Professor… that's nice. What else have you been doing?', she says.
Defeated, I say: 'Mummy has been thinking very much for a very long time.'
'Oh', she says, pauses, and continues, 'have you been thinking about how you could do it all differently?'
For a while, I didn't pay attention to her further chatting away. I just thought about how I could do it all differently.

And that is what I have attempted to do-

Emma

PREFACE

At the very root of human life lies the necessity of other humans. As social beings, our becoming in the world is formed by and with others; our 'living life' happens in entanglement with all other(ness). Then, as the basis of coming together to work in the world of organising is the inherent entanglement with others – working together – whether that is denoted work/working group, team, collaboration, cooperation, or something else. From the early ways of working to new(er) ways of working, organisational life, without exception, depends on the collective working together (Fine & Hallett, 2014). In the vastness and simplicity of such implication lie, at least, two reflections worthy of mention here. First, it is what motivates this thesis: its aim of exploration, its suggested concerns and contributions, and a humble, personal interest in the world of working together. Second, it is what justifies this thesis as well. Here, of course, I am not concerned with personal matters; but with those pertinent to the study and practice of working together. These two perspectives, although to one-another often polarised, separated, even mystified – go hand-in-hand. Currently, we witness that formalised work groups and teams as ways of working together are increasingly becoming the organisational unit of main importance (Foss & Lindenberg, 2011; Maloney, Bresman, Zellmer-Bruhn, & Beaver, 2016). Knowing more about the life of groups and teams is therefore critical in understanding the very nature of organisations and the practice of organising, underpinning their continuous relevance to the field of organisational studies (Foss & Lindenberg, 2011). In that sense, this not only justifies the motivations and intentions of this thesis, it also encourages and demands a never-ending and heightened emphasis on the different, unfolding, new ways of working together.

This thesis is about working together. It is about how the processes of working together take form under current ways of working in the context of knowledge-based organisations. These organisations (an increasing proportion of many economies) are settings that highly depend on and demand workers collaborating under autonomous, flexible, participatory and flat-structured conditions (Annosi & Brunetta, 2017; Grant & Parker, 2009; Johns, 2010). Not to deny the variety of ways of working and organising collectively, the polyphony of labelling can be confusing, even disheartening. I therefore apply the denotation *working together* in the attempt to convey arguments pertaining to

all such ways of collective working entailing interdependence between workers, such as work(ing) group, teams, collaborations, including the add-on adjectivised specifications as autonomous and self-managing, and gerundium '*–ing*' forms stressing processual aspects, for instance, teaming, collaborating, coworking, and so forth. Significantly then, the use of working together here is viewed as a spectrum of interdependent ways of working together, and implies a complexity beyond that of simply social ties between coworkers working alongside each other. It thus encompasses the different, but similar ways of working together addressed in the separate chapters of this thesis. For example, the theoretical paper is specifically concerned with the concept of self-managing teams, representing teams that have a high degree of autonomy, decision-making power and responsibility (Manz & Sims, 1986). Drawing on the same ethnographic study in both the empirical papers, instead, I use the connotation *work group*. The reason being, first of all, that the two organisational units studied referred to themselves differently: one as a team, the other as a section (although neither labels do not necessarily portray how they work "in reality"), despite both equally functioning as autonomous, self-managing work groups. Secondly, the distinction between group and team in most definitions emphasise the need for *a common* purpose in teams compared to groups (Katzenbach & Smith, 2015). While it cannot be said that there was no common purpose at all in the studied groups, members were unified by their function, i.e. their speciality, rather than a common goal or task in mind. In addition, most group members perceived themselves as a work group, and not as a team or a section. In staying true to the practice rather than upholding an artificial theoretical construction of team (as current research tends to do), I therefore stick with the term *work group*. Overall, the studied groups worked in knowledge-based organisations located in Denmark. Group members and management perceived the work environments to be highly autonomous, self-managing and flexible, supported by a flat and distanced management approach and open office workspaces – exemplars of working together under new ways of working.

With the context of working together as the overarching area of concern, alongside is the inherent disposition of process on which this thesis rests. Process philosophical thinking is here understood as constitutive of the world – including that of organising – in which all is in continuous flow, on the move, continuously changing and becoming (Hernes, 2014). This implies that phenomena are not construed as stable and solid entities,

such as social entities like groups or organisations, instead they are "epiphenomena of primarily fluxing and changing patterns of relationships and event clusterings" (Nayak & Chia, 2011, p. 283). In that view, groups only ever exist in formation, they are continuously made and remade (Latour, 2005). Tied to such process thought is, as this thesis in different ways underscores as well, a relational world-view; the idea that everything is relationally constitutive (Hernes, 2014; Nayak & Chia, 2011). These assumptions implicate that working together – as the group members in the empirical context here do – is an ongoing, relational process continuously (per)formed.

This thesis is too a product of connecting and working with multiple others; people, words of readings, materialities, and so forth. This is particularly apparent in the multiplicity of changes occurring in the groups and settings studied (of which I have only been able to pass on a few, and, to me, most apparent); the slippery process of studying and making sense of changing people, skills, labels, purposes, spaces, places and so on. For that reason, a process perspective fits well with the ethnographic method of study carried out, exactly because it seeks to "capture organizational realities 'on the move'" (Van Hulst, Ybema, & Yanow, 2017, p. 233). But it is noticeable also in its own processual right; the process of (forever) changing world-views in the duration of the emergence of these words. In taking the process and its implications serious, I hope, this will become a strength rather than a weakness. It has and does, of course, as you might discover, come with daunting challenges – in the field and the aftermath. But then again, we are on the move.

LIST OF FIGURES

x

LIST OF TABLES

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The thesis on which you are about to embark on, is about working together in a world of new ways of working. Here, the view on *working together* is understood as more than simply working together, alone – that is, it entails interdependent ways of working. This thesis particularly focuses on manifestations of working together in the form of formally structured work groups and teams. The ongoing transforming new world of work has involved manifold changes for organisations and workers, set off by societal changes, technological advancements and an increased awareness of the meaning of (work) life. As the contexts and conditions in which work unfolds and is (per)formed change, so does the nature of work.

In view of the changing nature of work, attending to what this has entailed when working together is of great importance with the increasingly group-based, relational and participatory ways of organising. Therefore, the general purpose of this thesis is to explore how processes of working together play out under new ways of working. In addressing this purpose, three interrelated research questions have guided the work of this thesis. These emerged as: i) how are unintended consequences of self-managing teams manifested?, ii) how are newcomers' identification processes implicated in processes of socialisation in work groups?, and iii) how do sociomaterial practices of open office spaces constitute work groups? The thesis consists of three papers, which in turn address these research questions in-depth, draw on individual literatures and add to individual streams of research. What cuts across the three papers is their exploration and concern with manifestations of new ways of working together in better understanding how processes of working together play out. The first paper specifically focuses on working together in the form of self-managing teams, and how such ways of working may lead to unintended consequences. The following two papers are empirical, and based on a two-and-a-half-year longitudinal ethnography, including 15 months of fieldwork of two work groups in two knowledge-based organisations. Both papers deal with how new ways of working together play a role for workers, the first by exploring how newcomers' identification processes are implicated in socialisation processes and, the second by exploring how work groups are constituted by sociomaterial practices of open office spaces. Overall, the thesis contributes to existing research by showing how working

together by nature is contextual, relational, dynamic and paradoxical. Furthermore, it demonstrates that processes and practices construct, maintain, constitute and control ways of working together under new ways of working. Aside from the theoretical contributions that the thesis puts forward, there are also significant practical implications to consider when organising and managing ways of working together in a New World of Work[1].

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[1] As Sewell (2015) dubbed the world of new ways of working

DANSK RESUMÉ

Denne afhandling handler om, at arbejde sammen i en verden af nye arbejdsformer. At arbejde sammen forstås her som mere end blot det at arbejde sammen, alene - men at arbejde sammen i en forstand, der indebærer indbyrdes afhængighed medarbejdere imellem. Afhandlingen fokuserer særligt på forskellige fremtrædelsesformer forbundet med dét at arbejde sammen i formelt organiserede arbejdsgrupper og teams. Den igangværende transformation af, hvad man forstår ved at arbejde sammen indebærer mangfoldige forandringer for både organisationer og medarbejdere. Der er tale om en omkalfatring, som er igangsat og drevet af samfundsmæssige ændringer, teknologisk udvikling samt en større bevågenhed om, hvad det meningsfulde (arbejds-)liv indebærer. Når omgivelserne og vilkårene, hvorunder arbejde udfoldes og udføres forandres, ændrer det i sin natur arbejdet.

Med udgangspunkt i disse forandringer af arbejde, er det særdeles vigtigt at være bevidst om, hvad det indebærer at arbejde sammen set i lyset af, at der i stigende grad findes flere gruppebaserede, relationelle og deltagende arbejdsformer. Det overordnede formål med afhandlingen er derfor at undersøge, hvordan processer, der befordrer samarbejde, udspiller sig under nye betingelser. For at belyse dette nærmere er følgende tre sammenhængende forskningsspørgsmål fremsat: i) hvordan manifesteres utilsigtede konsekvenser i selvstyrende teams?, ii) hvordan er nye medarbejders identificeringsprocesser impliceret af socialiseringsprocesser i arbejdsgrupper?, og iii) hvordan konstituerer sociomaterielle praksisser sig i arbejdsgrupper, der arbejder i åbenrumskontorer?

Denne afhandling har tre fokusområder, der udmundes i tre delstudier. Med afsæt i forskellige teoretiske forskningsområder, adresserer de hver for sig de stillede forskningsspørgsmål ved at belyse centrale aspekter, der knytter sig til de tre spørgsmål. I konsekvens heraf bidrager de opnåede resultater til mere afgrænsede forskningsfelter. Det der imidlertid går på tværs af studierne er, at afhandlingen undersøger, hvordan processer, der befordrer samarbejde under nye arbejdsformer, kommer til udtryk. Det første delstudium fokuserer specifikt på arbejdsformen, hvor der arbejdes sammen i selvstyrende teams, og hvordan denne arbejdsform potentielt medfører utilsigtede

konsekvenser. De følgende to delstudier er empiriske og er baseret på et over to et halvt års longitudinelt etnografisk studie inklusiv 15 måneders feltarbejde af to udvalgte arbejdsgrupper i to forskellige vidensbaserede virksomheder. Begge delstudier beskæftiger sig med, hvordan nye arbejdsformer opleves at have betydning for medarbejdere. Det sker ved først at undersøge, hvordan nye medarbejderes identificeringsprocesser er implicerede af socialiseringsprocesser i arbejdsgrupperne, og dernæst ved at undersøge, hvordan arbejdsgrupperne konstitueres af de sociomaterialle praksisser, der skabes i åbenrumskontorer. Afhandlingen bidrager samlet set til den eksisterende forskning ved at vise, hvordan det at arbejde sammen under nye arbejdsformer er kontekstbaseret, relationelt, dynamisk og paradoksalt. Derudover påvises det i afhandlingen, at processer og praksisser konstruerer, opretholder, konstituerer og kontrollerer, hvordan det at arbejde sammen udspiller sig under nye former for arbejde. Foruden denne afhandlings teoretiske bidrag, påpeges der endvidere betydningsfulde praktiske implikationer, som der bør tages hensyn til, når man organiserer, leder og styrer de arbejdsformer, der fremmer det at arbejde sammen under de nye vilkår for arbejde.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Living in a world on the move implies that we are always seeking ways of how best to respond to and solve the challenges of tomorrow in a new world of work. Forming new ways of working as a part of responding to these challenges is manifold, and will remain an ongoing endeavour for organisational scholars and practitioners. In the non-escaping reality of continuous and increasingly group, team and relation-based organisational structuring, knowledge work, technological advancements and the emphasis on the meaning of work (Grant & Parker, 2009; Lee & Edmondson, 2017; Sewell, 2005), understanding how we come together to work has never been of greater importance.

A large part of the research on working together, understood as set out in the preface, is represented by studies on groups and teams, from which the thesis takes its point of departure. Generally, existing research on groups and teams is characterised by static and explanatory perspectives, whereas less consideration has been given to the contextual, (micro) dynamic and temporal aspects of working together (Cronin, Weingart, & Todorova, 2011; Humphrey & Aime, 2014; Maloney et al., 2016). The paradoxical, informal, relational and unobtrusive processes and practices happening within and forming current ways of working are thus underexplored. This, for example, pertains to how workers come to feel part of, belong to, maintain their own and others' group membership and organisational role(s) – practices and processes of identification (Ashforth, Harrison, & Corley, 2008; Sluss, Ployhart, Cobb, & Ashforth, 2012), socialisation (Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Smith, Amiot, Callan, Terry, & Smith, 2012) and control (Barker, 1993, 1999). Adding to that, most work focuses on the beneficial aspects of organising under autonomous, flexible, collaborative and open ways, including cost-optimisation and efficiency (Baldry, Bain, & Taylor, 1998; Cohen, Ledford, & Spreitzer, 1996), and workers' well-being, motivation and satisfaction (Langfred & Rockmann, 2016; Van Mierlo, Rutte, Kompier, & Doorewaard, 2005). More fragmented is the work paying attention to the less desirable aspects and potential unintended consequences of

current ways of collective work and increasingly knowledge-based work settings. Overall, the existing work on new ways of working points out both favourable and unfavourable consequences for workers, marking the need for further exploring how specific manifestations of new ways of workings influence workers (Nijp, Beckers, van de Voorde, Geurts, & Kompier, 2016). Another downplayed aspect to new ways of working is consideration of how the material and spatial may play a role and play out in organising the collective (and vice versa). Although practice and research within the field of space and materiality are starting to turn to study coworking and collaborative spaces and how, for example, space can enhance a sense of a shared community (e.g. Garrett, Spreitzer, & Bacevice, 2017; Spinuzzi, 2012), no work, to my knowledge, takes seriously the spatial and the material into perspective in work on formalised structured work groups. The literature on groups and teams, space and materiality are thus little connected in organisation and management studies, despite turns to the spatial (Taylor & Spicer, 2007; Van Marrewijk & Yanow, 2010) and the material (Boxenbaum, Jones, Meyer, & Svejenova, 2018) which certainly show that such contextual matters should be taken into account when studying how we work together.

In light of the complexity of today's organisations and the increasingly knowledge-based and technological-driven world of work, such neglect certainly begs for attention in regard to what matters and how it matters when working together. Overall, the spatial, material, temporal, cultural and technological changes should be given more attention than done currently within organisation and management studies (Dale & Burrell, 2008; Kornberger & Clegg, 2004; Orlikowski & Scott, 2008; Van Marrewijk & Yanow, 2010). This implies taking into account the work environment, and how it comes to form and change how we experience, organise and control the ways of working together. Knowing more about how manifestations of new ways of working together play out will assist in achieving a greater understanding of how they play a role for workers, in which contexts, and with what consequences potentially to follow (Nijp et al., 2016). Therefore, the attempt is here to initiate a (re)turn to the collective and the new ways of working together with consideration of the potential unintended consequences, the relational processes, and the constitutive entanglement of sociomaterial practices through the inherent intertwinement with the spatial and the material. Building on these foundations, the general purpose of the thesis is *to explore how processes of working together play out*

under new ways of working. In addressing and collectively contributing to this purpose, three more specific research questions have guided the development of the three separate papers of the thesis. Of equal importance, these are:

   i.   How are unintended consequences of self-managing teams manifested?

   ii.   How are newcomers' identification processes implicated in processes of socialisation in work groups?

  iii.   How do sociomaterial practices of open office spaces constitute work groups?

The working questions guiding the different parts of this thesis will in turn be addressed more thoroughly in the individual papers. The first paper is a theoretical paper delving into the consequences of one way of working together. The remaining two papers are empirical, and based on an over two-and-half-year ethnography of two work groups from two different knowledge-based organisations. The field study totalled 15 months of fieldwork in two phases separated by a time of withdrawal from both settings. The research design of ethnography was chosen as it allows for the description and uncovering of actions and meaning-construction of social dynamics and processes of everyday (work) lives (Spradley, 1980; Van Maanen, 2011). The empirical settings were selected because they reflect new ways of working, environments that are characterised by autonomy, flexibility and flat hierarchical managerial structures. Overall, this design and approach taken is able to capture an informal and contextual account of the practices, processes and consequences of working together under new ways of working. To this end, the thesis rests and builds on a relational and process philosophy (Hernes, 2014; Langley, Smallman, Tsoukas, & Van de Ven, 2013; Nayak & Chia, 2011). In dis/entangling the thesis; an overview is illustrated in figure 1, including how the separate papers are distinctive and connected.

FIGURE 1: Overview of Thesis and Contributions

GENERAL PURPOSE

To explore how processes of working together play out under new ways of working

Relational and process philosophy

Manifestations of new ways of working

Consequences of new ways of working

How new ways of working play a role for workers

PAPER I
Research question
How are unintended consequences of self-managing teams manifested?

PAPER II
Research question
How are newcomers' identification processes implicated in processes of socialisation in work groups?

PAPER III
Research question
How do sociomaterial practices of open office spaces constitute work groups?

Contributions
i) Identifies and examines how unintended consequences are manifested in self-managing teams.
ii) Connects the existing fragmented work into an integrative framework
iii) Demonstrates why the paradox of self-managing teams should be embraced.

Contributions
i) Portrays individualised and informal accounts of socialisation.
ii) Demonstrates how newcomers' identification is constructed through relational socialisation processes.
iii) Identifies the work practices newcomers and work group members engage in during socialisation.

Contributions
i) Shows how space and groups are constitutively entangled.
ii) Shows how sociomaterial practices of space and groups emerge through control processes.
iii) Signifies the usefulness of sociomaterial approaches when studying intangible phenomena.

LITERATURE

Self-managing work design

Socialisation

Sociomaterial space

Control

Control

Identification/belonging

Working together under new ways of working

COLLECTIVE CONTRIBUTIONS
i) Shows how the contextual, relational, dynamic, sociomaterial and paradoxical nature of working together play a role and play out under new ways of working.
ii) Demonstrates how processes and practices construct, maintain, constitute and control ways of working together under new ways of working.

As a point of beginning, I have described in the preface how this thesis is becoming, and, broadly, under what motivational grounding. In this introductory chapter, I have sketched out the main empirical and theoretical underpinnings that this thesis is occupied with, including the guiding general purpose and research questions. The remaining part of the thesis is structured as follows. Chapter 2 consists of the theoretical grounding to which the individual papers relate; practices and processes of working together under new ways of working. In Chapter 3, the method of the fieldwork study is introduced, including why the method is of relevance to the study and the particular context of working together, the settings in which the study was carried out, and how the study and analytical work was approached and carried out. Chapters 4 to 6 encompass the three individual papers. In chapter 4, the first, theoretical paper is about the manifestations of unintended consequences of organising in self-managing teams. The second and empirical paper in chapter 5 focuses on how newcomers come to identify with their work group through relational processes of socialisation. Chapter 6 consists of the final and empirical paper that takes into consideration the spatial and material dimensions of working together by exploring the sociomaterial practices of open office spaces. Chapter 7 returns to the proposed general purpose and the distinctive, yet constitutive contributions of the individual parts in the discussion, including implications for theory and practice, limitations of the thesis, suggested avenues for future work and, in closing, provides some concluding remarks. An appendix follows the chapters, which entail a co-author statement for the first paper.

CHAPTER 2

THEORITICAL GROUNDING

In this chapter, I address the main and overarching theoretical grounds on which this thesis touches. Naturally, some of these theoretical insights and constructs are dealt with more extensively in chapters 4 to 6, in the separate papers. The purpose is, therefore, to give an overview of what ties these parts together, and what they address and imply as a relational whole in exploring how processes of working together play out under new ways of working. With this in mind, the following sections introduce the background for new ways of working, followed by what this has implied for working together. The subsequent section elaborates on the processes and practices of working together under new ways of working. Lastly, an overview of the papers and their contributions are presented.

New Ways of Working

The notion of 'new ways of working' broadly stands in contrast to what today is considered as traditional ways of working. Broadly speaking, traditional ways of working are especially thought of as the Tayloristic, Fordist, bureaucratised and rational ways of organising (Scott & Davis, 2007; van Meel, 2011). In contrast, new ways of working rest on forms of organising which include - but are not limited to - post-bureaucratic (Annosi & Brunetta, 2017), flat hierarchies (Lee & Edmondson, 2017), hybrid (Sewell & Taskin, 2015), distributed (Spinuzzi, 2007, 2012) and networked (Sproull & Kiesler, 1992). These forms of organising belong to what may be called the New World of Work (Sewell & Taskin, 2015). By and large, these new ways of working are characterised by the transition from traditional labour processes centralised on manufacturing, in a Western context at least, to a world of work where heads are replacing hands – knowledge work (Sewell, 2005). Aside from the growth of knowledge-based work, the shifts of organising are set off by technological advancements, and the accompanying trends of viewing work

and organisations as meaning-making places (Lee & Edmondson, 2017). Approaches to meet the new world of organising can, among other ways, be seen in the dominance of self-managing work designs and/or team-based organisational structuring (Annosi & Brunetta, 2017; Johns, 2010), and participatory and relational work designs (Grant & Parker, 2009). More specifically, the term 'new ways of working' was largely introduced in the 1990s to reflect the current and ongoing trends towards greater flexibility in time and space of work carried out (Nijp et al., 2016; Sewell & Taskin, 2015). A more recent way of observing the transforming work structures and practices is through changes in workers' mobility and infusion of information systems and technology. "Telework", for example, shows how traditional ways of working have been transformed as the activity of work is decoupled from the physical workplace (Sewell & Taskin, 2015). Generally, work has changed to encompass elements that are "much more digital, loose, informal, flexible and mobile" (van Meel, 2011, p. 365). As a result, people can increasingly work anywhere, anytime (Spinuzzi, 2012, p. 402). Organisations are thus faced with the continuous transformation of how to organise work and to accommodate work practices in a world on the move.

The 'newness' in new ways of working is, however, a matter of perspective, as much of what would be considered new ways of working, such as open offices, desk sharing and work on the move, albeit not mainstream, at least originate from the 1970s (van Meel, 2011). In that way, new ways of working should be considered a broad conceptualisation, encompassing divergent forms of organising which involve, to greater or lesser degrees, qualities of new ways of working (Nijp et al., 2016). Fundamentally, the ongoing and increasing shift to newer ways of working has implications for both macro and micro aspects of organising. In this thesis, focus is on the micro aspects of new ways of working (if at all, it is possible to make a macro-micro divide), compromising changes for the individual and for individuals working together in groups and teams. Specifically, the issues of primary concern in terms of new ways of working include autonomous, flexible knowledge workers, flat hierarchical management structures, and in the empirical context, working in open office workspaces. Divergent perspectives on new ways of working both point out favourable and unfavourable consequences for workers, which underscores the need for more work investigating how particular manifestations of new ways of workings influence workers, under which circumstances and with what

consequences to follow (Nijp et al., 2016). This implies consideration of the spatial, material, temporal, cultural and technological changes (Dale & Burrell, 2008; Kornberger & Clegg, 2004; Orlikowski & Scott, 2008; Van Marrewijk & Yanow, 2010). With these uncovered questions in mind, we turn to how working together plays out under new ways of working.

Working Together

New ways of working have surely involved drastic changes for individual workers and their everyday work life, including higher degrees of autonomy, flexibility, mobility, influence and empowerment (Langfred & Rockmann, 2016; Lee & Edmondson, 2017). In return, however, today's work arrangements may also demand of workers increased responsibility, adaptability, commitment and identification (Barker, 1999; Magpili & Pazos, 2017), and involve isolation, reduced privacy, and increased peer- and self-control (Barker, 1993; Dale, 2005; Mitev & De Vaujany, 2013; Sewell & Taskin, 2015; Spinuzzi, 2012). Accordingly, work designs and office layouts are increasingly being arranged through initiatives promoting greater transparency, connectedness and openness (Paring, Pezé, & Huault, 2017; Turco, 2016; Våland & Georg, 2018). The ongoing and increasing tendency to provide open office layouts as opposed to private ones is the prime example of how organisations seek to transform the work layout and environment in response to new ways of working (Baldry & Barnes, 2012). Coworking and collaborative workspaces, that is, workspace communities of independent workers, are other examples of flexible and mobile ways of working together (Spinuzzi, 2012). Collectively, such environments encourage work cultures and practices that are always 'on-the-go' and 'always-on' (McDowall & Kinman, 2017). In terms of work designs of working together, groups and teams have become the fundamental organisational unit (Foss & Lindenberg, 2011), and the unit which dominantly carries out organisational tasks (Maloney et al., 2016). For sure, research studying groups and teams can be seen to reflect this massive trend over the last decades (Cronin et al., 2011; Humphrey & Aime, 2014). This bears the recognition that organisational life depends on the lives of the subgroups within (Fine & Hallett, 2014). Responding to new ways of working, organisations increasingly turn to autonomous and self-managing forms of organising, particularly the 'self-managing

team' (Annosi & Brunetta, 2017). Certainly, such organisations reflect the current trends motivating the need for less hierarchical forms of organising as well as improvement of the individual experience of work (Lee & Edmondson, 2017). The increasingly autonomous, distributed and virtual group-based ways of organising today are thus characterised by being highly adaptable and dynamic (Barker & Tompkins, 1994; Grant & Parker, 2009; Lipnack & Stamps, 1999).

The reality of phenomena as being unstable, always changing and adapting to their environment resonates with a process perspective, since it underpins that what traditionally has been perceived as stable entities, such as a group, are rarities, the "exceptional states" (Chia, 1999, p. 210) of organising, rather than the common. Although, by now, the group literature recognises groups as dynamic and not static in nature, they are still rarely studied as such, meaning that the dynamic perspectives are relatively understudied (Cronin et al., 2011). Significantly then, consideration of contextual, dynamic and temporal aspects of working together is less explored within organisation studies (Maloney et al., 2016). In addressing these shortcomings, a relational and process perspective may prove useful in (re)turning to studying collective ways of working with consideration of constitutive practices and processes that takes into account the spatial and material underpinnings, and how ways of working are shaped in light thereof. This perspective underscores the view that groups are continuously in formation, reproduced and come into existence in their performativity; through group makers, talkers and holders by continuous comparisons and antitheses to what they are not (Latour, 2005). It is by making such distinctions that the organisation of groups emerges and persist through continuous reproduction of boundary setting (Hernes, 2004). Such a performative perspective is integral to process thinking and puts at the centre the processes and practices of working together.

Processes and Practices of Working Together

Of particular interest are the processes and practices of working together rummaging under new ways of working - what (comes to) constitute the phenomena of working together. From a strong process and performative perspective, as assumed here, change

is not something that *happens* to things, change is instead endemic and constitutive of the world - a world that is constantly becoming (Langley & Tsoukas, 2017). Associated with such a performative understanding of reality are the enactment of (work) practices (Latour, 2005). As the primary way to approach process organisation, practices are understood as configurations and regimes of smaller units of activities, such as 'doings' and 'sayings' (Nicolini & Monteiro, 2017). For example, when group members engage in embracing work practices of newcomers, the practices consist of a multitude of smaller actions, such as giving newcomers some slack, creating a safe environment, talking with them, and so on. When referring to processes in what follows, practices are then viewed as implicit and inherent parts of these processes.

Some processes are integral to organisational life and to the lives of groups, whilst others are more context-dependent. The processes of concern here are ones inherent to organising, those concerning every individual entering organisational life, and in turn, what moves within and by any attempt to organise. These prevailing processes are identification, socialisation and control, including the work practices through which these processes emerge. Taking seriously the process of organising, organisations of every shade must attend to all three of these interrelated processes. While not all three papers directly draw on all these theoretical fields, in their entanglement they are all indirectly part of the separate papers as they are all concerned with different aspects of what makes a group, how workers come together to work, and how members come to belong, feel part of and contribute to a given social constellation. Since all originate from vast literatures, it is noteworthy that all processes addressed are considered primarily in relation to the context of working together, such as the group or team context rather than to the organisation as a whole. In stating primarily, I recognise that these concepts are multi-dimensional, and can be approached from various perspectives and levels (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016). Besides, such separateness is, in reality, complicated, and most likely, impossible.

The process of identification is viewed as an individual's belongingness to a group, the process of internalising a perceived identity as a part of the self (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016). Identification with a given group, on most occasions, begins during processes of socialisation, when new members learn the

appropriate and desirable behaviours and perspectives in a given work setting (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). While these processes are highly interrelated, they are often only treated so indirectly or in passing, suggesting that more research that takes into account both processes would be valuable, especially from longitudinal ethnographic approaches (Ashforth, Harrison, & Sluss, 2014; Sluss et al., 2012). Importantly, these processes are not perceived as binary variables, based on specific clock-time, rather, as ongoing processes of becoming involving nonlinear events of experiences and sensemaking (Ashforth et al., 2008; Ashforth et al., 2014; Langley et al., 2013). However, existing studies approaching identification and socialisation from a process perspective are underrepresented calling for more processual perspectives on how these integral processes play out (Ashforth et al., 2008; Langley et al., 2013). Also, while the importance of these processes are stressed within existing work, we know little about the work practices involved in becoming and feeling part of a group (Duguid, 2005). This is especially important when considering new ways of working, because such processes become more informal and unobtrusive in character through the lack of direct management and control. Indeed, as part of transforming the ways of organising and view on workers, a break with traditional authority, bureaucracy and formality has occurred (van Meel, 2011), and with it, the ideologies, forms and practices of organisational control (Barley & Kunda, 1992; Dale, 2005; Sewell & Taskin, 2015). This disruption entails a need for greater emphasis on processes of control produced through the self and peers through autonomous and self-managing work designs (Barker, 1999), and organisational spaces (Dale, 2005; Taylor & Spicer, 2007). For instance, what is the role of control in terms of open office layouts providing Panopticon-like visibility, surveillance and transparency (Sewell & Wilkinson, 1992), or team-based Tayloristic modes of organising (Baldry et al., 1998)? Although identification and identity construction are old friends (or foes) with control within organisational studies (e.g. Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Kärreman & Alvesson, 2004), control has rarely been considered in relation to socialisation and how newcomers become accepted as work group members, despite both socialisation and control being formed within and by groups (Riketta & Van Dick, 2005). Neither has control been studied with much attention to the work practices involved. The processes of control have indeed changed dramatically with new ways of working

together, i.e. that which underpins the need for (re)entering these important and omnipresent phenomena.

Although extensive work addresses questions of why it is important to consider inherent processes such as identification, socialisation and control, less emphasis is given to *how* these processes come about. Also, although we know much about phenomena of working together, we know little about how these phenomena evolve and change over time (Cronin et al., 2011). Addressing how such processes unfold involves attending to the emerging and constitutive practices. For example, understanding how groups are formed and performed by practices and through which members are constituted, maintained and controlled. In line with process thinking, this also entails shifting focus from the group as entity or community to the involved practices (Duguid, 2005), including what makes a group in its continuous process of becoming and perishing (Chia, 1999). Part of this neglect is surely related to the seldom explored informal, relational and unobtrusive processes happening within and forming current ways of working. In engaging in the conversations on these matters and streams of research, I am seeking to initiate a (re)turn to working together in a context of new ways of working. These above-mentioned processes are all constitutive and inherently entangled with how we work together, and are all significantly transformed and challenged by current ways of organising. To understand more fully how these processes unfold, we need to take into account the surrounding environments and their relational and processual nature on the world(s)-in-view. In doing so, the spatial and materialised reconfigurations need more recognition within the work on working together, including matters on how they come to make, break and endure ways of working together.

Overview of Papers

The body of this thesis consists of three distinct but interrelated papers. These papers are presented in what can been considered the most chronological order of their emerging process (although all have been approached iteratively and continuously), to give a better understanding of how the work and process in general unfolded.

Paper I, *Embracing the Paradox of Self-Managing Teams: Manifestations of Unintended Consequences* is a theoretical paper co-authored with Professor John P. Ulhøi. The paper explicates the paradoxical nature of working in self-managing teams by identifying three antecedents within the existing literature; the self-management work design, control and identification, through which manifestations of unintended consequences stem. Based on this, we argue for the need to recognise and attend to the inherent paradox of self-managing teams: that they entail unintended as well as intended consequences. We connect the existing fragmented research on the less desirable aspects of self-managing teams, and provide an integrative framework illustrating the primary level of significance. Overall, we suggest that the paradoxes of self-managing teams should be embraced by attending to their unintended consequences.

Paper II is an empirical paper based on a longitudinal ethnography with the title *It Takes Work: How Relational Processes of Socialisation Construct Newcomers' Identification in Work Groups.* In this paper, I explore how newcomers' identification processes are implicated by processes of socialisation in two autonomous work groups from two knowledge-based organisations. The study shows how newcomers engage in 'identification work'; work practices fostering identification with their work group, whilst existing group members engage in 'socialisation work', work practices that either hinder or foster the socialisation process of newcomers, and determine acceptance mechanisms for which newcomers become considered as full group members. The study adds to existing research by showing how an account of informal socialisation processes unfolds together with and through newcomers' identification processes, and that it is through practices that group members make new members become a part of their group.

Finally, Paper III, *Sociomaterial Practices of Open Offices: The Constitutive Entanglement between Space and Work Groups through the Production of Control* is also an empirical paper based on my ethnographic fieldwork. This paper addresses how sociomaterial practices of open office spaces constitute coworkers as a work group. I apply a perspective of sociomateriality in showing how open office spaces and work groups are constitutively entangled by practices of routinising and ritualising, hierarchising and belonging through the ongoing production of control. The paper contributes to the literature on sociomateriality and space by viewing work groups as

inseparable from the ongoing emergence and existence of sociomaterial space. Further, I show and argue that the sociomaterial needs to be taken into consideration within group control literature to aid better understanding processes of control when working together in the New World of Work.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter constitutes the methodology, that is, the body of practices, processes and procedures and collective methods involved in carrying out the study. Overall, the empirical foundation builds on a longitudinal ethnography of two work groups in two organisations spanning over two and a half years. The methods of ethnography are particularly well-suited to studying processes, first, because they enable exploration of phenomena over time and/or space and, second, because they allow for close and detailed study of the day-to-day actions and micro dynamics to organising (Van Hulst et al., 2017). Ethnography was selected as the method for this work precisely because it makes possible what this study sought to explore: the description, meaning and sensemaking of processes inherent to everyday work lives in the context of working together (Spradley, 1980; Van Maanen, 2011). Furthermore, the difficulties of, and the sophisticated methods needed for, studying groups over time has made longitudinal research designs underrepresented in the existing work on groups; what particularly qualitative approaches would be suited for (Cronin et al., 2011). In giving an understanding of the method chosen and what it entails, I first introduce the methods of ethnography and how it relates to this study. I then discuss the ontological and epistemological dis-/continuities as underlying assumptions of the study, theoretical framings, and analysis. After presenting the empirical settings of the study, I elaborate on the methods of inquiry, that is, how I went about the study. The chapter ends with a section of how I carried out the analytical work in (partly) making sense of it all.

A Method of Ethnography

In the words of Van Maanen, ethnography "rests on the peculiar practice of representing the social reality of others through the analysis of one's own experience in the world of

these others." (2011, p. xiii). As the traditional method of anthropology, ethnography has become an avowed method of inquiry within management and organisation studies over several decades (Rouleau, de Rond, & Musca, 2014). Still, there is much to the method of ethnography that remains ambiguous. There is, for example, little consensus about what constitutes good, rigorous ethnography beyond a researcher's long immersions into a field of others (Van Hulst et al., 2017; Van Maanen, 2011), an overarching implied theory of culture (Spradley, 1979) and "thick descriptions" of fieldwork experiences (Geertz, 1973). Or, simply put, ethnography entails fieldwork, sensework and textwork (Van Hulst et al., 2017), but what lies in-between is basically left to the (in my case, novice) ethnographer. Second, and ironically probably fuelling the first point, the most highly-regarded contemporary ethnographies entail "a certain instability, rupture, uncertainty and fluidity of meaning" (Van Maanen, 2006, p. 16). Perhaps the continuities to ethnography is just that: that it demands the finesse to portray lived experiences succinctly, elaborately and memorably; what will probably always be "something of a mess, a mystery and a miracle" (Van Maanen, 2011, p. 175). For sure, I admit that my ethnographic study entailed all these elements, in re-turning cycles slowly moving. The ethnographer's hardships of obtaining access and the ongoing field working are of most critical matter (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007), and another is that of tale telling (Van Maanen, 2006). The challenges of such matters make ethnography complicated as a method of inquiry, because so much relies on the ethnographer's interpretation throughout and continued through the writing up - the textwork – in which the understanding of culture lies (Van Maanen, 2011). This ethnographic study was no exception to the lack of boilerplate and the challenges of attempting to understand a strange new world whilst standing amidst it all. Indeed, I had to learn by doing, by being in the field for extensive lengths of time, retracting, only to return to the field until I could settle on what my story was "really about; and not uncommonly it turn[ed] out to be about something rather different from the initial foreshadowed problems" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 160). In that sense, the very method of ethnography formed the study in necessitating a two-phase research design of the fieldwork study in order to move from an exploratory phase to one of focus. Apart from that, the longitudinal design and processual underpinning bring with it questions and challenges on matters concerning the underlying assumptions about working together, and how to approach, study and make

sense of working together. For this reason, I elaborate on what these world-view considerations and ontological and epistemological dis-/continuities entailed for the study's becoming and for studying people working together in ongoing movement.

Ontological and Epistemological Dis-/Continuities

Traditionally, ethnographic methods have been tied to social constructivist and interpretivist ontologies, with the world-view that social reality is constructed between people in their everyday lives (Eberle & Maeder, 2011). Setting off within such tradition, the ontological and epistemological considerations – and therein the theoretical and analytical groundings – of the study, unfolded as did the process of performing and 'living' it. For that reason, a more expressive stance towards ontology is taken in the third and most recently conceived paper about sociomaterial practices of the open office. To enlarge on this, I first underpin what can be regarded as continuities throughout this thesis, after which I discuss what may be considered as discontinuities between that paper and the others.

The foundation of this thesis rests, above all, on a relational ontology: that everything exists only in relation to other(s) (Langley & Tsoukas, 2017). This implies viewing reality as of "unstable, continually changing, fluid nature" (Shotter, 2014, p. 317). This also advocates a disposition of process: that the world and lived life – including that of organising – is in continuous flow where all is in process (Hernes, 2014). Such a strong process view sees change *as* reality and process as the very "'stuff' of reality" (Nayak & Chia, 2011, p. 289). This approach implies that phenomena studied as such are not simply there for captivation or fixation, rather, they must be followed in the going of things (Helin, Hernes, Hjorth, & Holt, 2014). The approach acknowledges that the 'being' of actual entities, reality and the world is constituted by its 'becoming' (Whitehead, 1929, in Nayak & Chia, 2011). Within the method of ethnography, process thinking fits inherently well, because its longitudinal and everyday-ability allows for uncovering both stable-like qualities and the hidden flux of organisational life (Van Hulst et al., 2017). Ethnography has in consequence frequently been applied in studying the nuances of process, especially since longitudinal approaches are essential in empirically

studying process (Langley et al., 2013). The perspective of process encompasses the concepts, constructs and mechanisms addressed throughout this thesis, although not at all times equally at the forefront. This means, for instance, that the concept of 'group' is not considered a stable entity, but as collectively entangled performances in forever (trans)formation (Latour, 2005). This puts the performativity of phenomena at the forefront in the alternative to representationalism (Barad, 2003; Helin et al., 2014).

In the passing of time of the study and being in the field, I increasingly became aware of the ways in which work happened, and how imbued the everyday ways of working were with the spatial and material. While an interest in materiality and spatiality was not an initial focus of the study, the exploratory nature of the study meant that a tale of the field came to be about something quite different. This, it turned out, was the seeds sown for what may be seen as the main discontinuity of this thesis. Thus, in the third paper a more elaborately expressed ontological position is taken than in the former two papers. In fact, it takes what Barad (2003) calls an onto-epistem-ology, as opposed to the traditional separation of ontology and epistemology, that is, "the study of practices of knowing in being" (p. 829), as knowings of the world can never be separated from being of the world. From a background in metaphysics and feminist theory, Barad (2003, 2007) proposes agential realism as an alternative to social constructivism and critical realism, and a scientific understanding that puts central the performativity of practices. Simply put, agential realism builds on the collapse of Cartesian dualism and its assumption of human exceptionalism (Pickering, 2013), by moving from Cartesian cuts to agential cuts, which, in contrast to marking separability, engage in agential separability through differentiating and entangling in cutting together/apart (Barad, 2010). This approach suggests that knowing – and what may be perceived as things, objects, materiality, space and humans – do not exist in and by itself, but emerge from direct and ongoing material engagements with the world (Barad, 2003, 2007). It is on the pillars of such an agential realist world-view that the final paper rests – including the throughout occasional drizzles. Above all, and for the methodological concern here and now, my subsequent perspective is that what may be considered data is only ever made so through my presentations and cut-outs as such, in that their becoming emerges through discursive-material engagements, including writing words, ideas, readings, spacetimes and so on. This suggests being mindful of the relational and processual dispositions - that thinking and

writing (for instance) are not subjective stand-alone happenings, and instead they are personalised parts of the world, changing and reproducing it (Helin et al., 2014). In dis-/entangling the studies further, the spacetime coordinates, that is, the where and how the empirical settings unfolded in forming the two empirical papers, how the fieldwork was approached, inquiries made and the analytical work performed, a flavour of different worlds emerges not (only) originating from me, but with you as reader. What we will make of the process of working together is ours. First, nonetheless, I will provide one beginning - the empirical settings.

Empirical Settings

Two Danish located organisations found the empirical ground of the study. These are Vigus Energy Technologies A/S (Vigus) and the Scandinavian Infrastructure Consultancy (SIC) (both pseudonyms). As knowledge-based organisations, they were selected based on their structures of flat ways of organising at the bottom level, despite overall being large, hierarchical organisations. In that sense, they were both devoted to features of autonomous and self-managing work designs. Seeking to explore current ways of working together in such environments was based on several aspects. For one, such organisations mirror the increasingly relation-based, participatory and autonomous ways of organising (Grant & Parker, 2009). Adding to that, groups and teams are fundamental to the emergence and existence of organisation, and thus not solely of relevance, but a necessity to organisation studies (Foss & Lindenberg, 2011). Indeed, the meso-level of organisation represents the everyday life: it is "where the action is" (Fine & Hallett, 2014, p. 2). Furthermore, knowledge-based organisational settings pose challenges to processes of identity, identification, control (Barker, 1993, 1999; Robertson & Swan, 2003), which were (also) of initial interest to the study. From the outset and exploratory phase, I was interested in the increasingly autonomous ways of working, how organisational members managed their day-to-day activities and what, if any, were consequences of working under such new ways of working and organising. Ideal settings, I supposed, to study such organising would be found in the increasing knowledge-based industries, and particularly knowledge producing departments, such as within R&D. I therefore specifically sought

to collaborate with knowledge-based organisations organising under autonomous, self-managing structures.

Two work groups of between 10 and 15 members were selected in collaboration with the key informants as good examples of self-running units, both working within R&D departments mainly consisting of engineers, either in specialist or project management roles. The group members were tied together due to their speciality and function, which implied that members usually worked with multiple other organisational members on project teams. Nevertheless, these work groups were considered their primary work group/team from an organisational as well as member perspective, and were also their home physically, materially and socially. Both work groups were characterised by the expectancy of and members' demand for autonomy, flexibility and dedication collectively mirrored in work hours, presence and attitude towards work. Certainly, the work groups posed comparable and similar features, yet, naturally, varied much on other aspects. Generally, the focus and interest was never to compare to two work groups exclusively and extensively, rather the focus was on current autonomous, flexible, open and collaborative ways of working, and how members within such contexts experience and make sense of their everyday work lives. This implied seeking to understand explanations for phenomena in the given context, and not seeking causality as to why something was perceived or occurred in one place and not the other, such as a comparison between the work groups would give reason to. In understanding the matter of context, a few specificities of the two organisations call for further elaboration. Worthy of mention, however, is not only that such pen pictures are highly condensed; it is also only the matters purposive to the empirical insights drawn, which are extracted.

Vigus Energy Technologies A/S

Vigus is one of the leading manufacturing energy companies in the world with more than 7,000 employees. As a first mover, Vigus had been challenged extensively by a growing, highly competitive and relatively new industry over the last decade. This meant that although the organisation was doing well financially during the first part of the study, the realisation of a radical structural change mid-way in the study meant that Vigus and the group suffered a sudden recruitment freeze. As part of these changes, the group was split

into two groups, one representing the former group, the other focusing more on the project management side of the former work group. The newly formed work groups remained in close collaboration, consisting of the same members and, with few exceptions, members remained physically located in the same office space. For these reasons, I remained tied to both work groups in following members rather than the team denotation, with a view that such changes, despite challenging, were an inevitable part of the process both to any form of organising and to the study. For the sake of simplicity, and due to the non-comparative perspective, the references that follow represent members and experiences connected to the first Vigus work group. Another interesting change was that their work group leader left for another job only weeks after I initiated the fieldwork, and a new leader was appointed only after nine months of having a remotely located interim group leader. The group continued working on developing and improving Vigus' products closely with other work groups and stakeholders during this period, underscoring the level of autonomy and trust that the work group members had individually and collectively. Overall, the organisation was culturally diverse and the corporate language was English.

The Scandinavian Infrastructure Consultancy.

Of similar size to Vigus, SIC is a major international infrastructure consultancy, in which the studied work group was part of an expansion of its own sub-field. Having grown financially over the last years, the group experienced a continuous intake of new projects, and expanded with new members accordingly. The work group consisted primarily of Danes as did the organisation, for which the corporate language was Danish, although many of their stakeholders were international and it was therefore not uncommon to hear English spoken at the office. The aim of the work group was to run projects designing and upgrading SIC's products, achieved in collaboration with other departments and stakeholders. The most significant change at SIC during the study was a re-location of the group to a different office facility due to space limitations, involving the move to an open office, which was smaller and more closed off to neighbouring work groups than the previous one.

Methods of Inquiry

The study, on which the empirical papers of this thesis rest, is based on a longitudinal ethnography in two knowledge-based organisations. Specifically, a work group from each organisation was studied simultaneously over a two-and-a-half-year period amounting to 15 months of fieldwork in two phases. The field study was carried out from August 2015 to March 2018, first for a period of nine months in both organisations, and after one and a half year's withdrawal, I then re-entered the field for respectively four and six months. The first phase of fieldwork was dedicated participation observations and informal, ethnographic interviews for the whole period and towards the end, formal interviews with group members and the group leaders or managers of relevance. On average, I spent a full working day a week in each organisation for the entire fieldwork phases. On rare occasions, I would also join meetings remotely online. In total, I carried out 55 semi-structured interviews, 28 from the first phase of the study, 27 from the second phase, and by chance, equally distributed between the two groups with 27 from Vigus and 28 from SIC. The formal interviews lasted an average of 49 minutes, the shortest 22 minutes, the longest 1 hour and 33 minutes. For the use of background knowledge, I used archival data in the form of publicly available and employee material, although this was not part of the main data analysis.

First and foremost, the fieldwork entailed "hanging out" (Dingwall, 1997): being present, talking to group members and getting a feeling and understanding of the place. In order to blend in, I used my computer to write all my field notes, and when I occasionally brought a pen and notebook instead of the computer for smaller and more informal meetings, I later incorporated these field notes into my digitalised ones. As the backbone of ethnography, I was indeed a novice observant in a different world to my own, attempting to get to know that of others – one that was highly technical and specialised. Since I had no prior knowledge of the organisational units in which I entered, nor of the future informants, importantly, I was able to maintain a position of novice; an amateur learning about and getting immersed in their cultures (Spradley, 1980). I therefore decided to shadow group members, meaning that I in turn followed members around during their working day attending various meetings, in order for me to partake in further interaction with and observation of members (Czarniawska, 2008). Simply

being there and partaking in the everyday life of the work groups was then particularly useful in obtaining knowledge about the work and tasks that group members faced, the everyday 'ways of doing' and 'ways of working' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007), as well as general knowledge about the organisations and the subsequent industry fields. Equally important, it allowed the time for establishing a bond, trust and creating psychological safety with the group members, and in becoming part of the studied myself. In general then, I adopted a role of moderate participant observer in the sphere between being an outsider and insider (Spradley, 1980). Without this period, the "asking questions" (Dingwall, 1997) in the conversations and formal interviews with group members would not have been as rich, because my prior knowledge of the work and settings assisted more specific, contextual and detailed conversations at the later interviews and through the ongoing fieldwork. Besides, it meant that I knew the group members and they knew me at the time of the more formalised interviews, which made the outcome much more useful in terms of relevance, honesty and understanding.

As noted, the second phase of fieldwork was not initially planned, yet after engaging more with the data analysis off site, the need to re-immerse the field was pressing. Several themes of interest had become clear and areas of concern and research questions were naturally more specific, yet the exploratory approach taken meant that much was still in the unknown. For example, in realising the dilemma between newcomers and experienced group members elaborated in the second paper, it became useful to gain a more processual aspect on newcomers' socialisation, including understanding how experienced members had themselves been socialised. In refining and confirming these preliminary areas of interest and analysis, I decided to re-enter the field, if possible. After renegotiating access, both organisations welcomed me back into the formerly studied groups. The groups had, of course, changed remarkably, as described above in more detail in the organisational settings. Some group members had left, others joined, some had been promoted, changed roles, skill level, and so on. Still, most members knew me from the first time around, and I was met by a welcome return, which made me quickly return to the familiarity of the everyday life in the groups. During the second time around, the analytical work (in)formed stones yet to be turned in the field, and was slowly moving towards the centre of my work engagements. On that note, I will explain in more detail how I went about the analytical work.

Analytical Work

As the study itself was a process in continuous change, the analytical work was no exception. The iterative process between ideas, empirics and theory persisted from beginning on, common to such 'grounded theorising' as this (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). This became especially apparent in the unplanned longitudinal research design. For sure, the lengthy withdrawal from the field was a necessary part of the process of analysing the data, because is gave the space needed for the main, and in-depth analysis, eventually forming the narrowing focus and funnel structure required (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). In this vein, it should be emphasised that both empirical papers were shaped extensively by my own experiences within the field – including my own performativity and practices of knowing. Letting the empirics lead the collection and simultaneous analysis of data, signifies that the two were inseparable, which, in my view, they would (and should) never be. Understanding the story of newcomers, for example, only came about because of the experienced dilemma between newcomers and more experienced group members. In addition, the story of open office spaces only came about through the realisation of how imbued the work practices were with the material and spatial dimensions and through familiarity and engagements with the space and sociomateriality literature.

As noted, the field notes stemming from the observations were stored in various documents on my computer. Within the notes, I used personalised sections and codes for different types of field notes, for example, under labels such as *general observations (GO), personal notes (PN),* or *matters of interest (MOI).* Once I became more familiar with my own ways of doing fieldwork and taking notes, however, I changed and eventually omitted these categorisations, as I would recognise the character of the specific field note when reading it, and because distinguishing and boxing field notes this way did not reflect the dis-/entangled elements of the notes. A paragraph could, for instance, both hold elements of personal notes and thoughts, and matters of interest. Together with the field notes, the formal interviews were incorporated into the analytical software tool NVivo 11 after having been recorded and transcribed. In accommodating the informant's choice, about half of the interviews were conducted in Danish and the other half in English. The fieldwork notes were a mix of Danish and English, depending on the context

and language spoken at the time. When used in the papers, the originally Danish field notes and quotes have thus been translated.

With little established technique to the method of ethnography (Van Maanen, 2006), there is also no formula or standardised procedures for ethnographic data analysis (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Still, the analytical approach was inspired by classic ethnographic thematic analysis (Spradley, 1979, 1980; Van Maanen, 1979), as well as its close companion, grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, 2015). The more structured analysis was therefore initiated by open coding in which data was broken down, taken apart, grouped and re-grouped with similar codes (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The codes were formed in vivo, that is, made up of raw data, consisting of sentences or chunks of sentences cut out by categorisations of "what is this a case of", "a way of" "a result of", and so forth (Spradley, 1979). This process resulted in a significant number of codes, and admittedly, a difficultly in realising what was really of (most) relevance. Reducing, refining, relating and renaming the codes was therefore the next, ongoing step. Categories consisting of codes were formed by constant comparison of similarities and differences between data, and by cutting in, out and around in establishing hierarchical coding trees, while continuously returning to the raw data again to add or elicit further codes and categories (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). This entailed moving from the more descriptive categories to the development of more interpretive and conceptual categories, which theoretically organised and explained the more descriptive categories (Van Maanen, 1979). Also, some codes and trees of codes came into the foreground, others went into the background. For example, codes related to the office and spatial aspects were saved into a different folder, for potential later use, whereas codes relating to newcomers, at first, became more prominent. Other coding trees, such as belonging and identification, were duplicated into several folders, as they potentially belonged to more than one story. Creating such structures between categories and sub-categories of codes, is what Corbin and Strauss (1990) would refer to as axial coding.

With the amount of data ethnographies as this produce, I was, at some point, forced to actively decide which story I wanted to tell (first), as reflected in the foregrounding and backgrounding of codes. The trees of interest selected were the ones which seemed to puzzle me the most in one way or the other; some which stood out from

fieldwork experiences, some developed during conversations with informants, others emerged at a distance and during my fieldwork withdrawal. By the time I re-entered the field, I had a reduced, yet still too broad, set of categories with multiple coding trees and some form of relational and structural illustration. With the data from the second fieldwork phase, I went over the analysis again, continuously and more thoroughly, what would be termed selective coding (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Indeed, the coding and analytical work benefitted much from my field retraction; it made much clearer the stories of interest and weeded out those, which were not. In a sense, to me, the interpretation of data and analytical processes seems ongoing and unending still. Nonetheless, the analytical work (for now) is what amounted to the theoretical insights drawn out in the two empirical papers.

CHAPTER 4

PAPER I

Embracing the Paradox of Self-Managing Teams: Manifestations of Unintended Consequences

Conference Contributions

Previous versions of this paper have been presented at the *European PhD Workshop by London Business School,* LBS, 2017, and at the *British Academy of Management* (BAM), University of Warwick, 2017. The conference version is included in the BAM conference proceedings.

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Embracing the Paradox of Self-Managing Teams:
Manifestations of Unintended Consequences

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ABSTRACT

The embracement of self-managing teams within today's organisations is hard to miss. Yet, in the body of work on self-managing teams, research is remarkably fragmented and more silent on their darker, less desirable and not intended aspects. To understand the phenomena of organising in self-managing teams adequately, we argue for the need to recognise and attend to their inherent and persistent paradox – that they entail intended as well as unintended consequences. To this end, we examine the manifestations of unintended consequences in self-managing teams from three identified antecedents within the existing literature; the self-managing work design, control and identification. With the purpose of organising and connecting the existing fragmented research, an assemblage of the antecedents and the associated consequences are sketched out in an integrative framework at the individual, group and organisational level, illustrating their primary level of significance. From this, we argue that researchers and managers must embrace the paradox of self-managing teams by attending to their unintended consequences indeed inevitable to organising.

Keywords: concertive control, identification, self-managing teams, work design

INTRODUCTION

Sparked by the transformation from largely a production-oriented economy towards one of knowledge, organising in self-managing team has been an on-going and increasing way of meeting the need for constant adaptability (Grant & Parker, 2009). In light of the longstanding appreciation of teamwork in research and practice, and particularly in self-managing teams, the objective has been "to identify better ways of doing teamwork, [but this] has frequently taken place with little appreciation of its potentially negative impacts" (Sewell, 1998: 421). As early as in 1978, Cummings pointed towards the lack of comprehension of self-managing teams, how they operate, how to implement them, and their possible unintended consequences. Although theory on self-managing teams have evolved a lot since then, it has been done so without a full understanding and recognition of the paradoxical nature of organising in self-managing teams. Since their introduction, self-managing teams have been appraised for the assumed ability to soften up the hierarchy in the hope of enhancing outcomes beneficial for organisations and individuals within. This attractive narrative of the self-managing teams seem to have dominated the field, and, obviously, fuelled their continuous diffusion and adoption over the last decades in a rather pro-biased manner. Yet, when Barker's article 'Tightening the Iron Cage: Concertive Control in Self-Managing Teams' was published by *Administrative Science Quarterly* in 1993, unexpected and controversial issues associated with self-managing teams were raised. By way of an elaborate ethnographic study, Barker discovered a peer-based, *concertive* control system, which manifested and through team identification reinforced itself more powerfully than the organisation's former traditional hierarchical control systems (Barker, 1993; Barker, 1999). Although the seminal work of Barker contributed to the exploration of the inevitable tensions and more unintentional aspects of the self-managing organisation (eg. Hawkins, 2013; Langfred, 2007; Larson & Tompkins, 2005; Papa, Auwal, & Singhal, 1997), research has still not provided us with a comprehensive understanding of the two opposite and yet interrelated 'sides of the same coin' of self-managing teams. If we as organisational scholars are to understand the phenomena of organising in self-managing teams adequately, we need to recognise and attend to their inherent and persistent paradoxical dimensions (Smith & Lewis, 2011); that they come with *both* intended *and* unintended consequences. This involves organising and connecting the existing, largely context-specific work that is scattered

over various streams of research to gain a fuller, more representative perspective on the consequences of self-managing teams. Our purpose is therefore to attend to the paradox of self-managing teams by examining the less researched, but not necessarily less important, unintended consequences of self-managing teams. Specifically, we identify and examine how unintended consequences are manifested in self-managing teams, which, based on a review of the literature, stem from three interrelated antecedents: (i) the self-managing work design, (ii) control, and (iii) identification. In doing so, we view unintended consequences in the Mertonian sense, as not intended, *potential* outcomes of organising in self-managing teams (Merton, 1936). To follow, an assemblage of the identified antecedents and consequences in an integrative framework allows us to establish which consequences matter for the individual, group/team or organisational level and create a more fine-grained perspective on self-managing teams than previously known. Finally, this enables a discussion of how managers can become more aware of and respond to the paradoxical nature of self-managing teams, and provide implications for how theory on self-managing teams in the future come to include the intended as well as the unintended consequences by embracing the paradox of self-managing teams.

THE EMERGENCE OF SELF-MANAGING TEAMS

Along with the introduction of new organisational forms, the autonomous, self-managing team surfaced. Already in the early 1950s, when a study of English coalminers showed that workers were self-regulating, the idea of self-management begun (Trist & Bamforth, 1951). Stemming from a socio-technical systems theory perspective, this field gradually developed into theories on 'autonomous', 'semiautonomous' or 'self-regulated' work teams (Cummings, 1978; Hackman, 1977). However, it was not until the late 1980s/early 1990s that self-managing teams significantly increased in the organisational milieu to meet competitive challenges (Cohen, Ledford, & Spreitzer, 1996) alongside the increased focus on workers, their motivation and well-being (Grant & Parker, 2009). As a response to societal changes, organisations became more dependent on gaining committed workers rather than controlling them top-down, making the self-managing work design inevitable

(Hackman, 1986). In general, the shift towards flatter and more relational work designs[2] is, above all, mirrored by the team-based organisation (Johns, 2010), particularly self-managing teams (Annosi & Brunetta, 2017). The hierarchical layers of the organisation decreased along with the need for middle managers, and in turn, team members are empowered (Levi, 2017). As a result, workers become active participants in shaping their own work designs (Grant & Parker, 2009). Hence it has been a natural step for many organisations to introduce self-managing teams with the promises of increased team effectiveness, both in terms of improving performance, productivity, controlling costs, commitment (Cohen et al., 1996), intrinsic job satisfaction (Wall, Kemp, Jackson, & Clegg, 1986), motivation (Barker, 1999), and enhancing the psychological well-being of team members (Van Mierlo, Rutte, Kompier, & Doorewaard, 2005). First and foremost, self-managing teams are appraised for the characteristics of being significantly autonomous and having decision-making and task responsibilities (Langfred & Rockmann, 2016; Manz & Sims, 1986). They are also highly task interdependent (Langfred, 2007), also expressed by the reliance on joint responsibility (Van Mierlo et al., 2005). This implies that the team typically has the privilege to decide how to allocate work and execute the associated tasks (Langfred, 2004). Taken together, self-managing teams are therefore particularly effective for carrying out organisational activities that are complex, involve deadlines and require easy adaptation to change (Barker & Tompkins, 1994). Furthermore, they are distinguished from more traditional teams by the requirement of members' capabilities of high skill variety and for potentially having a compensation system connected to the team's performance (Moorhead, Neck, & West, 1998).

Self-managing teams have surfaced under various, but similar or interchangeably used terms, including self-managed (Yeatts & Hyten, 1998), self-directed, self-organising, self-regulating, empowered, autonomous and semiautonomous work groups or teams (Van Mierlo et al., 2005). Agreeing on the by far most selected choice, *self-managing* is considered to capture the concept of interest best, as generally representing the less hierarchical ways of organising (Lee & Edmondson, 2017). The lack of uniformity in terminology is equalled by the lack of a commonly agreed definition

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[2] With the lack of clarity between the terms work design and job design, the terms are regarded interchangeably.

(Langfred, 2007). Clearly, the concept of self-managing team has been applied ambiguously within research. In effect, several authors rely on earlier descriptive characteristics of self-managing teams, such as the most recent review by Magpili and Pazos (2017) or Annosi and Brunetta's (2017) book elaborating on new organisational forms, and simply refrain from providing a definition of self-managing teams. Often referred to is Hackman (1986), who distinguishes between different types of units having self-managing work designs in addition to traditional manager-led units: (i) self-managing, (ii) self-designing and (iii) self-governing, representing the increasing amount of authority that the unit has, how work is managed, designed and directed. The latter represents the most prominent form of self-management, corresponding to what Stewart, Courtright, and Manz (2011) refer to as self-leadership, suggesting that self-management should be considered on a continuum. Importantly this suggests that a self-managing team is not *a* specific type of team, but rather teams that to varying degrees involve features of self-management.

To reach a common understanding, a few issues regarding the existing definitions and characterisations (see table 1 for a selection) need to be further clarified. Existing definitions agree upon that a self-managing team consists of a *limited* number of employees working together in a group, but varying from as small as four individuals to less than 20. These members are considered to be peers (Barker, 1993) and are said to involve *peer-based* control (Barker, 1999; Magpili & Pazos, 2017; Sewell, 1998). This makes sense from the perspective that the team and its members are empowered by the flattened hierarchy and in that respect team members are of equal level. Although we accept the term peers, we stress that this may not necessarily be true of all aspects; members' knowledge, experience and career stage, for example, may indeed vary, such as a newcomer may not be regarded as a peer by an experienced member. Another repeater is the purpose of working towards a set of tasks, goals or purposes. However, what is often central in team definitions (e.g. Katzenbach & Smith, 1993; Magpili & Pazos, 2017) is the need for *a common* purpose; rather we argue that in today's organisations, at least in the more complex ones, most likely there are several, perhaps contradictory, purposes, interests and/or expectations reflecting the multiple projects that team members might be associated with. The same applies for the notion of working on a whole task (e.g. Hackman, 1977); we instead argue that teams often work towards

several intertwined tasks. Probably the most referred to key characteristic is distributed decision-making autonomy, second to that the responsibility of team members. Manz (1992) suggests that "self-management applications do tend to allow workers significant self-influence regarding *how* to complete a task to meet a standard (…) [but] they generally do not encompass self-influence in terms of *what* should be done and *why*" (p. 1120, emphasis in original). Normally, a traditional top-down directed team would not be given any self-influence, whereas a self-leading team would also have the autonomy as to the 'what' and 'why'. Although none of the definitions distinguish between group and individual autonomy, there is certainly a distinction between the two, and in agreement with Langfred (2000), we argue that self-managing teams to various degrees have both.

In summation of the above, we argue that self-managing teams include the following four constitutive parts. First, a self-managing team consists of a limited number of employees working in a group. Second, self-managing teams comprise of peers in terms of an equal hierarchical (at least formally) level among members. Third, the purposiveness of the members of the group is to work interdependently according to a set of given tasks, goals or purposes, that is, the group has a task structure. Fourth, the individual members and the group as a whole have a certain degree of autonomy regarding decisions and responsibility concerning *how* tasks are solved to achieve the pre-assigned goals.

TABLE 1

Selected Definitions and Characteristics of Self-Managing Teams

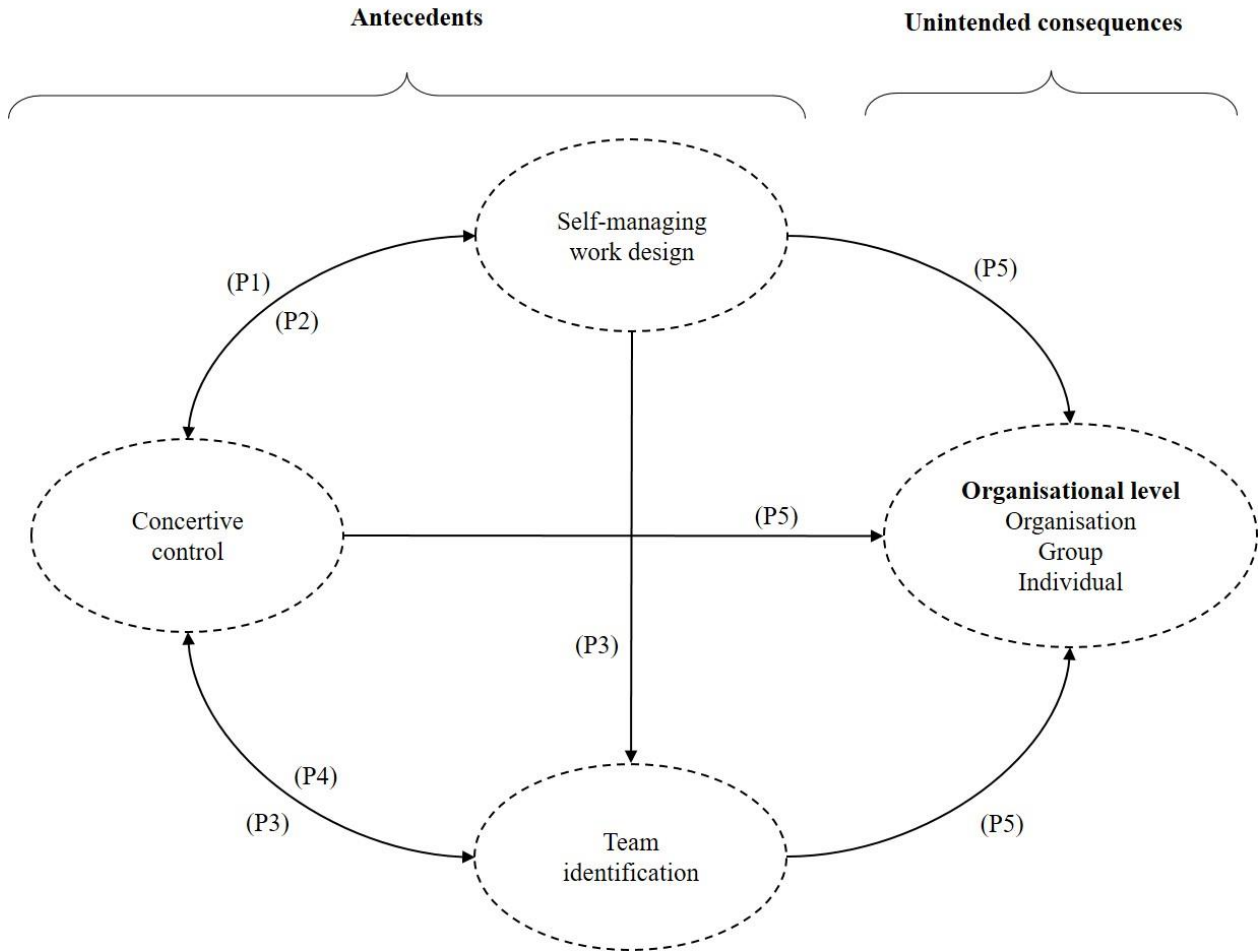| Author(s)	Terminology	Typical number of members	Definition	Key characteristics
Cummings (1978)	Self-regulating work groups	- Not provided -	Refer to Hackman (1977)	- Provision of task boundary, autonomy and feedback - Greater productivity and worker satisfaction (1978, p. 625)
Hackman (1977, 1986)	Autonomous work groups/self-managing teams	Less than 20 members	The group is assigned a whole task, members have a number of skills required to complete the group task, the group is given autonomy to make decisions about methods of work, task scheduling, and assignment of members to different tasks, and compensation is based on the performance of the group as a whole (1977, p. 141).*	- Taking personal responsibility for their work outcome - Monitoring and managing their own performance - Actively seeking what they need to achieve excellent performance - Helping others in improving their performance to strengthen the unit as a whole (1986, p. 93-97).
Manz & Sims (1986), Manz (1992)	Self-managed work groups/self-managing work teams	4-12 members	Refer to Hackman (1977)	- Active control by group members over their environment and themselves, theoretically occurring without external influence or control (1986, p. 150). - Self-management allows employees to significant self-influence regarding *how* a task is completed, but not in terms of *what* and *why* (1992, p. 1120).

Barker (1993, 1999)	Self-managing teams	10-15 members	Contemporary self-managing teams are peer groups (…). These groups make all the decisions, do all the coordination, and perform all the work required to build the items or perform the task under their responsibility (1999, p. 3).*	- Self-managing workers must gather and synthesize information, act on it, and take collective responsibility for those actions. - Team members are cross-trained to perform any task the work requires and have the authority and responsibility to make the essential decisions necessary to complete the function (1993, p. 413).
Yeatts & Hyten (1998)	Self-managed work teams	5-15 members	A group of employees who are responsible for managing and performing technical tasks that result in a product or service being delivered to an internal or external customer (p. xiii)	- Responsible for managing and making decisions regarding all or most aspects of their work. - Perform at higher levels and at lower costs than traditional work groups.
Van Mierlo et al. (2005)	Self-managing teams	Less than 20 members	- Not provided -	- Joint responsibility for a well-defined and meaningful piece of work. - Perform a variety of tasks within the team. - The team has a considerable degree of authority.
Magpili & Pazos (2017)	Self-managing teams	- Not provided -	- Not provided -	- Collective autonomy and responsibility among team members - Diverse skills and knowledge

*The definition provided by Hackman (1977) and Barker (1999) do in fact not explicitly state that they are definitions, but have been regarded as by others.

ATTENDING TO UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

A paradox consists of "contradictory yet interrelated elements that exist simultaneously and persist over time" (Smith & Lewis, 2011: 382). Applying a paradox lens allows for a deeper understanding of contradictory demands and ubiquitous tensions (Lüscher and Lewis 2008). This entails contradiction yet interdependence at the same time; a view of mutual constitution (Schad, Lewis, Raisch, & Smith, 2016). In understanding the phenomena of self-managing teams, we need to acknowledge their inherent paradox, the 'both/and' to the given way of organising (Smith & Lewis, 2011). This implies going beyond the largely positive view on self-managing teams and attending to the "other side of the same coin". We do so by the use of sociologist Robert Merton's conceptualisation of unintended consequences; Merton distinguished between intended and unanticipated (later denoted unintended) consequences of purposive social actions (Merton, 1936). The work of Merton (1968; 1936) is largely accountable for what is considered literature on the dark side of organising (Vaughan, 1999), reflected in his conceptualisation of unintended consequences being applied within organisational research, such as on organisational restructuring (McKinley & Scherer, 2000), impulsivity and emotional intelligence (Winkel, Wyland, Shaffer, & Clason, 2011) and strategic change (MacKay & Chia, 2013). In applying Merton's conceptualisation, we take the view that unintended consequences are not automatically deemed negative simply because they are undesired, although because of their nature, they are more likely to be deemed negative in comparison to intended consequences. Also, consequential outcomes are not to be perceived as constant, rather they *may* follow the given act (Merton, 1936); importantly, the consequences discussed thus represent potential outcomes. From reviewing the existing literature, we identified the unintended consequences of self-managing teams overall to stem from antecedents in the form of the self-managing work design, concertive control and team identification, as illustrated in figure 2. The dotted circles in the figure resemble that the constructs are regarded as interrelated processes rather than being static and fixed, and that they may occur in a dispersed and concurrent manner.

FIGURE 2

Antecedents of Unintended Consequences in Self-Managing Teams

Antecedents

Unintended consequences

Self-managing
work design

(P1)

(P2)

(P5)

Concertive
control

(P5)

Organisational level
Organisation
Group
Individual

(P3)

(P4)

(P3)

Team
identification

(P5)

Unintended Consequences of the Self-Managing Work Design

The classic work design feature highlighted about self-managing teams remains their unequivocal need for autonomy (Manz & Sims, 1986). Langfred (2000) provides a useful taxonomy introducing four different types of self-managing work group designs dependent on the level of individual and group autonomy. He argues that the most common form of a self-managing team described in the literature refers to teams with a high degree of group autonomy coupled with a low degree of individual autonomy (ibid.) As a result, research emphasises collective autonomy in self-managing teams (e.g.

Magpili & Pazos, 2017). Langfred further argues that teams with a high degree of both types of autonomy might be rarer and primarily exist in creative, high-tech industries where the teams only have vague or unspecified goals due to the nature of their work. With the rise of ambiguous knowledge-intensive firms, exactly such self-managing teams with both high levels of autonomy present would be expected to be increasing.

Overall, the high degree of autonomy that self-managing teams are designed to have (Moorhead et al., 1998), can increase stress levels because of the increased decision-making and responsibilities resting on the team (Cruz & Pil, 2011). A 'too-much-of-a-good-thing effect' (Pierce & Aguinis, 2013) was also evident in Langfred's (2004) study on the combination of high individual autonomy and high trust levels in self-managing teams which could negatively affect team performance. Haas (2010) also identified autonomy as a potential detrimental outcome, especially for those workers engaged in knowledge-intensive work, referring to Katz and Allen's (1982) argument of the risk of team isolation due to the 'Not-Invented-Here Syndrome', where the team barricades itself against ideas and knowledge from outside the team. In a study exploring the consequences of the "autonomy paradox", the data also suggested that less autonomy can be better (Michel, 2011). A related key feature of self-managing teams is task interdependence, which in particular, team members with strong preferences for autonomy have the ability to alter (Wageman, 1995). In his longitudinal study of 35 self-managing teams, Langfred (2007) showed that unintentionally trust between members was lowered, and teams would restructure themselves as a result of conflict when task interdependence was loosened and individual autonomy lowered. He further pointed out that self-managing teams are susceptible to higher conflicts with reference to DeLeon (2001) and Vardi and Weitz (2003) because, respectively, members of a self-managing team have a greater potential for and reluctance to deal with conflicts. Another work design feature typical of self-managing teams is cohesiveness. In Janis'(1972) theory on 'groupthink', that is, when groups lack critical and effective thinking in their conflict-preventive strive for unanimity, he argues that social pressures in highly cohesive groups may cause defective decision-making, for example when decision-making becomes polarised within the group. The high level of interaction and dependency on each other in self-managing teams is likely to make them significantly cohesive and exposed to groupthink and defective decision-making (as conformity pressures may do too) (Moorhead et al., 1998; Neck & Manz,

1994). Neck and Manz (1994) further highlight that cohesiveness can foster ineffective thinking processes as it interferes with workers' contributions, innovation and creativity. Since "members of cohesive groups strongly value the rewards controlled by their peers, they are especially likely to engage in behaviour that is congruent with group norms" (Moorhead et al., 1998: 142). Members who fail to do so may risk being "frozen out" or having their actions sanctioned by other members (Hackman, 1977). More recently, the notion of 'group mind' has been introduced, referring to the power of the group to affect individual members' emotions causing them to engage in more extreme behaviour than what they otherwise would do on their own (Barsade & Gibson, 2012). Seen in the light of schemes of incentives and rewards, team-based rewards, according to Haines III and Taggar, may have some unintended consequences in that they "may fail to recognise individual differences and can sometimes encourage free riding, meaning withholding effort in the belief that rewards can be received by letting others do the work" (2006: 194). They further stress that a perception of unfairness tends to be more likely for high performers, as such performers seem to be more disposed to perceive team-based rewards as unfair.

Collectively, this suggests that the self-managing work design does not necessarily only have intended consequences. Indeed, the structural design of self-managing teams may also involve dysfunctional outcomes (Langfred, 2007). Overall, we agree with Johns' (2010) call for more elaboration on the inherent paradoxes and unintended consequences of work design, particularly relational and team designs. Grant and Parker (2009) also emphasise the need for more critical perspectives on the potential dark sides of relational work designs to balance the more mainstream functionalist and positivistic perspectives.

Unintended Consequences of Concertive Control

Reminded by Larson and Tompkins (2005), control is an omnipresent phenomenon in organisations. When the notion of bureaucratic control developed with Max Weber's theory of bureaucracy, it was recognised that control was manifest in social and organisational structures (Edwards, 1979). Aware of bureaucracy's powerful oppression of workers in the constraining mechanisms of rationality, Weber famously coined

bureaucracy 'the iron cage' (Scott & Davis, 2007). The iron cage has since come to resemble how bureaucratic control traps organisational members in the 'irresistible force of high rationality' (Barker, 1993: 410), leaving them with little or no option to break out of the "desirable" control system. Since, bureaucratic control has been a target of criticism, for example by Merton (1936, 1968) and his students (Blau, Gouldner and Selznik) (Jaffee, 2001), and by March and Simon (1958), who theorised about the dysfunctional properties of the bureaucratic organisation as a consequence of regarding individuals as machines.

As the rise of self-managing teams set in, it was accompanied and propelled by a shift in organisational control strategies towards cultural and normative forms of control (Barker, 1993; Barley & Kunda, 1992). Cultural and normative control indeed gained footing in organisations with the rising quest for "winning the hearts and minds" of employees and creating strong corporate cultures "in the search for excellence" (Peters & Waterman, 1982; Scott & Davis, 2007). One such form of control was termed *concertive control* by Tompkins and Cheney (1985), and represented an elaboration and replacement of the traditional and hierarchical management control systems (Ezzamel & Willmott, 1998; Stewart, Courtright, & Barrick, 2012). Adopting and more generally developing the concept, Barker argued that concertive control "grows out of a substantial consensus about values, high-level coordination, and a degree of self-management by members or workers in an organization" (Barker, 1993: 408). As active participants in their own subordination, team members then establish their own norms and behaviour to achieve organisational goals (Sewell, 1998). Thus, concertive control reinforces itself through demands of conformity to and strong identification with a team's norms and values (Barker, 1999). Certainly, such inconspicuous forms of control can be of the most powerful kind, as it allows for controlling the very premises of action (Larson & Tompkins, 2005); what made Barker (1993) refer to concertive control as 'the tightened iron cage'. Establishing identified employees then essentially becomes a mechanism of control (Barker & Tompkins, 1994). This leads us to propose:

> *Proposition 1: A self-managing work design tends to lead to the development of a concertive control system within the team.*

Proposition 2: Members of a concertive control system tends to reinforce a self-managing work design.

As consequences of members implicitly accepting that the collective controls their individual behaviour, concertive control potentially creates an environment that is constraining or even oppressive (Sewell, 1998; Wright & Barker, 2000). Paradoxically, the very empowering nature of concertive control at the same time also limits behavioural freedom for the employee (Papa et al., 1997). Wright and Barker (2000) furthermore argued that the innovativeness of a team might be stifled and result in demotivated and dissatisfied team members. A key feature of the concertive control mechanism is the norms set in self-managing teams, which typically imply a heavy work load and intensity (1993). For example, in Papa et al.'s (1997) empirical study on the mechanisms of concertive control, workers experienced a pressure to work extremely long hours and at times without any free time at the sacrifice of personal life, similar to the perceived workload requirements and sacrifices members experienced in the case study by Deetz (1998). In Michel's (2011) data rich and a decade-long ethnography of Wall Street investment bankers, she also encountered unobtrusive control imposing hard work, long and unpredictable working hours as the norm. Her study further showed that unobtrusively the organisation controlled the bankers' bodies and subsequent actions, which, four years into the study, led to body breakdowns and unintended consequences of decreased creativity, ethics and judgement (Michel, 2011). Serving to uphold and improve performance by setting the standard for normative behaviour, the pressure from peers encourages performance in self-managing teams (Sewell, 1998; Stewart et al., 2012). A downside of such high conformity and performance peer pressure, however, may be resistance (Ezzamel & Willmott, 1998; Larson & Tompkins, 2005), and may affect employee well-being (Avanzi, Van Dick, Fraccaroli, & Sarchielli, 2012), work-life balance and stress levels negatively (Barker, 1999). Reinforced by an on-going desire to be accepted by the other team members as a 'true' teammate, the individual team member tends to conform to prevent any risk of sanctioning (Langfred, 2004; Wright & Barker, 2000). Moreover, failure to conform or perform may even lead to social rejection by the

team (Feldman, 1984), as for example Deetz described; "not sharing in the dream of AIMS [the case company] was heresy punishable by ostracizing" (1998: 167). In Larson and Tompkins' (2005) study of a high-tech aerospace company, the powerful mechanisms of concertive control constrained not only workers, but also managers. Sewell summed it up nicely; "…emerging forms of workplace control may well be, either intentionally or unintentionally, monstrous creations" (1998: 414).

Unintended Consequences of Team Identification

Being a root construct and integral process to organisational life, identification represents when individuals view themselves as pertaining certain qualities of or in relation to a person or social entity (Ashforth, 2016). Most research on identification has adopted a Social Identity Theory (SIT) perspective (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), assuming that individuals have an innate need for a positive sense of being self-maintained by favourable comparisons between one's own group (ingroup) and other groups (outgroups). From such literature, a vast amount of work has documented a positive effect between identification and the organisational members' attitudes and behaviours (e.g. van Dick, Wagner, Stellmacher, & Christ, 2004; van Knippenberg & van Schie, 2000). Subsequently, research is moving beyond functionalistic and static orientations of identification to encompass more critical and interpretivist perspectives, including the view that is both an outcome (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016) and a process (Gutierrez, Howard-Grenville, & Scully, 2010; Kreiner, Hollensbe, Sheep, Smith, & Kataria, 2015).

In connection to control, identification serves to regulate and normalise behaviour of organisational members in its reinforcing facilitation of control (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Kärreman & Alvesson, 2004). To wit, identifying, being committed and self-directed brings out "the most sophisticated level of control" (Edwards, 1979: 150). In his study on self-managing teams, Barker witnessed such strong commitment to and identification with the teams as a bonding process of buying into the concertive system. Such disciplinary powers are also exemplified in Papa et al.'s (1997) study of the Bangladeshi bank 'Graemen', which were unobtrusively masked through work group members' identification. In fact, they identified to such an extent that they partly

sacrificed their personal lives to live up to the expectations of their team members. On the association between control and identification, we therefore propose:

Proposition 3: A self-managing work design with a concertive control system tends to lead to the development and reinforcement of team identification.

Proposition 4: Team identification within a self-managing work design tends to reinforce the concertive control system.

Despite raising the important question a decade ago: 'how inevitable is the dark side of group identification?' (Ashforth, Harrison, & Corley, 2008, p. 349), there is still surprisingly little emphasis on the consequences of identification with teams. Yet, the existing exceptions to follow show that consequences are more likely to occur when identification becomes (too) strong, also referred to as overidentification (Ashforth, 2016; Avanzi et al., 2012). Specifically, we focus on team identification (interchangeably referred to as group identification), suiting the suggestions that workers are most strongly attached to the work group as the closest and most salient social unit (Barker & Tompkins, 1994; Riketta & Van Dick, 2005), in contradiction to the overwhelming focus on the organisation as the target (Ashforth, 2016). Nevertheless, due to the limited research on the dark sides of team identification, we include the key consequences of identification with other targets (these are explicitly stated), because identification is multifaceted and multitargeted, meaning that spillover effects between targets are likely to occur (Ashforth, 2016; van Knippenberg & van Schie, 2000).

To begin with, consequences of identification can develop from the implicit yet constant comparisons between groups, which at the cost of strengthening team membership and ingroup favouritism may foster outgroup discrimination (Ashforth et al., 2008; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In fact, the mere awareness of an outgroup may provoke competitiveness and discriminatory behaviour towards outgroups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Richter et al. (2004) also found that team identification was negatively related to effective intergroup relations. As team members are guided towards fitting the prototype

of the salient ingroup, members who are non-prototypical, marginal or clearly deviates from the ingroup members risk being negatively sanctioned (Dedrick, 1978) or rejected as deviants, also called the "black sheep effect" (Ellemers & Rink, 2005; Hogg & Terry, 2000). In addition, a strong sense of shared social identity can make team members "stick to their guns" to the extent that they maintain committed to projects that have failed (Haslam et al., 2006). Too, it can make members more sensitive and vulnerable to evaluative judgements from other ingroup members, as opposed to judgements received from people outside the group (Ellemers & Rink, 2005).

In Dukerich et al.'s (1998) discussion on the dark side of overidentification in and with the organisation, they highlight four unintended consequences. First, the level of trust in other members is often overly high, which may result in members not taking necessary action, in the belief that others will do so; equal to free riding. Secondly, members may lose the ability to question what the organisation (or team) does and become ethically and legally blinded, intentionally or unintentionally leading to unethical or illegal behaviour. A third concern emphasised is an unwarranted or wrongful protection of others or the organisation. Lastly, they argued that members experience threats to their individual identity as a sacrifice of identification with the collective, resulting in a dismantlement of personal identity, or even aggressive and antisocial behaviour.

Along the same lines, Leavitt and Sluss (2015) theorised that identity threats were more sensitive with heightened identification, and could increase the likelihood of lying. Recent work further pointed towards individuals who have to cope with processes of dual identification such as identifying both with a profession and a team, leading to role conflict and stress (Conroy, Henle, Shore, & Stelman, 2017). Barker found that team members had to "pay the price" of identification, meaning doing whatever it took to be a team player, including subjecting to the power relationships and willingly investing one's individual identity in the team (Barker, 1999). In the case study by Deetz (1998), workers also had to invest their individual identity, almost to the extent where the connection to their work was stronger than that to their families and private life. In the first empirical study on the potential negative effects of overidentification, Avanzi et al. (2012) found that when identification became too strong, workaholism (excessive work commitment) increased and individual well-being was negatively affected. Similarly, Li, Fan, and Zhao

(2015) found that job and life satisfaction was negatively affected by organisational identification through work-to-family conflicts.

Clearly, overidentification can become problematic in high-demand organisations that seek to maximise workers' loyalty and commitment to an extent that they become "greedy" (Coser, 1974). Knowledge-intensive firms are, for example, more dominated by the new forms of control in their reliance on intellectual capital (Deetz, 1998), such as Robertson and Swan's (2003) case study showed how retaining a highly committed workforce with a high demand for autonomy was facilitated through a strong culture based on elitism. The new ways of organising, such as the increase of knowledge work, has indeed changed the nature and related consequences of control (Langfred & Rockmann, 2016). Regrettably, however, there is still limited insight into unobtrusive forms of control within knowledge-based organisations (Michel, 2011). This suggests that self-managing and relational work designs are particularly susceptible to consequences related to control and identification. In sum, the unintended consequences associated with self-managing teams (see table 2 for an overview) lead us to the final proposition:

Proposition 5: A self-managing team with a concertive control system and team identification is likely to increase the likelihood of unintended consequences.

TABLE 2

Integrative Framework of Unintended Consequences

Antecedents	Unintended Consequences			Authors
	Individual	*Group/Team*	*Organisation*	
Self-Managing Work Design				
High autonomy	Well-being negatively affected Stress	Performance negatively affected	Not-Invented-Here Syndrome	Schwartz (2004) Cruz and Pil (2011) Langfred (2004), Haas (2010) Katz & Allen (1982)
Task interdependence		Lower trust* Team restructuring* Higher conflicts		Langfred (2007) Langfred (2007) DeLeon (2001), Langfred (2007)
Cohesiveness/hom ogeneity	Ineffective thinking processes Frozen out Actions sanctioned	Defective decision-making** Groupthink** Group mind		Neck and Manz (1994), Moorhead et al. (1998) Neck and Manz (1994), Moorhead et al. (1998) Neck & Manz (1994) Hackman (1977) Hackman (1977) Barsade and Gibson (2012)
Team-based work and rewards	Unfairness	Free riding		Haines III and Taggar (2006) Haines III and Taggar (2006)

Control system				
Constraining environment	Oppressive environment Demotivation Dissatisfaction Limits behavioural freedom	Stifles innovation		Sewell (1998) Wright & Barker (2000) Wright & Barker (2000) Wright & Barker (2000) Wright & Barker (2000) Papa et al. (1997)
Heavy workload	Sacrifice of personal life Body breakdowns		Decreased creativity Decreased ethics Decreased judgement	Barker (1993), Papa et al. (1997), Deetz (1998) Michel (2011) Michel (2011) Michel (2011) Michel (2011)
Conformity pressure	Well-being negatively affected Work-life-balance Sanctioning Rejection Ostracising			Avanzi et al. (2012) Barker (1999) Wright & Barker (2000) Feldman (1984) Deetz (1998)
Performance pressure	Well-being negatively affected Work-life-balance negatively affected Sanctioning Rejection			Avanzi et al. (2012) Barker (1999) Wright and Barker (2000) Feldman (1984)
Devotion to the concertive value-system			Resistance to change	Larson and Tompkins (2005)

Identification				
Ingroup membership and favouritism	Sanctioning Rejection due to "black sheep effect" Sensitivity and vulnerability		Outgroup discrimination Ineffective intergroup relations Commitment to failed projects	Tajfel and Turner (1979), Ashforth et al. (2008) Richter et al. (2004) Dedrik (1978) Hogg and Terry (2000), Ellemers & Rink (2005) Haslam et al. (2006) Ellemers & Rink (2005)
High trust			Free riding	Dukerich et al. (1998)
Lack ethical and legal accountability			Unethical or illegal behaviour Unwarranted or wrongful protection	Dukerich et al. (1998) Dukerich et al. (1998)
Threats to identity	Dismantlement of individual identity		Aggressive and antisocial behaviour Lying	Dukerich et al. (1998) Dukerich et al. (1998) Leavitt & Sluss (2015)
"Paying the price"	Investing individual identity			Deetz (1998), Barker (1999)
Dual identification	Role conflict Stress			Conroy (2017) Conroy (2017)
Workaholism	Well-being negatively affected			Avanzi et al. (2012)
Work-to-family conflict	Job satisfaction negatively affected Life satisfaction negatively affected			Li, Fan & Zhao (2015) Li, Fan & Zhao (2015)

*Also a consequence if individual autonomy is lowered

**Also a consequence of conformity pressures

DISCUSSION

We have proposed that the self-managing work design, concertive control and team identification serve as antecedents of unintended consequences in self-managing teams. Surely, these imbricated mechanisms may develop to varying degrees and in various forms depending on the given context. After elaborating on the distinctive levels of significance, we turn to consider why such inherent paradoxes of self-managing teams needs to be embraced.

Individual Consequences

Based on our examination of unintended consequences, there is reason to expect that organising in self-managing teams is more likely to foster unintended consequences at the individual level relative to the group and organisational level. These consequences primarily relate to the individual's psychological well-being and aspects of work-life-balance, and are not exclusively relevant to a specific category of employees (blue versus white-collar workers). The assumption that the individual is the recipient mostly exposed to consequences is palpable, if, for instance, it instead was the organisation, the managerial attractiveness of self-managing teams would certainly have caught up with their practice. It could also explain why managers may not have awareness of the downsides of self-managing work designs, and/or that the members associate or explain it away with other work-related aspects. This may further negatively affect the overall potential for effectively reducing such counter-productive consequences.

Group Consequences

The identified group level consequences, in comparison to the individual ones, are closer related to those associated with those of the organisation as several overlapped or lacked a distinction in the literature. The consequences are mainly characterised by performance hindrances such as defective group thinking processes (Moorhead et al., 1998; Neck & Manz, 1994), and, to a lesser extent, social relations e.g. free riding (Haines III & Taggar, 2006). From what can be observed, the group may not be that affected by consequences stemming from the concertive control system and team identification, but by the work

design itself. This suggests that if care is taken to the work design, such as a not too high level of autonomy or too much cohesiveness, the team does not per se experience unintended consequences. Adding to that, it may explain why individual and organisational level consequences sometimes take place unnoticed or are misdirected, because the team as a whole appears to be, possibly even to its own members, well-functioning.

Organisational Consequences

The organisational level consequences are either performance-related, such as workers' resistance to change or decreased judgement (Michel, 2011), or related to less effective intergroup relations, such as the Not-Invented-Here Syndrome (Katz & Allen, 1982). The consequences seem to occur primarily when team members strongly identify with their self-managing team, somewhat contradicting the mainly positive views on identification within the identification literature. Noteworthy, the spillover effects between levels eventually indirectly imply organisational consequences. For example, the organisation will ultimately be affected by turnover as a result of members' negatively affected well-being, or if innovation is stifled within a team. While most organisations probably do not experience extreme consequences such as illegal behaviour, it is not unimaginable that individuals experience consequences that may lead to ineffective teamwork hurtful for performance. Unintended consequences for the individual, group or organisation might then spur further consequences in a vicious rather than a virtuous manner.

Embracing the Paradox of Self-Managing Teams

Embracing the paradox of self-managing teams requires recognising inherently opposing and interlinked consequences and thus dealing with both types of consequences, including the less desirable, unintended consequences that come along with the intended ones. Not only balancing the largely positive view on self-managing teams, we have provided a more fine-grained and integrated understanding of the negative consequences than previously known. Identifying the existing unintended consequences crucially draws attention to aspects that are potential and to some degree inherent to organising in self-managing teams. More importantly, when the level of significance is largely distinguishable, it enables an understanding of why such consequences may occur with little awareness. For instance, the individual organisational member is more likely to experience unintended consequences than the team and the organisation as a whole. An explanation for this could be grounded the paradoxical poles (e.g. intended and unintended consequences) operating simultaneously and at different levels (Clegg, da Cunha, & e Cunha, 2002), such as high autonomy might work well for some purposes at some level, but not others. Still, continuous and purposeful responses to the paradox and the potential consequences to follow are needed in order to sustain long-term success (Smith & Lewis, 2011). If key unintended consequences are not attended to, they are likely to result in further, and perhaps more extreme side effects, such as high autonomy leading to stress (Cruz & Pil, 2011), or a heavy workload leading to body breakdowns (Michel, 2011), ultimately resulting in burnout and poor retention of workers. In that sense, the issues self-managing teams with their introduction were assumed to resolve, such as the demand for autonomy, paradoxically spurred other constraining issues (Putnam (1986) in Lüscher & Lewis, 2008). Unintended consequences, tensions and contradictions are parts of the everyday, paradoxical nature of organising that will never evaporate, yet in embracing the existence and relational nature between poles (such as self-managing teams hold both intended and unintended consequences), synthesis can be achieved that mutually supports the interaction between the two (Clegg et al., 2002).

LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Although we by no means can claim to have identified all the existing consequences of self-managing teams, rather, we have attempted to do so through what, based on the literature, we argue are the prevailing antecedents of unintended consequences; the work design, concertive control and team identification. In addition, the integrative framework infers no claims over the significance and frequency of consequences, and, certainly, quantity may delude significance. It could, for instance, be argued that the dark side of identification is a more researched topic than that of the other two antecedents, adding to a larger representation of consequences. This applies for the level affected too; the individual level of analyses may have been preferred to group level ones. To that, Merton (1936) rightly warned us about causal imputation; can an unintended consequence be attributed to a certain action, i.e. are the consequences really (or only) connected to self-managing teams? Building on these limitations, we suggest future work to go a step further by examining which consequences are of importance at which organisational levels and under which conditions, especially in reflection of today's increasingly knowledge-based organisational landscape, and under new ways of working such a remote working. Future work could, for example, address how individual member's commitment to their professional network influences autonomy, interdependence and effectiveness in self-managing teams (Mazmanian, Orlikowski, & Yates, 2013) or shed more light on the individual and contextual influences that promote unintended consequences of identification (Conroy et al., 2017). This allows for considering the findings' transferability to other contexts, which will assist in addressing the possibility of causal imputation of the identified consequences (Merton, 1936). Overall, with the aim of building new and/or extending existing theory, especially qualitative research methods are useful to accommodate the rather nascent research area (Grant & Parker, 2009; Sewell, 1998; Yeatts & Hyten, 1998).

How can managers and team members then appreciate the paradox of self-managing, and therein the everyday and potentially long-term unintended consequences? Indeed, this pertains to the question still not fully addressed: how are self-managing teams to be managed? In itself, this is a matter causing confusion, ambiguity and a paradox (Manz & Sims, 1986, p. 144). Certainly, the leaders, to whom a self-managing team reports, are confronted by a demanding, complex and very different role from that of

leading traditional teams, and they should ideally involve both hands-on and hands-off strategies and behaviours (Druskat & Wheeler, 2003). By studying how managers approached a restructuring to self-managing teams, Lüscher and Lewis (2008) found that managers were able to find means of living with tensions by 'working through' paradoxes of performing, belonging and organising by practices of paradoxical inquiry. It may be helpful, therefore, if team members and managers embrace the paradoxical consequences through a 'paradox mindset', that is, in the context of teams, acknowledging and accepting the tensions between the individual's needs and that of others (Miron-Spektor, Ingram, Keller, Smith, & Lewis, 2018). In other words, appreciating and managing the interplay and consequences between the competition and cooperation, that is, on the micro-level, between the self and others (Keller, Loewenstein, & Yan, 2017; Schad et al., 2016). Ultimately, a paradox mindset encouraged members and managers to cope with, feel comfortable with, even strive with the consequences they experience in their everyday work life (Miron-Spektor et al., 2018).

Attending to "the other side of the same coin" of self-managing teams is not to undermine their beneficial aspects, nor in any way to oppose their continuous use. On the contrary, this is exactly why it is important to treat with caution their design, implementation and managing. By embracing the paradox of self-managing, the manifestation of inherent unintended consequences they carry can be better understood. This neither erases nor resolves the always-existing dark side of organising in self-managing teams – but it can assist virtuous rather vicious responses to their manifestations.

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CHAPTER 5

Paper II

It Takes Work: How Relational Processes of Socialisation Construct Newcomers' Identification in Work Groups

Conference Contributions

Previous versions of this paper were presented at the *10th International Process Symposium* (PROS), Halkidiki, 2018, and at the *78th Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management* (AOM), Chicago, 2018. The paper was nominated for Best Paper at the Organizational Behaviour (OB) Division at AOM, and included in the conference proceedings.

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It Takes Work: How Relational Processes of Socialisation Construct Newcomers' Identification in Work Groups

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ABSTRACT

As all organisations must face the socialisation of newcomers, increasingly they too must ensure that individuals come to identify with the work group, they enter into and become a part of. By a longitudinal ethnography of two work groups from two knowledge-based organisations over a two-and-a-half-year stretch, I explore how newcomers' identification processes are implicated by processes of socialisation. The study demonstrates how the perceived distance between newcomers and experienced group members make newcomers engage in 'identification work'; work practices that make them more like their fellow experienced group members and fosters identification with their group. Correspondingly, existing group members engage in 'socialisation work', work practices that either hinder or foster the socialisation process of newcomers. Reflecting the norms and values in the groups, group members in addition determine acceptance processes, by which newcomers become considered as full group members. Together, these relational processes of socialisation construct how newcomers' come to identify with their work group. This research adds to and holds implications for the existing literatures on identification and socialisation by showing that socialisation of newcomers consist of relational processes between group members, and by being inextricably intertwined with newcomers' identification processes. In addition, is signifies that it takes work from all group members in socialising newcomers through the practices group members collectively engage.

INTRODUCTION

"We are three heroes; Hans, me and Svend. We have known each other for a long time, I know what they can, I can trust them and I don't need to check up on things. And then there's this whole pool of new [group members]…" (Frederik, experienced group member, Vigus)

The desire to feel part of something we all have within us – just like the experienced group member in the above quote identifies as one of the "hero" group members. Too, there is this "whole pool of new" group members, who, albeit formally being part of the group, are not yet considered full group members. With the muddled distinction between people's work and private lives, not even to mention the time we spend working, there is no novelty in our need to belong and identify in and with organisations. In the abundance of literature on identification, however, not much attention is given to *how* identification develops during socialisation, despite being - obviously on most occasions - the starting point of identification with a given work unit. Naturally, all organisations face socialisation of their newcomers, and they too increasingly must ensure that these newcomers come to identify with the work group they enter into and become a part of. Still, understanding processes of informal socialisation (as opposed to formal socialisation based on organisational initiatives), including how socialisation agents and relationships between newcomers and peers influence newcomers' identification and socialisation process is underexplored and underestimated in current research (Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Feldman, 1994; Korte, 2009; Sluss, Ployhart, Cobb, & Ashforth, 2012; Smith, Amiot, Callan, Terry, & Smith, 2012). Yet, such significant others in a newcomer's work unit during the socialisation process cannot be neglected or downplayed, because identifying and becoming part of a group is "both something we do to ourselves and something we do to each other" (Wenger, 1998, p. 191). Yet, existing research largely overlooks approaching identification and socialisation from a process perspective (Ashforth, Harrison, & Corley, 2008; Langley, Smallman, Tsoukas, & Van de Ven, 2013). Adding to that, although it is recognised that it is through practices that we become members of a community, such as a work group (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Work practices are viewed broadly as regimes of 'sayings' and 'doings'

(Nicolini & Monteiro, 2017). Most emphasis, however, has been put on the community such a group, and not as much on the practices involved (Duguid, 2005), and thereby the *work* members actually engage in.

This study addresses the abovementioned issues related to the processes of identification and socialisation by asking *how are newcomers' identification processes implicated in processes of socialisation in work groups?* Through an over two-and-a-half-year longitudinal ethnography of two self-managing groups from knowledge-based organisations, I explore how newcomers are socialised through work practices into work groups. The fieldwork was carried out in two phases amounting to 15 months, the first phases for nine months in both organisations, the second for four months in one and six months in the other. Based on the fieldwork analysis, I propose a conceptualisation of such work practices. First, newcomers engaged in what may be called 'identification work'; work practices that fostered their identification with their respective group. This is distinguished from 'identity work', where individuals engage in work that (re)builds a sense of coherence and distinctiveness in relation to self-identity (Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2004, p. 1165). 'Identification work', instead, underscores the process of constructing, maintaining and strengthening, and thereby feelings of belongingness with a given social entity, person or relation. Second, existing group members engaged in what I term 'socialisation work', that is, work practices that either encouraged or discouraged newcomers' socialisation process, whereby identification was also strengthened. Finally, based on the negotiated norms and values of the group, members established acceptance processes, which determined how newcomers came to be considered and accepted as full group members. Collectively, these relational processes of socialisation came to construct newcomers' identification with their group during the socialisation process. Taken together, the study contributes to the current literatures on identification and socialisation by unpacking the processes by which newcomers' identification develops during socialisation in demonstrating *how* identification is constructed through collective practices in groups. More precisely, I attempt to develop socialisation theory by conceptualising identification work, socialisation work and acceptance processes as relational processes of socialisation. Taken together, these practices construct newcomers' identification with their group under informal socialisation processes. I therefore seek to elaborate theory within and between the fields of identification and

socialisation; processes that are not just relevant, but inescapable to every individual entering organisational life.

IDENTIFICATION AND SOCIALISATION IN GROUPS

Identification as a Process

"We all identify" was the statement Pratt (1998, p. 171) made in response to our innate human needs to feel safe, self-esteem, holism and to belong. It is how we navigate our surroundings; how we make sense of (organisational) life (Ashforth et al., 2008). Thus, identification remains an everlasting topic for organisations and organisational scholars (Ashforth, 1998; Haslam & Ellemers, 2011). A vast amount of literature on identity and identification clearly shows how organisations and their employees benefit from identifying (Pratt, 1998; van Knippenberg & van Schie, 2000). While much research has focused on identification with an organisation, identification is often stronger with the work group, because it is easier to extract sameness and familiarity with a smaller and closer unit (Barker & Tompkins, 1994; Richter, Van Dick, & West, 2004; van Knippenberg & van Schie, 2000). Responding to that, it is identification with the group level in organisations (including identification with e.g. teams) that is the focus here. Developed by Tajfel and Turner (e.g. Tajfel, 1974; 1986), Social Identity Theory (SIT) is the mainstream approach to research on identification with groups, and was indeed designed with the purpose of studying groups. Since Ashforth and Mael's definition of social identification as "the perception of oneness with or belongingness to a group" (1989, p. 34), the once stable and somewhat linear view on identification is now coming to acknowledge identification as a relational process (Gutierrez, Howard-Grenville, & Scully, 2010). From such a view, existing members of a particular community need to recognise a (new) member as a participant as well, that is, membership must be negotiated with others (Wenger, 1998). Identification is thus not considered a state of being at a certain point in time or a binary variable; but an ongoing process of 'becoming' (Ashforth et al., 2008; Ashforth, Schinoff, & Rogers, 2016; Langley et al., 2013). Specifically, the study builds on work considering identification to involve elements of both stability and

process (Gutierrez et al., 2010; Kreiner, Hollensbe, Sheep, Smith, & Kataria, 2015), including both "intense episodes" and "offline identity processing and stability" (Ashforth et al., 2008, p. 340), and as both a process and an outcome (Ashforth, Harrison, & Sluss, 2014). Also, I acknowledge that identification occurs simultaneously and complementary at multiple levels and targets within organisations (Ashforth et al., 2016; Sluss et al., 2012). With an emphasis on process, this study goes beyond the SIT theory approach and questions of why identification occurs by exploring and seeking to understand *how* individuals come to identify (Ashforth et al., 2008). An obvious - but oftentimes only mentioned in passing - starting point when wanting to understand how individuals come to identify is to study it from its very beginning; when members first enter their working unit and go through the process of socialisation.

Identification during Socialisation

As part of understanding and acting within the context of an organisation, newcomers seek to build a self-definition, which their social identity is integral to. Who one is, is thus related to one's sense of *where* one is and *what* is expected of others (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). A transcendence between "who have I been", "who am I now" and "who I might become" (Ashforth et al., 2008) – the process of becoming – is therefore obvious to address during socialisation (Ashforth et al., 2014). Organisational socialisation theory originates from Van Maanen and Schein's work, who define socialisation as "the fashion in which an individual is taught and learns what behaviors and perspectives are customary and desirable within the work setting as well as what ones are not" (1979, pp. 211-212). Socialisation too is considered a process (Ashforth et al., 2014; Langley et al., 2013), one which is continuously renewed through relations of persons, actions and the world in which they evolve (Lave & Wenger, 1991). From that view, socialisation occurs throughout the maintenance of a particular role, although the view has been to treat socialisation as representing the early, most tricky period of an role (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Further, I view socialisation as based on event time involving nonlinear events of experiences and eventually processes of sensemaking, as opposed to clock time, viewing socialisation as a linear adjustment phase during a specific time (Ashforth et al., 2014).

There are well-established links between socialisation and, among others, job satisfaction, commitment, organisational identification, stress symptoms and intentions to quit (Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Korte, 2009; Smith et al., 2012; Van Maanen, 1975). Identification has been connected to socialisation in earlier work, such as by Buchanan (1974), who examined managers' commitment during their socialisation in part through an identification scale, or Bullis and Bach (1989), who found that receiving informal recognition and feedback profoundly boosted organisational identification during socialisation through a turning points analysis. Most recent research has been of quantitative character (Ashforth et al., 2014), for instance, on the relationship between institutional socialisation tactics and organisational identification (Ashforth & Saks, 1996), newcomers' relational and organisational identification (Sluss et al., 2012) or changes in organisational prestige and identification in newcomers (Zhu, Tatachari, & Chattopadhyay, 2017). In theoretical work, the relation between identification and socialisation is often just mentioned in passing, though Ashforth, Schinoff, and Rogers' (2016) recent piece on the positive influence mentors and protégés have a on one another in fostering personal, and eventually organisational identification, is a fine exception to this. Identification then, could still be the "dark horse of the socialisation process" (Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003, p. 950). There is thus limited work considering both identification and socialisation, despite encouraging remarks by several scholars for decades, in particular for longitudinal, ethnographic studies (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Ashforth et al., 2014; Pratt, 1998; Sluss et al., 2012). Moreover, although it is recognised that it is through practices that we become members of a community such as a work group (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), most emphasis has been put on the community, and not as much on the practices involved (Duguid, 2005), and thereby the actual *work* members engage in. Finally, little research has attempted to address identification and socialisation from a process perspective, leaving opportunities for future work (Ashforth et al., 2008; Langley et al., 2013). Although some agree with the view that the process of becoming is inherent to the process of socialisation (e.g. Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Sluss et al., 2012), overall, there is reason to believe that the dynamics between identification and socialisation has yet to marvel within the respective fields of research.

Moving Inwards through Participation

As newcomers go through the process of learning, they must negotiate their membership with the community to which they enter (Wenger, 1998). In that sense, they become by others an accepted, central and valuable working member (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Moving inwards to becoming a member can, according to Van Maanen and Schein, be characterised as "going from an outsider, to a marginally accepted novice group member, to a confederate of sorts who assists other members on certain selected matters, to a confidant or intimate of others who fully shares in all the social, cultural, and task related affairs of the group" (1979, p. 222). Agreeing that newcomers during socialisation move inwards and become less peripheral, a stark contrast between being an outsider and insider e.g. of a group is not assumed. Rather, newcomers become experienced members by legitimate peripheral participation, that is, through participation members become part of the culture and practices of the group, which may eventually lead to full participation as a group member (Lave & Wenger, 1991). It is, to wit, the recognition of a shared culture, legitimate action and boundary what creates belonging in organisational life (Fine & Hallett, 2014). Such boundary setting is what distinguishes members from non-members, what makes a group emerge and persist, and may involve social thresholds for how easy or difficult it is for newcomers to become accepted as a part of (Hernes, 2004). However, it can be extremely difficult to know exactly what is needed from newcomers in gaining (full) group membership. On the one hand, Van Maanen and Schein (1979) argue that for newcomers to be accepted they need to be considered by others as central, trustworthy and affable, which is unlikely to occur unless they are perceived to be similar to the existing members themselves. Cable, Gino, and Staats (2013), on the other hand, suggested that when socialisation emphasised that newcomers bring with them their authentic best selves, and thus their own identities instead of seeking to incorporate that of the organisation, the result would be increased satisfaction, performance and less turnover. To be authentic, however, would to some extent require that newcomers are in an environment in which they find themselves confident to be just that - and to be recognised for it by their fellow group members. For example, cultures of elitism found in some knowledge-based organisations (Alvesson & Robertson, 2006) may not allow for such authenticity. It is, nonetheless, at the early stages of membership, that the shaping of the individual is greater than at any other point (Buchanan, 1974), and especially so

when becoming accepted by others (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Therefore, when a work group affirms a newcomer's actions as normative for the group, the feelings of acceptance will encourage the newcomer to reciprocate with (increased) identification (Smith et al., 2012). Gaining membership in a community and constructing an identity around it, thus requires both work of identification and work of negotiability with the existing group members (Wenger, 1998).

METHODOLOGY

An Ethnographic Method

Allowing for the description and explanation of human actions and for constructing meaning of social dynamics and processes (Spradley, 1980), ethnography was a natural choice of method in understanding the processes within groups. By way of ethnography, in the words of Van Maanen (1979, p. 540), I wished to "uncover and explicate the ways in which people in particular work settings come to understand, account for, take action, and otherwise manage their day-to-day situation". Inquiries of action (including what is said) that are guided by the socially shared rules and norms and by social actors passed on to newcomers during socialisation are central to ethnography (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Besides, ethnographic methods is one of the favoured ways of capturing nuances of processes, in its ability to study the every-day micro dynamics and studying processes over time (Langley et al., 2013; Van Hulst, Ybema, & Yanow, 2017). In the complexity of studying groups over time, however, longitudinal process studies of groups are scant in existing research (Cronin, Weingart, & Todorova, 2011). This study meets thus meets this call as an ethnography adopting a process view exploring the long-term dynamics within the studied groups (Van Hulst et al., 2017).

The importance of focusing on the group, meso-organisational level is anchored in its mediating role between the individual and the organisation in the everyday organisational life; it is where interactions are enacted and practised (what Goffman calls the interaction order) (Fine & Hallett, 2014; Goffman, 1983). Since the study was carried out in two groups from different organisations in two phases over a two-and-half-year stretch, the data and analysis obviously reflect two different settings and group cultures.

Nevertheless, the focus is not to specifically compare the two groups, rather, to understand the processes, which came about in the two groups within similar, knowledge-based settings. In addition, studying two groups strengthened the understanding of the phenomena of interest by data source as well as method triangulation (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). With the purpose of creating "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1973), care was therefore taken to show the data as complete as possible by including different viewpoints from both groups (Langley, 1999).

The Empirical Setting

Two knowledge-based organisations; Vigus Energy Technologies A/S (Vigus) and the Scandinavian Infrastructure Consultancy (SIC) (both pseudonyms), make the empirical setting of this study. The organisations were selected based on their "typical" features of organisations devoted to aspects of self-management work designs - settings that assisted capturing informal processes of socialisation. I wanted to explore groups in knowledge-based organisations precisely because they pose challenges in relation to identity (Robertson & Swan, 2003), and because identification is typically strong in self-managing groups, as workers become highly entangled with the existing group's norms and value-system (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Barker, 1999). Two organisational units, one from each company, were selected as good examples of self-running groups both from R&D departments. Both organisations are situated in Denmark and posed relatively similar features, see table 3 for specificities. Whilst the fortunate newcomers received an introductory day to the organisation, a few informal training sessions plus somewhat sporadic mentorships, what newcomers remained to learn to perform their role was in general considered to be managed by and happen within the groups with a learning-by-doing approach. Interestingly, this was also how experienced group members had learning their own role back when they entered the organisation. Both groups suffered under similar industry conditions – Vigus was in a relatively new and highly competitive industry, whilst SIC was responding to demands of becoming an independent field within their industry – both of which resulted in a scarcity of soundly experienced workers.

TABLE 3

Features of Vigus and SIC*

	Vigus	SIC
No. of employees	*8,000*	*7,000*
No. of group members	*10*	*15*
No. of different nationalities	*8*	*3*
Female group members	*2*	*2*
Age range	*20s-40s*	*20s-50s*
Group leader	*Yes*	*No*
Section manager	*No*	*Yes*

*The presented figures are, of course, approximates as they changed during the study, but attempt to reflect "moments of stability"

Vigus.

The manufacturing company Vigus is one of the leading energy companies in the world. In a fast growing and relatively new industry, Vigus was a first mover and has expanded extensively over the last decade. Financially, Vigus was doing well and more people were hired into the group during the first part of the study. The group members were unified in being specialised in their area, and while members worked on multiple and different projects, the studied group was their primary group. In broad terms, the aim of the group was to develop and improve Vigus' products in close coordination with other groups and various stakeholders. The group in Vigus was culturally very heterogeneous and the company language was English. At the second fieldwork phase, many things had changed at Vigus; new group members had joined whilst others left, a new group leader was appointed, and on top of that, radical organisational changes were underway resulting in a sudden and complete halt in intake of new employees, and the group became split in two groups. I remained connected to members of both groups, but I focused on the group, which was the continuation of the former studied group.

SIC.

The major international infrastructure consultancy SIC had also grown financially over the last few years, and with an expanding intake of new projects, new group members continued coming. With few members of non-Danish origin, the language spoken in the group was Danish, as were SIC's company documents. The group and the organisation were therefore culturally more homogenous than in Vigus and most of the group members also stayed in the group during the study. The group's aim was to run projects in which they designed and upgraded products, all of which was achieved in collaboration with other departments and stakeholders. The group was a mix of specialists and project leaders working on different projects, but again the members' primary group reflected a specific field within the infrastructure industry. The most remarkable change during the study was that the group moved to new office buildings, partly dispersed from the rest of the company.

Data Collection

Over a period of a bit more than two and a half years, I studied two knowledge-based organisations simultaneously in two phases totalling 15 months of fieldwork. The first five months were dedicated to observations and informal interviews about two days a week, one day in each organisation. From then on, formal interviews with group members were carried out one or two per week alongside continued observations, amounting to nine months in the first phase of fieldwork. After withdrawal from both organisations for one and a half year, I re-entered the field for four months in Vigus and six months in SIC after reflection and initial analysis, with the purpose of validating the emerging findings. I had no knowledge of organisational members or the work conducted prior to the organisations' acceptance of taking part in the study. For this reason, and due to the nature of highly technical and heavy screen-based work, admittedly, it was difficult to get "immersed into their culture" (Spradley, 1980). Despite no less challenging and complex, yet allowing for further interaction with and observation of group members, I initiated shadowing, meaning that I followed members around during their working day (Czarniawska, 2008). This included attending various meetings from small informal to large formal meetings, whether that was face-to-face or online meetings. The second

fieldwork phase involved more focused observations and interviews of especially new, but also some old group members, and I therefore ceased structured shadowing and meeting attendance (unless considered relevant). Between moments of being a quiet observer throughout the study, I interacted with group members during timed lunch breaks, sporadic breaks, "jumping in on" conversations and asking novice questions when possible. The field notes thus mirrored the daily lives of members plus my thoughts and reflections underway. A role of moderate participant observer was adopted in the sphere between being an outsider and insider (Spradley, 1980). This time of "hanging out" (Dingwall, 1997) was very important in understanding and becoming part of their worlds – essentially becoming socialised myself (Van Hulst et al., 2017) - and in establishing some form of psychological bond with group members. Too, is assisted the subsequent formal semi-structured interviews, in total of which 55 were conducted (28 from the first phase of the study, 27 from the second phase), 27 from Vigus and 28 from SIC, all of which are anonymised. I also included archival data in the form of publicly available and employee material as background knowledge. All the interviews were recorded, fully transcribed and, together with the remaining data, analysed in NVivo 11. About half of the interviews were conducted in Danish, the other half in English (at the informant's choice); the quotes used from the Danish transcriptions have in consequence been translated.

Data Analysis

I set off with the broad research question 'how are consequences of self-managing groups manifested in knowledge-based organisations?' Zooming in from an exploratory phase to one of focus, I allowed my lens to be adjusted and transformed during the process of data collection and analysis in discovering "what the research is really about" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 160). From the beginning on, an unanticipated pattern kept resurfacing; experienced members were really busy whereas newcomers had little work to do – unsatisfactory for group members and ineffective for the otherwise busy groups. Newcomers were extremely dependent on the goodwill of experienced members in socialising them, and as a result, they influenced newcomers' journey of becoming full functioning group members. Whilst embarking on the second phase of fieldwork, I

therefore started contemplating about how newcomers' identification process in work groups are implicated in processes of socialisation. While socialisation was not initially of interest per se, I allowed the research to steer in unknown directions and as the theories which had initially carried me no longer held, for a length of time, the data carried me. Generally, the analytical approach was inspired by ethnographic thematic analysis (Spradley, 1979, 1980; Van Maanen, 1979) and grounded theory, for instance by the use of constant comparison in the development of categories (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Accordingly, the analysis was initiated with open coding consisting of in vivo sentences or chunks of sentences in the sense "what is this a case of", "a way of" "a result of", and so forth (Spradley, 1979). The similarities and differences of categories were then compared, and the categories hierarchically structured while continuously returning to the raw data again to add or elicit further categories (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Having multiple hierarchical trees, I started to focus on specific trees of interest and moved from the fairly descriptive categories to the development of more interpretive and conceptual categories, which theoretically organised and explained the more descriptive categories (Van Maanen, 1979). The outcome was a set of categories plus a sketchy illustration of how the categories were related before re-entering the field. I then went over the data once again during and after the second fieldwork phase with the additional data; cutting, adding, incorporating and refining the findings. Besides allowing time for reflection, the two-phase longitudinal design indeed made possible an iterative process and refinement of the coding and analytical work.

FINDINGS

Newcomers' Socialisation Processes

At a glance, the two groups were very alike – members were dedicated, ambitious and highly skilled engineers working under pressures of deadlines, performance and high workload. Members enjoyed the autonomy and responsibility that came with a flat management structure; certainly a predominant feeling was that of freedom. Yet, a recurring and continuous dilemma was for new members entering the groups to become more experienced through a socialisation process that above everything was individual, informal and somewhat random. In that sense, newcomers learned what they had to do

"the hard way (laughing); trying, making it wrong and then trying again… Because all the tasks I had were some ideas in the heads of people" (Madalina, newcomer, Vigus). During such socialisation processes, I witnessed how newcomers attempted to go from being idle, clueless, dependent, unsatisfied and uncomfortable to being busy, skilled, independent, satisfied and acknowledged – on the journey from being a newcomer to an experienced group member. Especially the newcomers without experience from previous jobs had a hard time getting hands on work and getting enough of it, as one laughingly remarked about his workload; "right now? 10 %" (Christopher, newcomer, SIC). Common experiences were such as "I would have liked to have more work to do… that's my situation and I don't think a lot of things are happening, which should be the case" (Lauren, newcomer, Vigus), or like one said:

> The first month I was very, very bored because I did not do a lot (…) I think there was a lot to do because my colleagues were very busy with their work, but I was there and I didn't have any tasks to carry out. (Antonio, newcomer, Vigus)

Not having enough work to do and being idle brought about a feeling of discomfort in cultures were the perception was that busyness equalled being good. As a member explained:

> It is there implicit, if you don't have a lot to do, then maybe you're not that good, pushed to extremes. Especially not since the culture is like, we have to win a lot things, everyone has to be occupied and we really have to produce, and we have to be the biggest. So if you're sitting and not doing much then it's implicitly there; why hasn't this person got that? (Philip, experienced, SIC)

The mentality of being busy was of course built on experienced members workload and an overload of tasks, as one said: "I would have to say that I have worked beyond what people would find reasonable, and it's not just double time. For long periods

I have worked between 70 and 100 hours a week" (Erik, experienced, Vigus). Related to the issue of busyness, newcomers had a hard time overcoming being clueless, "because you have a lot of things to reach, but you don't have any clear tasks for the day and maybe you cannot ask because they [the experienced] are occupied" (Paul, newcomer, Vigus). To become a skilled member able to solve problems, challenge processes and be proactive was central to adjusting and contributing to the group, yet continuously asking the experienced for help was difficult for some, and at times that was not sufficient, as Antonio, a newcomer from Vigus, said: "At the beginning it was like some small tasks and it was like, 'ok I'm already done with this, what can I do now?' And nobody had an answer for that." Indirectly Antonio becomes excluded from the group's tasks because he does not know how to carry on by himself or who to ask for help. Many newcomers thus felt that "the problem was that I didn't have much clue of what was going on" (Lauren, newcomer, Vigus). Vis-à-vis being self-managing groups, newcomers where extremely dependent on the existing group members in giving and teaching them the tasks connected to their role, especially since the group at SIC only occasionally had a present section manager, and the Vigus group was without a team leader for almost a year. This was difficult for the newcomers, who, as Lauren expressed, felt that "Karl [the former team leader] left and I was kind of left alone" (newcomer, Vigus). Experienced members being self-run, in contrast, did not use the group leader for other than administrative purposes. As a result of being idle, clueless and dependent, many newcomers were unsatisfied because of boredom or demotivation, and as no surprise "you start thinking, I'm wasting their time and I'm wasting mine" (Anne, newcomer, SIC), in contrast to the contributing and overall satisfied experienced members. Too, newcomers were uncomfortable in comparison to the acknowledged experienced group members, who, as the opening quotes suggests, were trusted in the work done. For example, the field notes from Vigus below portray how a newcomer is uncomfortable with the prospect of sitting next to the experienced Hans:

> At lunch we sit a bunch together, me and Harry at one end, and two empty seats at the other end before the next group of people. Harry tries to call Lauren over, but she doesn't hear him and looks at the empty seat beside Hans, and for some reason decides to find a

complete other seat. Maybe she thought the seats were for someone else, but I hope Hans did not see her turn away.

As this observation suggests, some newcomers found it difficult to navigate in a group of mostly highly experienced members. As I also noted in my field notes, "they are all dependent on the same few people, everything goes through them." The socialisation process of becoming more experienced then also came to influence how newcomers felt and how identification with the group developed.

Constructing Newcomers' Identification during Socialisation

With a need to belong and feel part of the group, newcomers' naturally sought to work towards narrowing the distance between themselves and their experienced counterparts. To become socialised and more experienced, this made newcomers engage in work practices, which would be valued in the groups and thereby foster their identification with their group. I term such practices 'identification work' to represent practices which seek to lead to identification with the group. At the same time, existing group members engage in what I call 'socialisation work', work practices that would either hinder or foster newcomers' journey from peripheral towards full group membership. Further, based on the norms and values in the groups, members' negotiated acceptance processes determined how newcomers' came to be considered members of the group. Below, I elaborate on how these three relational processes of socialisation together constructed newcomers' identification with the group, see figure 3 for an illustration. Importantly, the socialisation and identification processes occurred at different paces and to varying degrees, depending on the identification and socialisation work group members collectively engaged in.

FIGURE 3

Newcomers' Identification during Socialisation
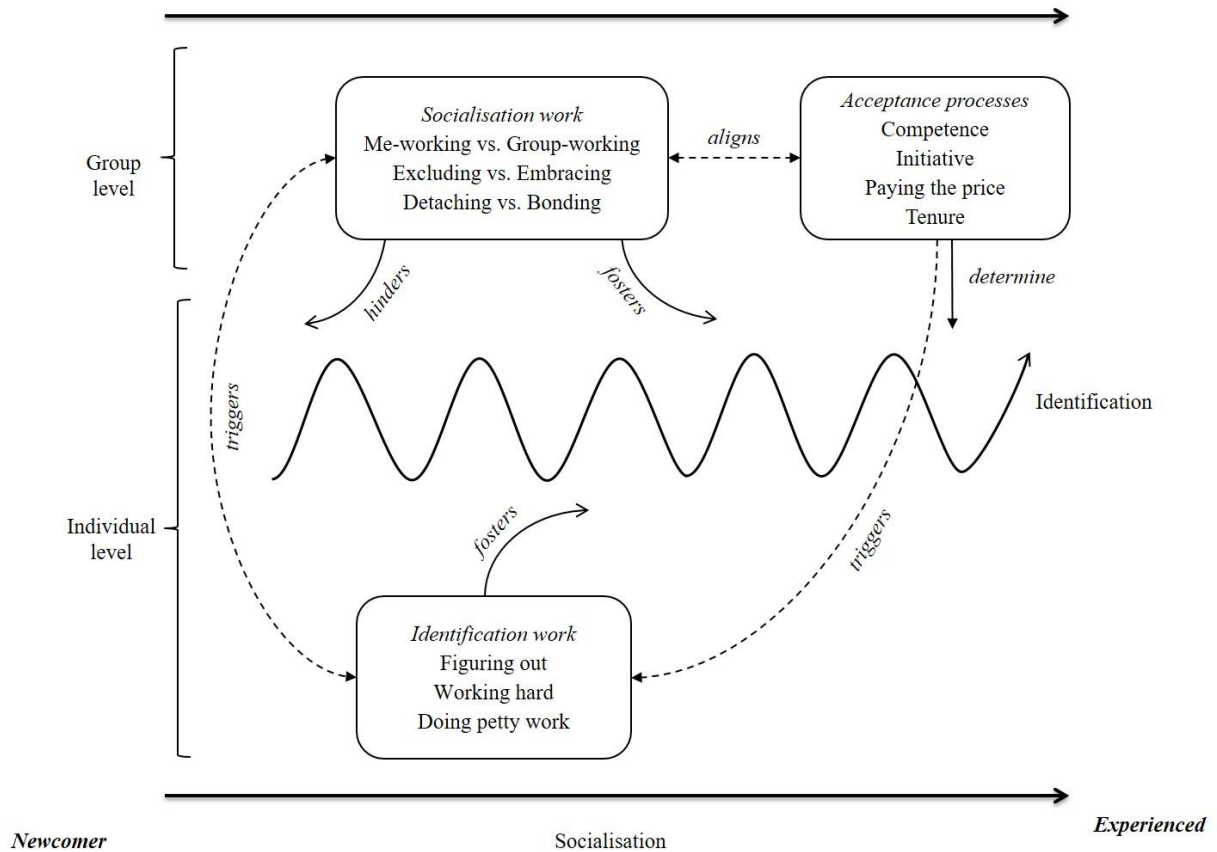
Identification Work

Seeking to become more experienced and at the same time develop a place of belonging triggered newcomers to engage in certain identification work that was appreciated by existing group members. Specifically, they did so by attempting to figure out what to do independently, working hard and by doing petty work. In addition to the illustrations to follow, further examples of quotes and field notes are provided in table 4.

Figuring out.

> To really be effective you have to be really good at making the most of the information you have at hand and not be too concerned having everything written out line by line. What you need to do; you have to run with what you have. (Jonathan, intermediate, Vigus)

As Jonathan describes, it was important for newcomers to attempt figuring out what to do independently, as it was a way of contributing to the group. Still, this was not easy, as Lauren from SIC said: "It's a challenge to know what I should do by myself and what should I ask about. Sometimes I actually spend time figuring things out by myself, which I really cannot figure out myself... that's a daily challenge." While this might seem counterintuitive, newcomers at times remained passive and did not always ask for help when needed, because they did not want to bother and disturb others; too that was a way of fitting in.

Working hard.

As noted, members should be busy to be good, and as a way of signalling initiative and a willingness to "pay the price" of the job, newcomers engaged in working hard. Working hard was obviously reflected in the hours worked, but also in the desire to do well, as Paul from Vigus said: "sometimes I am a bit frustrated because I want to do it well, and maybe I want to learn too fast, so I go home and spend a weekend with that." Similarly at SIC, the intermediate member, Sarah, worked hard to be good; "I want to know where the world is going, I want to learn so many things, I want to be able to do this 3D simulation and all this stuff." However, working hard was often hindered because group members did not pass on work to newcomers, either because they were not trusted with the work, or simply were not able to solve the tasks.

Doing petty work.

Despite newcomers sought to figure out what to do independently and were eager to work hard, however, oftentimes the amount of work newcomers had, did not allow workers to

be working hard in terms of hours, wherefore some resolved to petty work, as Anne, a newcomer from SIC, for instance exemplified:

> Often I say to my partner when I'm on my way, 'I don't want to go, I don't have anything to do'. But the days when I have work to do, I look forward to coming, and it actually doesn't matter if I have to sit and write minutes at a meeting or something else.

Anne is in fact so eager to work that what for her as a trained engineer would be petty work, is better than the alternative of no work. Most newcomers sought to be independent rather than simply working on being busy, and although all varieties of identification work were found in both groups, instances of doing petty work were infrequent as opposed to considering how not to bother the other members too much. At times, doing petty work, however, even involved simply looking occupied, as Kasper from SIC, said with a laugh: "we [the newcomers] can't continue reading [product] regulations. I caught myself sometimes just having it (a website) open, but I wasn't reading; I just sat there staring at it blindly." This illustrates what means some newcomers used not to bother others, and what they would do (or not do) to belong to the group.

TABLE 4

Examples of Quotes and Field Notes*

Theme 1: Identification Work	
Figuring out	Sometimes I should ask before I do, maybe I'm also a bit stubborn or childish, but damn it, I would like to figure it out by myself. (Anne, newcomer, SIC)
	I try to figure out things and check, but there are things that I cannot control and sometimes there are whole different tools, documents, processes that are linked. Maybe they are documented, but sometimes I haven't found this, and this makes me frustrated sometimes. (Paul, newcomer, Vigus)
Working hard	I work more [than full time], because I like what I'm doing. And sometimes if we have to deliver something we work more, but other times to make the things well done, I prefer that. (Felipe, intermediate, Vigus)
	Of course during these months of integration, of course, you are in a hurry. (Paul, newcomer, Vigus)
Doing petty work	[When I have nothing to do], I sit and read up on [the] regulations and look at the website, just to get to know the field. (Kasper, newcomer, SIC)
	Even though I sit with my back to Halfdan I sometimes write with him (laughs), because it's fun to sit and write with each other. (Christopher, newcomer, SIC)

Theme 2: Socialisation Work	
Group-working	Because you see yourself in a group and which is your role and you feel growth. Let's say this person is doing this, another that, and this is my space, I fill this hole, and I think that's something that motivates you. When you see that, there is something you can do and you like being part of the group. If not you will always be subjected to be directed… (Paul, newcomer, Vigus)
	I definitely don't feel like anyone of us are holding back on asking questions, better ask one time too many or have a daft question than not getting anywhere or doing something that's completely off the track. (David, experienced, SIC)

Embracing	Even though Erik helps Anne for two or three hours, he is still busy and works many hours. But you have to consider it [getting new people] as a gain; otherwise I don't think you do it. (Rasmus, newcomer, SIC)
	I know that if I help for one hour then I need to work 19 hours instead of 18, but I want to help him or her, because I know how it would be, if I had such a question. (Siya, experienced, SIC)
Bonding	Then over time they are giving me more projects, because of the trust. "Hey Sarah can do this", because I've had the opportunity to work with them and learn from them and it's made things easier. (Sarah, intermediate, SIC)
	Actually it's really important; your colleagues, the social aspect, the arrangements, to have a social life around that of working, for it to become a bit more than just colleagues. (Halfdan, intermediate, SIC)
Me-working	I might be working with Frederik or Jonathan on something, or collaborate with Lauren, but I have rarely interfaced with other people or needed to work together with other people in the group. In many cases, we work a lot in smaller groups and on our own. I think people work a lot independently. (Harry, intermediate, Vigus)
	I feel more natural on my second day, but also a lot on my own because they work so independently. (Field notes)
Excluding	When I want something, I need high, qualified knowledge (...), I want highly qualified people. And not to be negative, but those who waver a bit and can't make a decision, those I'm not bothered with. (William, intermediate, SIC)
	If you have three weeks until deadline then it often doesn't make sense to get others involved in the project, then you just end up spending more time on it. (David, experienced, SIC)
Detaching	Everyone is involved a lot in their own tasks, probably you noticed that at the office as well, and maybe, I noticed this when I came her as well, that I felt there was not that much communication in the office. (Harry, intermediate, Vigus)
	Of course we speak decently to each other and we're doing fine, but I wouldn't go as far to say that we're a group. (Hans, experienced, Vigus)

Theme 3: Acceptance Processes	
Competence	Definitely the additional resources (people) help, but then it's not that simple. Does the additional resource have all the knowledge that I have? (Theo, experienced, Vigus) They have a lot of experience (…) They just give something to the group because they concentrate on describing the whole project. It makes our projects grow having them on board. (Lewis, experienced, SIC)
Initiative	But everybody it quite op to talk about what they did. [But] it's up to you. If you would be very closed, probably not to do that, I think actually it's quite important to align to everybody, or at least figure out what you have to do. (Sabine, intermediate, Vigus) A good personal characteristic, I would say, and that is also something I look for I others (...) It's people who get up from their chairs and just speak to the stakeholders. (Jonathan, intermediate, Vigus)
Paying the price	There are a few people whom I work really well with, they really have drive and they are willing to put in the extra work it takes. (Hans, experienced, Vigus) The main thing is not that you're super smart, it's actually about whether you are able to be part of the group, have the right mood, and that you're interested in the job. As long as you're interested also in understanding it, because one thing is to do something out of routine, but when the more complicated stuff comes, are you then able to tear the problems apart, solve it and put it back together again? (Erik, experienced, SIC)
Tenure	I usually say that you need to be a place for five years before you work properly. (Lewis, experienced, SIC) During lunch I end up talking with Siya about how long he's worked for the company, because he meets an old SIC employee. 'Hey, did you see he returned to SIC, guys?' No one knows the guy, and Siya shrugs, 'none of them have been here for as long as I've been, they're all new. There's only a few of us who belong to the old crowd.' (Field notes)

*Data from field observations are followed by (field notes), interview quotes are followed by (group member).

Socialisation Work

Implicitly, group members were responsible for socialising newcomers, helping them on a daily basis and teaching them how to perform their role. In both groups, however, the hours and dedication it took was considered a part of job, and as being one of the few able or willing to take on their shoulders socialisation of newcomers, meant juggling extra work, as one stated:

> It's a combination of me being the person I am, and that I take on the responsibility of something which, all things considered, shouldn't be mine (…) Before you're done with what you have to do and before you can start [you own] work… it means that it's often been night work. (Erik, experienced, SIC)

Erik was by the others considered the group's guru in SIC and spent up against half of his time sharing knowledge and informally teaching the less experienced. Although the above quote does not resemble how every experienced tackled their workload, it does illustrate the dilemma put on existing group members as it "depends whether you prioritise socialisation of newcomers" (Frederik, experienced, Vigus) on top of all other tasks in a squeezed amount of time. I found that group members engaged in interrelated forms of work practices that either hindered or fostered newcomers socialisation; me-working versus group-working, excluding versus embracing and detaching versus bonding.

Me-working versus Group-working.

In light of the pressure on group members, some worked from home whenever possible to get work done without disturbances from less experienced colleagues, whilst others in the interest of quickness and quality simply had a hard time delegating work. Apart from not delegating work, me-working was evident when members worked independently. The highly specialised and knowledge-based work contributed to a somewhat lacking sense of common purpose that made workers work independently, as one explained:

What we found out at some point was that we kind of didn't have a common task or common thing, because everyone works on something different usually, but of course there's development of our new methods and so on, but there is not that much time for that because we are usually busy with the other stuff, so what is missing for the group spirit is to have a common goal or common thing to work on. (Sabine, intermediate, Vigus)

Because the organisational conditions to an extent omitted the natural development of group work, the group members were themselves accountable of prioritising time for common things and ways to create sharedness. Me-working was more apparent in Vigus, strengthened by a weak emphasis on social bonding between members. Nevertheless, group members from Vigus still stated that the group was "highly motivated [despite], somewhat inexperienced in some areas, some members, but at the same time very eager to learn" (Jonathan, intermediate) and that there was "a great degree of commitment by everyone" (Harry, intermediate). Group-working involved members expressing positive distinctions about the group, delegating tasks and supporting each other, like Siya, an experienced SIC member, said; "even though we are both tired and exhausted and we want to finish our work, he is always welcome [to call me] and I'm always welcome to ask him, even if it's 2 o'clock in the morning". Oddly enough, the group in SIC was not designated a group, but a section, in contrast to the group at Vigus. They did, however, engage in much more group-working than they ever did in the Vigus group. What was missing was "some common ambitions, where we could all contribute" (Hans, experienced). To which extent members were able to engage in group-working practices was therefore both a result of organising, and the individual members' incentive to do so, particularly when breaking new members in.

Excluding versus Embracing.

A second way group members engaged in socialisation work was by excluding, or conversely, embracing newcomers. Excluding newcomers rested on group members not having enough time (be that because of prioritisation or ignorance), because "working with people with little experience, to get them going and helping them, there's no time for that if someone needs your input on something you can do much faster than they can"

(Frederik, experienced, Vigus). Others excluded newcomers because they were selective of whom they worked with, as one said:

> Some [of us] are hard as nails, I think... If they find out that what someone did wasn't good, then they'll never use that person again. (Philip, experienced, SIC)

In general, experienced members found that their tasks were "difficult to pass on" (Hans, experienced, Vigus), wherefore Hans would give newcomers "simpler and easier tasks in order (…) to keep an eye on what they're doing". In contrast, embracing newcomers included willingly investing and taking the time to socialise newcomers, sharing knowledge with them, creating a safe environment and viewing them as a resource. Members usually embraced newcomers, also because the group cultures emphasised helping newcomers, as the experience I noted in SIC:

> 'Dammit Jack… boy. You've done it like… you've drawn it from this end to the other, you shouldn't have, argh', Rasmus says and makes a slapping sound and sends his hand through the air towards him and purposively misses. 'You could have said that', Jack says a bit hesitant. 'Dammit boy', Rasmus says again in a friendly tone. 'You didn't tell me beforehand', Jack defends. 'Do you know what you have to do know?' Rasmus says. 'Move files?' He asks. 'No, guess again', Rasmus replies. 'Do some levels?' 'Right, you're getting smart', Rasmus says in reply; 'a simple task before you go home'. He sighs loudly after five minutes. 'It's like I always have to find something on you', Rasmus says to Jack. 'It's to keep you busy, otherwise it would be boring', Jack replies. Rasmus starts laughing and says; 'the work is that bad? It a good job you already had your interview with Klaus. Rasmus wheels his chair to Jack's desk and takes him through it again.

This was interesting experience, since Rasmus started out as an intern and hence newcomers when I first started the fieldwork. Rasmus had, once I returned to the field, improved a lot and become considered a valuable member of the group by the more

experienced members, to the extent that he was trusted in teach the newcomers, such as Jack, how to perform tasks.

Detaching versus Bonding.

The work is one thing, but if you don't have pleasure from the social interactions you have, it could but the most interesting job ever, but if your colleagues are really boring, or you hate your manager, you're not going to last very long. I think it's as important as the actual work. There were times when I found [the tasks] incredibly boring and repetitious, but it's still manageable if you have a fun group and can see the drive and motivation in the people around you, because that inspires you as well. (Jonathan, intermediate, Vigus).

In this quote from Vigus, the significance of bonding is underlined as a central part of feeling part of the group, this despite, as noted, most members in Vigus experienced detaching. Lauren, for example said; "I don't feel that much… There's nothing a lot apart from really professional" (Lauren, newcomer), or as the experienced Frederik felt that "the people are fine, we get along well, but we don't really talk with each other, we coordinate stuff and then we're left in our correct place [at the desk]". This also meant that they rarely socialised outside work hours, which, as Lauren remarked, "would be weird". In comparison, group members at SIC were better at bonding and saw the group as "very attached to each other" (Siya, experienced), felt "lucky to have the group" (Sarah, intermediate), and that having a "cool environment, happy colleagues and positive atmosphere (…) is absolutely not a given it's like that, it's something that you should appreciate" (Philip, experienced). Apart from the social aspect, bonding was also manifest in trusting newcomers, which encouraged their sense of belonging, as a newcomer experienced:

> He looked me over the shoulder for the first two projects I did, then he let go. (...)
> The reins were free. It worked well; I felt it was a pat on the back, a vote of
> confidence. (Rasmus, newcomer, SIC)

It made a difference for newcomers' socialisation then whether fellow group members engaged in detaching or bonding practices, and too whether they came to feel as one of the group.

Acceptance Processes

The members of the groups determined how new members were accepted as full group members through negotiated acceptance processes. These processes were aligned with the socialisation work of group members, which were in continuous interplay with newcomers' identification work. I identified four implicit ways to be accepted by the group members in the two groups; competence, initiative, 'paying the price' and tenure.

Competence.

The most obvious acceptance process was competence - a key requirement of members in both groups - "that's what fire people up here; to become so skilled that you make very few mistakes" (Philip, experienced, SIC). Competence within their subsequent expertise areas was a great part of what the groups in the organisations were known for, wherefore it mattered hugely whether newcomers already possessed skills of competence, or were quick learners.

> Jonathan, I have gotten to know, he is good, and I don't have the need [to check him]
> anymore, but everyone newer than him, I have to get to know. And that's primarily their
> professional level. (Frederik, experienced, Vigus)

The intermediate worker Jonathan is here acknowledged by the Frederik because now he knows him and his work. While Frederik was Jonathan's mentor and friend, Jonathan became able to run by himself, gained the competence necessary and eventually became

the mentor of a new recruit. Jonathan has thus, in the eyes of Frederik, been accepted as a valued and trusted group member.

Initiative.

Initiative was especially encouraged to newcomers in both groups, and considered an integral part of becoming a group member. As both Jonathan and Philip explained:

> It's really important to be very assertive and just call people or go up to their desk and ask them for clarification on what you need from them, and what they need from you and confirm that they have understood. It sounds very simple and straightforward, but I think it's not, understandable; of course it's much easier to sit and wait. (Jonathan, intermediate, Vigus)

> To reach out is crucial if you want to be successful, that's how you become good as a newcomer; that's how you get advice and guidance. Those who are good are proactive (…) those hires where people don't improve, they're out - and that's a bloody expensive hire, when they end up not being able to do what you expect. (Field notes, talking with Philip, experienced, SIC)

Both emphasise that newcomers are responsible for their own socialisation; questions will be answered by more experienced group members, but the newcomer has to take the initiative to ask. Yet, showing initiative was difficult for many because they considered themselves or others as "introverts" and "nerds" (field notes). This made it hard to become part of the group and be accepted, as was explained to me one day by an intermediate group member from SIC, Halfdan:

> Nothing happens by itself, you really have to be pushy and knock on desks to get tasks every single day. If you don't do that you'll never really get in. If you're good at the social part then that's another way in. Because then people know you, and they think of you when they need someone for a task. I'm not very good at that, I never was, it just takes a

long time for me. When I started here, I was writing on my thesis, and I was basically just sitting here for half a year without talking with anyone really. (Field notes)

Ironically, newcomers even prevented themselves from showing too much initiative, because they wanted to come off as independent and being able to figure out what to do by themselves.

Paying the Price.

Following Barker's (1999) metaphor as the only theory-labelled concept, 'paying the price' represents willingly doing whatever it takes to be a group member according to the rules and norms of the group. Paying the price included willingly working extra hours to finish the job in time, as Frederik, an experienced member from Vigus, reflected: "in the beginning it was interest hours, to get up to speed and to get to know the [product] and the company". In addition, it meant making the effort expected of you and having the right mentality:

> "Others [from the group] might view it as a job, were we [the experienced] also see it as a hobby" (Hans, experienced, Vigus).

Clearly, there a difference was experienced between those who simply saw it as a job versus those who really made an effort as a "true" group member.

Tenure.

The final way of being accepted by members was simply by being a group member for a long time and seeing new members join the group. There was surely the perception that through tenure automatically members were more competent.

> Luckily now it's like, some of those who have been here for five years, who can do it by themselves, to a great extent can answer questions from the new, so it's not just me. (Erik, experienced, SIC)

In the above account Erik states how other member after being in the group for five years, can also take on part of the socialisation of newcomers. Generally, it took years for members not to be considered or feel new anymore, which increased the lack of intermediate workers and the feeling of the group being "half new and half experienced" (Felipe, intermediate, Vigus). Overall, the experienced Philip summed up nicely that newcomers had to work their way in to be accepted in the group at SIC, and how that also made them feel part of the group:

> You don't gain respect if the others don't know what you're capable of, and then you'll continue to be regarded as new. The more you work with the others of the group, the more you are part of the community. (Field notes, talking with Philip)

DISCUSSION

The study portrays socialisation processes in two groups of informal, individualised and random character. This gives a different account of socialisation than the dominant focus on institutionalised socialisation, that is, socialisation initiatives from the organisation's perspective (Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Cable et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2012). Specifically, I demonstrate how newcomers engaged in identification work and existing group members engaged in socialisation work, which collectively constructed newcomers' identification. In alignment with socialisation work, the negotiated ways of accepting newcomers further determined how newcomers gained group membership. In understanding the relational processes of socialisation, I discuss the reasons for why they came to construct newcomers' identification.

Why Processes of Socialisation Construct Newcomers' Identification

Based on the study, at least two explanations stand out as to why newcomers' identification became so dependent on the relational socialisation processes. Indeed, the groups represent somewhat extreme cases of how socialisation is "left" to the groups, only achieved in relation to others and how actual work must be practiced (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). However, these processes were intensified, I argue, first because of the distance to management – hierarchically, mentally and possibly also physically – which resulted in more responsibility put on the group members accompanied by the unobtrusive presence of peer-based control (Barker, 1993). The learning-by-doing approach to socialisation in the two groups led to experiences where "nobody had an answer" and struggles with whom to rely on or ask for help. While uncomfortable and not satisfactory for newcomers, it was for the experienced as well, who were "forced" to perform the roles of socialisation agents, some involuntarily, others taking on a responsibility that they did not consider theirs. In addition, the hierarchical vacuum the distance to management also left, meant that when members were forced into such a role, they might hinder rather than foster the newcomers' socialisation process, for example, by not bothering about newcomers or assuming that others would take of them. Of course, it did not help that experienced members were abysmally busy, whilst newcomers had nothing to do, inefficient for the groups and counterproductive for the continuous socialisation of newcomers.

The second reason is related to the importance of sharedness. Created by the group members, newcomers had to resonate with the group's sharedness and buy into the respective group cultures (Fine & Hallett, 2014) in the negotiation of membership (Wenger, 1998). In becoming less peripheral, newcomers' had to be accepted according the group members' acceptance processes that was based on the respective ways of doings. Surely, the acceptance processes reflected that in becoming experienced, newcomers had to become more like them (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979); to possess the same qualities, such as having the same mentality by viewing the job as a hobby, rather than bringing in their authentic best selves (Cable et al., 2013). Also, the importance of buying into significant and dominant others' norms and values and achieving their validation (Ashforth et al., 2016; Jones, 1986), such as being busy implied being competent, was evident. In that sense, the groups had relatively tight social thresholds for newcomers to become accepted as group members (Hernes, 2004). Overall, newcomers' experiences of adjustment proved to be very reliant on such key socialisation agents (Feldman, 1994; Jones, 1986). While these processes emerged within the groups precisely because socialisation happened within and by the self-managing groups, they were mostly unspoken and implicit, some even to existing group members themselves. For instance, when a valued norm was for newcomers to work hard (identification work) and was met with members embracing newcomers (socialisation work), they were valued for their initiative and improved competence (acceptance processes), making the newcomer more independent and thus more experienced, eventually constructing the feeling of "sameness" with the group (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). As shown, however, there was only so much a newcomer could do to be socialised and to strengthen identification with their group, because they were dependent on the group members in socialising them too. The newcomers' identification work and existing members' socialisation work were thus highly interrelated processes which would trigger each other. The negotiated acceptance processes based on the group cultures, also formed and triggered newcomers' identification work, and thus indirectly determined the identification process. In a sense, experienced members then partly acted as "gatekeepers" to newcomers' full participation and membership in the group. When the feeling of acceptance from experienced group members was perceived, newcomers, as Smith et al. (2012) anticipated, were then free to respond with identification.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The process of becoming a group member, and how newcomers came to experience belonging during that journey (alas some never reached that stage), was and will indeed always be, an individual matter. Capturing and showing the nuances of the data in detail is not an easy endeavour, and to attempt to portray such of two groups complicates matter further. Nevertheless, as the dilemmas of socialisation was experienced in both groups, it was unnatural to separate one group from the other; on the plus side it provided the ability to expand, reflect on and, ultimately, strengthen the findings. Another limitation of the study was invariably the difficulty of studying highly screen-based work coupled with the overload (and difficulty) of technical jargon throughout the fieldwork. Still, I have attempted to give an account of the informal socialisation processes experienced underpinned by the importance of newcomers' working unit and key group members. I hope this will encourage future research to pay more attention to and value the intangible and often complex processes integral to socialisation, in particular in relation to processes of identification in acknowledging that they are inextricably linked. How does, for instance, socialisation relate to other foci of identification? How does socialisation unfold in "dirty" organisations where identities are not necessarily positive? Building on the conceptualisation of identification work and especially socialisation work, how do such practices take form in other contexts, in different conditions, and what role does the physical and material environment play? In addition, future research should seek to go beyond viewing individualised and institutionalised as dichotomous socialisation processes (Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Cable et al., 2013; Zhu et al., 2017) and focus on how the interplay between forms of socialisation processes, such as formal and informal or deliberate and random, together socialise newcomers. More generally, it would also be interesting to elaborate on exactly how the rise of self-managing groups, knowledge work and new ways of working challenge how we view socialisation processes of newcomers.

Taken together, the study portrays how socialisation of newcomers in two groups unfolded informally through relational processes of socialisation. Overall, the importance of fellow group members as socialisation agents seems greater than today acknowledged, especially within autonomous and participatory work designs, such as the groups studied.

While newcomers must work their way in to become part of a group, existing group members must work them in too – indeed, it takes work.

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CHAPTER 6

Paper III

Sociomaterial Practices of Open Offices: The Constitutive Entanglement between Space and Work Groups through the Production of Control

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Sociomaterial Practices of Open Offices:
The Constitutive Entanglement between Space and Work
Groups through the Production of Control

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores how sociomaterial practices of open office spaces constitute work groups. Specifically, I study how autonomous workers come together as groups in open and shared spaces. From a sociomaterial perspective, the analysis builds on the ongoing turns to the spatial and material and their constitutive entanglement with the social. To this end, I draw on a longitudinal ethnography of two work groups by cutting out sociomaterial assemblages of practices of routinising and ritualising, hierarchising and belonging through the on-going production of control. The paper adds to the literature on sociomaterial space by showing how groups are inseparable from the ongoing emergence and existence of open office spaces and that it is through the entanglement with space that work practices emerge. Further, I show how imbued working together in open office spaces are with processes of control, by which I argue that the spatial and the material needs to be taken into consideration within group control literature in better understanding processes of control in groups. Taken together, I argue that work group members make spaces together, as space makes the collective.

INTRODUCTION

For the real scandal of Galileo's work lay not so much in his discovery, or rediscovery, that the earth revolved around the sun, but in his constitution of an infinite, and infinitely open space. In such a space the place of the Middle Ages turned out to be dissolved, as it were; a thing's place was no longer anything but a point in its movement, just as the stability of a thing was only its movement indefinitely slowed down.

(Foucault, 1986, p. 23)

When thinking of open offices as a space of working together, it is usually not attributed much attention in the social sciences - and if it is - it is usually delimited to the physical, material surroundings; a "neutral shell" (Baldry, Bain, & Taylor, 1998, p. 163) and "empty container" (Burrell & Dale, 2014, p. 700) in which work happens. And despite Galileo's discovery of space as infinitely open and in ongoing movement, space – including that of the open office - has for generations been treated, as Foucault put it, "the dead, the fixed, the undialectical and the immobile" (1980, p. 70). The open office layout originates from the 1920s USA, but were not taken on in the UK and Australia until the 1950s (Baldry & Barnes, 2012). By the 1970s, they had become a popular office design with intentions to cost-optimise and encourage interaction, communication, knowledge sharing, collaboration and effectiveness, whilst resembling flat and flexible organisational structures (Brennan, Chugh, & Kline, 2002; Oldham & Brass, 1979; Zalesny & Farace, 1987). Without a doubt, the cheap, space-saving and surveillance-facilitating open office plans is a major advantage for managers (Baldry et al. 1998). Recent indications also show that open offices are suitable for groups working on virtual and collaborative projects as the physical presence of coworkers and leaders help overcome challenges (De Paoli & Ropo, 2015). An ongoing body of research, however, emphasises the downsides for workers of open offices, including noise, lack of privacy, poor air quality, interruptions, distractions, increased control and chaos (Brennan et al., 2002; Turco, 2016; Zalesny & Farace, 1987). A shift towards unassigned and non-territorial workspace, increased proximity between workers, decreased privacy and increased crowding are all trends open office designs are heading towards (Khazanchi, Sprinkle, Masterson, & Tong, in press). Despite the continuous shift towards more open offices then, the preference for more conventional, private offices has remained for many

workers (Hatch, 1990), though newer research suggests that this may be tied to older generations, as younger workers and those with shorter duration of employment, are more open to open work environments (McElroy & Morrow, 2010). Still, the open office remains a cherished office layout that organisations continue to turn to with greater productivity (Brennan et al., 2002), increased openness, connectedness and transparency in mind (Turco, 2016; Våland & Georg, 2018). The open office is, for example, sneaking into universities (Baldry & Barnes, 2012) and other governmental and public sector work settings (Våland & Georg, 2018; Zalesny & Farace, 1987).

With a perspective of sociomateriality, and in agreement with Dale's expression, "the whole of the constitution of a particular space is understood as a combined material and social interaction" (2005, p. 651). Such an understanding draws on and lies within the ongoing turns to the spatial (Taylor & Spicer, 2007; Van Marrewijk & Yanow, 2010) and material (Boxenbaum, Jones, Meyer, & Svejenova, 2018) within organisation studies. More precisely, I rest and build on the work viewing materiality as inescapable; that the material and the social are *constitutively entangled*, intertwined and inherently inseparable in everyday (organisational) life (Orlikowski, 2007; Orlikowski & Scott, 2008). That humans are viewed as constituted by relations of materiality, and the material as being constituted by human practices in turn, is emphasised by signifying practices within organisations as *sociomaterial practices* (Orlikowski, 2007), since they are always already material (Barad, 2003). Indeed, it is the physical surroundings as sociomaterial assemblages that facilitate and guide our world experiences and actions (Carlile, Nicolini, & Langley, 2013; Elsbach & Pratt, 2007). Thus, to understand the sociomaterial practices in organisations, we must take into account the embedded spatial dimensions (de Vaujany & Mitev, 2013). As part of the arrangement of our physical environment, the open office is one such spatial dimension (such as layout, buildings, site) within and connected to organisations (Elsbach & Pratt, 2007).

Existing research has demonstrated how workplace and space are infused with symbolic cues, mechanisms of power, control, internal hierarchy, cultural norms and identity (Baldry, 1997; Baldry & Barnes, 2012; Burrell & Dale, 2014). Acknowledged as well, is that the spatial dimensions of workplaces, including the experiences and perceptions of the surrounding environment, influence relational ties at work (Khazanchi

et al., in press). Still, how space and materiality are connected to human actions is yet to be fully grasped (Fayard & Weeks, 2007; Kornberger & Clegg, 2004), including within office design research (McElroy & Morrow, 2010). For one, research on open office space (and space in general) has had little, if any, say in connection to groups and group processes, including what makes coworkers become a group. This observation is important in light of, at least, two arguments. First, research on the relationship between the environment (such as space) and the social needs to move beyond the largely deterministic and oversimplified theorising on the social represented in current studies (Fayard & Weeks, 2007). Second, our current modes of organising increasingly mirrors group and relation-based organisational designs (Foss & Lindenberg, 2011; Grant, Parker, Walsh, Fried, & Juillerat, 2009). While the use of groups continues to grow in everyday organisational life, scholars are not adequately attending to their inherent complex nature through research that explores and takes into consideration the contextual, dynamic and temporal aspects of groups (Maloney, Bresman, Zellmer-Bruhn, & Beaver, 2016). Lacking emphasis is, in particular, knowing more about what really matters for the study and practice of organising in groups, including matters concerning the spatial and the material, and certainly also, *how* such matters comes to matter.

To this end, I endeavour in this study to apply a sociomateriality lens in a group context arguing that sociomaterial space and working together in groups, are, and should be, considered as entangled. My question is: *how do practices of work groups emerge in open office spaces?* Based on data from a longitudinal ethnography stretching over two and half years and amounting to fifteen months of fieldwork in two organisations, I show how sociomaterial practices emerge in different ways as constitutive entanglements between space and groups. Specifically, I find that sociomaterial practices unfold as practices of routinising and ritualising, hierarchising and belonging through the production of control. By analysis of assemblages of agential fieldwork cuts (meaning, slices of data that I locally enact from my fieldwork), I make the argument that such practices are produced as coworkers come together as a group through and together with their shared and open space. I attempt to go beyond existing perspectives of working together in open office spaces, by unpacking and showing that practices in open office spaces are inherently sociomaterial. I therefore encourage acknowledgement of the view that the social as collective is inseparable from the ongoing emergence and performativity

of sociomaterial space. Specifically, based on my analysis, I argue, that we as humans produce spaces (physically, socially and mentally), but also that space produces us - individually and collectively. Space is then inseparable from who we are; it creates, maintains and controls who we are as we come together to work. What I seek to cut out with this study is that it is only and ever together with the spatialmaterial that our collective becoming is performed, emerges and exists.

SOCIOMATERIAL SPACE

Within existing research, demonstrations of how materiality and space in organisations influence workers and identity construction have been made, such as with outsets in products, artefacts, practices (Watkiss & Glynn, 2016), as well as office layout (Elsbach, 2003). With the concept of spacing identity, Våland and Georg (2018) emphasised that it is through the spatialmaterial arrangements that identities are continuously performed and "constituted through organizational practices taking place within, enabled by and constitutive of particular constellations of the social, material and spatial" (p. 195). From such a perspective, Ropo and Salovaara (2018) sought to unpack and conceptualise leadership through the sociomaterial relationship between humans and space. Similarly, de Vaujany and Vaast's (2014) study portrayed how the material in organisational space in the form of the organisation's building and legitimacy were mutually constituted over time through spatial practices, showing how spatial markers (also called barriers) such as walls, doors and shelves, carry meaning, "talk" and "tell stories". The absence of spatial markers in open office space, one would argue, equally has stories to tell. For example, an organisation may seek to convey a flat non-hierarchical organisation through openness such as an open office design with few spatial markers, representing equal status and power among coworkers (Dale, 2005; Elsbach & Pratt, 2007). The entitlement to privacy, and the direct relation to floor space and what that privacy actually covers, is related to status (Hatch, 1990). It is no surprise then, that organisations with open office layouts by and large are perceived to have less formal cultures, be more innovative and set the conditions for more collaborative work and committed workers (McElroy & Morrow, 2010). Sharing and shifting to and from office space generally mirrors the increasingly flexible, autonomous and hybrid forms of work (Sewell & Taskin, 2015). This

development of organisational spaces with the vanishing demarcation of time and space has led to denotations such as 'the materiality of absence' (Giovannoni & Quattrone, 201) and 'the disappearing workspace' (Dale & Burrell, 2008). 'Hot desking' is an example of non-territorial workspace, where members must take a different and whatever-available desk every day and have literally no private legitimacy of any space (Elsbach, 2003). Such was the case in Baldry and Barnes' (2012) study; when university researchers were stripped of their private space in a move to open plan offices, they experienced enhanced control, negative influence on student contact and collegiality, and the number working from home increased remarkably. As an academic experiencing relocation to a new open university similarly expressed; being ripped off one's privacy paradoxically made the feeling of loneliness increase (de Vaujany & Mitev, 2013). In addition, research is rather contested whether open space with its accompanying reduction of privacy hinders informal interactions among workers (Fayard & Weeks, 2007). To feel psychological comfort, Knight and Haslam (2010) found experiencing autonomy and control over one's workplace to be central. Overall, workspace has been argued to entail both symbolic messages, power relations, controlling forces, hierarchy and identity (Baldry, 1997; Baldry & Barnes, 2012; Burrell & Dale, 2014; Dale & Burrell, 2008). However, understanding how such space forms how we work and who we are together, and how we form space in turn, is still remarkably underexplored. Downplayed in existing research is too the importance of material and physical workspace and group members' embodied and sensuous experiences of open plan office (De Paoli & Ropo, 2015). A reason for that could be that much work on open plan office space falls within approaches to organisational space that treats space as a distance, covering issues such as how workplace layout and office design influence workplace behaviour, as opposed to approaches viewing and recognising space as materialised through power relations or as lived experiences (Taylor & Spicer, 2007). And even though the connection between material and spatial dispositions and social interaction has long been recognised, it is still little understood and oftentimes only implicitly (Kornberger & Clegg, 2004), and remains to be further examined, among other research streams, by that of office design (McElroy & Morrow, 2010). In understanding the relationship between the social and the environment in organisations better, we thus need different approaches than the existing ones in the field (Fayard & Weeks, 2007).

In addressing (and acknowledging in the first place) aspects of 'how we become' in space through practices we and others together perform, I engage with a perspective of sociomateriality from the approach originating by the work of Barad (2003; 2007) grounded in metaphysics and feminist theory, and developed mainly within organisational studies by Orlikowski (2007) and Orlikowski and Scott (2008). Such an approach builds on (the bringing back of) materiality in organisational studies with the avowal that matter does matter (Barad, 2003; Carlile et al., 2013). Acknowledging more abstract notions of materiality and space than purely what is "made of stuff"; tangible, solidified matter, includes acknowledging the materialisation of practices such as rules, policies and software too (Carlile et al., 2013, p. 5) - the invisible as well as the visible (Orlikowski, 2007). In addition, it involves viewing (office) space as produced, performed and constituted by its occupants and the created practices, and vice versa – that the material is social too, and the social is material (Orlikowski, 2007). Specifically then, space is not a singular or stable entity, rather, "there are *multiple forms of spatiality*" (Law, 2002, p. 92, emphasis in original). In that sense, space can never be *a* space, although it surely is perceived as such (like *the* open office has been treated in the above-mentioned studies). The meaning of space is viewed, instead, as a dynamic and relational process that is ever-emergent and continuously reproduced (Hernes, 2004). Such a view falls under Beyes and Steyaert's reframing of space to the notion of spacing; a (re)thinking of space "as a processual and performative, open-ended and multiple, practiced and of the everyday" (2012, p. 47). Broadly, this alternative approach to representationalism builds on the collapse of Cartesian dualism and human exceptionalism with an emphasis on and engagement with the performativity of agents; human as well as non-human (Pickering, 2013) – we do stuff to stuff and stuff does stuff to us. Similar to the view of actor-network-theory (ANT), the social and the material within sociomateriality are enactments which "*all* participate in holding everything together" (Law, 2002, p. 92, emphasis added). In other words, from a relational ontology, things, objects, materiality, space and humans are enacted through their on-going intra-actions with each other. Making agential separability (and therein existence within phenomena) possible, the neologism *intra-action* underscores the emergence of relata (of relation to other)/non-pre-existing human and nonhuman actors, in contrast to the usual *interaction* that presumes prior existence between entities (Barad, 2003, p. 815). Carving

out the argument succinctly, Barad explains: "time and space, like matter and meaning, come into existence, are iteratively reconfigured through each intra-action, thereby making it impossible to differentiate in any absolute sense between creation and renewal, beginning and returning, continuity and discontinuity, here and there, past and future" (2007, preface). In relation to that, a warning must be given; the social/material, nonhuman/human are viewed "as mutually exclusive realms of analysis" (Dale, 2005, p. 652) in the impossibility of separability, yet the analysis of sociomaterial assemblages to follow may portray (initial) separability between the two. Perhaps with some exception within ANT, studies largely fail to illustrate the fluidity, temporality and inseparability they seek to convey (Nyberg, 2009; Orlikowski & Scott, 2008). *Showing* sociomaterial entanglement empirically is certainly one of the greatest challenges within studies of sociomateriality, and one that requires some form of imaginative intra-active leap. Moreover, the ones most convincingly done so, such as Nyberg's example of computational customer calls in (2009) or Orlikowski and Scott's (2014) study of online valuations in the travel sector, involve the use of technology and/or information systems. Without exception to that the challenge, the distinctive cuts drawn out in the analysis to follow are thus made for the analytical purpose only (Orlikowski, 2007) - in cutting together-apart (Barad, 2013). The hope is, nevertheless, that the experience eventually will be one that extends, or at least inquires, the existing - but always enfolding - view on the becoming of collectives and their discursive-material embodiments.

GROUPWORKING SPACE

A large part of today's organisations organise workers in groups and groups, representing the rising relation-based and participatory organisational designs (Grant et al., 2009). While the term *team* originally signals having a common purpose and mutual accountably among members, as opposed to the *group*, these terms are often used interchangeably (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993). Another conceptual and linguistic matter demands attention, since group is used throughout for the purpose of the study; in the conventional sense group carries meaning of stasis and a somewhat determinable, fixed entity of members in unison. The view is, as with space, that one such entity in itself can and will never exist, rather, groups are ever-evolving entanglements. In agreement with Latour

(2005); groups only exist in formation, they are forever made and remade. As the basic form of collective cooperation, groups are fundamental to the emergence and existence of organising, and therein to theories and studies of organisation (Foss & Lindenberg, 2011). For sure, it is at the performances shared and understood by a collective shaping the ongoing group cultures; what constitutes the everyday life of organisations (Fine & Hallett, 2014). At the forefront of actions and practices socially shared such as in a group, are routinised and ritualised performances, including what make up the informal norms and rules guiding everyday 'ways of doing' and 'ways of working' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Such recognised performances within a group assist in building a structured and a negotiated norm system, and in turn they come to characterise a group (Fine, 1979) - put differently, they become the group.

In the familiarity and salience of groups, organisational members often lend strong attachment and identification to their work groups and teams (Knippenberg & Schie, 2000). An unintended consequence recognised of cohesive groups, however, has been the powerful mechanisms of peer-based control, what Barker dubbed 'concertive control' (1993; 1999). Adding to that, under new ways of working, current ideologies of control are recognised to reconfigure workers through peer and group-based control reflecting the increasingly horizontal and less hierarchical organisation (Dale, 2005). In relation to control and similarly to the findings of Barker, Dale (2005) especially emphasised that open space in organisations serve two purposes; first, it produces the self-discipline that workers increasingly demand and managers increasingly expect, and secondly, it facilitates an appropriate identity and desired identification with the organisation. Paring, Pezé, and Huault (2017), for example, showed how identities were regulated as a sociomaterial processes in the imbrication of the discursive, material and spatial dimensions. The overall controlling aspects led Baldry et al. (1998) to denote groupworking in new open workspaces as 'team Taylorism', as they were experienced by workers to be no less coercive than the traditional Tayloristic modes of organising they were thought to replace. Overall, this signifies that (open office) workspace cannot only focus on how space influences certain actions within organisations, but needs to consider how and why spaces are (re)configured through processes of power and control, and how space is produced and maintained through the experiences of members within (Taylor & Spicer, 2007). Nevertheless, research within space has also shown little, if any, attention

to how the perceived to be material and spatial dispositions influence working together in groups, including what makes coworkers a group, and how group control happens and is shaped by spatialmaterial underpinnings. In light of the complexity of today's organisations and their groups within, such oversight calls for attention in regards to what matters for and in groupworking spaces. This implies taking into account the surrounding environment and how it may change how we experience, view and organise when coming together to work.

STUDYING WORKERS OF SPACE

I build my argumentation for viewing open office space as constitutively entangled with group members from a longitudinal ethnography stretching over two and half years from mid-2015 to spring 2018. I carried out the fieldwork study in two groups from two different knowledge-based organisations based in Denmark. By pseudonyms, the organisations are Vigus, a manufacturing company within the energy industry, and SIC, a professional services organisation within the infrastructure industry. The study totalled fifteen months of fieldwork in two phases, the first for nine months in both organisations, the second for four months in Vigus and six months in SIC. The data consisted of field observations for the whole period, 55 formal and countless informal interviews with group members, as well available archival documents, such as annual reports, for the use of background information. With an exploratory approach, and not uncommon to ethnographic inquiries, the aim of the field study was far broader than the ultimate focus of this paper (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). The interest in practices in relation to space did not materialise until I was in place in space; until I experienced and realised how imbued the everyday practices in the groups where with the spatial and material underpinnings. The study resonated well with the view that ethnographic approaches are useful in studying office designs (Hatch, 1990), because they enable exactly such experiencing.

In relation to how the study was approached, it should be mentioned that the sociomaterial lens taken here rests on a commitment to an agential realist and relational ontology, even an "onto-epistem-ology – the study of practices of knowing in being"

(Barad, 2003, p. 829). Such a perspective emphasises that being in the world is inseparable from knowings in and of the world. This implies that the fieldwork assemblages and simultaneous analysis have indeed involved locally enacted separations between "subject" and "object" within phenomena – 'agential cuts' - (Barad, 2003, p. 815) from my own sociomaterial practices. In other words, with a methodological concern, the data are only ever data because they were made to be so. As to my intra-actions as ethnographer - now and then - I then make no other claim than being enmeshed throughout as an inseparable part of the environments in which I partook. My own performativity of practices in space; my practices of knowing, including the sheer practice of carrying out the study and its material-discursive becoming conjointly with the reader, is all part the on-going production, reconfiguration and cuts of knowledge and of the world.

Both Vigus and SIC were large organisations with around 7,000 employees spread in offices worldwide. The two groups were similarly organised; consisting of approximately between 10 to 15 members, most of whom were engineers, working in R&D departments designing their respective organisation's products. Importantly, it matters not so much that they are different groups for the purpose here; instead, what is of interest is what the cuts from the groups achieve. The focus is thus on the meaning of cuts, rather than where they come from. Group members worked in different project groups, but were connected in their primary group by their function, that is, the speciality of work. Usually a couple of group members worked together on projects, and used each other for sparring and developing collective methods. A member's group was also considered their social home; such as always going and sitting to lunch together and arranging social activities outside work. The groups observed were in on-going change and forming during the study (and beyond); for example, some members left while others joined, members changed their roles and tasks, as did their skill levels, and so forth. Still, what seemed to characterise group members was the desire to be (and demand for being) highly autonomous, self-managing and dedicated workers, enjoying the flexible work environments, in which they managed their own work time, and came and went to the office as they pleased. The groups worked in small open offices, meaning that apart from a few exceptions (due to space limitations or specific arrangements) group members sat in the same physical office space clearly separated with space markers from other

organisational groups. In fact, the group at SIC moved to a different location during the study, which involved moving from an even more open office to one more centred on the group. This move sparked many conversations about office space, as members overall preferred the new, smaller open office. All the group members in Vigus and SIC had their own "private" desk, but the less experienced workers were frequently informed to move to another desk if someone left the group or a newcomer joined. In principle, no member had the authority to decide exactly where they wanted to sit, but it was not in the unknown to most members that particular members had a say in the decisions of management in that regard (more on than follows).

As the second phase of fieldwork came about, my lens was adjusted from the first phase, and the sociomaterial assemblages constitutive of the groups became clearer from experiences and iterative engagements with the literature. The two-phase study allowed time for iteration, re-engagement and the on-going production of sociomaterial assemblages. Without the longitudinal design, the ubiquitous, and thereby quiet, embeddedness of the spatial and material in the everyday group life would have been hard to cut out. The analysis thus consisted of entangled recurrences between sociomaterial encounters and fingerings with words of screen and print, and coding of words assisted by means of software, eventually amounting to the identification of distinct cuts of assemblages in which sociomaterial space of open offices constituted the studied groups. Broadly speaking, the analytical work rested on classic ethnographic analysis (Spradley, 1980; Van Maanen, 2011), alongside iterative, ongoing and inseparable intra-activities. The coding work was inspired by grounded theorising, where both open, axial and selective coding were used to produce the cuts of data drawn out (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). At first, open coding was used to identify the parts of the data that of interest, for example, related to workgroup practices or space. Moving on to creating categories and sub-categories by relating and comparing the different cuts of data, I engaged in axial coding work. By going over the codes through selective coding, I elicited, refined and added to the created trees of codes, before eventually reaching to a point at which the three different ways identified and elaborated below, seemed exhaustively to portray how sociomaterial practices emerged in the work groups followed in relation to space.

CUTS OF ASSEMBLAGES

Sociomaterial assemblages from the two studied groups show how practices of work groups in open offices emerge in different ways. Specifically, I find that the office spaces and groups were formed by sociomaterial practices of routinising and ritualising, hierarchising and belonging through the production of control, see figure 4 for a visual cut. Each of these constituent assemblages of entanglements are cut out in turn.

Figure 4

The Constitutive Entanglement between Space and Groups
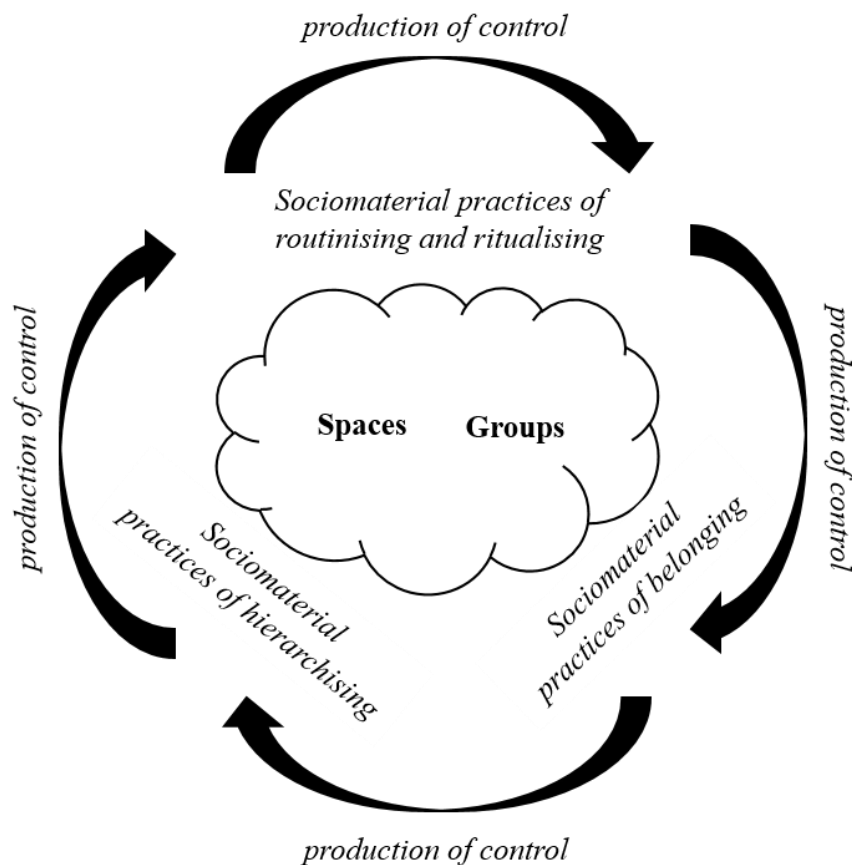
Sociomaterial assemblages of routinising and ritualising

> I sit and stare out in the office and notice a poster on the wall saying 'Communication and collaboration – PRESENT. When we are present… we are attentive, we show openness, we are positive.' It shows a busy metro station where everyone is heading to the doors, but one man is looking towards the viewer, smiling. At the bottom is the brand logo, SIC. (Field notes, SIC)

As this poster meets me on my very first day in the open office at SIC, I instantly know the organisation feature processes most Danish organisations do; flat hierarchising, openness, transparency and collaborative ways of working. In fact, both studied organisational groups conveyed such composition of flexibility, autonomy and self-management. Such cultures were reflected in the everyday routinised and ritualised ways of working, which was, yet somewhat implicitly, communicated by management and socialised on to new members within the groups. This involved an attitude of flexibility towards working hours and working from home or other office locations, although most group members worked during normal working hours (usually 8am to 4pm) or more, and were present most days. Especially newcomers were (assumed to be) present in the office as part of being socialised into their groups and routinised ways of working. One day Vigga elaborated on the relation between presence in the office and becoming part of the group at SIC:

> We use each other a lot, you learn from each other and you also get to hear how other interpreted what you did on a project. It would be completely different if people sat in private offices, you wouldn't overhear what's going on and use each other like we do. It's also a way in; you get a feeling of what other people are doing and what they're capable of. Everyone is busy which means that you don't get on a project because you don't have anything to do, you get tasks on a project because you're there, because you're visible. (Field notes, SIC)

The poster signalled, and as I shall later elaborate, the bodily presence in space was also a mechanism of unobtrusively controlling members, despite arriving under the disguise of easy-goingness and flexibility. Consisting of self-managing knowledge workers, the groups were generally expected to handle work and everyday task-related issues within the group, bringing about espoused cultures of collaboration and work ethos, but really, individual initiative and competence trumped that. Newcomers unripe with the needed skills had to make sure that they were present and proactive in terms of getting tasks and socially pushy in becoming part of the groups. In return, the more experienced members usually prioritised helping and socialising newcomers during the otherwise busy workdays and continuous incoming tasks. In the office, this was experienced as long periods of quiet and concentrated work, interruptions with questions from group and other organisational members, and on rarer occasions, more ferocious chatter various places. As Bjørn from SIC explained to me, the open office came with some distractions, but overall group members perceived it as a benefit for the everyday work life:

> You do get a lot of interruptions of one or the other sort, but you'd also lose something if we didn't sit in an open office. The other day I just overheard a conversation and it made me aware that I had to coordinate with Ben. If we'd sat in different offices, I'd never have known, and we would both be working on the same thing. (Field notes, SIC)

Both groups had clear routinised and ritualised approaches to coffee and lunch breaks, food and drinking habits, such as what was customary, and at what time such practices took place. I became accustomed to such routinising as well; "I'm looking at the time and it's one minute to twelve, probably Kristian will be here anytime now asking if people are ready for lunch. He comes in at 12.03 and says 'lunch time'" (field notes, Vigus). Appreciated was ritualising cake bringing at every small occasion, such as when Esben from Vigus transferred from another group, moving just down the hall into the group's shared office:

A bunch of men come into the office and go towards Esben. He has brought cake with him, as it is his first day in the group since he transferred from the [other] group. Essentially this means he has changed from one small open office to another, just 50 meters down the hall. All the people standing, talking and eating cake are from his old group. Alexander, Anders and I stay at our computers, not really knowing if we should continue working or join them. No one says anything to us, and since I don't know Esben, I wait for him to invite us into the circle they have formed around the cake. The others are offered a second piece; they take the offer with little hesitation. They tease him with his new nice spot that includes books, referring to the shelf behind him, which is still full of Frederik's things. A few more come in from the old group and take some cake, and slowly the circle dissolves. Esben finally asks if I got the email about today's cake, but I say I'm not on any email list, and he then says that we (his new group members and me) can take some cake if we want. (Field notes, Vigus)

Actually, Esben had transferred to the group over a year ago, but because of space limit and still having some loose ties with his old group, he stayed at his old desk for the interim time. The physical move of office location and desk, legitimacy of "his" new space, was what justified the cake eating. That Esben was offered a corner desk signified that he was experienced and that he had already built up credit within the company and respect across groups. Because Esben had been there many years, he already knew some of his new group members, but clearly ritualising the move and occupation of specific space, also revealed where he now belonged - in the new group. The transition between groups was a transition in space too, one that was cemented by ritualising space, but where it was also apparent that Esben was still more part of his old than new space-group. Cake ritualising was not simply happening in space, occupation of and movement within space, space also created such routinising and ritualising. Although the group at SIC oftentimes treated occasions with beer, there too was a similar ritualising practices involving cake, such as producing space of and words of collaboration; "We gather around a cake and talk about the collaboration with Enos (pseudonym of collaborative organisation)" (field notes, SIC). Other occasions included birthday celebrations:

The chatter starts as we gather around the table in the middle of the room. It's time for cake to celebrate Lewis' birthday again, as if the rolls and cake we had this morning were not enough. I join them to have a piece, even though I'm neither hungry nor feel like eating cake. They all do it, and so do I. Plus, it is a chance to talk, a chance to uplift the otherwise quiet humdrum; to fill the empty space. (Field notes, SIC)

Ritualising ways of working such as this served several purposes; first, they were social events, something the group did together. In the imaginary scenario that a group member did not join (or if I had not joined in the absent lust for cake), one would not be part of the spatialmaterial ritualising practice, and (at least in those cut-out moments) the group. As the group members at SIC were more tightly knit and acted more a group, they had more routines and ritualised traditions. Clearly, I felt the need to participate in these practices, because I too wanted to be a part and belong. Also, it was a way of breaking the quietness in the office; a way of generating intra-actions. The open office provided particular space for this to happen; it made us move in space and come closer together around the objectified cake. In that sense, we fill space with our bodies, actions, voices and togetherness, and the space which I otherwise found empty (of course, it never is) became filled. At the same time, our practices related to such material fillings of space through ritualising, such as getting up from our desks, fetching coffee, stemming together, cutting the cake, talking, etc., are produced and imbued with spatial and the material underpinnings. There would never have been ritualising practices in the group without the perception of shared open space, and the open office space, in return, only became so because of the ritualising practices we together performed.

Routinising and ritualising practices in groups, such as those considered here, show just how practices emerge through the constitutively entangled between space and group members. Participating in the everyday performances spatially, materially and socially was part of being and becoming a group member. Significantly, it was not only significant where routinising and ritualising occurred in space, but also apparent that space achieved to trigger, shape, limit and change the emergent practices. In addition, the routinising and ritualising manifestations achieved to make and take up space, move, push and fill the ongoing distribution of space. The emergence of sociomaterial practices of

routinising and ritualising was thus achieved by the interplay and entanglement between the office spaces and the groups.

Sociomaterial assemblages of hierarchising

Flat organisational hierarchising was apparent in both groups, for instance, in Vigus the group leader sat in the same space as the group, because "when I'm here, I prefer being in and among people I work with; the group members, which I think is a benefit for them and for me" (Jonathan, Vigus). In SIC, Vigga, a group member explained: "managers also sit among us when they come to the office, which makes them more accessible, approachable, human even, because it implies that we need him as well as he needs people on the floor". Group leaders and managers were, however, only sporadically present, which intensified the feeling of flat hierarchising, as one said: "without having a boss in the office, the leadership is not very strong. I mean, okay we have our tasks, but we are equal. At least in the office" (Felipe, Vigus). Again, this portrays how, in and by the open office space, group members are equal - even with managers. Although the spatial office layout signalled flatness, openness and connectedness in the two groups, the shared space too maintained informal hierarchising among group members. As Philip, a group member from SIC, explained when we informally spoke:

> There is this unspoken hierarchy in an open office. The seniors sit around the edges in order to have the overview of others; no one can go behind your back and see what you are doing. It's really important where you sit and it means a lot for us. And it's kind of taboo to express that you want to sit certain places; they [the group members] say they don't care where they sit, but deep down they do. (Field notes, SIC)

The physical, material place of members' desk in the office seemingly resembled who they were within the group in terms of status, and sure enough, in both groups it was the experienced group members who occupied the corner desks. Second best to that was sitting against a wall, whilst newcomers – including me - were placed in the middle. This not only made newcomers and their work visible to everyone in the group, it equally

ensured invisibility of the experienced members' work. Erik, a group member from SIC, also believed that given his position in the group as an experienced member, he was assigned a certain desk, as he said:

> If you sat out there in the middle of the room, I wouldn't like that. (…) I'm actually fine with it [the open office], maybe because I'm one of those that you assign one of the places to that are okay. (Erik, SIC)

By being 'one of those', he refers to his status within the group; he has the experience, has been there for long time and was what the others called "the guru". In Vigus, the same scenario played out with the most experienced members as well as group leaders sitting at the outer desks. The most experienced group member even had the privilege of a desk in a different, private office only accompanied by his protégé, exactly so that he would not be disturbed too much. Relating to the routinising socialisation practices for newcomers to be present and visible in space in becoming part of the group, presence and the nature of embodiment within space was also important for the hierarchising practices. More senior group members, group leaders or managers implicitly had more freedom and flexibility in terms of when they were present/absent and what they did in the office when present – experiences of hierarchising practices, which mirrored their position in relation to the group:

> A guy comes in to the office and asks for Jonathan [the group leader]. Alexander says loud and clear; 'no, he's only been here two minutes today.' We all turn heads and chuckle. 'What?' the guy says. 'It's true. He just came in for two minutes, answered one question, took his computer and left for meetings', Alexander replies. 'Oh, you got that one question then?' I ask. 'Of course I got that one question; I'm important,' he jokingly replies. (Field notes, Vigus)

> A man arrives loudly saying hello to the group. He is wearing a nice suit and looks like a manager. He is. He walks around looking for a desk, and asks me if the empty desk

opposite me is Philip's (…). I say yes, and he asks me if I'm part of the [SIC group]. I explain who I am and we shake hands. His name is Jack (…). Jack is talking on his phone opposite me. He has his shoes on the table, showing his bright striped socks. (Field notes, SIC)

The transparency and openness of the offices gave away when group members came and went, when and how many meetings they had outside the office and the group; visibility of practices. In that sense, absence signified busyness, importance, seniority. What was considered acceptable practices, such as working with one's feet on the table, for example, depended on who one was in the group and in space. The embodied practices of occupying, working in and with/-out the open office spaces thus ensured and maintained the status of group members and upheld the informal social hierarchising relations among group members. It was only and ever in its togetherness that space and group members created and maintained the practices of hierarchising.

Sociomaterial assemblages of belonging

How you come to feel part of a group is a little hard to imagine in an open office like this. (Anne, SIC)

Before the move to the smaller open office, Anne, a newcomer to the group, reflects on her experienced difficulty in becoming part of the group, and associates it to the space in which the group works. For her, the very open office space hinders belongingness. Another member from SIC, however, also felt how sharedness and belonging was created in the collaborative space, but importantly, this being after the group moved to a smaller open office:

That we sit together creates a form of sharedness, for example, if we're frustrated about a project, we all feel it. You experience the frustration in the others and you feel it too, even the managers experience it. (Vigga, SIC)

Experiencing that the office space produced and enhanced the feeling of belonging when shared by people collaborating then depended on just how open the space was perceived – a perception based on space as a whole, including air, floor space, things and colleagues within. Once it is perceived too open, as the first office was for Anne, her feeling of belonging diminished. As Svend, a group member from Vigus, compares the office with an imaginary larger and more open office space:

It would be harder to create the boundaries of the group, because how do you do that when there are no actual boundaries between your group and other people? At least we're able to talk across the room in our shared office because it's not bigger than that, but you couldn't do that if you're in a larger open office. (Field notes, Vigus)

Another group member emphasised the good size of the office as well:

I like sitting in this small open office. Not *too* big an open office, because that can become very… overwhelming. (…) The size we have here is still okay. (Jonathan, Vigus)

Like Anne from SIC, Svend and Jonathan from Vigus also emphasised that the size of the open space should not be too big, otherwise, it would negatively influence the feeling of belonging to the collective. Also, spatial markers were used to make the individual desks more personalised such as displaying photos, drawings and work material. All such markers provided means of signalling which space territory belonged to whom as individual group members, but also which belonged to the collective. In SIC, for instance, a shared table in the middle was the gathering spot; holding relevant book collections and sweets members brought along to share. Being physically present in space was another way practices of belonging was apparent. Indeed, group members felt more connected to their group when working in the office as opposed to from home or another

office location, as Lauren from Vigus said, "If you're at the office you have a feeling of what other people are doing and that you are part of the group". When members were in the same space, the awareness of others became apparent, as did the feeling of being part of something. Even the discourse about the office space reflected what was happening or felt in the group, and the office was even synonyms with the group in both groups, like "in our office we are trying to…" (Felipe, Vigus) or "we feel it in our office…" (Lewis, SIC). A group member from SIC even called the group a floor, because he thought of the group of workers in terms of *where* they were located in the organisation, and not who they were in relation to their function.

To sum up, the size of open space, the use of spatial markers, the presence in space and even the discourse about the office space emerged through relations between space of groups. Collectively, the sociomaterial practices achieved to create, shape and maintain belonging to space and groups.

The production of assemblages through control

Apparent in the two groups was that the autonomous, self-managing group members were controlled through the open workspace. For one, all work practices, including the routinisation and ritualisation of everyday ways of working, were visible to everyone in the office. Second, in its sharedness, openness and visibility the workspace produced, maintained and reinforced the hierarchical relations organisational members between. Lastly, the sociomaterial practices in the group ensured and controlled how members came to fit in, would feel part of and experience belonging to the group. Collectively, the assemblages of sociomaterial entanglements enacted practices constitutive of space and groups through the production of control. Accustomed to a two-person private office at the university, I experienced such self- and peer-based controlling force on my very first day at SIC:

> Everyone can hear what everyone says, and the openness of the office makes one's work very public. I wonder how they feel about the open office, if they don't lack personal freedom. Every move, phone call and chat has the eye of everyone, I find that a bit

awkward. I feel like I have to be busy the whole time because people are always looking, I wonder if they feel like that too. (Field notes, SIC)

Although I had the same experience of the open office at Vigus, I never really got used to the openness and transparency of the typical knowledge-based organisational settings. After months of reducing my type size from 12 to eight to prevent others from reading what was on my screen, I eventually resorted to putting a privacy filter on my laptop, only making the screen visible to myself sitting directly in front of it. Feeling the panoptic force of the open office was in fact what initially made me intriguingly aware of how space influences work practices. Only from experiences of being in the groups' open space myself, did I start to consider how an open and collaborative space continuously changed work practices, and how those practices influenced the workspace in return, such as changing type sizes and adding material screen filter in avoiding the eyes of others. Members similarly felt vulnerable to the visibility and voyeurism of their work practices, and as a result, they preferred the corner desks and those against a wall, as members expressed:

I prefer having my back against a wall (laughing). It's nicer that others can't see what I'm doing on the screen. (Svend, Vigus)

"I have one of the better spots, because I have a wall". (Henrik, SIC)

A newcomer, in contrast placed in the middle of the office, emphasised how she felt exposed to the view of others:

I hate it (laughing). It's because I'm not very good at sitting with my back to people. But I have to say, it has helped that I got those shelves up behind me, even though I said it didn't matter with those shelves, it did help. I just don't like when people are standing

behind me and look down without me noticing. I would like to sit a place where I have visibility of the whole room (…) Sitting with you back to… is bloody annoying. (Ava, SIC)

The material shelves changed Ava's perception of control in space, she came to feel more protected from the glare of others and sudden surprises as she said, now see would "see them coming" (Ava, SIC). Walls then, were a way of creating some sort of privacy by shielding one's screen and work from the view of others. Besides, "the better spots" served the purpose of giving an overview of space and people within it, as I noted one day: "I get Henrik's desk in the corner, that's nice; I can see what's going on from here" (Field notes, SIC). Rasmus from SIC, on the contrary, did not mind that much, yet he what well aware what it meant to others:

The others are very concerned about sitting against a wall because then it's not noisy all the way around, but it doesn't bother me too much, it's not what destroys my day if Ben is talking on the phone behind me or not (…) But [some of the others] are very concerned about it; Bjørn is so happy that he finally got his wall (laughing).

Clearly, Rasmus was one of the few who did not mind that much about other seeing his work and sharing space, still, he had also only been in the company for a year, and was still rather reliant on the other, more experienced group members. The specific place of members' desk was not only related to the internal hierarchising, it was also a way of adapting the work practices around the controlling aspects of working together space. Objects and sitting close to walls were, as was my screen filter, used as means for creating some sort of privacy, a territory of space; a shielding against others and escaping control in the open space. Some, for example, put on headphones on in order to "be able to stand the others (…) and shut them out" (Rasmus, SIC), or "if I have to concentrate, I put on my noise reducing headphones, then I can't hear a thing" (Henrik, SIC). I similarly noted one day that it was a "quiet day between the members, but a busy day on the phones. Most of them are wearing headphones, whether or not they're talking" (Field notes, SIC).

This was doubly effective for the creation of self-space; individual members perceived themselves to be more shut off from others, and it ensured that others would perceive them as in want of self-space.

The openness of course also assured control of who was in the office when, not to mention how members acted when present. Ben, for example, explained how his manager had the impression that he should be in office more often as:

> He thought it was the reason why I had some down periods without much to do… even though I can't really identify with that, but also because those in the office have tended not to give me any tasks, because they did not know if I would get it done. (Ben, SIC)

Despite flexibility in terms of working hours and presence/absence in space, there were, it seems, limits to the freedom group members could take. A consequence of not being present and not being on people's minds when new projects came in could mean that members would be set aside in terms of tasks and be 'forgotten' in favour of others. Being in space so others could see you were there and working was a way for managers and other group members to control group members. Especially more experienced workers could keep an eye on the more inexperienced workers, as Felipe from Vigus remarked; "It's important to have the people you're working with close enough to be… to see them… or to put pressure on them". Of course, such controlling aspects of practices in space also included the open conversations the office entailed, be that between members or through phone calls and online meetings. The physical, bodily and material presence along with the practices performed within and by space were, overall, all connected to more or less unobtrusive ways of controlling workers. This shows that while space was controlled by the groups, such as members moving shelves around to create a different group dynamic, the collective was also shaped and controlled through the spatialmaterial.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Above, I have cut out assemblages of sociomaterial practices of the open office that were enacted in three interrelated ways; by routinising and ritualising, hierarchising and belonging. For a start, the sociomaterial entanglement between space and groups was enacted through the everyday routinising and ritualising practices. In coming together for cake it was *all* what would be perceived as social or material that partook in holding everything together (Law, 2002); what made the sociospatialmaterial come into existence through intra-actions in the impossibility of distinction (Barad, 2007). Imagine, for example, the intra-actions involved in such a practice if they were in slow motion (Beyes & Steyaert, 2012); bodies, moving, material, touching, all minor configurations involved in routinising and ritualising space. In such different scale perspectives of time and space than mostly conventional, separability is smeared out whilst the entanglement and ongoing production and reconfigurations become clearer. Through the controlling force of visibility, the open office and collaborative settings ensured and demanded that members participated in the routinised and ritualised practices, as well as shaped and maintained the practices in turn.

A related, and second way of groups and space emerged was through sociomaterial practices of hierarchising. For quite some time, it has been acknowledged that the physical material setting holds implications for an individual's social position and status (Hatch, 1990; Zalesny & Farace, 1987). This lends the positions that the open office represents organising of less hierarchy (at least internally); a way of equalling the status difference between managers and workers, and workers in between (Turco, 2016). Ironically, the internal hierarchising established and emerging in and of the office spaces went against the very notion of the flat hierarchy open offices are supposed to resemble and create in the first place (Dale, 2005; Elsbach & Pratt, 2007); perhaps being the reason why it was taboo for members to make territorial claims within the shared space. This suggests that space does indeed play a controlling role on group members in between, and that open office settings encouraging autonomous and self-managed collaboration may in fact unintentionally spur the development of concertive control by (re)establishing hierarchising power relations within the groups (Barker, 1993).

On a final account of the entanglement of space and groups was through sociomaterial practices of belonging. Most members of the two groups struggled with experiencing belonging in open office space. This contrasts with Zalesny and Farace's (1987) argument that members within open offices are more likely to perceive it as collective unit, and will identify more with their work in comparison to private offices. This was also the case in Garretts et al.'s (2017) study on workers, who, despite working for different organisations, came together in a coworking space and created a shared sense of community. A way of overcoming the inherent constraints, members worked around creating more private and territorial space. Such practices were similar to how the spatial markers carried meaning in the study by de Vaujany and Vaast (2014), a way of making the open space appear more enclosed was by using spatial markers such as glass walls and shelves to establish boundaries group members in-between and with other groups. Another aspect relates to what Sewell and Taskin (2015) found in their study on teleworkers; those present as opposed teleworking from home risked feeling isolated, and less committed and relevant to others. This emphasises the importance of material and embodied presence of group members as well as leaders to stimulate effective collaboration (De Paoli & Ropo, 2015). Surely, belonging was created and maintained through the sociomaterial presence of group members, and in turn, limited by absence. Again, the assemblages of belonging were imbued with controlling reproductions, such as attempting to fit in or by avoiding the gaze of fellow group members.

Overall, the entanglement between space and groups was enacted by the sociomaterial practices through the production of control in the two studied groups. For instance, the visibility and therein accountability of presence and absence produced experiences of control in both groups. Once present, the practices performed within space were (re-)shaped by the sociomaterial practices. Apparent in the groups, was for example the notion Baldry and Barnes (2012) made; the more space a member perceives and is perceived by others to have, the more power and control the particular member had.

Space, and the otherwise always already material, if one was to analytically divide it from the humans occupying and moving within it, does in and by itself create no practices that may constitute a group. Neither does a group of coworkers make up a group without space (be that visible or virtual), or without a relation to space (such as history,

memory or meaning). It would be impossible to distinguish between when the social and spatialmaterial influence each other (even in slow motion or at the atomic level), precisely because the sociomaterial practices, such as how to work, where to sit and when to be in space, are only ever formed, changed and continued through sociomaterial entanglements. For instance, a chronological order can never be established or begun/ended between; (not) building a wall, (not) having a preference for sitting against a wall, (not) sitting against a wall, presence/absence or (in)visibility. Rather, space and members of the collective only continuously come to exist in their constitutive entanglement through the ongoing and sociomaterially negotiated production of control. It is only together that the material and the social become, as I have attempted to show by unpacking how sociomaterial practices in open office space through the production of control continuously form and maintain through momentarily boundary practices - and thereby the constitution - of groups. Indeed, I have demonstrated how such sociomaterial assemblages create consequences of experiences and actions (Carlile et al., 2013). In turn, I have portrayed that open office space was only ever made so by and with the social, not simply its physical, visible materiality, but through functions of intra-activities forming practices again and in turn. The cuts not only demonstrate that space is continuously evolving and ever-emergent (Hernes, 2004); they also show that the collective is too, and more importantly, in an inherently entangled manner with the spatialmaterial. Taken together, I have argued that space and groups are constitutively entangled through the imbued sociomaterial production of control. This holds not only implications for future theorisation on sociomaterial space and control in groups, but also for the practice of working together in open office spaces.

Implications for theory

As an on-going and increasing office layout, open offices and how they influence and are influenced by individuals working within, has been little explored within organisational studies. This study attempts to initiate a turning to the spatial and material in understanding and making sense of some of the complex, but inherent entanglements stirring in new, open and collaborative workspaces. This entails recognising and further exploring that space brings with it and is brought meaning, stories, are embedded with power relations and control mechanisms, and is produced by embodied and lived

experiences (de Vaujany & Vaast, 2014; Taylor & Spicer, 2007). By showing how sociomaterial practices of space constitute groups, I expand the usually sociomaterial cases of technology and IS, such as done by Orlikowski & Scott (2008) and Nyberg (2009). Importantly, this signifies – and encourages – that sociomaterial approaches can be useful in studying somewhat more intangible aspects within organisation than technological apparatuses, such as working together in space.

In terms of control in groups, the controlling forces of sociomaterial practices became evident in rather concertive ways. This suggests that peer-based control happens and is shaped not only through social mechanisms as existing work has discovered (Barker, 1993; Barker, 1999), but also by the sociomaterial entanglements. This underpins that spatialmaterial surroundings more than play a subordinate role for groupworking and theorising on groups and groups, particularly aspects relating to control such as surveillance, visibility and power relations among group members. With ongoing turns to more open and collaborative ways of working, indeed the findings suggest that new forms of control consist of more-than-human (Braidotti, 2013). By no means can we then think of 'who we were', 'who we are' and 'who we become' when working together – our collective becoming - without consideration of and complete immersion into sociomaterial space.

Implications for practice

Being true to the nature and agential realist account of this study, there are no practices, occurrences, context, and so forth, that would happen or be the same elsewhere. Yet, a sociomaterial perspective can equip practice in better understanding how office space and the surrounding environment influence humans, their feelings and productivity. Such implications may prove particularly useful in similar contexts of open office layouts and for autonomous, self-managing groups. First, and to no surprise, the study suggests that space and office arrangements are extremely important for workers, especially in terms of how it relates to group members in between and as collectives. For example, sitting in corners and against walls are favoured places in space, and this may have profound influence on the internal hierarchy and feeling of belonging within a group. Noteworthy

then, is that the open office space created and maintained hierarchising, which goes against, among other things, the open, flat and equal hierarchy, they were supposed to create. Openness then in and by itself inhibits openness. Objects in space may too have a similar function in terms of creating privacy; what most workers have a need to experience. Another take away is the importance of embodied experiences in space, such as the presence of coworkers and leaders to most optimally foster collaborative and group-based work. Offices therefore need to be designed with these matters in mind and, when possible, with the influence of group members themselves – consistent with what previous work has emphasised (Knight & Haslam, 2010). Overall, the study finally suggests that a more optimal open office size is somewhat small with fewer rather than more members in, for sure in work environments were independent work alongside groupwork partly characterises the work practices. For these matters, space must be made.

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CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The more detailed theoretical and practical contributions and implications are outlined in the individual papers; this chapter deals with what cuts across the separate, yet interrelated, considerations. First, I will discuss the theoretical contributions that the thesis holds, followed by the practical implications. I then present, what I consider to be, the main limitations to the choices made, methodological issues met underway, and the process of getting to here. This discussion leads to carving out avenues for future research. Lastly, I pinpoint the main takeaways from the thesis in a conclusion.

Theoretical Contributions

On the whole, this thesis adds to the existing literature by giving an account of how processes of working together play a role and play out under new ways of working in exploring the manifestations of working together. To this end, the main theoretical fields to which the thesis contributes are elaborated in turn.

Contributions to Theory on Working Together.

This thesis shows how working together by nature is paradoxical, relational and sociomaterially entangled. Overall, this adds to the less studied contextual and (micro) dynamic perspectives on groups and teams (Cronin et al., 2011; Humphrey & Aime, 2014; Maloney et al., 2016). The paradoxical nature of organising entails that working together holds unintended consequences alongside the intended purposive actions, which should be considered and embraced as inevitable to organising. However, some consequences may be avoided or limited by acknowledging their origin, that is, the antecedents contributing to their development, and by knowing more about which organisational level is mostly affected. For instance, the study showed that socialising

newcomers in informal, individualised, autonomous settings had the consequence of overburdening the existing group members, whilst some newcomers had to face demotivation, frustration and potential exclusion. As another feature of new ways of working, the open office also brought with it consequences in the studied contexts. Some group members felt a need to evade always being and working together in open space, wherefore they attempted to create their own spaces of privacy or if possible, escaped the shared space by working from home. This suggests that while the greater openness, transparency and connectedness characterising new ways of working are good for many purposes (Turco, 2016; Våland & Georg, 2018), they equally entail consequences, which must be considered when structuring organisations, and designing work and office spaces in current organisations. In addition, I have demonstrated that processes, such as socialisation and identification, are relational and only come about in their relation to other processes (Langley & Tsoukas, 2017), and that these very processes are inherently intertwined. This underscores the importance of informal and individualised socialisation in developing identification with work groups, as opposed to focusing on institutionalised forms of breaking new members in, as most existing research has been occupied with (Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Smith et al., 2012). Essentially, the most important agents of identification and socialisation are the members of the work group, and the relations with these key individuals. The accounts I provide show that such processes form 'bottom up' and the best way to embrace these processes are to provide supporting environments in terms of management, structures and design of work and spaces. For sure, the space in which work happens and happens together with is of crucial importance in its constitutive entanglement with the work group. The becoming of groups, their existence and ongoing formation is shaped through sociomaterial practices, which maintain and form the group through control processes. This thesis then suggests that the material and spatial are of greater significance than currently recognised within the literatures on groups and teams.

Contributions to Control Theory.

Control has long been recognised as omnipresent to organising, and of ongoing interest to organisational scholars (Larson & Tompkins, 2005). With the focus of this thesis, I found control to be highly intertwined with other organisational phenomena, such as group identification, as studies before on control and its identity regulating forces have

demonstrated (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Kärreman & Alvesson, 2004). Existing research has demonstrated how these forms of control involve self- and peer-based control, particular in the context of autonomous, self-managing workers or groups (e.g. Barker, 1993; Hawkins, 2013; Michel, 2011). Apart from extending this to the process of identification with a given group, and not only an individual's self-identity, I show how control both plays a role (such as potentially fostering unintended consequences) and plays out (such as through sociomaterial practices) under new ways of working. Furthermore, while the connection between control and space make history in organisational studies (e.g. Dale, 2005; Dale & Burrell, 2008), no research, to my knowledge, has tied this connection with a group-like context in particular, as is shown here. Understanding such relations better is of critical importance in light of the increasing and ongoing use of group and team structuring in organisations, not to mention the multitude of potential consequences it brings from peer-based and concertive control (Barker, 1999). Due to interdependent working within open and shared space in many new ways of working, space processes and their potentially controlling forces become of great importance as they arrive in new and different ways. For example, interestingly, whilst the openness of the open office spaces coupled with flat-hierarchical structures and reduced managerial control is intended to signal greater equality, in practice it managed to promote and uphold hierarchising relations between members in the two groups studied through the spatialmaterial dimension. These findings show that control is indeed still omnipresent – and that the processes and practices of control may come in new and powerful disguises under new ways of working.

Contributions to Process and Practice Theory.

The manifestations of new ways of working together come about through the processes and practices of working together. Indeed, with a process perspective, it is the performativity of things which makes its existence and becoming (Helin et al., 2014; Latour, 2005). By now, it is broadly acknowledged that organisations more than entail processes since Weick introduced the concept of organising as an extension to organisation (Langley & Tsoukas, 2017). The process turn has involved theorisation of identification and socialisation as processes and relational ones too (Gutierrez, Howard-Grenville, & Scully, 2010; Langley et al., 2013; Sluss et al., 2012). What this thesis adds

to these perspectives (through studying them over time) is *how* identification and socialisation processes come about in the context of working together, how they are inherently intertwined and indeed that they entail *work*. The study here shows how newcomers become part of a work group and not only why they would do so, as much work has focused on within identification literature, that is, *why* members identify (Ashforth et al., 2008). Furthermore, I have demonstrated how newcomers' identification processes are intertwined with socialisation processes, and that they only come about relationally (Langley & Tsoukas, 2017), group members in-between as well as the two forms of processes. Finally, I have argued that working together does not simply involve work practices, but that these practices inherent to group formation and maintenance are sociomaterial, entangled and constitutive.

Practical Implications

The separate papers carry with them important implications worthy of concern for practice: for example, that workers do not necessarily enjoy working in office spaces that are perceived too open. Regarding the more general implications, I outline the implications for the practice of working together under new ways of working through key interrelated issues.

Firstly, the transforming new world of work changes the nature of relations within the workplace, concerning both relations between the workers themselves and with their managers[3]. For example, while socialisation was somehow assumed to happen "by itself" in the informal autonomous and knowledge-based work settings studied, group members were unsure who had the responsibility of socialising new members. The new group members, in turn, were unsure who to turn to for help and rely on in a flat-hierarchical structure with little direct management influencing most group members. In effect, existing group members became the main socialisation agents of fellow and new workers, rather than managers or the organisation as whole, although these processes were not

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[3] In line with what is used in the field, I use the term *manager*, while acknowledging that these implications may pertain equally to related terms such as leaders.

officially recognised or formalised. The importance of peer-to-peer relationships was also seen in that peers were largely accountable for enabling identification and for controlling one another. In general, managers in the studied organisations were considered more as maintaining supporting, administrative roles rather than micro managing, for example, the execution of tasks. Both workers and managers need not only to be aware of such changing relational roles, but also to establish processes for how best to work with and around these changing relations.

Secondly, the structures of organising and work design must purposively accommodate the "new workers" in terms of meeting their needs and demands in becoming the most productive workers, and creating the supportive environment needed. Generally, this thesis has demonstrated that the structures of new ways of working, at least the ones similar to self-managing teams, may involve unintended consequences aside from their intended ones, especially for individual workers. Although current ways of working are moving towards less management and greater autonomy, openness, flexibility and fluidity (Langfred & Rockmann, 2016; Sewell & Taskin, 2015), based on this work, seemingly, workers still need managers to be present, accessible, and accountable. Stripping away or downplaying the need for middle managers and group or team leaders (Levi, 2017), may then not be the most appropriate initiative when flattening hierarchical structures of organising. On the contrary, the findings underscore that if adverse consequences are to be avoided, then managers should be in active "touch" with work groups and support them in processes such as identification and socialisation, which may eventually increase well-being and retention of workers. In that sense, the closest managers are critical when organising in groups and teams, although their managerial roles and tasks might have changed. Additionally, managers and designers of workspaces need to have an understanding of the place and space where work is (per)formed, and how the workers respond to a given or potential office space. If workers are forced to work together openly and transparently, but are not adequately prepared to do so, or it essentially is not suited for the tasks of all workers, the consequences go beyond dissatisfied workers. Much of the necessary considerations in optimising the new ways of working together should begin with adjusting organisations to accommodate the changing nature of work.

A third issue is that of sharedness when working together. Sharedness is not achieved simply by working alongside others with little collaboration and interaction such as coworking pertains to – working alone, together (Spinuzzi, 2012). Instead, sharedness must be created, recognised and maintained between workers through interdependent working. Just because workers are placed in open offices does not mean they will by and of themselves work (well) together, even though they are designated a work group or team. The group at Vigus, for instance, had difficulties in creating feelings of commonness, sharedness and belonging as they were tied to different project teams, and all their work hours were connected to projects. Essentially, there were no resources set aside to the sharing and development of collective methods, systems and processes in improving the skills and work procedures within the group and their specialist area. Again, the consequences went beyond individual workers, for example, when group members would spend time using and developing individual systems for the same procedures alongside each other, or would suddenly realise that what they were working on something someone else had already done half a year earlier – yet the process was never shared or stored. Surprisingly, I experienced several situations like these, as a result of organisations and managers not realising the need for and importance of creating sharedness when working together under new ways of working. A way of creating sharedness could be achieved by ensuring the allocation of resources, space and time for developing shared systems, methods and processes. Other ways could involve relating recognition and rewards to the group level and not only the individual group members, or by initiating and supporting social activities within the group, as they emphasised at SIC, which in general enhanced the feelings of sharedness and belonging – valuable for being and working together.

Taken together, the practical implications suggest that managers with advantage should be trained in working together under new ways working. This should entail creating awareness about how new ways of working together involve accommodating the changing nature of organisational structures, work designs and spaces, and relations within organisations. For example, how is socialisation of newcomers best supported in informal, flat-hierarchical managerial contexts? It lies not in the nature and purpose of qualitative research such as this to generalise findings, indeed it goes against the very philosophical foundations on which the ethnographic methodology applied in the study

rests. Nonetheless, since the discussed processes are inherent to all ways of organising, other, and especially similar, contexts should be attentive to the implications put forward here. Overall, the thesis suggests that there still is much for managers to learn about and (re)consider when organising and managing workers and the collective under new ways of working.

Limitations

In relation to the methodology and work methods, attempting to study humans and organisational processes on the move comes with a multitude of challenges and potential limitations. First, the selection of groups studied was not done by me alone, on the contrary, both groups were pre-selected by the key informants as well-running units operating under autonomous, self-managing conditions. Even though I agreed to the choices made after discussing the respective groups, and again after the first month of pilot observations, the choice was based as much on pragmatism as on theoretical selection. Secondly, and touched upon in chapter 3 on methodology, I found it difficult and time-consuming to temporarily become part of a world of others and make sense of what was going on. This became even more complex, as I ended up gaining access to two organisations and embarked on studying two work groups simultaneously in different organisations within different industries. Not only was this a challenge to me in terms of juggling my presence both places, having many (new) relations to form and making sense of two contexts at once, it too complicated the insights drawn from the study. For that reason, I decided to focus on what came about in and with the groups and what the processes achieved, rather than comparing the two groups through a comparative ethnography. Such an approach could, of course, have been pursued with greater emphasis on the groups' distinct cultures and shared systems (Fine, 1979; Fine & Hallett, 2014). In that vein, it might have been more fruitful to study a single context (at a time, at least), and going in-depth with one group instead of two. Still, the empirical span became wider with two contexts and with it the heightened opportunity for rich data and examples. Besides, I was avoiding turning a blind eye to the event that either of the two organisations would pull out of the collaboration anytime during the study, leaving my work vulnerable had I only followed one group. Third, the one-and-half-year withdrawal

from both organisations was a (perhaps too) long time in consideration of the manifold changes, complicating matters further, such as having to establish a new key informant and the studied group being restructured into two new groups in Vigus during my absence. While life did not allow for this, hypothetically, however, for the sake of theory development, the longitudinal research design might as well have been achieved over a shorter period with fewer obstacles to follow.

A central point made from the beginning on was the relational and processual philosophy on which I have attempted to address this entire process and the fieldwork study within. Setting off in a theoretical world amounting to the first paper, and "ending" a very different place with the third, signifies just partly what it entails to "live with the process". I can honestly say that I let it be an iterative process between engagements with theories, data and people, and many a time I considered other paths, which perhaps would have been easier to pursue. Some friendly colleagues, for example, remarked on my turn to sociomateriality and agential realism with utterances like: *But why… why would you do this half a year before handing in you thesis?* The simple response was that I could not undo what I now saw. Once I experienced the sociomaterial entanglement "out there" as well as "in here"; in the field and in theory, I had to tell a new and different-minded story than what the first two papers portrayed, despite the challenges and limitations it holds. Overall then, I would certainly have ended elsewhere had my focus been more funnelled from the beginning on (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007), and with it, possibly yielding more detailed accounts of the same phenomena, such as exclusively focusing on the spatial and material under new ways of working. Then again, it would have been a different process and a different story.

Related to the above, and on a last note, my own participation in the study and role in the context has, of course, many implications of the study and analytical process; what can and should not be disregarded. As noted in the early pages of my acknowledgements, I became socialised into the very worlds I studied, and for that, I am a victim of the issues associated with holding these worlds at an arm's length while becoming a part of it all. My own experience in space coming from a two-person private office at the university, for example, certainly triggered my awareness of the problems that group members experienced in the open offices. Then again, it is what makes

ethnography unique – you never know what you end up experiencing, standing in the middle of it all – and how (much) as a researcher, you will shape the study-in-process you are performing.

Avenues for Future Work

Studying phenomena, including those pertinent to the world of organising – from a relational and process perspective is invariably complex, and anything but the easy way around. Still, future work needs to do more than speak of dynamic, processual aspects of ways of working together, and attempt to follow and study the processes instead. Exploring such processual aspects of working together further could entail focusing on process elements such as experiences and their heterogeneity (Langley & Tsoukas, 2017), temporality, wholeness, openness, force and potentiality (Helin et al., 2014). Equally seldom considered within process studies on ways of working together are those applying a practice approach. While the practice approach has gained footing within organisational research, the practices involved in working together have been less explored. From a perspective where it is "practicing all the way down" (Nicolini & Monteiro, 2017, p. 111), the practices of the group, rather than the group as entity, should be a main focus for scholars interested in ways of working together. Moreover, linking a practice perspective to central organisational processes hold several avenues for future, important work, such as how managers' and workers' practices facilitate control in new and different contexts. Coupling practices with an emphasis on how matter matters (Carlile, Nicolini, & Langley, 2013), and appreciations of the more-than-human (Braidotti, 2013), such as sociomaterial approaches, would yield new perspectives to traditional ways of studying organisational processes, such as socialisation. In relation to that, in the less explored contextual aspects on groups and teams there is still little work (besides the attempted beginning here) which pays attention to the spatial and material within interdependent ways of working together. For sure, much more work holding important potential can be carried out incorporating these foci. Generally, the sociomaterial aspects to working can be extended beyond the, so far, mostly technological and information systems perspectives (e.g. Nyberg, 2009;

Orlikowski & Scott, 2014), including more intangible phenomena, such as the ones approached here.

Studying processes and practices as the ones here, are well-suited ethnographic methods in the ability to follow phenomena (humans, artefacts, objects, etc.) over time (Langley et al., 2013; Van Hulst et al., 2017). Future research should thus attempt to conduct ethnographic studies involving fieldwork that enables living through experiences of the practices unfolding in exploring and better understanding processes of organising. Solely 'asking questions' in surveys or interviews says little more than people's perceptions and intentions of the engagement in practices - and not the actual work (sayings and doings) constituting the practices. In the vast and varied literature on studying different and new ways of working together, there are indeed still many uncharted paths to explore particularly with view to the dynamic, contextual, spatial and material. Hopefully, this thesis will become a little move pushing future moves in those directions.

Conclusion

I set out with (or really, engagements with the world made this thesis come to be about) the purpose of exploring how processes of working together play out under new ways of working. In exploring these processes, I have addressed the calls for knowing more about how particular new ways of working together are manifested in specific contexts, how they play a role for workers and play out, and what their potential consequences might look like (Nijp et al., 2016). To that end, I built the theoretical and methodological foundations of the thesis on an underlying relational and process philosophy. First, by attending to self-managing teams as experienced within the existing literature, I identified and connected the fragmented research on the unintended consequences of such a favoured way of organising together (Annosi & Brunetta, 2017). Through an ethnographic field study of autonomous and self-managing work groups in knowledge-based settings, I then turned my attention to how particular manifestations of new ways of working together play a role for workers and how it plays out in doing so. The study considers two perspectives on how new ways of working play a role for workers: first, in

showing how newcomers' identification processes with a work group are constructed through relational socialisation processes, and second, by showing how imbued and entangled the everyday work practices of work groups in open office spaces are with the spatial and material. The findings from the study contribute to existing research within their respective fields, and collectively by showing how working together under new ways of working is inherently contextual, relational, dynamic, sociomaterial and paradoxical. Indeed, I have given accounts of how processes and practices play out as they construct, maintain, constitute and control ways of working together in the context of autonomous, self-managing work groups working in open offices. In making the most of new ways of working, particularly such ways of working together as the ones studied here, it must be recognised and embraced that they bring with them unintended consequences for workers in the brave new world of work; workers who are not only on the move, but on the run[4].

For now, we have much to embark on when studying and practicing ways of working together – this move of exploring the unintended consequences, relational processes and sociomaterial practices, hopefully, brings about such further dis-/entangling.

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[4] As in, running to keep up (rather than away)

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APPENDIX

Co-Author Statement

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Declaration of co-authorship*

Full name of the PhD student: Emma Perriton

This declaration concerns the following article/manuscript:

Title:	Embracing the Paradox of Self-Managing Teams: Manifestations of Unintended Consequences
Authors:	Emma Perriton & John Parm Ulhøi

The article/manuscript is: Published ☐ Accepted ☐ Submitted ☒ In preparation ☐

If published, state full reference:

If accepted or submitted, state journal:

Has the article/manuscript previously been used in other PhD or doctoral dissertations?

No ☐ Yes ☐ If yes, give details:

The PhD student has contributed to the elements of this article/manuscript as follows:
- A.   Has essentially done all the work
- B.   Major contribution
- C.   Equal contribution
- D.   Minor contribution
- E.   Not relevant

Element	Extent (A-E)
1. Formulation/identification of the scientific problem	C
2. Planning of the experiments/methodology design and development	B
3. Involvement in the experimental work/clinical studies/data collection	N/A
4. Interpretation of the results	N/A
5. Writing of the first draft of the manuscript	A
6. Finalization of the manuscript and submission	B

Signatures of the co-authors

Date	Name	Signature
18.10.18	John Parm Ulhøi	

In case of further co-authors please attach appendix

Date: *18.10.18*

Signature of the PhD student

*As per policy the co-author statement will be published with the dissertation.