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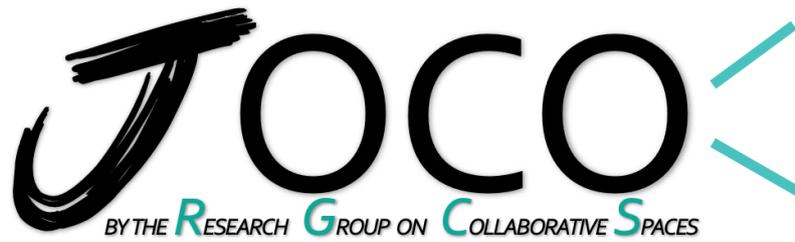
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## Seizing the Potentialities of Open Science: From a Community to a Platform Journal

Paula Ungureanu, Stefan Haeffliger and François-Xavier de Vaujany<sup>1</sup>

The adventure of the Research Group on Collaborative Spaces (RGCS)<sup>2</sup> started in March 2014. At that time, our network was not an association. It was a Working Group settled in France, in the UK and in Canada gathering researchers and practitioners interested in topics of new collaborative work and collaborative spaces<sup>3</sup>. Quickly came on the way the issue of Open Science (OS) and Citizen Sciences. To develop knowledge commons (for society and organizations) and to explore impactful, inclusive, responsible, resonant new practices, methods and concepts about and for collaborative practices, OS appeared quickly as a promising space.

Our network thus started to co-produce its own knowledge commons. Topics such as “new (open) research methods” for social sciences and humanities (Aubouin et al, 2018), new (open) academic events and new academic practices (de Vaujany et al, 2018), “open education” and “open university” (Aroles et al, 2020; de Vaujany, Bohas and Irrmann, 2019), third-places and their role in our cities (Bohas et al, 2017) or new democratic practices (Bohas et al, 2016 ; de Vaujany, 2021) paved the way of our documented and shared discussions. In particular, the practice of “walking ethnographies” and “collaborative learning expeditions” (see the OWEE<sup>4</sup> protocol co-produced by the network in the spirit of a knowledge commons, Aubouin et al, 2018; de Vaujany and Vitaud, 2017) became a central part of our co-production of a knowledge commons. RGCS organized more than 32 OWEE experimentations in more than 20 countries with no other resources than enthusiasm and the affordances of open science. All these discussions have for sure strong continuities with past discussions about “actionable knowledge” (Argyris, 1996) or “practitioners'-academic' collaborations” (Carton and Ungureanu, 2017), but they also involve discontinuities because of the standards, connectivity and political philosophies at stake in open science and citizen science (Frieske et al, 2015; Fuller, 1999; Gieryn, 2006; Herther, 2012).

In 2019, we felt that the time had come to offer a more lasting landmark to all people interested in OS in the context of social studies at large, and in Management and Organization Studies, in particular, with a stress on

methodological issues (how to do collectively open science?) and philosophical debates (what is the meaning of open science, with which political implications for our societies and organizations)? Philosophers and sociologists of science have demystified the image of ‘normal’ sciences which they opposed to a practice-based and culture-imbued view which strives to investigate not only what scientists formally think but also what they do and how knowledge arises out of mundane academic practices such as conducting laboratory research, collaborating, writing up scientific theories or disseminating findings (see Knorr-Cetina et al., 2001), suggesting that the real, pulsating, mundane life of science often disattends the idealistic image of normal science as universal, objective, impersonal and based on illimited doubt (see also Hacket et al., 2008; Latour, 2002; Lynch, 1997). Yet, while much of what we know is related to what science is not, there is still much we must learn about the boundaries between new and old social practices of science making, including where they currently stand and what they may become in the future (Collins & Evans, 2002; Gieryn, 1995; Ungureanu & Bertolotti, 2020). We here argue, thus, that OS would very much benefit from the use of the theoretical lenses and ethnographic tools employed by the pioneers of sociology of science. Indeed, Open Science stakes are at the intersection of three realms: techniques, theories and research methods (see figure 1 below) (see Mirowski, 2018; Banks et al, 2019).

Open science practices often regard a shared “access to” something (1), or “opening” data such as surveys, interviews, measures or field notes. Various protocols, norms, licenses and infrastructures of the last decades have made real-time accessibility and collaboration within our reach. More and more, OS promoters realize that there is a mismatch between the model that they propose and the state of the academic fields which seek adoption, such that the theoretical lenses and concepts they use need to be aligned with the openness philosophy itself (2) (see Leone, Mantere and Faraj, 2021). OS thus may gradually be faced with the need to conceptualize a broader, non-dualistic process including both data collection, data diffusion and recursive and inclusive

<sup>1</sup> In the order of appearance: DISMI - University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Bayes Business School - City University of London, DRM - Université Paris Dauphine-PSL.

<sup>2</sup> See <http://rgcs-owee.org/> and @collspaces for more information.

<sup>3</sup> Acronym in French : NETC which stood for Nouveau Envrionnement de Travail Collaboratif, i.e. new collaborative work environment.

<sup>4</sup> OWEE (i.e. Open Walked Events-Based Experimentations) is a collective walk in a city, mixing local people with new comers, partly improvised, and aiming at offering a co-produced narrative and inquiry about a local territory and its problems. It is inspired namely by Debord (1958) famous “derive” and American Pragmatism and its theory of inquiry (see Dewey, 1938).

communication. In turn, these theoretical issues trigger reflections on methodological issues (3). Part of the traditional research methods do not fit with the objectives of OS (de Vaujany et al, 2018). And the problem is not just about opening as much as possible traditional spaces of academic discussions. Beyond spatial issues, at the heart of the discussion are new ways of co-narrating knowledge, new research temporalities (de Vaujany et al, 2018), new philosophies<sup>5</sup> which go beyond the closeness of the finite and the final, a paper which 'dies' as soon as it reaches destination in the academic journal<sup>6</sup>.

Research designs can flourish where diversity becomes a priority. When observations fall outside the purview of existing theory, researchers are encouraged to intensify data gathering and employ various research designs to synthesize the observations and build or extend theory (von Krogh et al., 2012). Phenomena-driven approaches thus cover a middle ground between data and theory, where general theories need to account for phenomena (Bogen and Woodward, 1988). In Management and Organization Studies, phenomena inspire theorization and what was a novel discovery enters the canon of general understanding over time (von Krogh et al., 2012). For instance, communities online where hackers build Free and Open Source software used to puzzle economists and organization scholars (Lerner and Tirole, 2002) and, as research proceeded, these organizations became the site of further studies that take their organization for granted (see e.g. Rullani and Haefliger, 2013).

The diversity of research approaches and designs can lend critical perspectives a voice as well as break established wisdom. It is noteworthy that the phenomenon of openness has had multiple declinations in the last decades, and that we are still very much in need of comparisons across paradigms, practices and processes of openness. We know that the discovery of openness followed a similar path from subverting established paradigms of building software (Kelty, 2001; Moody, 2009) to breaking established ways of describing job roles (Alexy et al., 2013) all the way to questioning strategy making (Luedicke et al., 2017), and new forms of organizing for public governance (Erikson, 2012; Macintosh & White, 2008; Skelcher et al., 2005). However, more research into what differs and what stays the same across different phenomena of openness would be benefic to making openness a distinct, consistent and integrated field of research. Research designs addressing openness may include nethnographies and questionnaires,

online observations and conversations, video and multimodal research, experiments and simulations, testing prior work as well as grounded theorizing about what openness means in specific contexts or across different contexts.

The Journal of Open Commons & Organizing (JOCO) aims at being a forum among others, a journal-platform. We will collect and select papers and other contributions all year long and valorize them in an annual issue. It will include three sections: an edited section (publishing research notes and white papers issues by RGCS during the year), an open reviewed section and a platform section (including a "paradise of lost papers" and a social network likely to help open researchers interested in social studies to identify each other). Beyond publication and diffusion, it will be combined with social network, open infrastructures and events (e.g. OWEEs and open seminars) likely to foster new kind of approaches to our practices. Each publication will stay 'alive' thanks to open panels (fishbowl panels), specific open seminars and new research material provided continuously by publishing researchers.

Based on the arguments above, the explored topics will be old and new ways of working (in corporate, scientific and activist worlds) or living and their relationships with new (open) modes of management, new ways of organizing and alternative forms of society. More precisely, we would expect contributions about:

- History of work and management in an open world;
- Changing nature of work: New ways of working, of managing and organizing in an open world;
- Understanding change in professions and expertise in an increasingly open and interconnected society;
- The blurring of work and leisure categories in the context of new ways of working;
- Collaborative entrepreneurship and coworking;
- Hackers and makers movements;
- Hackerspaces, makerspaces, FabLabs, biohackerspaces, third-places;
- Open Innovation;
- New practices and cultures of participation in technology and knowledge communities (crowdfunding, crowdsourcing, participation in open source technologies and decentralized technologies such as blockchains);
- New forms of collaboration, partnerships and participation in addressing grand challenges at the societal level (e.g., SDGs);

<sup>5</sup> With promising discussions around American Pragmatism (Lorino, 2018; de Vaujany, 2021), knowledge anarchism (de Monthoux, 1983) or post-Marxism (Therborn, 2018).

<sup>6</sup> See also this RGCS open seminar organized in July 2020 and entitled : "Re-inventing academic events: how to co-produce different conferences, workshops and seminars?": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nDhGBwaalo4>.

- Open strategy;
- Open policies;
- Open sciences and citizen sciences;
- Collaborative ethnography;
- Crowd research and new research practices exploring the crowd;
- Knowledge and digital commons;
- Theories of commons and communities;
- Communalizations practices and societies;
- Philosophies of commons and communities (e.g. based on phenomenology, sensible ontologies, pragmatism, Marxism, post-Marxism, critical perspectives...);
- Public policies devoted to commons, common good and communities;
- Education to openness, open knowledge and common good;
- Learning processes of openness and common good;
- New research methods devoted to openness, commons and common good;
- Open data based research.

Articles involving researchers, but also practitioners, artists, activists, are welcome. We expect in particular contributions likely to leverage the organizational and political potential of commons and OS for our societies. Looking forward to reading your propositions ([collaborativespaces@gmail.com](mailto:collaborativespaces@gmail.com))!

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## We/Me-ness: Meanings of Community

Ann L. Cunliffe<sup>7</sup>

### Prologue<sup>8</sup>

Community – just one word that is so important and yet we often struggle to achieve in social, organizational, political, and in academic life ... As Bauman (2001) pessimistically observed, community can be everywhere and nowhere, a dream and a reality – a warm place where others help us if we fall – but elusive in that it can be a paradise lost that we only hope to find. He argues that the price we pay for being part of a community is freedom and the ‘right to self-assertion’ (p.4).

Bauman’s words are reflected recently in our experience of the pandemic, which has brought out the best and the worst in us. People have come together to support others who are struggling with health issues, laid off work, evicted from their homes, and living below the poverty line. We have developed new ways of working, and while at our workplace or at home we may have glimpsed a more personal and familial side of our colleagues, laughing together and empathizing with unanticipated occurrences. Alternatively, there have been Zoom meetings that have turned into ‘absurdist dramas’<sup>9</sup>. Here in the USA, there are individuals who claim that their individual rights are paramount, i.e., the right not to have to stay at home, the right to refuse to wear a mask, to refuse to get vaccinated, and are very vocal in asserting and protesting their right – to the point of physical violence. Indeed, the drama of the commons (Dietz, et al., 2002) is playing out before our very eyes – in human as well as ecological terms:

**Individual freedom ..... communal responsibility**

**Ego ..... humility**

**Self-interest ..... community/ecological well-being**

**Me .....We**

This drama not only permeates society but also organizations, where employees are expected to be team players, but are evaluated individually, where decisions are based purely on the bottom line while claims are made about embracing sustainable strategies, and where sometimes a leader’s ego is more important than a concern for others. As in the case of Adam Neuman, co-

founder of *WeWorks* who resigned/was ousted after hubristic behavior including a nearly life-size portrait of himself surfing in his office. It’s a drama of the commons that also plays through our academic life as researchers and educators, one that has concerned me for a number of years. And it raises many questions about what community means and the ethical nature of community life.

### Meanings of Community

Interest in the commons has grown recently, especially around the sharing economy and coworking, where independent workers, often with diverse interests come together in a space to share resources (Garrett, Spreitzer and Bacevice, 2017; Spinuzzi, Bodrožić, Scaratti and Ivaldi, 2019). For example, Waters-Lynch and Duff (2021) argue there are five principles in managing coworking as an effective commons: constructing a narrative of the commons, sharing communing practices, monitoring the commons health, acknowledging contributions to the commons and participating in decisions. But research has indicated that coworking does not always mean a sense of community, and that there is a difference between entrepreneurial-led and community-led coworking spaces. In the latter, decisions are made in a communal way based on collectivism rather than collaboration (Avdikos and Iliopoulou, 2019). It is these nuanced meanings of community that I would like to explore in this essay.

I am using ‘community’ instead of commons deliberately. ‘Commons’ has its roots in the overuse and management of common physical resources, sparked by Hardin’s (1968) article on the tragedy of the commons. In contemporary life we now have the digital commons and debates around voluntary participation, cooperative production, opensource software, and alternative forms of capitalism (e.g., Arvidsson, 2019; Fuchs, 2020), issues that members of the *Research Group on Collaborative Spaces* are addressing head-on and enacting in very practical ways. And it’s this practicality or lived experience that is critical. For many years I’ve been interested in the performativity of language, how our words do things we may not intend or

<sup>7</sup> Professor of Organization Studies - FGV-EAESP, Brazil.

<sup>8</sup> I want to first thank the Board of the Journal of Open & Common Organizing for inviting me to contribute to this inaugural edition of the Journal. I am honored to be a part of the continuing adventure of the Research Group on Collaborative Spaces 1 and your interest in openness, collaboration and reflexivity. And I ask for your patience in reading my essay because I (perhaps selfishly) took this as an opportunity to write about what is in my heart. So, this is not an ‘academic’ essay, nor a philosophical treatise, but more of a narrative essay – an interweaving of thoughts, interests, and literature that I hope will resonate and offer some provocations along the way.... I will explore the meanings of community initially through the work of John Shotter and Paul Ricoeur – and how, if we embrace the idea of community and intersubjectivity, this means recognizing our lives as ‘we/me-ness’. I then move on to consider the implications for research.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/feb/05/handforth-insults-and-expletives-turn-parish-council-meeting-into-internet-sensation>

even notice, yet impact people in significant ways. For example, when we talk about ‘the’ commons and ‘the’ community – ‘the’ is important in that if we are not careful it objectivizes whatever comes after. Which leads to us to look at the object or phenomenon from the outside – as *something* to be studied. The same can happen when we put ‘ization’ at the end of a word ... because this shifts our attention to studying the organization or communalization as a process or by identifying characteristics, dynamics, mechanisms, etc., in abstracted terms rather than as living experience. Abstractions which, if we are not *care-ful* can absolve us from any sense of responsibility or accountability to others. While this way of theorizing has a place in academia, it should not marginalize ways of theorizing that are embedded and embodied in living experience.

I am using ‘community’ not to refer to an abstract social unit, but as our living social experience with others, involving relationships that Walther (1923) says encompass embodied feelings of togetherness and of shared experience – a feeling of *we* and *ours* (Ostler, 2020; Zahavi and Salice, 2016). While we may talk about community as shared meaning and shared experience, we might want to reflexively question to what degree we ‘share’? We might share a cake by cutting it in half and we can see the cake is shared equally. But how do I know that I share your meaning, see the situation is the same way that you do, feel the same way that you feel? Walther says we may empathetically understand another person’s experience through her/his words, bodily expressions and gestures – we may both cry about the situation, but it is not a shared experience in the sense of being exactly the same. So, a living sense of community means sharing while also respecting differences.

It is this living sense of community – of *we/me-ness* or the relationship between ourselves and others within community – that I would like to explore in my essay.

### We/Me-ness

I begin with two quotes from the vast body of work of John Shotter and of Paul Ricoeur. I do so because they had a major impact on my life and my work as an academic and because, I suggest, they provide a start point for exploring *we/me-ness*.

“I shall take it that the basic practical moral problem in life is not what *to do* but [who] *to be...*” (Shotter, 1993: p.118, italics in original).

“The selfhood of oneself implies otherness to such an intimate degree that one cannot be thought of without the other” (1992: p.3)

These two sentences were my ‘Wow!’ or arresting moments (Greig et al., 2012) – arresting because they interrupted my taken for granted ways of thinking and acting – highlighting differences that made a difference by provoking me into rethinking who I am in a world with others, i.e., in communities. I first came across John’s *21 words that made a difference* (Cunliffe, 2016) back in 1993 when I began to realize I had been focusing on what to do in my own life as well as in my teaching. For many years I taught undergraduate and MBA business school students management techniques (what to do) aimed at improving efficiency and effectiveness – without reflexively questioning their manipulative and exclusionary impact. And while Shotter’s words may at first appear to be individualistic, when read in the broader context of his work ‘who to be’ embraces a *we/me-ness* focusing on joint action (our entangled activities), relationally-responsive interaction and dialogue (in which we knowingly and/or intuitively coordinate our activities), and a social bond situated within a “common sense” or understanding. He makes this explicit in the following:

“What I do now depends on what we, overall, are doing... And what I do, is a ‘mixture’, so to speak - a complex mixture - of influences from within myself and from elsewhere. This is where all the strangeness begins.” (Shotter, 1996: p.3)

Strangeness indeed when we start to think about our *we/me* relationship with others ... ‘I am a daughter, a mother, a grandmother, a friend, an academic ... all imply *me* in relation with *we*. And where does the *we* and *me* start or end? Are they bounded or intertwined? I also want to note that since 1997, I have always inserted ‘[who]’ when John’s original sentence stated ‘what’. I will return to this later, but it’s an issue that brings me aptly to Ricoeur.

Ricoeur’s words also highlight the importance of ‘we’ rather than purely ‘me’, provoking us to think about our relationship with others and our identity. In *Oneself as Another* (1992) he explores the meaning of self-other – a hermeneutics of self in which I attest I am a character in a narrative, someone acting, suffering, and able to justify myself to others. Thus, otherness is not separate from self but is integral to, or at the heart of, the ontological constitution of self. The relationship between self-other is complex. I am unique in that I have my own life narrative in the sense of *who* I am (ipseity) and I am also the same as others in that I have an idem identity with generalized characteristics (physical, psychological, social), “the ‘what’ of the ‘who’” (p.122), which offers continuity over time, i.e., a dialectic of selfhood and sameness. Thus, we are not atomized individuals but always in-relation-with-others, in our thoughts, words, actions, and interactions whether we realize it or not. Ricoeur’s distinction and connection

between ipse-selfhood and idem-identity is an important one, because our way of ‘being-in-the-world’ involves a “detour by way of objectification [which] is the shortest path from the self to itself” (p.313). An objectification and abstraction that often occurs in mainstream Organization and Management Studies (OMS) research and education.

It also indicates why, since 1997, I’ve changed the ‘what’ to ‘[who]’ in Shotter’s quote – because language is important. John and I were good friends and discussed my change a number of times. In a co-authored chapter (2002) he agreed to change the ‘what’ to ‘what [kind of person]’, which still really didn’t address my concern that ‘what’ and even ‘what kind’ objectifies – but I think, over time, he was okay with my change<sup>10</sup>. ‘Who’ is ipseity – who I am as a person in my living experience with others – a critical issue when trying to understand community. I think in John’s last book he began to capture this, saying that in our theorizing we need to address ‘human-ways-of-being-human-in-a-human-world’ (2016, p.116). If we embrace this notion, then what does life, community, education and research look like? In relation to the latter, I suggest it embodies ‘who’ and *we/me-ness* that implicates a more phenomenological intersubjective orientation to our inquiry.

Together, Ricoeur and Shotter’s observations highlight the importance of understanding ontology and the impact of our ontological beliefs on what we say and do. Figuring out what we believe is the nature of social and organizational reality(ies) and what it means to be human in the world, is fundamental to who we are and what we do in our professional and personal lives. I now want to move on to address ontology, in particular how intersubjectivity relates to *being* in community and to how we see and enact ethics.

### Intersubjectivity

At the risk of being criticized as oversimplifying (although I have worked for 20-odd years in the US, as well as in the UK and Brazil), much of US-oriented OMS is silent about ontology, underpinned by a taken-for-granted objectivism based on a cartesian dualism of mind/body, and a positivist-driven need to identify constructs, dynamics, measure variables, and to identify the ‘what’ of identity, or the ‘what’ of what goes on inside our heads. I suggest that even though relationality is studied, it is often a causal relationship between separate entities, classes, categories, or objects (Cunliffe, 2011). A subjectivist ontology also tends towards objectivation (Berger and Luckmann, 1966) and individualism in that as individuals we each have our own interpretation of what may be happening around us. We interview individuals,

code our data, or include excerpts from those interviews to illustrate common themes and perhaps different interpretations. As individuals, we may have common characteristics and interests (that we can identify and theorize in our academic studies) but this does not mean that we see ourselves as part of a community.

An intersubjective ontology is based on the belief that we are always in-relation-with-others: that our sense of who we are – and indeed of community – emerges continually in our relationships and interactions with others. Whether we are aware of it or not. Thus, “intersubjectivity is the *fabric* of our social *becoming*” (Crossley, 1996, p.173, my italics) and of our personal becoming. Crossley uses the term ‘fabric’ to highlight the intertwined nature of individual threads in our social life, that our intersubjective relationships hold us together and give us a sense of community. An intersubjective ontology means paying attention to how we share our world with others in a mutual relationship as embodied, interrelated beings, not as a transcendental ego. “This present, common to both of us, is the pure sphere of the ‘We.’ [...] the I appears only after the reflective turning” (Schutz, 1970, p.167). So, as both Schutz and Ricoeur observe, while we may be biographically unique, we are also selves-in-relation-with-others, “If another were not counting on me, would I be capable of keeping my word, of maintaining myself?” (Ricoeur, 1992, p.341).

In his study of collective intentionality, Zahavi (2021) explores the relationship between self and others and whether our sense of subjectivity, individuality or identity presupposes our sense of intersubjectivity, communality, or collective identity. It’s rather akin to the chicken and egg question .... Which came first? And if we ever get an answer will it be important? Perhaps what is more interesting to explore is if I begin to see myself intersubjectively as always in-relation-with-others, then what do I see, feel, do differently than if I see myself as paramount? And here we are back to the importance of language .... Do I see myself in relation *to* others (as separate entities?) or in relation *with* others (intersubjectively entwined)? Is community about feeling that I am an integral part of a we? Embedded and embodied with others? About shared interests, values, goals, heritage, experience?

Both Shotter and Ricoeur also highlight the ethical nature of intersubjectivity and by extension – I argue – the importance for community. Shotter’s work, specifically his words the “*basic practical moral problem in life*”, drew me into thinking about ethics – of what it

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uLUpbBDnmMs>

means to *be* an ethical person (i.e., who am I and how does that influence what I do?). Ricoeur is explicit about the ethical nature of the *we/me* relationship and the implications for community (who am I in relation with others?):

“Let us define ‘ethical intention’ as aiming at the ‘good life’ with and for others, in just institutions”. (1992, p.172, italics in original).

This sentence raises a number of reflexive questions around: what our intentions might be (as researchers, managers, leaders, educators, community members); what is a ‘good life’; how might we enact ‘with and for others’; and what does a ‘just institution’ or community look like? Questions, it seems to me, that members of the *Research Group on Collaborative Spaces* are tackling head on. For Ricoeur, ethics are not just institutional they are also interpersonal and therefore intersubjective in the sense that they are about how we relate with and treat other people because we are responsible with, for and to others.

The intersubjective nature of *we/me-ness* in community also implies an ethics of care – caring for ourselves and for others in our everyday relationships (Gilligan, 1995). Not care of the self in Foucauldian terms, but as Noddings (1984, p.58) observes, an attentiveness to others in which “caring is a relationship that contains another, the cared-for, and we have already suggested that the one-caring and the cared-for are reciprocally dependent”. This is not a contractual reciprocity but a relational one – whether the relationship is a symmetrical one or not (e.g., Nicholson and Kurucz, 2019). For example, drawing upon Ricoeur’s work, Matthew Eriksen and I developed the notion of *relational integrity*, “the moral task of treating people as human beings” (Cunliffe and Eriksen, 2011, p.1438), of understanding and respecting our differences and how we are accountable to ourselves and to others for our actions. This was embodied in a comment by one of our interviewees, a Federal Security Director talking about his Assistant, “He’s a man with a heart” (p.1433). Relational integrity also means paying attention to our living conversations with others and how we create meaning *between us* in our dialogue (Bakhtin, 1986) – as researchers how we make meaning in makerspaces.... through #reflexivity #humanities #activism. I now go on to look at the implications of these ideas on community, intersubjectivity, and ethics for our research community.

### We/Me-ness in Research

I am arguing that from an intersubjective perspective, we are not individuals, but are always in-relation-with others (specific people, ‘generalized others’, culture, language, etc.) and meanings are shaped between people in responsive conversations and interactions. As researchers

we therefore have a moral responsibility to recognize, respect and give voice to others. Consequently, intersubjective research is collaborative, participative, and pays attention to the nature of relationships and how we and others make our lives and work meaningful in dialogue and interactions. From an intersubjective perspective, classical forms of relationships or connectivity between researcher and subjects are not relevant because they suffer from “a certain excess of distance” (Faubian, 2009: p.149) in which the researcher is the acknowledged authority, the expert able to observe objectively. Critiques of the ethics of classical connectivity have long been rehearsed in anthropology and sociology (e.g., Clifford, 1983), yet are still mainly ‘under the radar’ in OMS.

Intersubjective research is, of necessity, embedded in place and space; collaborative because sensemaking, learning and knowing occur in meaningful dialogue between researcher and research participants; and reflexive in that all research participants examine the impact of their taken-for-granted assumptions and language on relationships and actions. For example, Linda Finlay (2006) talks of how researcher and participant relationships are a dance within a shared intersubjective space, where both together reflect upon their own and each other’s experience and embodied experiencing through reflexive empathy. In her collaborative research with members of a family business, Jenny Helin (2013) draws on Bakhtin’s (1986) work on dialogue to examine how we might sense and *listen in* to the polyphony of participant voices in our research – working with participants to understand and facilitate meaning-making in and across moments in a dwelling space. This involves an embodied sense of *we/me-ness* – a caring-for by a caring researcher. Enacting these values can foster creativity, collaboration, and vulnerability (RGCS White Paper, 2016).

Intersubjectivity is therefore not solely a communicative practice (which may be viewed instrumentally as a way of persuading others) but is fundamentally a way of being in our community and our world (i.e., a sense of ‘who’ *we/me* are and may be). The communities we are part of play a role in the way we understand and enact *we/me* both collectively and individually. This became very clear to me when I moved from California to New Mexico. While the USA is known for its focus on individualism, in New Mexico there are 23 unique Native American communities where relationships (between people, with history and tradition, with plants, animals, the land...) are an important part of life that are embedded in family, community, work and research. Jennifer Nez Denetdale talks about how, as an academic and a Diné woman, she ensures that her work is “connected to the needs of my

own Navajo Nation and our citizens” and that she has “a responsibility and an accountability to my nation and to my people” i.e., living life with and for others (see [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJVse-Kbu\\_M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJVse-Kbu_M)).

Collaborative and participative intersubjective research brings together researchers and participants to examine issues and act on them. Used across disciplines such as education, environmental sciences, community development, social sciences and health care, collaborative research connects people, participation and place and “recognize(s) the existence of a plurality of knowledges in a variety of institutions and locations” (Kendon, Pain and Kesby, 2007: p.9). It is a methodology that treats people as implicitly knowledgeable about their own practices, addresses issues of relevance to participants as well as researcher, and encourages diverse perspectives. Traditionally participative action research is construed as a cycle of research-action-reflection, and is open to a variety of methods including focus groups, interviews and visual methods – methods which I suggest often take an objectivist rather than intersubjective approach. I suggest intersubjective collaborative research:

- Doesn't just focus on the research topic, but what it means to be a research participant, with “meanings and values as they are actively lived and felt” (Shotter, 2010: p.140).
- Places a dialogic emphasis on the role of living conversation in shaping meanings and identities unique to the context. This is based on the assumption that, “To live means to participate in dialogue: to ask questions, to hear, to respond, to agree, and so forth. In this dialogue a person participates wholly and throughout his [sic] whole life: with his eyes, lips, hands, soul, spirit, with his whole body and deeds. He invests his entire self in discourse, and this discourse enters into the dialogic fabric of human life, into the world symposium” (Bakhtin, 1984: p.293).
- Utilizes critical and self-reflexivity in exploring taken-for-granted assumptions and understandings in relation to self, others, practices and policies.
- Focuses on surfacing participant insights around and above the research questions, discussing and examining similarities and differences that may emerge.
- Is abductive in exploring doubt, surprises, and generating alternative futures through insight and imagination (Locke, Golden-Biddle and Feldman, 2008).
- Means that research participants need to be attuned to each other and to moments of connection and difference in their conversations. To work within the

hyphen-spaces between us (Cunliffe and Karunanayake, 2013).

From an intersubjective perspective, it is inconsistent to objectify data by coding or to develop abstract theories or models. Instead, an abductive analytic is appropriate: an iterative process of transposing observations, participants' accounts and experiences, and theory in relation to research questions (Peirce, 1906). The outcome of collaborative research is often insights that increase “the prudence or social eloquence of practitioners by enhancing their ability to discern and draw upon the resources of particular social settings” (Pearce and Pearce, 2000: p.420).

This sense of *we/me-ness* is embedded in the *Research Group on Collaborative Spaces*. You are embracing the notion of community and intersubjectivity through local, national and international meetings of people from many walks of life; by exploring new and collaborative forms of work, work spaces and makerspaces; and by collectively producing and sharing experience and knowledge. This not only draws on new ways of doing research, such as the *Open Walked Event-Based Experimentations*, but new ways of being a caring and care-ful researcher, and of creating and sharing knowledge. You are engaged in figuring out the ‘*basic practical moral problem in life*’ and what ‘*the ‘good life’ with and for others*’ can and will be.

I am at the end of my career and find myself becoming more pessimistic about the increasing abstraction, sterility and self-referentiality of the Academy at-large. The *Research Group on Collaborative Spaces* and the *Journal of Open & Common Organizing* gives me hope for the future and makes me wish I was at the beginning of my career! I look forward to a fruitful future for the *Journal of Open & Common Organizing*.

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## A pragmatist critique of the economic theory of the commons

Philippe Lorino<sup>11</sup>

### Introduction: “Man without a star”

The wandering Texan cow boy Dempsey Rae, played by Kirk Douglas in the movie “Man without a star” directed by King Vidor in 1955, arrives in Wyoming. He hates barbed wires since they took his brother’s life. Above all, for him, they epitomize the end of what he most cherishes, free riding in vast open spaces. But he is caught up in a range war: his boss, the steely female rancher Reed Bowman, has plans to triple the size of her herd, which will crowd out the smaller ranchers on the range. Rae faces a dilemma: should he serve Bowman’s plans to edge out other ranchers and dominate the whole region, or support the smaller ranchers’ will to defend their living by fencing off their pastures? At the end of the movie, Rae leaves the area disenchanted, probably guessing that his dreams of community life are just getting historically outdated. The range wars between big and small ranchers, or between ranchers and crop-growing farmers, or between ranchers, farmers and mining companies, are one of the favorite themes of classical westerns. They provide an archetypical illustration of “the tragedy of the commons” theorized by neo-classical economists: a rare resource (land), multiple competing appropriators (livestock grazing, crop growing, mining), individualist profit-maximizing consumption of the resource at the expense of other users, gradual depletion of the resource (soil depletion). This example is also interesting because this “tragedy of the commons” tacitly rests on a concealed past (the native Americans’ previous expropriation and eviction), unthought-of future disruptions (galloping urbanization, industrialization), more or less distant environmental transformations (precisely at the same time, the quick development of railway infrastructure, massive European immigration, leading to range and ethnical wars depicted in Cimino’s 1980 movie “Heaven’s Gate”). Dempsey Rae’s story is thus a case of commons conflict with a precise social, temporal and spatial frame (land utilization should be grazing or cultivating, not manufacturing or urbanizing; users are settled ranchers or farmers, not nomads; competing values are social justice, individual freedom and economic growth) but this frame is in the very process of “overflowing” (Callon, 1998): the terms of the problem are too local, too immediate and too static to understand the situation and construct viable futures. There is no other future for Dempsey Rae than further wandering in space and time and moving to distant territories.

“Man without a star” illustrates Mary Parker Follett’s analysis of coordination (1933/1995). If Bowman or the Federal Government impose some de facto (Bowman) or de jure (Washington) rule, the situation will conform to Follett’s concept of coordination through domination (forced solution). If miraculously Bowman and the other ranchers end up negotiating an agreement about enclosure, each one making the necessary concessions about pasture surface and number of cattle heads, this agreement will illustrate Follett’s notion of coordination through compromise (sacrifices from each participant in a zero-sum problem). Obviously, Dempsey Rae dreams of something else: community building? infinite spaces? What he dreams about, realist or fictitious, is not explicit, but it is probably some form of dynamic story, allowing to escape rigid structures and construct something new in new spaces and new times. It may then conform to Follett’s notion of dynamic coordination through integration, i.e., reframing the issue at stake, redefining its terms and inventing different paths.

### Economic approaches

The “tragedy of the commons” (Hardin, 1968) is a typical application of the static paradigm that historically underlies economics as a science, in its mainstream but also in many critical versions. The neoclassical pioneers (Pareto, Walras) abandoned the “political economy” of Smith or Ricardo to follow Cournot’s scientist project (1838/2019) and build a new science, a “rational mechanics of social facts” (Ménard 1978). With the stated goal of applying the mathematical model of rational mechanics (optimization under constraints) to economic phenomena, neoclassical economists faced the epistemological necessity to adopt some conservation law, like the mass and energy conservation laws in mechanics. They then decided to define economics as the science of value exchange, circulation, and allocation rather than the science of value creating activity (Lorino 1989), allowing to apply the mechanistic law of conservation to the conservation of global value, in the quest for optimal or satisfactory resource allocation.

Not surprisingly, for economists, the tragedy of the commons conforms to mechanistic hypotheses: there is a given shared, scarce, and non-excludable resource, a given amount of this common resource, a given list of potential “appropriators”, all being specimens of utility optimizing “homo economicus”, pursuing self-interest at the cost of general interest, and a given definition of “general

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interest” and how to measure it (performance indicators). Not surprisingly either, solutions include domination by one of the stakeholders, the imposition of private property rights, a contractual arrangement through which each participant accepts necessary sacrifices (value conservation leads to a zero sum game), or the regulatory imposition of utilization and conservation rules. All those solutions are static and focus on allocation rules.

Now the critique of the classical theory of the commons by Nobel Prize Elinor Ostrom (1990) tempers the “homo economicus” perspective by introducing social relationality, the capacity of participants to communicate and explore potential agreements dialogically, in “settings where appropriators are able to create and sustain agreements to avoid serious problems of over-appropriation (Ostrom, 2000, p. 34)”. But she actually keeps the main feature of the economic paradigm, namely, a static definition of the problem: the definition and amount of the resource (she speaks of “common pool resource”), the definition and list of “appropriators”, the definition of values at-stake measured through “frequently available, reliable indicators”, supported by expertise (“it is important for policy makers to create large-scale agencies who monitor performance of both natural resource systems and those that are using them”, Ostrom 2000, p. 47). All those components of the “commons” system are given. The theory then focuses on given resources and given “appropriators” and looks for “attributes of resources and of appropriators conducive to an increased likelihood that self-governing associations will form” (Ostrom, 2000, p. 35). This simplified static frame is the price to pay for applying economic calculation, “the basic benefit-cost calculations of a set of appropriators (A) using a resource (Ostrom, 2000, p. 35)”. Cost-benefit calculation enables Ostrom to apply the theory of rational choice, a cornerstone of mainstream economic theory. She thus focuses on the social organization required to allocate “already defined” resources to “already defined” users according to “already defined” values: “Ostrom’s work has been fundamental in establishing the commons as a viable alternative to the market for the allocation of resources. It has demonstrated that the commons are not just a resource but a mode of organising through which people can autonomously organise themselves to *preserve and share resources* (Fournier, 2013, p. 450, my emphasis)”.

### The pragmatist transactional view

Here, the economics of the commons and the pragmatist processual perspective (Lorino, 2018) clearly diverge. For pragmatist thinkers, social life is intrinsically dynamic and creative. All the terms of collective experience, analyzed by Dewey and Bentley as “trans-actional inquiry” (1949/2008), are permanently likely to evolve. Human and

social experience is a relational process, oriented towards the continual exploration/invention of possible futures: “Transaction is inquiry of a type in which existing descriptions of events are accepted only as tentative and preliminary, so that new descriptions of aspects and phases of events (...) may freely be made at any and all stages of the inquiry (p. 113).” No omniscient “calculator” may transcend and overlook the situation. The transactional inquiry is immanent and involves a close integration between human and non-human participants and the physical, natural and social environment: “[Our] observation sees man-in-action, not as something radically set over against an environing world, nor yet as something merely acting ‘in’ a world, but as action of and in the world in which the man belongs as an integral constituent” (p. 50); “since man as an organism has evolved among other organisms in an evolution called ‘natural’, we are willing to treat all of his behaviors, including his most advanced knowings, as activities not of himself alone, nor even as primarily his, but as processes of the full situation of organism-environment (p. 97).”

The accomplishment of a conjoint activity perceived by the members of a group as beneficial for the collective survival and development gives rise to a community of actors: “[W]herever there is conjoint activity whose consequences are appreciated as good by all singular persons who take part in it, and where the realization of the good is such as to effect an energetic desire and effort to sustain it in being just because it is a good shared by all, there is in so far a community (Dewey, 1927/2008, p. 328).” When there are doubts about the feasibility and the pursuit of the activity, the adequate methods of action, or the solution of a problem, e.g. concerning the maintenance and use of activity resources, the community must inquire into the situation. Any response to resource issues then emerges from the trans-actional communication and cooperation between participants. In other terms, the very definitions of “resources”, “common resources”, “participants”, the concerned “community” and “values at stake” are likely to change at any moment, as an inherent part of the efforts of the social group to determine a viable collective future, in a permanent and open dialogue with the situation that can lead to the redefinition of the situation and its spatiotemporal perimeter. The trans-actional inquiry involves collective creativity, the exploration of unknown territories, the experimentation of new practices, the tentative description of new roles, the redefinition of values and the possible extension of the inquiring community to other participants, according to the reframing of treated issues. The trans-action theory converges with Follett’s concept of integration (1933/1995): it considers the possible reinvention of the problem and the redefinition of its terms, boundaries and stakes at any moment.

The very existence, identification and description of a common resource is contingent on the definition of activities, raising such questions as: “to do what, where, when, with whom”? A resource is a resource when and if it is useful to conduct activities humanly and socially considered as necessary, from the satisfaction of elementary needs (breathing, food, heating, etc.) to the fulfillment of complex social imperatives (education, healthcare, safety, cultural expression, information, free political debate, etc.). It may remain a potential resource even if apparently collective activities do not need it anymore, if there is a collective judgment that, on the longer run, under new and partly unpredictable social conditions, it may prove necessary for the well-being or the survival of the community. Labelling and qualifying something as a “resource” is not self-evident. It requires an ongoing collective valuation process (Dewey, 1939/1988) that handles the multiplicity and potential contradictions of values on diverse time horizons, not through “scientific measurement” but through debated judgment (Lowe et al. 2020).

The same processual perspective can be applied to the boundaries of the concerned community and the definition of participants. The collective and dialogical inquiry undertaken to face a problematic situation enacts a community of inquirers as much as a community enacts the definition of resources and issues of resource utilization or depletion. Returning to the movie “Man without a star”, native Americans were obviously not even imagined as potential participants in that grazing war. Reframing the problem by widening the temporal perspective and taking into account the rights of the first occupants, representatives of the native Americans originally living in Wyoming should be concerned by the “pasture inquiry”, which would clearly modify the whole narrative...

Within the inquiry, the active process of valuation may continually reconsider values at stake, in the light of experience feedback and the results of new social experimentation. It is quite rare that possible values are not multiple and potentially contradictory. For example, should the health system ensure healthcare physical proximity for rural populations, with a lot of small sites, or should it prioritize the maintenance and development of competence through regular practice, which requires bigger units? Two legitimate values, proximity and competence, are thus conflicting and require a debated appraisal.

The whole process of inquiry, including its valuating and experimenting dimensions, focuses on activities and conjoint experience rather than on fixed utilization rules, individual or collective participants or property rights. In

pragmatist terms, participants are “inquirers” and “doers” rather than “appropriators”: the trans-actional inquiry does not address appropriation issues, but collective and transformative action methods or practices. Resources, participants and values are co-constituted through the exploration of possible future action and the reconstruction of social practices. For example, how should we define common good in healthcare activity: as a resource, such as the number of intensive care beds, or as a capacity to act, such as the social capacity to cure patients or to prevent health problems through preventive policies? Means (resources) and ends (values) cannot be separated (Dewey 1939/1988) and are defining elements of social action. A *democratically agreed joint definition of the problem* on which action is required, of action to undertake in response to it and of the resources required by such action may be, from a pragmatist viewpoint, *the first “common good”*.

### **Pragmatist inquiry and commoning: focusing on action or on resources and participants?**

The commoning framework (Berthelot, 2021) may be closer to the pragmatist inquiry perspective than Ostrom’s economics of commons. Euler (2018), for example, stresses the processual and concrete experiential dimension of “commoning”: “The difficulty or costs of exclusion was argued to be a social dimension that depends not only on the characteristics of the goods themselves but crucially on the respective demand (over time), potential substitutes, technological options and ‘on how the good is supplied and at what levels it is produced’. This was supposed to make clear that commons are not simply a type of goods but that the relevant social dimensions must be taken into account (...) A second impulse was taken up, namely to formulate commons in terms of *the social practices of commoning* (p. 15, my emphasis).” However, the critical authors who developed the concept of “commoning” often do not question the static nature of the “commons” definition and the focus on this reified entity called “the commons”, “already there”, already described and conceived, rather than on collective activity. They tend to primarily raise issues of access to commons, of conditions of their reproduction and of independence from markets and from commodification: “Escaping the market requires access to the commons, the protection of the commons and the ability to reconstitute social relations on the terrain of the commons (...) The commons, by providing a way of organising collectively for common use, offer a space for doing so and for emancipating ourselves from capital (Fournier 2013, p. 451).” The main issue is still an issue of appropriation, admittedly social appropriation, but nevertheless appropriation, rather than an issue of redesigning / reinventing / recreating social practices. The moves from “commons” to “commoning” thus seems to stop halfway. We still need to move further, from

“commoning” to “jointly creating” and “jointly making new practices emerge from joint exploration / experimentation”. The social and political struggles required by the maintenance and democratic distribution of commons should extend to the imaginable and continually questioned new practices that will enact the hypothetical “commons” of the future. What are future commons? They may be quite different from what we view as “commons” today: Pharmaceutical patents? Lithium? Space layers from 500 to 35000 km above the earth for orbit satellites? Seabed in ocean depths? Poles? The moon?

Thus, in the processual and dialogical perspective of pragmatism, the key issue is not limited to an issue of governance (“how should the production and use of resources be governed by the members of the community, what is the relevant and legitimate governance of commons, what do we have in common and how should we reproduce and use it?”) It is also an issue of day-to-day operations, experience feedback, imagining, designing and testing experimental activities: “what should we do together? How do we organize collective action? What resources do we need and what resources should we generate through our collective action? What can we create together and how can we achieve it? How do we explore the future together? How do we find some support in our past experience to invent future experience? What so far ‘external’ actors, distant in space, time or social organization, should be included in our collective enterprise to address those challenges?”

Internal/external, participants/non-participants are contingent and temporary categories that it would be ethically, politically and practically dangerous to hypostatize, as the economists’ static and structural approach tends to suggest: “New settlers are frequently highly disruptive to the sustenance of a self-governing enterprise when they generate higher levels of conflict over the interpretation and application of rules and increase enforcement costs substantially (Ostrom, 2000, p. 44).” Difference and heterogeneity are not necessarily problems; they become problems if we make them problems; but they can be major assets for collective creativity if we are willing to actively involve them.

### Two examples

An interesting example of “exotic irruption” into a trans-actional inquiry leading to common renewal is provided by the history of the “huerta de Valencia”: the region of Valencia, in Spain, is famous for fertile soils, water infrastructures (drainage of swamps and irrigation) and high quality vegetable and fruit production exported to the rest of Europe. Water has always been a scarce “common” and its utilization by farmers a sensitive issue.

In Europe’s oldest continuing legal court, the Tribunal de las Aguas de la Vega de Valencia, or Water Tribunal of the Valencian Plain, a locally elected panel of syndics establishes rules for the distribution of water and issues swift judgment on-site, in Valencia historical downtown, at a weekly hearing. The syndics are not legal scholars, lawyers, or judges, but water-users themselves and members of the community. The court was established, not by authorities, but by the Muslim fruit farmers who settled in the plain after the Muslim conquest of Spain in the 8th century (Hudson-Richards & Gonzales, 2013). Valencia area had been a rich agricultural zone under the Romans but had declined after the collapse of Roman rule. The Muslim settlers brought their well-known expertise for irrigation from Yemen, Syria and Morocco and established an extant irrigation system, building dams, canals, water wheels, mills, drying out vast swamps and developing related activities, such as watermills or wash houses. They introduced many new crops to the region, such as oranges, nuts, artichokes, eggplants. Thanks to the 8th century irruption of those external, distant and culturally “strange” participants, activities, competences and social practices were reengineered, introducing canal and dam building, orange growing, watermill operating. The city of Valencia and its surroundings grew and the “huerta” became a major element of the regional identity, a frequent theme in Valenciana literature and painting. The transformation of activity involved the redefinition of resources (new infrastructure), products (new fruit and vegetables) and participants (farmers, but also millers, water administrators, traders, artists).

Another example, the case of megafires (Zask 2019) also raises the focal issue of action: what forest utilization should be promoted, by whom, to do what? Roughly speaking, there are three views of the social relationship with forests: the industrial view, considering the forest as an industrial resource whose profitability should be maximized; the conservationist view, considering the forest as a natural space that should be preserved from social activities; the community view, considering the forest as the setting of community activities (for example Aboriginal’s traditional activities). The pragmatist philosopher Joëlle Zask defends the third view, which allows to accumulate experience and skills about the reasonable exploitation and maintenance of the forest: “We remain stuck in a binary: either exploit nature until the end, or conservation. This situation casts us into a cultural crisis where we are incapable, as citizens, of being objective about what is happening, because we have no way to act, no means to repair or build landscapes, individually or collectively (Zask, 2020, my translation).” She opposes her trust in practical experience to the technocratic trust in expertise: “The megafire is the most brutal indicator of a failure in expertise”; “as already

Dewey at the heart of his social critique, I have long stood against the idea of setting up a body of experts acting between the public and government”; “no one foresaw the extent to which megafires would become both the consequence and a major cause of climate change. Why? What is it about the organization of our sciences and government that allowed such a catastrophic phenomenon to remain unperceived? I think that it is the ideology of expertise itself — which also afflicts the social sciences — that is responsible. It is also responsible for the invalidation of the so-called ‘traditional’ knowledge (but I prefer ‘science’) of people distant or nearby. Yet the megafire is the ecocide symptomatic of ethnocide. It affects ‘fire cultures’, which practice fires that are controlled, directed, selective and seasonal (2020).” She emphasizes the capacity of social organization to limit the risk of megafires by creating activities, communities and values: “Whether it is a question of preserving an allegedly virgin nature or of exercising domination, the same project of sanctuary is envisaged, but for diametrically opposed reasons (...) Under the angle of the megafires are drawn, via extremely diversified paths touching the totality of our existence, ways of transforming the forms of interdependence which constrain us in communities. They make possible the signature of a new social contract that would summon, in addition to our purely inter-human faculties to make promises, to debate or to reason, *our faculties to establish dialogical relations with nature* (2019, my translation and emphasis).”

## Conclusion

The “new social contract” mentioned by Joëlle Zask about megafires is not a fixed and imperative norm for future activities, but a heuristic and instrumental mediation of trans-actional inquiry, submitted to the flow and overflowing of new experience, the continuous development of our dialogical relations with natural/social situations and the surprises that the uncertain future has certainly in store for us... After Texas, Missouri and Wyoming, Dempsey Rae decided to move to Canada, a territory situated beyond a border... What will he find there? He certainly does not know, and nor do we!

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## Communs & Résilience (French)

Jean-François Boisson<sup>12</sup>

Les communs sont des ressources très utiles pour traverser les crises successives liées aux désordres sociaux et environnementaux planétaires. Il faut cultiver leurs capacités de résilience car c'est à partir de ce qu'ils portent, qu'il est possible de construire un monde durable et humain

### Dans un monde qui s'effondre, les communs sont comme un viatique pour le monde nouveau en gestation.

En 2022, nous fêterons le 50<sup>ième</sup> anniversaire de la sortie du rapport Meadows qui nous invitait, plein de bon sens, à renoncer au mirage d'une société de croissance infinie dans un monde fini. Il faut bien reconnaître que nous n'avons pas fait assez et que le monde que nous connaissons et que nous avons construit, est sur le point de s'effondrer. Nous faisons tous l'expérience des tensions sociales consciencieusement anesthésiées à coups de milliards d'euros. Nous faisons aussi l'expérience du dérèglement climatique ou de la diminution de la biodiversité. Personne ne sait très bien ni quand ni comment mais on est assez sûrs désormais que les bouleversements que nous annonçait le fameux rapport du MIT en 1972, sont à l'œuvre.

A l'instar de ces populations qui doivent évacuer leurs maisons menacées par les flammes ou par la montée des eaux en emportant ce qu'elles ont de plus précieux pour refaire leur vie ensuite, il me semble que, dans ce contexte d'effondrement, nous gagnerions à emporter avec nous les **communs**. Mais comment emporter un concept à propos duquel le Portail des Communs<sup>13</sup> lui-même écrit : *“la définition des communs est un chantier à part entière toujours en cours à l'image de leur diversité”* ? Comme il faut bien préciser de quoi on parle, je propose d'adopter une définition large qui n'a bien sûr pas vocation à l'universalité mais qui a le mérite de permettre le dialogue. Ici je parlerai de communs comme de **ressources matérielles ou immatérielles constituées par et autour d'une communauté qui en assure, consciemment ou non, l'intendance, à travers un corpus de règles plus ou moins formelles**. A travers cette définition, on peut y reconnaître la “zone critique” dans laquelle nous vivons et dont nous parlent Jérôme Gaillardet et Bruno Latour<sup>14</sup>. Ils rappellent qu'à l'exception des roches métamorphiques, cette zone est intégralement constituée par ce que les êtres vivants ont produit depuis leur apparition il y a 4

milliards d'années : oxygène, eau, sable, pétrole, humus, ... Si nous étions plus nombreux à regarder cette zone critique comme un commun, nous ne serions sans doute pas dans ces extrémités de fin du monde. On peut également retrouver dans cette définition aussi bien une famille, qu'un code informatique libre de droit ou encore un système de santé (que la pandémie nous a invité à regarder comme un précieux commun). On peut aussi y trouver une culture ou le “spirit” d'une communauté dotée d'un charisme particulier ou encore des données (datas, contenus) ou même une marque. Ce qui me semble précieux dans les communs, au point d'imaginer les emporter comme viatiques pour traverser un monde tourmenté, c'est qu'ils constituent des espaces dans lesquels il est possible aux humains d'exprimer le mieux la beauté de leur capacité exceptionnelle à entrer en relation et à combiner leurs intelligences et leurs sensibilités pour imaginer et construire.

Si on décide qu'il est bon d'emporter ces communs dans ce qu'on appelle bizarrement le “monde d'après”, on peut se poser la question de leur capacité à traverser les crises et les chocs, c'est-à-dire se poser la question de leur résilience. Je propose de traiter la définition de la résilience dans une première partie et essayant de comprendre quels peuvent en être les leviers et les marqueurs. Dans un deuxième temps, nous pourrions appliquer ces principes et ce prisme de la résilience à la question des communs et comprendre à quelles conditions, il est possible de traverser ces périodes troublées à venir.

### La résilience est bien plus que l'effet d'une planification minutieuse : c'est une force vitale inhérente à tout ce qui est vivant et que l'on peut renforcer.

Il y a beaucoup de manières d'approcher la résilience. J'aime bien l'idée que la résilience soit *“la capacité à traverser des crises et à en ressortir transformé et intègre”*. C'est en tous cas l'approche que nous avons développée avec mes camarades au sein d'une coopérative<sup>15</sup> dans laquelle nous intervenons sur des questions de résilience organisationnelle. Cette définition nous indique qu'il s'agit de “traverser” et non de “résister” ou “d'affronter” des crises ou des chocs qui sont de toute évidence bien plus puissants que nous. Dans l'imaginaire judéo-chrétien, l'idée de traverser une épreuve (ou une Mer Rouge...) est

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<sup>13</sup> <https://lescommuns.org/>.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dDcThrLr3Po>.

<sup>15</sup> <https://resiliences.co>.

très souvent associée à un processus de transformation. On ne sort pas indemne de ce passage. Il n'y a pas de retour "à la normale" ou à un état initial. Forcément on y laisse quelque chose au passage : un peu de plumes ou un peu de soi. Ce qui est important dans ce passage, c'est la question de l'intégrité parce que si cette traversée est transformatrice au point qu'on perde ce qui fait profondément notre identité, à quoi bon avoir traversé ? Dans la physique des matériaux, on parle de ductilité. En psychologie, Boris Cyrulnik a décrit en détail comment des enfants ou des adultes qui ont subi un choc psychologique traumatique réussissent à se verticaliser de nouveau et à vivre normalement, grâce à des "tuteurs de résilience" qu'ils vont rencontrer dans leurs vies. Les autres, ceux qui n'ont pas cette chance, souffrent de troubles psychiques plus ou moins forts et ne sont plus tout à fait intègres. Dans le monde de l'entreprise ou des organisations d'une manière générale, on peut changer de modèle économique, de gouvernance, externaliser ou au contraire internaliser des activités, s'organiser en cercles ou passer dans un modèle très vertical, peu importe : garder son intégrité c'est rester fidèle aux valeurs de l'entreprise ou de l'organisation car elles constituent la matrice dans laquelle le collectif s'exprime et se construit. Beaucoup de spécialistes de la résilience insistent sur l'importance de se préparer et de planifier : on serait d'autant plus résilient qu'on aurait échafaudé des plans-B, C ou Z parce qu'on aurait anticipé les éventualités et qu'on les aurait en quelque sorte vues venir. L'anticipation a des mérites évidents mais on peut lui opposer facilement que la plupart des événements majeurs de ces 20 dernières années étaient parfaitement imprévisibles qu'il s'agisse de la destruction des tours jumelles à New-York en 2001, de l'accident de la centrale nucléaire de Fukushima ou encore de la pandémie de Covid19. Les faits confirment qu'il vaut mieux dépenser de l'énergie et de l'argent pour créer les conditions d'une réelle agilité des organisations et des humains plutôt que pour micro-planifier toutes les hypothèses.

La résilience est consubstantielle à tout ce qui est vivant. Elle est une forme d'énergie aentropique en ce qu'elle est une force de conservation qui s'oppose au processus de dégradation-destruction naturel des choses. Elle s'oppose comme la quille d'un voilier offre une résistance en sens opposé à celle que le vent exerce sur la voile, permettant ainsi au bateau d'avancer. Dans un autre registre, elle pourrait être comparée à l'énergie de Vishnou qui équilibre celle du destructeur Shiva. Cela signifie qu'on ne devient pas résilient puisqu'on l'est par essence dès lors qu'on est vivant. On peut cultiver, renforcer ou prendre soin, comme on le verra plus loin, de cette résilience, mais

on ne peut pas devenir résilient comme par magie. C'est vraiment une force de vie, une force vitale et donc c'est une belle énergie. Cela signifie aussi que cette force peut s'épuiser en particulier si les chocs ou les crises traversés sont trop rapprochés ou trop forts. En ce sens, la résilience n'est pas une forme d'immortalité.

### Parce que les organisations ou les personnes subissent des chocs ou traversent des crises au quotidien, il peut être utile de travailler à renforcer leur résilience

Si on devait décrire les principaux leviers qui permettent de renforcer la résilience d'une organisation, d'un territoire ou même d'une personne, ... on pourrait en identifier trois : le sens, la coopération et la capacité à prendre-soin.

Le **sens** d'abord parce qu'il constitue à la fois la finalité de l'action collective mais aussi le cadre de l'action individuelle. Le sens oriente les énergies (individuelles et collectives) et par conséquent leur impact. Il éclaire la question du "pour-quoi" et donne une forme à ce qui ne pourrait être que désordre ou dispersion. Combien de nos contemporains sont désorientés, déprimés voire malades parce que les structures traditionnelles de nos sociétés que sont les religions ou les états ne constituent plus des tuteurs commodes pour orienter leurs vies ? Combien sont-ils à errer dans nos sociétés de consommation en quête de sens en se remplissant de choses futiles ? Le sens ou la finalité d'une organisation, d'une personne, d'un collectif voire d'un système de soins constitue une colonne vertébrale, un point fixe ou un point de repère qui permet de ne pas être emporté par les aléas du quotidien. Le sens permet de faire des choix et d'ordonner des actes. Ce levier est d'autant plus efficace qu'il est conscientisé par celles et ceux qui sont concernés.

La **coopération** est un second puissant levier. Il a d'autant plus d'impact qu'il s'appuie sur la finalité. Pablo Servigne et Gauthier Chapelle montrent dans leur livre *L'entraide*<sup>16</sup>, combien les sociétés humaines les plus coopératives sont les plus résilientes. Il commence à se former un consensus scientifique pour reconnaître qu'une des raisons qui ont permis à l'homo sapiens de prospérer est son extraordinaire capacité à coopérer c'est à dire à se répartir les tâches collectives et à se coordonner dans l'action<sup>17</sup>. La base de la coopération et probablement de toute relation humaine positive c'est la **confiance**. Les études<sup>18</sup> montrent que l'homme est spontanément confiant et prêt à la coopération et qu'il ajuste son comportement en fonction de la manière dont sa spontanéité est reçue. On a tous fait l'expérience que l'on

<sup>16</sup> L'entraide : L'autre loi de la jungle - Gauthier Chapelle et Pablo Servigne - Édition LLL - 2017.

<sup>17</sup> voir en particulier les travaux de Sarah Hrdy (anthropologue, primatologue et sociobiologiste américaine).

<sup>18</sup> voir entre autres Marcel Mauss - Essai sur le don (1923/ 1968) - PUF.

travaille d'autant mieux avec des personnes en qui on a confiance. Avec ces personnes on a éliminé une grande partie des dispositifs de protection. Ainsi, les "coûts de transaction" sont plus faibles, c'est-à-dire qu'il est plus facile d'interagir et cela consomme moins d'énergie parce qu'on a réduit le nombre de "checkpoints" relationnels. Et par conséquent les échanges et les réalisations sont plus riches. Au-delà d'un premier feeling ou d'un marqueur de réputation (qu'il s'agisse de bouche-à-oreille ou d'une googlelisation), la confiance se développe et s'affermi dans l'expérimentation. C'est en faisant et en construisant avec d'autres que l'épaisseur des relations de forme, évidemment dans la mesure où les choses se passent bien pour tout le monde. Cette coopération gagne à être **écosystémique** c'est-à-dire à s'élargir à un réseau de relations de proche en proche à la manière d'un système neuronal. Car c'est en multipliant les expérimentations et les interactions au sein d'un écosystème qu'émergent des solutions ou des innovations de façon totalement imprévue à la manière des particules nouvelles qui naissent de la collision d'autres particules dans un accélérateur. Avec la coopération viennent non seulement les questions de confiance mais aussi les questions de **partage** (partage du pouvoir, partage des usages, partage de la valeur, ...). Le partage est un moyen indispensable pour nourrir tous les acteurs de la coopération en retour. Ce processus permet non seulement de répartir l'énergie (ou la valeur) produite entre celles et ceux qui l'ont produite mais il contribue à renforcer aussi fortement la confiance car il est la preuve que personne ne s'accapare la valeur ou en tous cas dans des proportions acceptables par toutes et tous. En résumé, la coopération est un fort levier de résilience en ce qu'elle permet de tisser des relations basées sur la confiance, l'expérimentation et le partage. Elle est comme un liant vivant qui permet aux organisations et aux productions humaines de faire émerger des solutions adaptatives pour traverser les crises qu'elles rencontrent.

Dans cette construction en trois parties des conditions de résilience, le sens constitue le fondement et la coopération le corps mais elle ne pourrait pas fonctionner durablement si on n'y mettait pas la clé de voûte : la capacité à "**prendre soin**" (le "care" en anglais). Car avec ce levier, on active une autre dimension de notre humanité : la sensibilité et l'affect. On peut dire qu'on renforce ou on cultive notre humanité de cette manière. Dans les entreprises, la capacité à prendre soin à la fois de chacun et chacune mais aussi du collectif en tant que tel et des parties prenantes, est l'expression d'une forte maturité. Il ne s'agit pas de se transformer en Mère Teresa ou d'infantiliser les autres par une attention mal ajustée. Il s'agit comme le propose le juriste Jean-Pierre Mignard<sup>19</sup> d'être "gardien de nos frères" humains. Gardien comme

protecteur et non pas comme privateur de liberté. En entreprise, cela peut prendre des formes très variées comme l'accueil de nouveaux arrivants ou les actions de médiation pour résoudre des conflits au travail, principale source de risques psychosociaux (RPS).

### La résilience appliquée aux communs

Les communs sont des objets vivants parce qu'ils sont le résultat d'interactions humaines qui les modifient en permanence, même quand il s'agit de faire toujours plus de la même chose. Par conséquent, on peut légitimement se poser la question de leur capacité à traverser les crises et les chocs sans s'effondrer et en restant intègres, et donc de leur résilience. Surtout lorsqu'on considère qu'il ne s'agit rien moins que d'une très belle et inspirante expression de la beauté de l'âme humaine et qu'on pressent que c'est sur ces bases qu'il est possible de construire un monde durable et paisible. On n'est vraiment pas dans une perspective de durer pour durer. Les communs ne "deviennent" pas résilients mais on peut améliorer leur capacité à l'être si on met en œuvre trois leviers.

### La finalité comme facteur de résilience d'un commun

Le premier levier à actionner est probablement celui de la **finalité**. On pourrait dire que pour être résilient, un commun doit être téléologique. En effet, les communs sont le produit de communautés humaines qui coopèrent et l'expérience de la vie de communautés nous confirme que cette coopération doit être orientée (donc téléologique) : sauver le monde, se protéger, rendre un service, se défendre, ... Sans quoi, il est impossible d'aligner les énergies individuelles. Au pire chacun va agir sans lien avec ce que peuvent faire les autres et au mieux, la communauté va imploser parce que les énergies individuelles s'épuisent en vain. Le seul moyen d'articuler les "je" et le "nous", sans développer l'un au détriment de l'autre et en maximisant au contraire leurs expressions relatives, c'est de les canaliser vers un but ou dans un sens qui les fédère. Il s'agit bien de respecter les objectifs individuels et les charismes de chacun et chacune. Lorsqu'un collectif va produire une culture et des communs immatériels, elle va inconsciemment orienter cette production vers une finalité. Plus cette finalité est engageante et mobilisatrice parce qu'elle fait écho aux finalités individuelles, et plus elle est consciente, plus le commun qui sera produit sera vivant et donc résilient aux changements de contexte et aux vicissitudes de l'existence. La résilience d'un commun est directement liée à la qualité de la coopération de la communauté et donc au niveau de confiance qui y règne

Le second levier est celui de la **coopération** dans une perspective écosystémique. La coopération est le cœur du

<sup>19</sup> Gardiens de nos frères - Jean-Pierre Mignard - 2014 - Editions Stock.

réacteur de la fabrication de communs. C'est parce que des humains sont capables d'interagir avec un niveau de confiance élevé, ce qui facilite les transactions et l'expérimentation, qu'ils vont fabriquer des communs. Un commun sera donc d'autant plus vivant et résilient que la qualité de la coopération, directement fonction du niveau de confiance qui règne entre les humains qui interagissent, sera élevée. Le carburant de ce réacteur est bien la **confiance** et donc une des clés de communs résilients c'est la capacité des hommes et des femmes qui les produisent à créer des conditions qui maximisent le niveau de confiance entre eux. Poser un cadre de confiance clair et formalisé (sans être complexe) est la pierre angulaire de la coopération. Surtout quand on reconnaît que la propriété d'un commun est collective<sup>20</sup> : un commun n'appartient pas à un membre du collectif en particulier (privé) et il n'appartient pas non plus à "tout le monde" (public). Il appartient à chacun et chacune c'est à dire que chacun en est individuellement pleinement propriétaire sans que cette propriété n'aliène en quoi que ce soit la propriété pleine et entière d'un autre membre du collectif, sur ce même commun. Dans une hypothèse où un fort niveau de confiance ne serait pas établi, les membres du collectif auront probablement beaucoup de mal à coopérer pleinement parce qu'il y aura toujours un doute sur la capacité de tel ou telle à "partir avec la caisse" pour exploiter pour lui, tout ou partie du commun. Par exemple, quand on a mis au point sur plusieurs années une marque comme Ouishare<sup>21</sup>, on peut légitimement s'inquiéter que tel ou telle membre de la communauté n'utilise l'image de marque, avec tout ce qu'elle peut véhiculer (les pionniers de l'économie collaborative, la capacité à mettre en relation des leaders d'opinion, des chercheurs, des industriels, ... qui ne sont théoriquement pas faits pour se rencontrer, cet esprit "poil-à-gratter", etc...), à des fins personnelles. Pour cela, Ouishare a mis en place une gouvernance partagée<sup>22</sup> très ouverte où les décisions se prennent en commun dans le cadre de leadership tournants. Ce dispositif crée les conditions pour un niveau élevé de transparence sur les modes de prise de décision et donc de confiance. Mais en plus, les décisions concernant l'utilisation de la marque sont particulièrement encadrées : des règles définissent les modalités d'expression des membres du collectif "au nom de Ouishare" ; de réponse à des appels d'offre ; les modalités d'organisation d'événements ou encore les critères de soutien de tel ou tel projet. Les membres de la communauté Ouishare sont donc invités à collaborer dans un climat de confiance optimal ce qui favorise leur engagement car il est clair que le cadre est posé pour que la contribution de chacun aux communs ne soit pas pillée.

Une communauté est, c'est un paradoxe en première analyse, un objet fermé. Il y a bien un dedans et un dehors. Même s'il peut y avoir plusieurs degrés d'implication dans la communauté, à la fin il y a bien ceux qui appartiennent à la communauté qui produit le commun et ceux qui n'y appartiennent pas. Quand on pense "communauté" on pense à juste titre à une organisation ouverte pour favoriser la coopération. Mais en même temps elle est excluante et fermée à ceux qui n'en sont pas et c'est normal parce que si la frontière n'existait pas, la communauté ne pourrait pas être téléologique. En revanche pour rester durablement vivante, la communauté qui produit un commun doit fonctionner dans une perspective écosystémique c'est à dire rester poreuse. C'est une ligne de crête permanente à suivre car un excès de **porosité** peut entraîner une explosion ou une dislocation, en particulier s'il y a trop d'acteurs qui ne sont pas ou pas assez alignés avec la finalité. Inversement, un manque de porosité entraîne un repli sur soi, une sorte de sclérose. On est dans un entre-soi faussement rassurant mais on n'assure plus du tout la fertilisation du commun avec les énergies du dehors. On

**[Gouvernance partagée]** Le fonctionnement de Ouishare [14] est totalement horizontal et basé sur une forme de "leadership do-ocratique". Cela signifie que l'influence et la capacité d'entraînement sont détenus par celles et ceux qui entreprennent et qui prennent des initiatives. Dès lors qu'un projet nourrit la raison d'être du collectif et qu'il fait du sens, il est très facile pour celui ou celle qui en est à l'initiative de le démarrer et de le développer. La plupart des informations circulent en temps réel sur une multitude de "chanel" thématiques sur la messagerie instantanée Telegram. Elles sont accessibles à tous. Lorsqu'il y a des décisions structurantes à prendre ou des informations importantes à partager, on utilise l'outil de prise de décisions collectives Loomio [15]. Les décisions sont prises par consentement (GPC [16]) qui a l'avantage de chercher à faire converger les opinions et rend chacun.e solidaire du résultat de la consultation. Parallèlement, le collectif multiplie les réunions physiques (équipe parisienne le vendredi, "summits" rassemblant toute la communauté au moins deux fois : an, ...), afin de cultiver l'informalité. Depuis 3 ans, Ouishare expérimente une forme de gouvernance par cercles : plusieurs cercles de décision ont été mis en place, animés par des membres qui prennent une part active à la gouvernance du collectif : les "connectors". Les décisions des cercles sont publiques et la rotation de leurs membres est encouragée.

<sup>20</sup> Propriété et communs - Idées reçues et propositions - Editions Utopia - 2017.

<sup>21</sup> Ouishare est un collectif pionnier de l'économie collaborative en France né au début des années 2010. Il travaille aujourd'hui sur l'impact du numérique et des pratiques collaboratives sur les entreprises et les territoires - <https://www.ouishare.net/>.

<sup>22</sup> voir encart "gouvernance partagée chez Ouishare".

peut dire qu'il faut cultiver l'écotone autour de la communauté qui produit un commun et favoriser la densité et la vitalité de cette zone d'échanges parce qu'elle permet à la fois de recruter de nouveaux entrants, d'identifier de nouvelles idées mais aussi d'exfiltrer des acteurs qui ne se reconnaissent plus dans la finalité et désirent partir. La coopération sera d'autant plus riche qu'on aura prévu et organisé les échanges avec le monde extérieur, dans une perspective non-prédatrice bien sûr. Il ne s'agit en effet pas seulement de laisser l'accès facile à la communauté et aux communs mais aussi d'être proactif et d'être en capacité à contribuer à la dynamique d'autres écosystèmes ou d'autres communautés, en dehors de tout intérêt direct, simplement en créant de la valeur sociale, à partir des communs qu'on a produits.

### **C'est en cultivant une masse critique d'intendants (steward) d'un commun qu'on peut réellement renforcer sa capacité de résilience**

Le dernier levier à activer est celui du "prendre-soin". Cela peut paraître une évidence : si on veut qu'ils traversent le temps et l'espace, il faut prendre soin des communs. Mais comment peut-on prendre soin d'un commun dont on n'est pas toujours conscient et dont les contours ne sont pas toujours explicites ? Comment faire en sorte que le commun soit non pas le sujet de tout le monde (et donc le sujet de personne) mais bien le sujet de chacun et chacune ? Nicole Alix, Présidente de la Coop des Communs<sup>23</sup>, avait l'habitude de dire qu'il faut sans cesse penser à "nourrir la matrice"<sup>24</sup> des communs. En effet, sans quoi, il y a un réel risque d'épuisement de cette ressource commune parce que chacun sera venu y puiser sans entamer une démarche contributive de contre-don en retour. On peut facilement avoir tendance à utiliser le commun en oubliant de le nourrir et d'y contribuer. C'est vrai en particulier pour les plus nouveaux ou au contraire pour les plus anciens acteurs de la communauté, ces derniers étant au risque d'estimer "qu'ils ont beaucoup donné et qu'on leur doit bien ça". Il ne s'agit pas de mettre les communs sous cloche pour autant. Mais si la relation est principalement une relation de consommation, on va épuiser le commun et donc diminuer sa capacité à encaisser et dépasser les chocs. La grande difficulté est de créer les conditions de l'expression de mécanismes de responsabilité individuelle, dans un contexte très collectif donc très dilutif de responsabilité individuelle au fond. Il s'agit d'articuler plusieurs dispositifs qui sont chacun nécessaires mais insuffisants pris isolément : tout d'abord rendre la finalité du commun consciente pour les acteurs ; ensuite mettre en place un corpus de règles simples permettant d'organiser la contribution de chacun et chacune, fût-elle tournante. Mais au-delà, il est nécessaire de créer les conditions d'une culture qui soit réellement

orientée vers l'attention et le soin, une culture qui valorise aussi la sensibilité et pas seulement le mental. Une culture de "stewardship". Il s'agit de constituer une masse critique d'acteurs qui se sentent intendants du commun. Un intendant est une personne à qui un propriétaire a donné la charge d'un bien. L'intendant remplit d'autant mieux son rôle qu'il rentre pleinement au service du propriétaire et du bien dont il a la charge. Il y a dans cette notion d'intendance des notions d'humilité, de respect, de lâcher-prise, de don gratuit et d'attention. Prenons l'exemple du système de soin français. Il est le fruit de mesures successives prises par l'Etat, des acteurs privés ou des

**[Nourrir la matrice]** Chez Resiliences, nous fonctionnons avec un système inspiré de l'holocratie, basé sur la répartition de "rôles" au sein desquels une ou plusieurs personnes agissent et prennent des décisions en autonomie. Ces rôles correspondent, pour la plupart, à des fonctions transverses dans des organisations classiques : compta-gestion, développement d'offres, animation du collectif, animation commerciale, ... Dans cette structure coopérative d'indépendants, la répartition de ces rôles est un moyen efficace pour s'assurer que les fonctions transverses, si précieuses, sont bien assurées. L'efficacité de "l'énergisation" de chaque rôle/fonction est évaluée collectivement tous les semestres et permet de remettre des pendules à l'heure, de redistribuer des rôles et de s'assurer que chacun et chacune est bien contributeur aux communs. Les actions de chaque rôle sont suivies sur l'outil de travail collaboratif Slack ainsi qu'à l'occasion des réunions de triage hebdomadaires. Ces rôles sont d'ailleurs rémunérés [17], selon une grille définie collectivement chaque semestre, à partir d'une part (25% environ) des prestations facturées appelée "fonds de réserve". Chez Ouishare, "prendre soin de la matrice" se fait de manière beaucoup moins formelle. Le collectif va ainsi favoriser l'implication contributive dans l'organisation d'événements qui mobilisent toute l'équipe comme le Ouishare Fest. Chacun.e peut s'impliquer, à la mesure de son engagement et de ses contraintes personnelles, mais cette participation active, et bénévole la plupart du temps, reste très valorisante dans le collectif. De la même manière, l'écriture d'articles ou de tribunes, non-rémunérée, est encouragée. Elle est aussi un facteur de cohésion et de vitalité des communs. Autre espace de contribution : celui de la gouvernance avec la participation active dans les cercles. Enfin, la culture du collectif exerce une surveillance implacable : elles et ceux qui seraient tentés de venir chez Ouishare en consommateurs sont très vite identifiés et, pression sociale plus ou moins explicite aidant, sommés de contribuer ou de quitter le collectif.

<sup>23</sup> <https://coopdescommuns.org/fr/association/>.

<sup>24</sup> voir encadré "Nourrir la matrice : un travail de chaque instant".

collectivités locales depuis bien avant la Révolution de 1789 notamment à travers les bonnes œuvres des rois de France ou des congrégations religieuses. Il est aussi constitué de ce que chacun des français et des françaises qui en a bénéficié en a fait. Il est donc bien le fruit d'une coopération collective, souvent inconsciente. Dans certaines circonstances, comme au plus fort de la pandémie Covid 19 en 2020, beaucoup de français ont pris conscience du caractère précieux de ce que nous avons élaboré collectivement au fil du temps. Nous avons pris conscience de la fragilité de ce commun et précisément de la nécessité d'en prendre soin. De prendre soin des équipements et des infrastructures mais aussi des acteurs qui le font vivre au quotidien comme les soignants. Alors que la pandémie n'est pas totalement jugulée, nous sommes invités à maintenir vivante la conscience de l'existence de ce commun et de sa finalité. Nous sommes invités à faire vivre les règles que la puissance publique a mises en place pour en prendre soin qu'il s'agisse de textes réglementaires ou budgétaires. Enfin, nous pouvons entamer des démarches individuelles pour en prendre soin. Est-ce qu'il y a une masse critique d'intendants de ce système : je ne crois pas. Si cela était le cas, on pourrait faire beaucoup mieux avec moins de moyens et on en revient à solliciter la "puissance publique" pour qu'elle renfloue le système en permanence.

### Les communs pour se réapproprier le monde qui nous échappe

Les communs sont précieux parce qu'ils permettent de véhiculer des pratiques vertueuses qui mobilisent l'esprit de coopération et d'attention de celles et ceux qui les créent et les utilisent. C'est la raison pour laquelle ils constituent des moyens efficaces pour polliniser nos sociétés avec des pratiques qui, bien que fondamentalement consubstantielles à "l'âme humaine", ont été perdues pour une grande part d'entre nous. Néolibéralisme, capitalisme-financier, inconscience sociale et environnementale : autant de facteurs qui ont favorisé l'égoïsme, l'individualisme, la recherche de la performance pour elle-même ou le triomphe du mental sur la sensibilité. C'est la raison pour laquelle les communs sont précieux mais aussi fragiles car les tensions restent fortes avec un environnement globalement à rebours de ce qu'ils portent. C'est pourquoi, il est important de favoriser leur résilience c'est-à-dire leur capacité à traverser les crises tout en conservant ce qui fait leur essence. Cette résilience sera d'autant plus forte d'abord si on conscientise leurs finalités, ensuite si les acteurs sont capables de coopérer dans un cadre de profonde confiance, ouvert sur les autres écosystèmes et, enfin, si on est chacun et chacune capable d'en prendre soin comme de véritables intendants. Au-delà, les communs peuvent prendre une dimension politique car ils permettent, comme le souligne le Manifeste du collectif Ouishare, "de nous réapproprier un monde qui nous

échappe". Car alors, en sortant d'une étroite logique public / privé, on est capable d'entrer dans une pensée collective qui ne soit pas un totalitarisme supplémentaire puisqu'elle fait de la place non pas au plus grand nombre mais à chacun et à chacune. Les communs deviennent des espaces en marge des espaces privés qui sont souvent prédateurs ou des espaces publics qui sont souvent aveugles. Des espaces dans lesquels ou à partir desquels, il est possible de bâtir un monde durable et vraiment humain.

## Le Tour à vélo : une démarche de “recherche-voyage” (French)

Aurelien Denaes<sup>25</sup> et Fanny Lebrech<sup>26</sup>

De début juin à fin octobre 2021, nous avons pris nos vélos pour un Tour de France de rencontre d'initiatives collectives et locales qui se rapprochent du concept de “Communs” : des ressources partagées, créées et maintenues par une communauté de façon démocratique, géré au plus proche de la ressource, prônant l'ouverture et la solidarité. Nous, c'est Fanny Le Brech, engagée dans le développement d'un tiers-lieu local, d'un réseau de tiers-lieux régional et des Coopératives d'Activité et d'Emploi (CAE) au niveau national et Aurélien Denaes, engagé dans le développement de tiers-lieux locaux, d'un réseau de tiers-lieux régional, du mouvement tiers-lieu national et élu local. Nous pensons être des chercheurs agissant et/ou des acteurs cherchant. Notre projet était de nous éloigner de nos propres territoires d'action et de nos organisations pour mieux questionner nos croyances et nos pratiques, d'ouvrir nos esprits pendant ces 5 mois, tout cela au grand air. Nous souhaitions sortir des sentiers battus de la recherche traditionnelle pour aller à la rencontre d'initiatives communes inspirantes qui pourraient faciliter la résolution d'enjeux et de problèmes que nous rencontrons nous-mêmes dans nos quotidiens professionnels, dans nos engagements collectifs, ou que d'autres acteurs.rices des Communs traversent.

Pourquoi en vélo ? Tout d'abord, à titre personnel, nous désirions réinterroger nos modes et rythmes de vie et prendre le temps de vivre une aventure nous faisant découvrir un nomadisme poussé, hors de notre zone de confort. Pour cela, nous souhaitions utiliser ce moyen de transport, de liaison, pour ne pas polluer, être sobre énergétiquement. En termes de recherche-action, ce moyen de transport lent est peu utilisé et pourtant, pendant ces 5 mois, nous avons vu à quel point il permet d'être au plus proche des territoires et de leurs initiatives. Avoir pris le temps de se mouvoir lentement dans l'environnement direct des 75 initiatives rencontrées nous a permis de mieux les analyser, de comprendre la construction urbaine et/ou rurale environnante et le rôle que jouent ces Communs dans leur paysage. De même, cela nous a été très utile, suite aux différentes rencontres, pour prendre le temps sur notre vélo (non électrique) d'intégrer ce que nous avons vu et entendu et de réfléchir, au grand air, dans l'effort.

Que cherchions-nous ? Que ce soit des tiers-lieux, des fablabs, des ateliers partagés, des coopératives d'activité et d'emplois, des coopératives d'habitants, des municipalités,

des espaces test agricoles, des structures d'éducation populaire, nous désirions rencontrer des expériences collectives locales, décortiquer leurs pratiques, leur poser des questions profondes pour comprendre ce qu'ils créent et comment. Ce projet est arrivé dans un contexte où l'épidémie de Covid-19 a pu prouver la fragilité d'un système et la résilience de nombreux citoyens et organisations qui se sont organisés pour mettre en œuvre des solutions à leurs besoins ou des actions de solidarité pour des populations “oubliées”. Les questions que nous avons posées ont été multiples : quelles répercussions la crise sanitaire, économique et sociale depuis 2020 a eu sur la construction collective alors que les citoyen.nes ont dû s'enfermer chez eux, s'isoler pour se protéger ? Comment les individus se sont adaptés, se sont (ré)organisés et ont fait preuve de solidarité ? Comment les tiers-lieux ont pu créer des communautés de projet qui ont facilité la résilience de leurs territoires ? Est-ce que les collectivités se sont appuyées sur ces citoyens et ces organisations de l'Économie Sociale et Solidaire (ESS) pendant cette période et comment ? Quelles nouvelles pratiques participatives, coopératives, démocratiques ont émergé dans ces constructions citoyennes ? Comment ces initiatives se sont organisées et coordonnées entre elles et comment elles comptent continuer à le faire dans l'avenir ?

Au cours de cette aventure, nous avons réussi à prendre des images et à interviewer en vidéo ou en audio une cinquantaine d'initiatives malgré les difficultés logistiques liées à ce mode de “recherche-voyage”. En effet, nous rencontrions tout au long de la journée des acteur.rices des Communs et le soir, nous allions manger et dormir régulièrement chez des membres de la communauté internationale Warmshowers, des passionnés de voyage à vélo qui accueillent sans contrepartie des pairs pour les rencontrer et écouter leurs aventures. Notre environnement social, sujet d'ailleurs de notre recherche, était ainsi bien riche et peu reposant.

Nous profitons maintenant de notre retour à la sédentarité et à nos engagements collectifs locaux - que nous n'avions d'ailleurs pas abandonné, télé-travaillant 2 jours par semaine sur notre chemin - pour rassembler toutes les données et les traiter. Nous avons en effet récupéré du contenu pertinent sur la construction coopérative et territoriale, les enjeux de gouvernance des Communs et le rapport entretenu en leur sein au travail, à

<sup>25</sup> Facilitateur de collectifs La Tréso - A+ c'est mieux ! / Explorateur des tiers-lieux et des Communs / Formateur.

<sup>26</sup> Facilitatrice de dynamiques collectives, ESSpace - A+ c'est mieux - Coopérer pour Entreprendre / Exploratrice des tiers-lieux et des Communs.

la convivialité et à la communauté. Nous y avons rencontré des systèmes uniques de mutualisations et de protections collectives, des innovations juridiques, financières, foncières, de nouvelles approches culturelles, numériques, agricoles, éducatives, etc. Nous comptons mettre en place dans les prochains mois une exposition tournante dans les espaces et communautés visitées. Il nous semble fondamental que cette recherche - que nous

voyons comme un travail de rassemblement de données et de réflexion sur ce qui nous a touché, comprenant une part de subjectivité - bénéficie en premier lieu aux usagers et porteur.ses d'initiatives qui ont pris le temps de nous accueillir et d'échanger avec nous. Nous souhaitons aussi faire la promotion de ce mode de recherche-action qui nous a semblé très approprié pour analyser les Communs territoriaux.

## Dialogue actually is the weapon of the powerful (Interview of Pr. Gibson Burrell)

Gislene Feiten Haubrich<sup>27</sup>

The interview took place on 16th September, by Zoom®.



Pictures of Gibson Burrell and Gislene Feiten Haubrich

**Gislene:** Thank you very much, Gibson, for accepting our invitation and being with us in this adventure that is JOCO, the journal we, as a network, are launching by December. Having you with us is an honour. Thank you very much<sup>28</sup>.

**Gibson:** You're very welcome. Thank you very much for asking me. And I'll try and give you some honest sort of views. The person I live with has said I should not abuse any living people but I'm not sure that I will be able to do that. So, let's see.

**Gislene:** I'm pretty sure, it will be very good. We all are going to learn a lot and be thinking a lot after this conversation, as well for those who are going to read it. We are going to start by the most obvious question, I think. Prof. Gibson. You are very well known by the critical studies in the management field. Would you say the management studies in the critical studies, are very well understood? And how it has developed in the last years?

**Gibson:** The first thing to say is I regard myself, you know, self-identify as organisation theorist. And I've been doing that for fifty years. Critical Management Studies are often associated with Mats Alvesson and Hugh Willmott in that sort of school, in the 1990's. But the first appearance of the term 'Critical Management Studies', I think, is associated with two people in Industrial Relations, in the LONDON School of Economics, where they use that, they're talking about the development of industrial relations, but they use this term, Critical Management Studies. And I think that's from about 1977.

But if we look at the field, it, like many, it all arises, it flowers, it decays. You know this is true of many things. I haven't seen it true of institutional theory, in organization theory yet, but I hope that it will happen!

So, the thing about it is... it's a portmanteau word. It allows you to carry inside the baggage all sorts of stuff. I think Bruno Latour and his actor-network theory have four recognised problems: what he means by actor, what he means by network, what he means by the hyphen, and what does he mean by theory? Same to Critical Management Studies: what do we mean by critical? What do we mean by management? What do we mean by studies? And I'm not going to go into all of that. But clearly, there's a tradition of critique, there's a tradition of understanding management, and there is what do you mean by studies; what methodologies do you use, and so on. And each of those elements in CMS is problematic.

What we've seen is... the way in which it seems like a standard, so there is a military metaphor: it seems like a standard by which to march, you know, to march behind, into battle, against to whatever your enemy is. But it then becomes this portmanteau, which covers a whole variety of stuff and then people start to say: well, what does it achieved? What has it done for those that are in this army, this marching, or a very small brigade or whatever? And the answer usually is it's enhanced their careers; it's given them some sort of reputation; it's something which they identify with and/or identified by. I think it was Thomas Kuhn who said: the real way in which a scientific field develops is when the old people die off. And it's a cruel sort of notion, but it may be that in order for things to progress beyond critical management studies, all that people that have exposed that, and that would include myself, would have to die off. So I'm not shutting out that possibility.

I think that critical management studies have achieved some things; it's made people think, but by no means is it new. People have thought about being critical of management if they've been in trade unions for a century and a half, at least. People are being critical of

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<sup>28</sup> I had a mission: to interview Prof. Gibson Burrell. He kindly accepted to be interviewed, even though his life was in the middle of a hurricane. We schedule the meeting for 16th September 2021. I would lie if I said I was not nervous. Actually, I was frightened: would my questions be dumb? Would I be able to manage the answers? Then, I remembered: good professors don't believe in stupid questions. Otherwise, they challenge us to think. It helped me settle because I knew I would be thinking for days, weeks after the interview. I was also constantly thinking about the readers: which questions would they like to ask? I tried my best to prepare a range of questions that I believed would tell a story and make minds curious. Finally, I felt very grateful. Beyond an academic with an extent of knowledge I truly admire, I had the opportunity to meet a kind, humble and generous person. More than answers, he gave me hope. It might sound unexpected, but the conversation really granted me hope and willingness to go further as a researcher. And, yes, the answers kept me thinking for weeks. I consider it can bring hope and reflections to you too. Enjoy the reading.

management by being workers. You know the Dilbert cartoons? If you if you see these, you know it's one of the bestselling things you will find in a bookshop, and it is all heavily hostile for management, senior management. To use the technical term, *it takes the piss out of* management very, very strongly. That seems to me what a lot of people do: they're going to work, and they think: this sloth, senior management, haven't a clue about what happens in this organization; haven't a clue what happens in the institution that I've just been thrown out of, oddly the University of Leicester. Exactly that. They haven't a clue about how an organization might function properly.

So, we can all be critical of management. Most people at work, in organizations, I find are very critical. They don't have a kind word to say about their managers often. But they just think "I've got to stay silent to have a job". And studies, in the UK, there has been a takeover attempt in the culture wars, so this is debate at the moment about all the culture wars happening in the UK. And the two cultures are: Sciences on the one side, and Humanities and Arts in the other. And it's maybe wider than that. But the Sciences is in the STEM subjects, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics are told this is where the future is for... You know, an island off the Western coast of Europe that has decided they don't want to be part of Europe, and the Arts and Humanities, their funding would have to be sacrificed. So, that's this struggle going on, and what that says is that critical management studies, because it studies using the arts and humanities, maybe more than the sciences, again is threatened. So, I'm sorry, this is a very long answer to your first question, but it gets me warmed up.

**Gislene:** No, perfect. Feel free professor, go forward. Actually, it goes for the second question: if you believe the critical studies might have a life outside the academia, or if they are surviving in academia, they can go outside the walls of the university, to reinvent themselves, maybe.

**Gibson:** Yes, I think universities have become much more conservative. Let me use the British example because, you know, I'm not able to comment outside that really. But in the British example, there was a small period of time between, let's say, 1955 and 1985, when the academics were much more influential. Prior to that, the majority of British universities, but not Oxford nor Cambridge, were governed by local businesspeople, businessmen, and their families that funded the rise of the university. And this might be true right across the Western Europe anyway. But in the post-war consensus, as universities expanded, university senates became more powerful. And that was the period when these were liberal institutions, there were the forefront of some progressive stuff. But in 1985, which again fits in Thatcherism thinking, the universities

were told that they needed to be under the control of Councils rather than Senates, and Councils were made up of local businesspeople, mainly businessmen, and that is what governs most of them. Oxford and Cambridge still remained relatively democratic. They still have academics that have some influence about what happens.

And the Latin phrase primus inter pares, you know, the vice-chancellors were one amongst several, one amongst many. In other words, they knew they were going back to becoming academics having been academics. But now that's over. In the vast majority of places, vice-chancellors want honours, they want Knighthoods or dameships, and that seems to be their motivation. You know, they want to build buildings as memorials to their own sort of name. So, universities are not good places to be at the moment, although I've enjoyed my 50 years in them tremendously. And that's important to say to young people. They can be great places.

What would critical management studies outside of academic life look like? Well, I think the journal you know, would have things to say; they would be able to say things about that. As I've said, trade-unions were a place of anti-management thinking. Libraries were a place where people would go and talk about the way in which the world was moving. Coffee shops originally. In London, they're set up against the "gin palaces". The gin palaces were seen as places of debauchery whereas coffee houses were seen as a place where you can have *soirées*, you could meet, and you could talk. So, there's a whole variety of things... in a coffee shop... Intellectualizing... The trade unions and other forms of collective which we've yet to see. Cooperatives of various kinds. But universities, at the moment, in the United Kingdom... They can be quite unpleasant. Whereas being outside of them, I think, it can be quite pleasant. Although obviously you know that's not a binary thing, there are huge intermediate positions. So yeah, it's very possible organise outside of a formal bureaucratic system, like university. It's quite possible. You will be told, of course, that you're need to organise, that you need to have leadership. Now, if there's one thing that we should explode in critical management studies and organisation theory, it is the notion you need a leader. Because what a pernicious sort of notion that is. And this goes back...

There was an infamous cartoon, in the United States, in the 50s, which was a space being, an alien, you know, landing somewhere in New Mexico, because at the time that is where they were thought to frequent. And who lands, turns to someone that he or she or it has met in the desert, and says: take me to your leader. And that just encapsulates the idea. It's all there in science fiction. Hollywood just hammers away at that sort of notion. So,

we need to get rid of the pernicious notion of leadership. Whether it's acephalous, you know, without a head, or whether it's communal thinking, or whatever. Alex Ferguson, who managed Manchester United rather successfully for a number of years, used to say to his players, and I'm not sure that this is a good metaphor, but he used to point out, when they were practicing, to a flock of the geese that was flying over, and he would say: you see, it appears to be the one in the front, but every goose takes a turn at leading. That is the notion of his football teams... you know, there weren't just one captain or one manager: everybody had to take their turn at leadership. And that story is about the level of the leadership theory. We must get rid of it. Most of it is absolutely dreadful. So, I've had a sideswipe but that is well, sorry.

**Gislene:** No, perfect, perfect, prof. Gibson. But if we don't have leadership, do you believe we have any kind of structure that might guide us, or help us, to build something else?

**Gibson:** There are structures which are acephalous, you know, without a head. The trouble is the lens by which we look at them looks to 'lead' us. Once you got a cultural expectation that there will be a leader, we spend our time looking for who it is, rather than seeing it in much more democratic shared sort of way. I know people who live in communes, and the temptation that they find is to try and avoid someone becoming a leader. There's a ceremony in North America, mainly in the Northwest Pacific states, the Potlatch ceremony. The Potlatch ceremony is a way the tribe would try to prevent a leader from developing. And so what the leader, the chief would have to do was burn all his or her accumulated surplus from the year. And they would burn it. And that was to prevent them becoming an established elite. Now, all that people have said, is well, at the end of the next year, it was still the same people burning off surplus in the Potlatch ceremony. I'm not sure that's the case. But that society make huge efforts to prevent the establishment of elites, the establishment of ruling families. Yet, Hollywood movies and beyond that, novels, all tell us that the natural figure arises. And he or she will take their rightful position through birth, through physical prayers, or whatever, at the head of the organisation. And I suspect, if we have a look over the last 10 thousand years of how people were organised, leadership, as we understand today, may not have been that common. I would hope that I would be the case. It's just so entrenched in culture, current culture.

**Gislene:** Yeah, yeah. This is the challenge that I'm trying to decode with you because we see, for example, now with the pandemic, that everybody is hoping for a saviour, or in the economy. They are expecting someone to take the

lead and solve the problems. And this is a cultural issue that comes after, maybe, an educational flaw or something like that? Why do you think, nowadays we expect so much someone to take the lead, and us assuming a position, not passive, but a kind of passivity?

**Gibson:** Yes, in who's interest is it that we are told we need leadership? The current leadership. Mao Tse Tung, who has a bad press, in the Cultural Revolution, was trying to develop anti-leadership notions, whilst keeping himself very much as the leader. He asked people to raise the question about why the elderly should be given more respect? Why should it be that expertise only lay in one or two hands? There was a circulation of population again that many people know. People were working universities and went into the fields; people went to work in the fields and went to the universities. That circulation happened. And that's an attempt, what I called a long time ago, anti-organization theory, where you take everything that organisation theory says is right and normal and fixed and static, and you problematise it. So, under the Cultural Revolution that happened. But then, people said: well, in the Cultural Revolution people starved to death; there was the collapse of the economy, which may be the case. But, of course, faced with the cultural revolution in China, the people that supplied the technology, Western technology, to China stopped sending it. So, a lot of the machinery of governments, a lot of the machinery behind industry, ceased operating. But that was the western intervention in it. Noam Chomsky writes about this, he writes about Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, and people have said: look at their killing fields, look at the number of people who've died. Clearly, that is a huge set of problems. It looks like genocide in some sorts of ways. But organizationally, there was an attempt to do something that was the inverse of the way in which people did it. Of course, those two things get put together, so people said: whatever you try do something differently, lots of people die, which does not have to be the case. I'm not defending the Pol Pot regime or the Cultural Revolution. What I'm saying is: there were interesting things that were happening in an organisational sense there that, at least, we should read about.

**Gislene:** Thinking about a possibility to change and considering the examples you got us from, for example, the cafes. We study a lot of the collaborative spaces and, *tier-lieux* in the broader sense. How could we understand them from the organisational point of view? Does it could be an organization? A cafe or coworking space: can we understand it as an organisation?

**Gibson:** Well, that's a very good question as well because the whole issue about what an organisation is comes to the fore of: how bureaucratic does it has to be? The

history of organisation theories is about the rise of bureaucracy really. I mean, Max Weber talks a lot about the military, and it is the organisation of the military which lies at the origins of the organisational theory. So, what organisation means often is bureaucracy and someone like Paul Du Gay is very keen on seeing that linkage is very strong. Other people have said: well, what we're interested in is organising, not organisation. Organising as a process rather than as the fixed structures. I think that's where there's much more opportunity to think about how we would organise ourselves in an organizing sense, the processes, and trying to stop structures from developing, maybe. Again, back to the Cultural Revolution, the circulation of jobs, the circulation of power around, the questioning of those that claim leadership, which happens in many anarchists' communes, anyway. Organising opens itself for much more, I think, to thinking about alternatives. But organisation often relates to bureaucratic structure. Michel Foucault talks, in French, about *l'organisation*, which gets translated by the British translator, as organisation structure. But I'm not sure that that's a good translation. So, organising allows much more leeway, rather than organisation as a way forward possibly in this.

But I wouldn't turn my back on organisation because the stances, the fixity, the structuring, it happens, and you start with it. You can structure a process and you can understand processing structure. Karen Dale and I talked about Riparian metaphor for this. Riparian is from the Latin for the riverbank, and it's the way in which the two things intertwine. The riverbank looks fixed and the water, the river looks like it's movement, but, in fact, there's structure is in the water and there's movement on the bank. It's a pretty mundane metaphor but the riparian sort of view of it, get that both structure and process. So, I don't want to end this little section on saying: there's organisation structure in one hand and, there is process on the other. There are bits of both. But it's a matter of emphasis. So yes, we can look at process and there's a lot in a process perspective we could get from a whole variety of different forms of organising.

**Gislene:** In your point of view, the concepts of commons, community, and the idea of communion, as a process, can help us thinking about these new collaborative spaces? Do these ideas connect or not?

**Gibson:** Yes, definitely. My grandmother was born in 1891. And she didn't say communism, she said *commune-ism*. She pronounced it that way. Before the First World War, the notion of commune was so central to those people on the left, who were interested in ideas. Community is such a powerful sort of notion too. But of course it could be some very right-wing communities. Someone does not

necessarily imagine that community has to be full of people that have got progressive, liberal sorts of values. But one of the things that I have been quite keen on is the notion of the community of scholars, where people don't necessarily share the same sort of views, but they are united by the notion of exchanging, within a communal space, ideas, debate in their very heart. But you listen, it is not that your ears are closed to it. The concept of community, in many ways, I would regard as very positive. The concept of commune, I would see as very positive. And again that's been lost, you know, in the anti-Marxist late 20th century, earlier 21st century. The whole value of thinking about that. Anarchism, for example. I think, and I may be completely wrong in this, and people will rather correct me, but I think in *Les Misérables*, there is a song in there about the red and the black, which is the flag of anarcho-syndicalism. But all that is lost, certainly in the English translation and when it's on stage. But at the time, it was such a strong notion, anarchism and syndicalism fused together. You know, acephalous groups but around the workplace. And that's gone. British trade unionism certainly has no flavour of that. I think it may be stronger in France and other places maybe. But that tradition, I only wish it has a fraction of the life that it used to have. So, a sense of history is really crucial for understanding organizations. There are people who say history is important; there's a number of scholars I could quote. But that's so true. If we want to look at the last 10 thousand years of how humans have organized, we will see so many ideas but what is told; there is 10% of what has happened that we're told is legitimate. And in that 10%, there's a whole of leadership, whereas outside of that, the 90% of the other ways that people have organised, I don't think we've got that as strongly.

**Gislene:** Yeah, I agree. And thinking about these new collaborative spaces and how they're connected to these new ways of working and thinking about new ways of working usually relies on the idea of the technology, and how technology enables people to work from anywhere and things like that. But also on the idea of the possibility, or the need we have to be part of a community, to be connected with other people. And many times we suppose that traditional structures would not have that kind of possibility. Do you think now we are experiencing this common movement in a genuine way? Are we looking for being part of a collective, really? Or looking forward to building something common? Do you believe we might have a sparkle of that anywhere?

**Gibson:** Yes, commonality, I think is really important. Many people do not like working from home, partly because they are exposed to their family. This is a joke by the way. But partly because of the loneliness of being isolated. The Americans have got the phrase about *water cooler moments*, where people go and get a glass of water

when they know that the people are there, just to engage in human interaction. But certainly, in the west, - in the west of the USA, in particular - the rise of a culture which is so self-centred, so individualistic, so narcissistic, where everything is a mark of oneself. So, there's this whole sort of tradition. No, tradition is too strong. There is this development of the ideas of impression management: you've got to seek to impress your superiors and your equals; the presentation of self, which Goffman talked about. It's all about the self, it's all about even the *id*. Identity has got *id* at the beginning of it, so it means an entity which is all about your *id*. That concentration down into what used to be called a transcendental ego - the true self - but the transcendental ego is really the self-part, the culture emphasizes that so much. It tends to go against cooperation, it's so competitive. "How you look? How you perform? How you behave? What you've achieved? What you've got? What you drive? Where you live?" All of those trappings there, the commodification of self. They seem to me to go against ideas of community, ideas of shared moments. But of course, even those incredibly narcissistic people like shared moments because they can show off. People who believe in social interaction at large scales have been frightened by meeting those that are infected and so on. So, it's cultural. There are cultures which do emphasize much more communitarian sort of perspectives, and there's, as I just said: communities which are incredibly individualistic. But organizations themselves have those tensions within them. The way in which work is fragmented into individual sort of tasks and the way in which, allegedly, it's all about teams. And it seems to me allegedly.

There's the American program that Trump sort of fronted, *The Apprentice*. It has been in Britain, and it keeps coming back. It's all about your interaction, in a communal sense, with a group of other people but all the time trying to stab them in the back. That just adds fuel to this idea about: "Do you want to be collective? Well, trust nobody".

In the not-for-profit sector, in the NHS, in a whole variety of voluntary organizations, it's much more open to collectivity and sharing things and so on. I was once in a hospital's *Intensive Care Unit*, and I happened to be awake at the time, and the way which the staff were trying to stop people dying was to eat together. They constantly ate together. So, that sense of collectivity through breaking bread, and there's, obviously, a biblical reference there, it's so strong. They constantly ate together. People would bring stuff in, and they would eat together. That was the one way in which in the face of very difficult circumstances, people dying all around them, they kept it together.

**Gislene:** We're going to touch one of these points that's the power relations in this kind of new ways of working. And you touch it a bit but if you could say something else about it because we have this idea, that is maybe just a discourse: we're looking for horizontal organizations, flat organizations but we might not be used to it. How do you see these things?

**Gibson:** The first thing that comes to mind is the power of algorithms. If we are communicating through technology, there's a whole hidden world there of hierarchy of which we are not aware. You and I are talking, we could see each other, but behind this, there's a huge infrastructure of Zoom and so on. The first thing is: in interactions, there are always powerful organizations at play. So, if you sit in a room, there's the furniture, there's what you wear, there is the arrangement of the room, there is the way in which the boss's chair is often higher than yours. You've got an uncomfortable seat while she or he has got something that is very comfortable, and they can lean back and do the way they like feeling comfortable. The technology around us is part of the power structure. The algorithms that people are using through screen-to-screen communications are really powerful and we are not aware of those. Behind almost every human interaction, there's structure which we, sometimes, don't appreciate. You and I are speaking English because you're very kindly doing that, but the structures of language are important: what language does one speak?

We're told that dialogue is in an egalitarian thing; we are equal in a dialogue. Dialogue actually is the weapon of the powerful. They insist on dialogue: they can deny it, or they can allow it. But it's when people talk behind their back, when they have conversations which the powerful are excluded from, then their regard gets problematic. I've been part of an organisation until recently, where our emails were being read. So, the idea that egalitarian structures are possible, of course, they are! But *my god*, there's many, called, structural forces, that encloses in what Max Weber might have called an iron cage. So, the processes take place within that. The trouble is: we're not aware of them.

We think if we're in the open air talking to someone, a thousand miles away, somehow, we've got freedom, and then being able to talk to people. But we are encased within a whole set of structures which allow what we're saying to be listened to, extracted, monetised... Yes, it is possible with these technologies, these new structures be more egalitarian. But let's not forget: that old thing that the last thing a fish would theorise is the sea in which it swims. So, we might theorise the interaction between us, but around that, there's a whole ocean of structures and

processes that allow us to do this, of which we might not think very much about. Ever.

**Gislene:** We usually think about power relations in the physical, let's say, environment: what we can see, touch each other, but actually, power relations are everywhere.

**Gibson:** Yes, absolutely. One doesn't have to be a Foucauldian, I think, to see that. Let's just mention Habermas about the linguistic world in which we live. Language itself is full of power. Language itself has a whole variety of structures built into it, whether it's English or other linguistic forms. The medium that we use isn't egalitarian. In order to be truly thinking about structures, we have to change almost everything. So, would it be Esperanto? I'm not sure that it would, because I think there's a lot of structure built into that too. But if we start saying the language that we use, in order to escape, is itself imprisoning, it's not a very optimistic message. So, finding new forms of discourse... but would we entrust anybody to come up with a new form of discourse, without calling them leader?

**Gislene:** Gibson, we have two questions to go yet, and this one, well, you've mentioned you've been working for 50 years in the field of management as an academic. When you look back at your career, which moments make you proudest? And there's any regret when you look back?

**Gibson:** Yeah, having criticised West Coast narcissism, this is a question which encourages it from a British person. The thing which I would like my colleagues to think is that we've tried to build a community of scholars. We tried to be communal, to celebrate the successes of others. And that community I've already mentioned. You didn't have to agree with each other. It wasn't as if it was a mono-dimensional, monotheistic sort of thing but at least you had to listen, you have to come and be prepared to listen, and to argue and debate and go away muttering afterwards. That's part of it. The Greeks have the idea about the Agora, which was a marketplace, I think, in Athens. The Agora was a place where people came and debated, the senate... well, it wouldn't be called a senate, would it? The way in which the groups would talk to each other... - all men of course, no slaves either - but they would talk to each other and that sort of approach of debate, but without the phallogocentrism, and without the slaves, seem to me that it would be an ideal thing: you would sit around, and you would talk. Now, lots of people would say, where's the action in that? Is a talking shop what you think is the way forward? Well, it seems to me that has to be done at some point. So, a community of scholars, in one or two places, that grew, and then died. But it was a way of organizing, I think, which brings out the best in people, I would like to think. It's supportive, it

encourages people to say what they think, not to be quiet; it allows great release of energy sometimes to know that people are interacting with you on the basis of friendship. The thing about Leicester is, people who are my colleagues and they are my friends. Because of the adversity that we've been through that's important. I'm not saying that we have to be friends with everybody. Lots of people, I would never say I'm friends with, but I would respect them, and I hope it'll be the same. So that's the community of scholars. That would be some small sort of contribution, even though it doesn't exist anymore.

The things to be ashamed of? The regrets? Not supporting the British coal miners more when I should have, in the 1980s. That's a deep regret. I wake up at nights about that. I lived in Lancaster at the time, and there were a group of people striking nearby who were from a coal mine that was very close to where I was born. It wasn't the same place, but it was pretty close. They spoke in an accent I understood.

They were living in tents to stop coal being imported from Poland. They lived in tents, and I thought: "I should ask them for dinner, to come to the house and have a bath", that sort of thing, but I never did. I had three daughters who were all under eight years old at the time. That was my excuse: were these guys going to come drunk or were they going to swear in front of them? But I really regret that. I should have done so much more. And that that haunts me, because I'm from a coal mining village and I should have done much more.

Also I should have resisted a pro-vice chancellor once, who was horrendous at the job. And I used to say to myself: "well keep your powder dry, Gibson". There's a military thing about you don't fire your gun because your powder is wet, so you keep your powder dry, and you can resist. And I used to say to myself: "keep your powder dry Gibson, you'll be able to use that some other time" and I never did. I never fired a shot at this one particular person, and I should have fired many shots. Organisations create quiescence, they engender fear. They bring about some of the worst forms of unethical behaviour, that you are forced to do because your superiors say that you have to.

I know someone that worked in a call centre, and her job was to tell people that their gas supply would be turned off because they hadn't paid. She was not allowed to listen to the stories that people said about their husbands leaving, about losses of jobs, etc. All she had to do was to stick to the script, in this call centre. Every night, she had to come back home and have a very deep bath and wash the sins of the day away. And I just thought: "how come that's such a powerful story", where you've got to wash

away the organisation, because it had such a corrosive effect on your skin, on your mind, on your soul. And I have one or two of those experiences. Well, not the same as the person I'm mentioning, who every day had to do that. So, yeah, regrets, I should've "fired many shots" at this pro-vice chancellor and I should have been done more to help the miners who I empathize with so much. Two regrets. And lots of others I'm not going to tell you about.

**Gislene:** I think those two are great for us to think, and most important, for us to listen to your story and how you perceive the story, because at the end, we are people who are trying to do our best to change the reality around us and sometimes it doesn't work the way we want to and it's good to know that we all have the chance to look back and see how we could have done things. So, thank you for being so generous and telling us this stuff, that's quite personal. And for us to finish: for those people who want to follow the path in academia, in the university, or maybe not at the university itself, which pieces of advice would you provide us?

**Gibson:** The first thing to say is: they're great! Ok, I have spent my time saying that they are bureaucratic and have all sorts of problems with the people within them, but they're great. If you are part of a community of scholars, if you are dealing with young people and shaping the way in which they see the world. That's fantastic! Absolutely fantastic! At the time, people who were doing a degree as undergrad or postgrad, they may be so glad to finish. But occasionally, very occasionally, someone will come up to you, twenty, thirty years later, if you're an old person, and say: "I really enjoyed that. What you did for me was the change the way in which I saw the world". And if that happens you know once a year, once a decade, you think: absolutely great! So, the first thing is universities are full of interesting thoughtful people, who are in the main doing their best to think. And thinking is the key thing. They are places where you can research, in most places, you can research what you like, you are given this freedom to actually open the doors to your mind, the doors of perception maybe, and think about things in a very deep sort of way and that's a huge privilege. A huge privilege. You haven't got the mundanities of being in a call centre, not being able to say to someone: "sorry", when you're cutting off their electricity or their gas or whatever.

They are places where you get a sense of the openness of humanity to thoughts of all sorts. I mean, really interesting thinkers are the ones who would never fit in universities. The really interesting thinkers are the ones that would be fired very early on. The really interesting ones are those people that are often thrown out the universities or never get promoted because they challenge

far too much, as far as the systems concerns. They're great to have around, they're difficult sometimes. They're really difficult.

I've told the story before, but I worked with someone called Bob Cooper who was a friend of mine. We were asked to do a talk and he was fantastic, and I was decidedly very average. This was not at the university; it was a private consultancy. They wanted us to stand for pictures in Amsterdam, with bowler hats and umbrellas, as if we were the stereotypical sort of British or English person. Bob, turned to the organiser, and he said angrily: "we are proper fucking academics!" And it's that notion that I've always found so good. So, that's my advice to young people that want to go into universities: be proper fucking academics. That's a wonderful career if you can make it. But you've got to get rid of all of that model of old folk, people getting in the way. You got to get rid of all the powerful people getting in the way. A new generation can make universities much better than the currently are.

**Gislene:** We hope so. But the challenges are big. We're hoping so. Thank you very much, Gibson, for your kindness since our very first email exchanging, for accepting our invitation. We knew, from François, who's suggested your name, he told me it would be a great interview. And absolutely, it was and I'm pretty sure everybody will enjoy it. So, thank you very much.

**Gibson:** Thank you very much for asking me and I thoroughly enjoyed it. But that was the nature of the interviewer, and the questions and the fact that, you know, I like talking about these things. So, thank you very much.

## Walking the commons: drifting together in the city<sup>29</sup>

RGCS members<sup>30</sup>

### Abstract

This second RGCS white paper is focused on a new research practice and method co-designed by members of our network: Open Walked Event-Based Experimentations (OWEE). The protocol consists in a free, several day long learning expedition in a city, which brings together different stakeholders (academics, entrepreneurs, activists, makers, journalists, artists, students, etc.) and relies on a partly improvised process (both the people met and places visited are part of the improvisation that emerges in the flow of discussions). Walk and embodiment are central, as both indoor and outdoor times are expected to involve participants and remote followers differently. Although close to the French “Dérive”, OWEE also diverges from it on several key points. This white paper returns to the OWEE philosophy, the importance of improvisation and public spaces, and the search for commons in the way collaboration and knowledge are built and shared. It then discusses the issue of preparing and managing the event. Finally, we offer several case studies and ethnographies related to past events. These feedback and empirical analyses are opportunities to explore key questions for the city as well as the ways we live and work together. We conclude by stressing the importance of embodiment and ‘felt solidarity’ in the approach of commons and communalization in today’s collaborative world.

**Keywords:** OWEE; method; walk; learning expeditions; commons; narration; sharing economy; future of work; future of academia; open science; citizen science; makers; DIY.

### Introduction. Exploring makers, or becoming makers?

François-Xavier de Vaujany and Amélie Bohas<sup>31</sup>

« Droit devant soi, on ne peut pas aller bien loin. »

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry - Le petit prince.

Since 2016, the **Research Group on Collaborative Spaces** (RGCS) has organized learning expeditions and field trips, which were, in a first time, opportunities to explore a territory and more simply, to launch new chapters of the network. In early 2017, with a second learning expedition in Berlin (#collday2017), came the idea that from this practice (which was quite common for innovators, entrepreneurs and some academics), we could co-produce an approach or a method that could become a **common**, both for the network and the communities we work with. This common would be a way to bridge the time and space of our learning expedition and their narratives as well as the different concerns, temporalities, actors (academics, entrepreneurs, managers, activists, artists) we encountered. This was also an opportunity to be closer to the culture of making that was at the heart of our objects of study (coworkers, makers, hackers). We could not simply be passive spectators of our world. We needed to be doers, makers and hackers ourselves in order to gain a deeper understanding of the collaborative

communities that were at the heart of our research and entrepreneurial activities.

Following our learning expedition in Tokyo (July 2017), we labelled this approach we were formalizing or attempting to formalize OWEE (which stands for Open Walked Event-Based Experimentations). Close to the spirit of the practice of the French *dérive* (drift), the idea is to introduce in the walk something managers, consultants and politicians organizing field trips and learning expeditions cannot afford: improvisation in the flow of the walk and fuzzy temporal and spatial boundaries for our events. An OWEE is primarily a ‘temporal luxury’. We take our time and do our best to care in the flow of our walk. Beyond the walks, we take time to analyze and reflect upon what we saw, and how we felt. Everybody is welcome to join. The practice of walking is key and is amplified and made meaningful by seated, indoor moments of visits, stays and discussions. Beyond this local and punctual philosophy, we do our best to connect all our events (OWEE but also publications, political debates, past artistic performances,

<sup>29</sup> This is a second version of the white paper written by the RGCS collective.

<sup>30</sup> Edited by Amélie Bohas and François-Xavier de Vaujany. Contributions by Aroles Jeremy, Auboin Nicolas, Berkowitz Heloise, Bohas Amélie, Bonneau Claudine, Boukje Cnossen, Bussy-Socrate Helene, Carton Sabine, Dandoy Aurore, De Vaujany François-Xavier, Fabbri Julie, Glaser Anna, Grandazzi Albane, Haefliger Stefan, Hasbi Marie, Irrmann Olivier, Laniray Pierre, Passalacqua Annie, Viviane Sergi, Vallat David, Vitaud Laetitia and Zachariou Renee.

<sup>31</sup> In the order of appearance: PSL, Paris-Dauphine University and Aix-Marseille University.

etc.) in order to make them alive in the flow of each event... After two years of experimentations and 19 OWEEs (*see list in Table 1*), we believe that the time has come for a first feedback on this practice. This is exactly

the objective we gave to this White Paper, namely formalizing a first feedback co-produced by all those who managed or participated to our learning expeditions.

Name	Place	Date	Hashtag and description
#visualizinghacking2017	Berlin	July 2016	Pictures and sketches of hacking gestures in the flow of our exploration of makerspaces, hackerspaces and coworking spaces. Selection of pictures and sketches presented at Paris Town Hall at the end of our first symposium
Opening event of RGCS Barcelona #RGCSB	Barcelona	September 2016	Learning expedition organized day 2 after the opening seminar of RGCS Barcelona.
#RGCS2019	Paris	December 2016	First symposium, including a three-path learning expedition in the east of Paris.
#visualizinghacking2017	Tokyo	June 2017	Second session of visualizing hacking. Same principle: capturing gestures of hacking and improvising. Four-day long learning expedition in Tokyo.
#OOSE2017	Copenhagen	July 2017	Unconference and visit of a coworking space and makerspace (at the end of the conference).
#collday2017	Berlin	July 2017	Second event in Berlin. Three-day long learning expedition focused on collaborative spaces in the east and west of Berlin.
#sharingday2017	Roma and Milan	December 2017	Four-day long learning expedition in Roma and Milan. Opening event for both chapters. Visit of Italian coworking spaces and makerspaces. Discussions about the future of work in Italy.
#OWEEUN	Geneva	December 2017	Half-day learning expedition in Geneva at the end of an unconference at the United Nations.
#RGCS2019	London	January 2018	One-day long learning expedition in London at the end of the second RGCS symposium.
#HowImetmystartupOWEE	Paris	March	Collaboration. Half-day visits and walk focused on startups and collaborative spaces in Paris.
#OWEE Printemps des Entrepreneurs	Lyon	April 2018	OWEE with EM Lyon students in the context of the "Printemps des entrepreneurs in Lyon".
#OWEEMTL "Entrepreneuriat et technologie"	Montreal	May 2018	One-day long learning expedition in Montreal. Focused on collaborative spaces.
OWEE innovation labs	Lyon	May	Exploration of several innovation labs in the Lyon area.
#OWEESA	Paris	June 2018	Exploration of street art in Paris. Used to reflect upon academia and our practices.
#OOSE2018	Tallin	July 2018	Off the track event of EGOS 2018 conference. Seminar, fish-ball based panel, visit of a makerspace and alternative areas of Tallin (improvised walk).
"Innovation through History: an exploration of the CNAM museum"	Paris	July 2018	Visit of CNAM with the purpose of exploring history of innovation. Anna created a template to follow and fulfill.
#hackingday2018	Boston	July 2018	Four-day long learning expedition in Boston. Exploration in particular of MIT and Harvard ecosystem. Topic: "Opening and Hacking Knowledge: back to where it started?"
#RGCSAOM2018	Chicago	August 2018	Collective walk at the Millenium park (guided by a research of Santi Furnari). Discussion and co-production on the topic: "Revising revise and resubmit processes: towards alternative scientific media?".
#OWEEIDEA	Lyon	September 2018	Learning expeditions with students. Exploration of new entrepreneurial places in Lyon.

Table 1. The open walked event-based experimentations we organized between 2016 and 2018

The document is structured as follows. First, we return to the OWEE philosophy, what the acronym means, the key dimensions that have emerged in and through it. We try to put forward a taxonomy of OWEEs and compare the approach with the French *dérive*. Most of all, we explain

why we believe this simple practice is or could be a common.

The second part is focused on the practice of OWEE, its lived design and experience. We return to practices we have identified in its online and offline management. We

also reflect upon the possibility to collect data and produce more transformative research from it.

The third and last part is focused on ethnographies and case studies based on OWEE we organized. We show how our learning expeditions have been opportunities to explore the paradoxes of a territory or a practice, to make beautiful encounters, to question key research and academic practices and to elaborate different forms of collaborations, ways of working modes of knowledge co-production.

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## Part I. What is OWEELiving experience? Collaborating and Co-designing the narrative

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« Droit Voyez-vous dans la vie, il n'y a pas de solutions.  
Il y a des forces en marche : il faut les créer, et les solutions les suivent »  
Antoine de Saint-Exupéry - Vol de nuit.

## Chapter I.I. Towards more integrative research practices? Introducing Open Walked Event-Based Experimentations (OWEE)<sup>32</sup>

François-Xavier de Vaujany and Laetitia Vita

Between 2015 and 2019, the **Research Group on Collaborative Spaces** (RGCS), an independent network of academics, organised more than 120 events worldwide, including 19 learning expeditions. RGCS aims to explore places and contexts of work transformations, in particular collaborative communities such as coworkers, makers, fabbers and hackers where new work and life practices are experimented. Collaborative communities are seen as windows to understand new work practices (mobile, remote, digital, collaborative, entrepreneurial) and levers or muses that might transform our own academic practices.

All events organised by the network (in particular those based on learning expeditions) have converged into a new research practice presented here: Open Walked Event-based Experimentations (OWEE). This new set of practices aims to overcome various dichotomies (such as knowledge-building / knowledge-diffusing; teacher / researcher; academic / practitioner; academic / politician), make a bigger impact, and offer deeper connectivity in time and space for research and the events organised by researchers.

### What is the OWEE method: an emotion?

Over the last three years, throughout various events and experimentations, we have been shocked to discover how many academics were bored with their work and disillusioned with academia. Some grew sick and tired of the “publish or perish” game. Others were dissatisfied even while academically successful.



Picture 1. Credit: Final Highline Expansion by John Gillespie. This work is licensed under a CC BY-SA 2.0 license.

They came to our events simply to “have fun”! They longed for the use of new media to write, produce, and assemble academic production – something different to the more traditional academic journals. They embarked on a journey without knowing the destination and thoroughly enjoyed themselves in the process. Many of us began to wonder whether scientific writing could not also leave

room for new rhetorics, different writing styles, and the expression of emotions (de Vaujany, Walsh and Mitev, 2011; Shanahan, 2015). Of course, traditional modes of writing continue to be favoured by numerous academics and still have a valuable role to play in the academic world. But more of us now seek to explore new ways of writing that allow for emotional tones and styles. Some journals have started to publish pieces that reflect this trend.

Furthermore, bodies and emotions are critical to our open experimentations. For example, the conversations people have while walking are fundamentally different from those they have sitting indoors. We have walked together so much; spending lots of time in third-places in Berlin, Barcelona, London, Tokyo, etc., continuing on our conversations while doing something with our hands, dropping all formality, feeding on the richness of the context, and analysing it together.

Walking and talking is a powerful combination. It effectively mixes people. You can avoid someone in a “safe” seminar room or event convention centre, but in a crowded metro, bus or tramway, you may end up speaking to whoever just happens to be near you. When there is a large diversity of stakeholders – academics, entrepreneurs, representatives of public institutions, journalists – walking works as a powerful engine to break down barriers and create new synergies.

All this has resulted in the OWEE method we are continually refining. It combines ethnography with more transformative, action-oriented research designs. Deeply grounded in phenomenology, this research protocol gives a central role to our embodied perceptions. The OWEE approach can be described by means of the four dimensions included in the following table:

### First empirical results based on the implementation of the OWEE method

We want to outline four key results based on the first two implementations of the OWEE method in Berlin in March 2017 (more about which in a forthcoming article), and in Tokyo in June 2017.

### The use of Twitter for a new scientific “meta-writing”

During our events, particularly our learning expeditions, we tried to be reflexive and experimental. We found that

<sup>32</sup> Chapter adapted from an article published in LSE Impact blog article which can be accessed here: “Towards more integrative research practices: introducing Open Walked Event-based Experimentations”.

Dimensions	Descriptions
Open	It is open to all kinds of stakeholders (academics, entrepreneurs, managers, community managers, journalists, activists, students, politicians...). It is hard to say when it truly starts and when it truly ends.
Walked	Walked practices are very important in the OWEE approach. Participants alternate stable (even seated) practices inside third-places with long walks between third-places included into the learning expedition
Event-Based	The learning expedition is an event in the sense that it builds in order to give a sense of 'happening'. Something truly happens and is a possible source of learning, scanning, surprising...
Experimentations	The design and re-design of the experimentations is full of improvisations and bricolages. Around one third of the event is not planned and expected to be co-produced by participants.

Table 2. Description of the OWEE approach around its four key dimensions

live tweets or sequences of tweets can be useful “meta-texts”, combining situations, people, organisations, and publications. When published in the flow of an event, tweets create a live narrative that can extend the event in time and space (see *our live tweets in Tokyo*), and connect it to other, past, ongoing or future events (e.g. by mentioning them in a tweet). Unlike traditional article publishing, Twitter provides an emotional, temporal network that integrates source material (research articles, books, pictures, etc.), makes it more meaningful, and gives it a new life through live tweets. It demands creative new ways of writing that are reminiscent of visual arts techniques such as assemblage and collage, whereby found objects are used to create something new that transcends them.

### Other social media involved in sharing live scientific knowledge

Other social media, such as Facebook, YouTube, or Instagram, can contribute to making events more indelible and unforgettable as they generate emotions. Numerous studies have shown that the longest-lasting memories are linked to emotions (Rapaport, 1942); they are recalled with more clarity and detail, which is likely to increase the quality of future publications. In the context of our learning expeditions, Whatsapp, Facebook, emails, and even text messages play a big role in the process; they constitute modern-day rituals that cement all participants together. They make the group more

horizontal and involved in sharing whatever knowledge has been acquired. Increased engagement and horizontal communication can turn participants into active “ambassadors”, keen to spread the word.

### Beyond scientific writing: learning expeditions as community-builders

Increasingly RGCS events tend to be mainly about team/community building. Our learning expeditions have provided plenty of opportunities to demonstrate this. There is no exaggerating the impact the community had on the RGCS network and its production. The numerous emails, messages, and posts using the *#visualizinghacking2017* hashtag are an excellent case in point. Storytelling and community-managing are increasingly necessary to give life to scientific writing and extend its reach and impact. Topics and research do still matter, of course, but style and delivery tend to become equally important. Incidentally, some of the best storytelling is often quite succinct, not a common trait of scientific writing.

### For a necessary pivot in space and time for learning expeditions... a major annual “unconference”

“Unconferences” are participant-driven events quite different to conventional conferences with their fees, sponsored presentations, and top-down organization. That is what our first RGCS international symposium in Paris last year was all about. We strived to return the word “symposium” to its original meaning (in ancient Greece it was a part of a banquet conducive to debate and creativity). “Work and Workplace Transformations: Between Communities, Doing, and Entrepreneurship”, the *2016 RGCS symposium*, was a big unconference designed to provide the whole group and its undertakings with a tone, spirit, and dynamic. It aimed to enhance, order, and lever all of our events and various experimentations. Naturally we hope our next symposium will achieve all that, and more<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> Many thanks to Tadashi Uda, Tomazaku Abe, David Vallat, Anouck Adrot, and Charles-Baptiste Gérard for joining this crazy adventure. And to Aurore Dandoy for blogging on our website! Many thanks to all those who supported it from afar: Amadou Lo, Julie Fabbri, Stéphanie Fargeot, Serge Bolidum, Aurore Dandoy, Marie Hasbi, Constance Garnier, Albane Grandazzi, Stefan Haeffliger, Viviane Sergi, Anna Glaser, and many others. There are so many things I will never forget (e.g. the exoskeleton experience!)

## Chapter I.2. Walking the talk, talking the place: three research protocols for learning expeditions<sup>34</sup>

Jeremy Aroles, H el ene Bussy-Socrate, Anna Glaser, Pierre Laniray and Fran ois-Xavier de Vaujany<sup>35</sup>

Managers, customers, citizens, entrepreneurs and researchers are being transformed into knowledge tourists but more rarely into ‘knowledge voyagers’. Field trips, learning trips and learning expeditions epitomize a new trend in embodied explorations of places likely to bring learning and new knowledge with them. These transformative experiences mainly consist in a set of visits to places and territories, between one day and one week, integrated into a program and narrative, giving an orientation to this partly walked experience. Being ‘outside’ traditional frames and contexts of life and work is expected to produce something particular.

Most of the time, the visit starts at a meeting point where organizers introduce the agenda of the day. Participants are then guided to the first place where they meet the owner of the place (i.e. happiness officer, CEO or HR manager, depending on the theme of the learning expedition). Then, they move together to the next point of interest. Meanwhile, they walk, take a bus, use public transportations or follow a guide. They can get to know each other (identity, values, status, goals...) by engaging in conversations and sharing similar topics. The tour typically ends with a social event. When participants engage in an expedition through unfamiliar spaces, they expect to learn new insights about themselves, about other people they could meet or about the area itself. Over the last decade, a number of expeditions have been organized by consulting corporations, professional organizations, associations, universities and companies. They targeted stakeholders as diverse as customers, neighbours, entrepreneurs, scientists or students. Multiple promises are made, such as networking, strategic scanning, performing a protest, acquiring new skills, etc. But what can we really expect from learning expeditions as researchers? A new fieldwork or a new method? Can scholars integrate learning expeditions into a proper research design?

In organization studies, expeditions and trips have rarely been used in research designs, except in the context of some ethnographical or auto-ethnographical approaches (Khosravi, 2010). Almost two years ago (in July 2016 with a first event in Berlin), we started to explore **how learning expeditions could lead to the joint understanding and transformation of new practices related to knowledge production and knowledge diffusion in academia**. Having

experimented this approach in Berlin Paris, Tokyo, Copenhagen, London, we are more and more convinced that trips and learning expeditions can form a proper research method combining various research protocols. We are stressing the potential of learning trips or expeditions to contribute to the creation of new corpora of data based on narratives and particularly self-narratives. In the following post, we would like to discuss how we collect stories and impressions of participants, including us, in the flow of the journey. Before, let us clarify our objective behind the new method. Our aim is threefold: collecting data; exploring open learning processes; producing and combining powerful narratives likely to transform research practices.

First, we aim to collect participants’ reflexive and narrative materials directly related to the event. Being part of the group could facilitate the understanding of emotions. For instance, during the visit or/and right after the visit, we want to explore what people felt and how they reflect upon what they lived. Materializing these reflections is a way to deeply contextualize the experience. Researchers are more likely to phenomenologically and interpretatively describe the learning process itself from the inside, especially if they also join learning expeditions.

Second, meeting participants outside traditional boundaries allows us to catch direct feedback about individual’s learning process and expected transformation at work. If completed away from the event, the protocol is likely to reveal how emotions, affects and discussions have settled into different levels of emotions and been (or not) re-explored by participants. It is a way to analyse the lived duration of the trip and visits as well as what they ‘express’ for participants (Merleau-Ponty, 1945). The idea is thus to collect longitudinal data for all the learning trips we have organized.

Finally, repeating the protocol in different territories, within the same entity (our research network RGCS) allows us to develop common but different materials... the identification of a “net of actions” (Czarniawska, 2004) or “field of events” (Hernes, 2014). What are the regular meta-narratives coming into the story (Ricoeur, 1983)? How? What kind of temporal structures do they enact? What are the embodied practices traveling from one experience to another?

<sup>34</sup> This chapter has been published on the RGCS website in the blog section.

<sup>35</sup> In the order of appearance: Durham University, Paris School of Business, ESCP Europe, PSL, Paris-Dauphine University.

Today, we are still experimenting different protocols to complete our goals. We are working mainly on three data collection methods, which are presented in the next section. We will explain then how it is related to our broader research method (OWEE) likely to strengthen our last research objective, which consists in being transformative of research practices by means of an accumulation and meta-narrations of all OWEEs. We will conclude by exploring key stakes of the process so far.

### 1. Collecting narratives and reflexivity in the flow of learning expeditions: three protocols

Recording live and past perceptions has been a traditional way to collect data in certain fields. In ergonomics and Human Computers Interactions studies, sense-making and reflexivity processes have already been subjected to numerous methodological explorations (Cairns and Cox, 2008; McCarthy and Wright, 2005). Some methods are based on recording actors' comments (and their coding) in the flow of their action. Others are based on ex-post comments of a video showing the actor implementing a set of gestures and actions that are ex post commented by the actor himself/herself. Philosophy has explored the issue of thought and body, and how thought and reflexivity are interrelated with action and agency (see e.g. Merleau-Ponty, 1945; Vygotsky, 1978). In social sciences, narrating reflexivity (e.g. with logbooks) is also at the heart of numerous protocols ranging from auto-ethnography to life stories (White, 2001; Bertaux, 2005; Dyson, 2007; Hayano, 1979; Malaurent and Avison, 2017).

In the context of learning expeditions, we offer to explore three different research protocols: (i) one based on the process of telling loudly (and recording) a thought; (ii) another on writing up a story individually and collectively (iii) a last one based on visualization and artistic expression. We expect the three methods to be related and to materialize different kinds of embodied practices and narration. In fact, telling can be more immediate than writing which can be modified. We would like to explore this distinctiveness before combining both telling and writing into a single research protocol. Some techniques have already implemented, others should be implemented and tested very soon.

#### [1. Telling loudly and self-recording the trip]

The first protocol is based on commenting on pictures taken by participants (including researchers) during the expedition. A selection of pictures is displayed chronologically to summarize the trip and to ask participants to react individually. Pictures are collected

through the social network Twitter or/and Instagram, as everyone is encouraged to use a single #discussion topic.

Ideally it takes place at the end of the visit, in a quiet place. We expect all participants to share feedback as a 'counter-gift', i.e. in exchange of being able to attend the tour for free (whereas others could charge<sup>36</sup>). For around 40 minutes, participants are dispatched in the room. With their smartphone, they record their thought and send the file to the lead researcher. They have been asked to look at the pictures and texts and tell what they did and felt.

Discourses are transcribed word-by-word, and then coded at the level of the expedition in a first instance and then consolidated with all other expeditions organized. The idea is to explore and compare vocabularies, topics and narratives from one learning expedition to another.

The spoken nature of the record (tone of voice, rhythm, and emotion in the background, etc.) is also be part of the coding. Organizers and community managers are asked to participate. Their feedback is considered as well. The next part of the protocol involves more reflexivity from participants. They are invited to write up some lines about the learning expedition. It could rely on the design described above (pictures of the expedition and line of personal tweets) or via a structured questionnaire. In both cases, all tweets or Instagram posts produced during the learning expedition are extracted (from the hashtag of each learning expedition) and analysed. They are also expected to be part of the duration, expression and narrative interrelated with the event. The first experiments of the protocol in Milan and Paris have shown that involving participants in the process is not easy. The best thing to do may be to explain very clearly at the beginning that a small data collection will be included into the learning expedition. As all events are free to attend, it may also be useful to remind that participating to the data collection will be part of a 'counter-gift'.

#### [2. Visualizing what was seen and felt through art]

The first protocol is based on commenting on pictures taken by participants (including researchers) during the expedition. A selection of pictures is displayed chronologically to summarize the trip and to ask participants to react individually. Pictures are collected through the social network Twitter or/and Instagram, as everyone is encouraged to use a single #discussion topic. Beyond words and spoken language, the idea is here to rely on more visual and metaphorical modes of narration and reflexivity. Pictures, drawing, sketches, can be produced by participants during the expedition or at the end of it. All materials are then collected by organizers. This last protocol has already been implemented twice by

<sup>36</sup> Participants are normally charged to attend a learning expedition if it is organised by a private organization. [https://collaborativespacesstudy.wordpress.com/2018/04/29/walking-the-talk-talking-the-place-three-research-protocols-for-learning-expeditions/#\\_ftn1](https://collaborativespacesstudy.wordpress.com/2018/04/29/walking-the-talk-talking-the-place-three-research-protocols-for-learning-expeditions/#_ftn1).

the RGCS: once in Berlin (July, 2016) and another time in Tokyo (June, 2017). The topic was ‘visualizing hacking’. Participants were asked to take pictures of gestures, movements, routines, artifacts that embody hacking, bricolage and improvisation related to new work practices. For each event, an exhibition of all pictures, sketches and drawings was organized, one at Paris Town Hall in December 2016 (first RGCS Symposium), another one in London in a makerspace in January 2018 (second RGCS symposium).

## 2. Possible integration into a broader research method: OWEE

What would strengthen and extend the potential for such protocol is its capacity to be replicated simultaneously within more global self-reflexivity exercises under a broader research design. We started to work on such a research design one year ago. We called it Open Walked Event-Based Experimentations (OWEE). OWEE is a particular type of field trip or learning expedition focusing on the exploration of new work practices and managerial innovations in the context of third places and collaborative spaces visited over one or three days. We organized learning expeditions around topics such as the collaborative economy, new places for entrepreneurship and innovation, future of work, artistic innovations. All were an opportunity to explore and make visible new work practices in the context of a specific city and territory. All OWEEs follow four criteria (de Vaujany and Vitaud, 2017).

First, they are opened to various sets of stakeholders: academics, entrepreneurs, managers, artists, activists, students and politicians. The event is expected to foster collaborations between and beyond the group. There is no selection process. It is a ‘first-come-first-served’ event. People can register for free via Eventbrite where they can download their ticket. The community manager is in charge of collecting subscriptions. The event is shared in various networks; this increases our likelihood to attract diverse communities. Second, the expedition is walked. Participants do not use a car or a bus, but mainly walk between each site (or sometimes use public transportations together). Walking through public or semi-public spaces is expected to create more ties between walkers and to be more performative for those following this iconography through social media (e.g. the tweets and the pictures they contain). Third, OWEE is event-based in the sense that it is designed in such a way that it creates a curiosity, the sensation that things will be partly unpredictable. Anything, planned or not, is likely to happen. Fragility is felt off site and on line, and reinforced by the openness of the event. Fourth, OWEE is a work in progress method. Bricolage and improvisations are authorized during events, both about the method

itself and the content of the expedition. One third of the program is empty and will be filled and co-produced by participants themselves in the flow of the walk. Through emails, phone calls to friends, etc., participants generate new ideas, suggest new places to visit at the last minute ... which is also a great way to produce collaborations.

## 3. Key stakes of the OWEE experimentation

Beyond self-reflexive protocols presented in the first section and then the OWEE design, what is our scientific contribution?

We would like to produce both new temporalities and new temporal structures for research practices, i.e. the co-production of knowledge by academics, entrepreneurs, managers, activists, students and artists over one to three days. We believe it is likely to be the repetition and connection of events that may lead to a transformation of the research field itself. From the perspective of participants (mainly), OWEE, its reflexivity and narrative phases could become a broad meta-narrative. The co-designed method itself could be strengthened by becoming a ‘common’ (Ostrom and Hess, 2007).

Citizen science and open science are major social movements today. All citizens can become researchers or can contribute to scientific explorations. Science, whatever the field (economics, management, organization studies, anthropology, chemistry, history, computer science...), is all the more likely to be at the heart of the city and to serve truly the city as it becomes physically open to it. Science is more likely to be part of all social, economic, technological and political movements as it also becomes a movement (in all senses we can give to this idea) itself.

We believe that OWEE, among many other initiatives, is likely to become one of these movements. But moving for the sake of it is not enough. It needs to be part of a broader, powerful narration and set of narrations. Let’s work together on it...

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## Chapter I.3. A detour toward situationism: what can OWEE learn from the French « dérive »<sup>37</sup>

François-Xavier de Vaujany

The “dérive” can be translated in English as “drift”. It has been originally put forward by Guy Debord, who was a member of the Letterist International, in the context of his “Théorie de la dérive” that was formalized in the late 50s. Debord defined dérive as “a mode of experimental behavior linked to the conditions of urban society: a technique of rapid passage through varied ambiances.” Dérive is fully improvised; it is an unplanned, walked journey through an urban landscape. Still according to Debord, the maximum number of participants is three, which makes it possible to keep the integrity of the group in the process of improvisation. Through “dérive”, participants are expected to suspend their everyday relations and “let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there”. Dérive aims at studying the “psychogeography” of the city (the lived experience of the city)) and emotional disorientation. Debord believed that the process could lead to the potential creation of Situations.

Open Walked Event Based Experimentations (OWEE) share with the notion of dérive a sense of improvisation, drift, bricolage. Going adrift in the urban landscape is also expected to produce a different experience of the city and of some of its visible and invisible dimensions (in particular about new work practices). During our last learning expedition in Boston (#hackingday2018), two thirds of our visits and encounters were improvised in the flow of our questions and discussions. Following new questions, new aspects we wanted to explore further, we sent emails, tweets, gave phone calls in the flow of our walk.

As for “dérive”, crossed discussions in small groups are also an important part of the process that often results in

co-produced traces (articles, posts, Framapads, exhibitions of pictures, seminars...). Clearly, “dérive” techniques related to this issue could be explored further (in particular artistic techniques) to get lost differently in the space of the city. Nonetheless, OWEE departs from dérive on several key dimensions. It is not fully improvised. Part of the program is pre-defined, which gives some matter and direction (in all sense of the term) to our event. Only one part of the program is fully improvised. Then, our events have, so far, included between 3 and 67 participants. Even if we often divided big groups into smaller ones, we are far from Debord’s philosophy. The idea is also to produce collaborations and common worlds between participants and the world they bring with them in the flow of the walk. Social media are also another key aspect that adds another dimension in the dérive. Dérive is often extended on line. Virtual participants can walk and go adrift with us. Walkers can go adrift both in the flow of the walk and on line with their smartphone.

But at the end, both OWEE and dérive share a strong belief. Encounters, true encounters, alterity, felt solidarity and Ricoeurian instants are at the heart of the protocol. And they will be all the more relevant as they stress the invisible entry points, boundaries, gate-keepers, hidden practices and fragilities at the heart of the space of the city and our walked narrative.

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<sup>37</sup> This chapter has been published on the RGCS website in the blog section.

## Chapter I.4. OWEE: From walking in common to walking as a commons<sup>38</sup>

David VALLAT<sup>39</sup>

The **OWEE research method**, always under construction (having Levi-Strauss's spirit of 'bricolage' at its core), is directly inspired by the values and practices of the places we study (makerspaces, hackerspaces, FabLabs, coworking spaces, etc.). What we observe as researchers (collaborative practices, spaces, communities and movements) tends to influence how we conduct research.

As stated on our **website**, "RGCS is inspired by makers and open science movements. The culture of DIY, open knowledge and doocracy are at the heart of its values". So it's not a surprise that the OWEE research method puts an emphasis on 'Openness' and 'Experimentation'. What could be a better way to create knowledge than to experiment (a concept, a method, a tool, or whatever artefact a human mind can figure out – the trial and error process may be used indifferently in a mind or in a lab)? Doing it in a collaborative way implies openness.

Openness is a practical way of creating valid knowledge according to **Popper's empirical falsification principle** (Popper, 2002). Besides, knowledge increases by being shared. This idea underlies the diffusion of scientific knowledge since the publication (both in 1665) of the first scientific journals in France (Journal des savants) and in England (Philosophical transactions of the royal society).

The openness in science is mirrored in collaborative spaces, which have inherited the collaborative DNA of the Web. « To manage the complexity of the technological landscape, hackers [programmers] turn to fellow hackers [programmers] (along with manuals, books, mailing lists, documentation, and search engines) for constant information, guidance, and help. » (Coleman, 2012, p. 107). In the mid-1980s, Richard Stalleman, a programmer at MIT, initiated the free/libre movement, arguing that the digital properties of software (easy copying and distribution) make it possible to treat it as a public good.

What we have observed in our learning expeditions is people's willingness to understand knowledge (scientific knowledge of course but also practical – 'bricolage' – or **artistic one**) as a public good meant to be shared in order to benefit to the community.

The famous **Budapest Open Access Initiative** explains (in 2002) precisely what is at stakes: "An old tradition and a new technology have converged to make possible an unprecedented public good. The old tradition is the willingness of scientists and scholars to publish the fruits of their research in scholarly journals without payment, for the sake of inquiry and knowledge. The new technology is the internet. The public good they make possible is the world-wide electronic distribution of the peer-reviewed journal literature and completely free and unrestricted access to it by all scientists, scholars, teachers, students, and other curious minds. Removing access barriers to this literature will accelerate research, enrich education, share the learning of the rich with the poor and the poor with the rich, make this literature as useful as it can be, and lay the foundation for uniting humanity in a common intellectual conversation and quest for knowledge."

On the one hand, knowledge is a public good easily shared thanks to the Web. On the other hand, a **'second enclosure movement'** is threatening this public good (hence changing the nature of this 'good' to become a 'common-pool-resource' following Elinor Ostrom's concept).

### 1. Knowledge as a common-pool resource

What is a common-pool-resource (CPR) according to Elinor Ostrom, the 2009 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences? A common-pool-resources is (originally) a natural resource that requires collective management (Ostrom, 1990) or else risks facing "the tragedy of the commons" (Hardin, 1968) – that is to say, excessive exploitation of a common good (e.g., fish stock) for private purposes according to the well-known logic of the **free rider** (Olson, 1965). Understanding properly the CPR idea requires a classification of economic goods, undertaken by Samuelson (1954), according to two criteria: Exclusion, which gauges the alternately public or private character of a good by asking: can one easily exclude certain individuals from the use of this good or not? Rivalry (or subtractability), which indicates the degree of a good's availability in relation to its use by asking: does the personal use of a good deprive others of its use? The intersection of these two criteria results in the following table (*see table 3*). Useful knowledge, which is at first a public good, is threatened of subtractability.

<sup>38</sup> This chapter has been published on the RGCS website in the blog section.

<sup>39</sup> Lyon 1 University.

To be more precise useful knowledge is threatened in three ways:

- Information overload (too much information to deal with);
- Knowledge enclosure (intellectual property: patent, copyrights);
- **Orwell's Doublethink** (fake news or alternative facts).

So knowledge is, now, much more a common-pool-resource than a public good.

		Subtractability	
		Low	High
Exclusion	Difficult	Public goods Useful knowledge Sunsets	Common-pool resources Libraries Irrigation systems
	Easy	Toll or club goods Journal subscriptions Day-care centers	Private goods

Table 3. type of goods (source: Hess and Ostrom, 2011, p.9)

### 2. OWEE: a community meant to produce knowledge

The OWEE research method is aimed at producing open access knowledge (Suber, 2012). To do so we rely upon collaboration (of researchers, makers, citizens, students, etc.). Walking in common according to the OWEE research method is a good way to create a community: **“[We] are opened to various sets of stakeholders: academics, entrepreneurs, managers, artists, activists, students and politicians. The event is expected to foster collaborations between and beyond the group”**. The community is both **physical** (people engaged in the walk) and **digital** (people following our live tweet, people taking notes on Framapad, etc.).

We understand the word “community” according to its Indo-European roots (see Benveniste, 1969), communis: who has reciprocal obligations. An OWEE seeks reciprocity (in the knowledge creation process of course but more basically in the open mindedness, respect, benevolence, that underlie our research and **teaching practices**). Reciprocity is an organized process. So while creating a community, we build rules (formal and informal), we build an institutional arrangement that achieves coordination. That arrangement is not as familiar as the Market or the State. It’s a commons. With this institutional arrangement, we move from walking in common to walking as a commons. How so?

A central point in the works of Elinor Ostrom is to demonstrate that the common-pool-resources are resources subject to social dilemmas, in other words the risk of the disappearance of the resource (by overexploitation). In order to address this risk, one must organize oneself. It is important to underscore that a

common-pool resource only becomes a commons once a communal management of the resource has been put into place. A commons, thus, must be governed. Conversely, a common-pool-resource can exist without implying communal governance (the climate is a common-pool-resource but not a commons). By extension, a public good governed communally becomes a commons, as is the case of Wikipedia or Linux, both of which are knowledge commons.

### 3. Where is the OWEE commons?

It is not easy to see the OWEE commons at first glance because commons are deeply contextual. According to **David Bollier**: “Each commons has its own distinctive character because each is shaped by its particular location, history, culture and social practices. So, it can be hard for the newcomer to see the patterns of “commoning” (Bollier, D., & Helfrich, S., 2014) The term commoning suggests that the commons is really more of a verb than a noun. It is a set of ongoing practices and not an inert physical resource. **“There is no commons without communing”**.”

So, the OWEE commons can be seen through a set of practices. Empirical studies on the governance of common-pool-resources (CPR) have allowed for the establishment of design principles that facilitate the perpetuation of communal governance (and thus enable the protection of common-pool-resources). These principles do not automatically imply the success of communal governance but they have been found to be present in all instances of success. The principles are as follows (Ostrom, 1990, pp.90-102):

#	Ostrom principles (1990, p.90-p.102)	Implementation in OWEE
1	The limits of the common good are clearly defined; the access rights to the common good are clear	For each OWEE we specify (usually on Eventbrite): - how people can join us and what we intend to do (boundary rules); - who is acting as a guide, who is taking notes, etc. (position rules)
2	The rules governing the use of the common good are adapted to local needs and conditions	The purpose of the OWEE is to produce open access knowledge, hence the distribution of this knowledge through social media, a website (RGCS blog and live area) and open access publications (RGCS White Papers)
3	A system allowing individuals to participate in the definition and modification of these rules on a regular basis has been established	The OWEE method is discussed after each event (with participants and online); modifications of the method are published on the RGCS website. A group on slack is devoted to OWEE.

4	A graduated system of sanctions for those who violate the community's rules is provided for	The rules in use during each OWEE are defined when needed (for example being silent while visiting a place where people are working). A basic rule is reciprocity, or the <a href="#">Golden Rule</a> (tweet others as you would wish to be tweeted): contribute to Framapad, to the live tweet, retweet, etc.
5	An inexpensive conflict resolution system is available to community members	The case has not been encountered yet; let's say that a call to order would suffice (exclusion should be the ultimate sanction).
6	The community's right to define its own rules of operation is recognized by external authorities	Our first choice for the moment: Discussion.
7	When applicable (such as for a common good that exists across borders or a common good assigned to a range of territorial levels), the organization of decision-making can be established at several levels while respecting the rules set out above	This right has not been questioned yet.
8	The community's right to define its own rules of operation is recognized by external authorities	RGCS is a very decentralized network and OWEE events are organized all over the world.

Table 4. Ostrom's design principles implemented in the OWEE method

So, walking as a commons is for us to produce collaborative knowledge (mainly scientific but not only), with an experimental and experiential method and to share broadly (following the open access philosophy) both

the outcomes of the research and the method used. It's a way to organize ourselves relying upon reciprocity, trust and individual responsibility, following the example of many collaborative spaces. Commons is a very **performative concept**: using it (intellectually) leads to practicing it. And with the practice comes a new world of organizational experiments, social interactions, political institutions and research fields.

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## Chapter I.5. The city: Re-introducing streets and public spaces in research practices

Boukje Cnossen, Stephan Haefliger and François-Xavier de Vaujany<sup>40</sup>

Research has transformed the street and public spaces into **research objects** (see e.g. Bundy, 1987; Voyce, 2006; Weisburd et al, 2004), but what about making them (again?) **a research practice?**

Researchers and intellectuals are part of a seated, closed, indoor and covered world. Most academic events, in particular in social sciences and humanities, take place in hotels, conference centers or university seminar rooms. For academic gatherings such as conferences or workshops, public spaces are just week-end stories (after a Thursday and Friday focused on the event itself), part of a short walk for a social event or a touristic exploration of the city before coming back at home.

Research practices of social scientists, e.g. management and organization studies scholars, remain focused on well-defined organizational phenomena, and are communicated in well-defined contexts (conferences) and in established media (scientific journals) after the research, once it is stabilized. Indoor environments thus pervade research practices in social sciences and humanities. Numerous reasons can be invoked for this: protection against capricious weather, search for serenity, conference fees (we then pay to 'access' or even 'possess' something), concern for participants' security, logic of insurance, need for facilities (e.g. using a video projector, a microphone, being seated...)... And presenting research in public spaces is not at all an obvious thing. What could be meant by that? What would it change or add to traditional ways of producing, sharing and communicating research?

Since the beginning of the learning expeditions and collective walks organized by the **Research Group on Collaborative Spaces** (RGCS), we have had the opportunity numerous times to walk our research, to chat 'outside' and 'on' our research objects. Walking in new work places such as coworking spaces, makerspaces, biohackerspaces, fablabs... generate different kinds of discussions. Walking between the places of each visit also generates numerous opportunities to feel the context, districts, areas and connectivity of the place. It is a way to feel the narrative around it and to comment on it together. Sometimes, we have also improvised breaks in gardens, public squares, public spaces... This created a particular atmosphere far from traditional academics or practitioners' meetings. We could be interrupted, entertained, disrupted by many things around us. This fragility changed the narrative we produced for ourselves

and those following us, from a distance, on social media. Obviously, we were 'in' the world we were commenting, connected to it. The performativity of such an experience was different from the context of the traditional, controlled, seated world of the meeting room, the convention center, the seminar room.

Gestures, walk, movements and speeches take another dimension in public spaces. They can be seen and heard by people beyond the interaction. They can be interrupted by people and things beyond the immediate stage of the presentation or discussion. People can move from one place to another, which means the explicit emergence of a new context in the flow of the discussion. As they are 'out', they can be located in places other people know, could join, have been... Diffused on social media, such places are thus likely to involve other people. These virtual participants have been, will be or could be there. Public spaces can thus be powerful contexts for different practices of sharing and communication of knowledge. If the experience of the public space combines a variety of people (academics, entrepreneurs, journalists, activists, students...), it can then foster fluid mixed conversations and collaborations. These possibilities can be leveraged and activated by specific community management techniques (see Open Walked Event-Based Experimentations, **OWEE**).

**Nonetheless, public spaces are also and obviously the context of class struggles, economic inequalities and property fights.** The history of **jaywalking** in the US and in many other countries clearly epitomizes this. If till the early 20th century, streets have often been common places, everybody's places, the car manufacturing lobby has made it partly ways for cars and car drivers. Likewise, public spaces (e.g. streets but also squares, beaches, public gardens...) can be controlled and dominated by various groups: men, gangs, marketing corporations, bourgeois... But public spaces open the possibility for shared experiences of these dominations and violence. The performativity of the place can be shown obviously, visibly, and in an embodied way. Walking in the Haussmannian parts of Paris can make obvious the bourgeois stage they are. Walking close to the façade, on the large pavements, in the second empire decorum, can be shared and pushed forward by a collective experience. The "**Dérive**" described by Guy Debord (1956) is a way among others to feel and comments the different areas and atmospheres of a city.

<sup>40</sup> In the order of appearance: Leuphana University, Cast Business School and PSL, Paris-Dauphine University.

What about including more the street and the experience of the street in researchers' experience and collaborations? Likewise, what about including urban walks in managers, entrepreneurs, activists, artists, students' experience of the city? Maybe it is time to open science literally, physically, to the atmosphere and movements of the city. Maybe it is time to transform the city, its actors, flows, spaces, places, times, into partners of our research.

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## Part II. Living experience? Collaborating and Co-designing the narrative

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« Sache-le donc, toute création vraie n'est point préjugé sur l'avenir, poursuite de chimère et utopie,  
mais visage nouveau lu dans le présent, lequel est réserve de matériaux en vrac reçus en héritage,  
et dont il ne s'agit pour toi ni de te réjouir ni de te plaindre, car simplement comme toi, ils sont, ayant pris naissance.»

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry - Citadelle.

## Chapter II.1. Designing serendipity: walk in progress

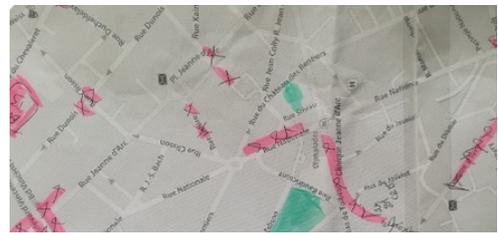
Hélène Bussy Socrate and Nicolas Auboin<sup>4</sup>

In the context of one **Open Walked Event Based Experimentations** (OWEE), Nicolas and I were in charge of organizing a learning expedition in Paris about **Street Art**. Most OWEE and past learning expeditions organized by RGCS so far have been organized as a set of visits. We thus walked between places and indoor times. Our idea here was to spend all of our time in public spaces, and to discover, collectively with participants, streets, public walls, gardens and places open to the public. Nicolas and I were neither street art nor art history experts. Although we realized very quickly that organizing a tour about something that is short-lived is complicated and risky, we tried to figure out what could be our role during the tour. We had two strong assets to organize this walk: our institution is based in one of the most important scenes for Street Art in France, the XIII<sup>th</sup> arrondissement of Paris, and we had an initial network that could help. Thus, we named ourselves ‘facilitators’, helping the group to learn more about street art through different points of view. We decided to divide our OWEE into three stages.

The first stage involved identification of actors. Nicolas got in touch with a good friend elected at the XIII arrondissement city council. Very quickly, the mayor himself answered positively to our call and invited us for breakfast. A visit of the city council would give to participants the elective representatives’ point of view. In partnership with a gallerist, they ordered several pieces to promote a positive image to citizens. On my side, I got in touch with several artists I knew. Despite their interest for the walk, most of them were traveling abroad at that time. So I visited **Urbacolors**, and interactive maps, picked up names of artist working in the XIII and contacted them via Facebook Messenger. Two days later, Lor-K called me. She makes sculptures with rubbish and was really interested in bringing up her critical vision of street art, so did I! She would explain to the participants how she meanders in the city to find the correct place.

The second stage involved “spotting”. Once we had our contacts for guiding participants in the street art world, we had to design the walk. To make sure participants could enjoy some street arts between the city council and Lor-K projects, we decided to go and have a look ourselves. We did a first spotting together in bicycle. It helped us to familiarize ourselves with the area, and to look at practical things such as quiet places to discuss and where to have lunch. Nicolas went for a walk and spotting of the places alone one day before as he guides the group.

This walk was an opportunity both to consider all possible trajectories of route and to think about the street art works that can be presented, the spaces and times of sharing. It was also a step to enrich the network. Indeed, Nicolas took the initiative to go meet Mehdi Ben Sheikh, the head of the itinérance gallery, which is a key actor of street art in the 13<sup>th</sup> arrondissement. He was immediately excited by the project and opened to help us. He proposed to welcome us in the gallery and to present himself the philosophy of his approach of production and accompaniment of artists. It was also a stage to discuss on issues of the institutionalization of street art and the role of the gallery owner in this process.



Picture 2 and 3. Map and short walk to spot the places that would be at the heart of our learning expedition (source: authors’ own)



The last stage involved the management of serendipity. Like most plans, nothing happened as planned and this is truly what is expected from OWEE process!

On D-day, we had many good or (rarely) bad surprises. We had planned milestones but we left a lot of room for improvisation. From the City hall to the gallery we let ourselves be carried away by unexpected discoveries of art works on the street or places like the Frigos, by the people we met (Lor-K, Bamba, Emmanuel, the Frigos member, people in the street), by the anecdotes that have generated questions and reactions. This serendipitous process was particularly enjoyable. We had to adapt to the climatic conditions (by looking for a covered space) to the physical conditions (by looking for a café where to settle and debrief) to the opportunities related to the meetings in particular in the Frigos.

We also rethought the trajectories of our travels both to meet the constraints of timing but also to maintain an openness to the opportunity of a discovery such as taking the tube to discover the frescoes in height and find more

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quickly one of the artists with whom we had an appointment.

The group set up on Whatsapp and occasional phone calls to participants allowed to manage flexibly the constraints of time and place that appeared on the way. The adaptation of the role of the guide was also important to

accompany the different phases of the OWEE: first a leadership role to move the group in motion towards the first landmarks (physical and intellectual); then, a role of facilitator to create link with the various stakeholders; lastly, a more elusive role to keep a space for improvisation and autonomy of the participants.

## Chapter II.2. Managing Indoor and Outdoor Times in Learning Expeditions<sup>42</sup>

Aurore Dandoy and François-Xavier de Vaujany<sup>43</sup>

This summer, walking has been a trendy topic in French bookstores. Presented either as a healthy practice, an opportunity for true, reflexive loneliness, a possibility to explore a territory, a new managerial approach or as a political engagement, walk is an embodied practice at the heart of numerous trends and fashions today. Indeed, it is a very old practice. **Aristotle** taught philosophy while walking in the Lyceum of ancient Athens. Beyond the peripatetic school, **situationists** (with the practice of '**drifting**') or revolutionaries (through walk as a protest) have all settled practice as a movement with possible political connotations.

Walk is also an experience. Moving from one place to another (see vignette below) without thinking about it, there is something lived in-between. Walking as a group of researchers outside the university walls is an intriguing, liminal experience. For academics (and probably entrepreneurs...), experimenting the indoor world is much more common than the outdoor one. We cross, move, see public spaces, but we rarely *do* something for and in them.

When we began the Open Walked Event-Based Experimentations (OWEE) adventure, we were not aware of the novelty (in particular for many researchers) of such a practice of walked conversations and events taking place in inner courts, streets, gardens or public squares. What is more striking is that we did not plan to walk in-between two places for academic purposes. It was the easiest way to reach the next destination for an association with no resources. Now, walked conversations including citizens, entrepreneurs, artists, students, academics and activists have become our flagship, as a 'do' tank (RGCS). More and more, we believe that the practice of walking has implications both for research, teaching and the political relevance of any knowledge co-produced by a community.

### Walk as a shared and diverse experience

Walking does not boil down to *putting one foot after the other*. As reminded by the French poet Baudelaire with his vision of *flânerie* or by Leroi-Gourhan in his anthropological account of hominids who became human when stood on their feet, walk is a central experience in our lives. However, it would be a mistake to believe that there is a normality or normal state or process of walking epitomized by so-called 'healthy people'. Walking in our perspective is not incompatible with wheelchairs,

disabilities and drifts. It is both the most shared and the most diverse experience.

### 1. OWEE (Open Walked Event-based Experimentations) in practice: a couple of astonishments

Since our first event in Berlin in July 2016, our network has organized numerous learning expeditions and field trips all over the world. We want to come back here to the live, hot, 'in the event' community management of our walk and discussions.

First of all, what we find striking is a size effect. We have had the opportunity to manage very small (2) and very big (67) groups of people in the context of our learning expeditions. Managing a group of three or five people makes improvisation and drifting (derive) much easier. Community managers and participants can improvise visits and people encountered in the flow of their questions and their discussions. The bigger the group, the more likely it is to stick to the program (e.g. to make coordination more effective). It appears more manageable to co-produce the program within small groups, even if when we are big groups, the group can split spontaneously and re-assemble at some point.

Then, the process of walking has been full of interesting micro-observations and micro-experimentations. Stopping something and doing a break has often been a way to re-constitute the group and the collective conversation. Walking the conversation, in particular after something likely to be commented (a visit), made it also often more fluid. But again, a good community management requires to pay attention to the sub-groups likely to emerge and re-emerge and to arrange stops, games, open conversations... likely to break them.

In line with this concern, the use of (crowded) public transportations has also often been particularly useful. First, one can avoid all day long someone, but once in a crowded tramway or metro, you are pushed and can be close (or closer) to someone you wanted to avoid. Then, a social convention is activated. You cannot spend 20 minutes in silence with someone you know and will spend other hours or days with. You feel you have to say something. Second, walking is a tiring activity and people needs to rest regularly to avoid tiredness which increases negative emotions and risks of conflicts. Moment of meals

<sup>42</sup> This chapter has been published on the RGCS website in the blog section.

<sup>43</sup> Both from PSL, Paris-Dauphine.

are also an important part of the schedule in order to not lose people or split the group at wrong times.

Interestingly we also noticed that outdoor parts of our events were **performative** precisely because of an in and out set of movements. Just walking continuously outdoor does not necessary create something for those in the group or those following us from far. This is the movement and tempo and narrative of this movement that can bring a particular performativity and narrativity. In the case of the social movement called **Nuits Debouts** in France, public gatherings at the place de la République in Paris were performative because people kept ‘coming back’. Because we felt that these people had an ‘house’, were ‘in’ a couple of hours or days before. Because they could or should be somewhere. Because the length of their stay here, the duration of the narrative, was a way to show their determination.

But it is also important to specify that OWEEs walks and conversations are always extended by means of online social networks. Some people follow us. They walk symbolically with us. They interact with the group and the people encountered and wrapped (e.g. through mentions of Twitter) in the online narrative. After our events, the use of posts, articles and videos is also a way to extend in time and space a narration which will be put in the loop of future events and their live tweets and onsite narration.

Embodiment is at the heart of a walked community management. Gestures, postures, rhythms of the walk by the community manager, all contribute to make the learning expedition expressive for all those walking or joining far in time and space the conversation. And the eight practices we have stressed engage bodies, corporeity and intercorporeity (Merleau-Ponty, 1945) in the process of walking.

With more or less success, our learning expeditions try to include a high variety of people: academics, entrepreneurs, artists, activists, public policy managers, journalists, slashers, students, workers, etc. This unusual situation (some people do not understand that they will join such a heterogeneous group) sets up great opportunities for fluid conversations and collaborations. It is interesting to see that behind job status, we are all made of flesh, something a long walk makes obvious.

As an ongoing protocol, all OWEEs are different from the others and give new insights for enhancing the protocol. A year ago, we were trying to write a guide for a walked community management (an “OWEE box”). We listed numerous mandatory requirements, such as duration of the OWEE or tools to use to collect data. Now, on the

contrary, we encourage micro-experimentations, such as enhancing the **improvisation part** of the learning expedition or the use of camera to **interview participants** and passersby.

**2. Eight practices in our walked community management**

Beyond the diversity of our events, we identified in our notes a set of particular practices community managers are likely to enact in the context of an OWEE-based learning expedition (*see Table 5 below*). This analysis is based in particular on our learning expeditions in Berlin (July, 2016), Tokyo (July, 2017), Paris (March, June, 2018) and Boston (July, 2018), which we had the opportunity to animate together or separately.

Practice of walked community management	Description	Limitations
<b>Practice 1: Assembling and re-assembling the group</b>	Bringing a visible dressing and/or artifact. Keeping a visibility on the street. Identifying representatives of sub-groups.	Guiding and re-assembling can also break the fluidity and openness of the conversation. It can also be at the opposite of a spirit of improvisation.
<b>Practice 2: Dissolving or connecting sub-groups</b>	Arranging stops, breaks, jokes, provocations, to make the conversation as open and fluid as possible.	Some people just want to be alone. The presence of sub-groups can also be important for the creative activity that will take place on site or indoor.
<b>Practice 3: Maintaining a sense of openness and improvisation</b>	Not coming with a paper-based version of the program. Showing that things can be changed from the beginning, as quickly as possible.	Some people left the group because they interpreted this as a lack of direction or leadership.
<b>Practice 4: Directing to next stops and public transportations</b>	Using entry processes in metro, buses, and tramways, the process of buying tickets, as a ‘shaker’ and key time for the discussions about what could be done next.	Some people have their own bike or have a precise idea of the way we should follow.
<b>Practice 5: Extending the walk online</b>	Using Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Blogs, Framapads and other tools to comment, reflect and share the dynamic of the walk. Including the live experience into a broader narrative (doing a temporal work, see Kaplan and Orlikowski, 2013).	Some people do not want to appear online, on pictures tweeted. This practice can also foster a very artificial way of behaving. Good not to tweet all the time.
<b>Practice 6: Coordinating the walk among participants</b>	Finding a way to coordinate the walk. Include two key issues: people can get lost, some people may need to come in and out during the event and may need to find the group again. Some people just want to share things between the group... and not on Twitter.	At some point, a WhatsApp group can be so successful that people will not share anymore things on social media.

<p><b>Practice 7: Encouraging initiatives and spontaneous experiments</b></p>	<p>Listening to suggestions or negative impressions. Looking closely at every participant and wondering when one stays alone if it is a need of loneliness or someone who is waiting for something else and who could lead his/her idea as another micro-experimentation.</p>	<p>Guiding a group with a partially organized program is a challenge but allowing people to change everything in it, even the organized part can cripple the guide.</p>
<p><b>Practice 8: Being a catalyst (Brafman &amp; Beckstrom, 2006)</b></p>	<p>Putting one's ego aside to enhance participants' initiative. Listening to one's life story. Mapping skills and needs among the group. Trying to help everyone with answers, new questions or connections with someone who could help. Being trustful and honest when previous engagements cannot be kept. Accelerating and catalyzing interesting trends ongoing trends in the group more than trying to impulse things all the time.</p>	<p>It can be frustrating for the organizer not to act as a leader but as a catalyst (the one who closes the walk, not the one leading it). Questions like "what will we do next?" or "where do we go?" must not be answered as a tourist guide but merely as a fellow walker: "I don't know, what do you think?"</p>

Table 5. eight practices in our walked community management

**Reference**

Brafman, O., & Beckstrom, R. A. (2006). *The starfish and the spider: The unstoppable power of leaderless organizations*. Penguin.

Kaplan, S., & Orlikowski, W. J. (2013). "Temporal work in strategy making". *Organization science*, 24(4), 965-995.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1945). *Phénoménologie de la perception*. Paris: Éditions Gallimard.

## Chapter II.3. Academia in the Mirror of Street Art: Back to a Recent Walk in Paris<sup>44</sup>

François-Xavier de Vaujany<sup>45</sup>

This was a rainy day in Paris. On June 14<sup>th</sup>, an alternative academic network (**RGCS**) organised a great learning expedition about street art in the 13<sup>th</sup> district (“arrondissement”) of Paris. This **Open Walked Event-Based Experimentation** (OWEE) was an opportunity to mix academics with entrepreneurs and street artists. A group of 20 people thus walked in the grey and cold streets of Paris this day. The context helped us to realize how colourful and warm street art can be!

We started with a meeting point and a first discussion at the town hall of the 13<sup>th</sup> arrondissement. The deputy mayor explained us the history and context of street art here. We then walked around from one point to another (see the hashtag #oweesa and our **album**) before the final destination at **les Frigos**.

### 1. The street as art

In this article, I want to focus on an encounter which took place during this expedition, one of this moment where something happens, where and when we are obviously here, in the situation. It was the planned encounter of the street artist **Lor-K** in an inner court. We were all seated here, in the cold. Actually, it was raining. Lor-K, a young woman Parisian street artist, stood in front of us, with a cardboard next to her. I will never know what it was for. Suddenly, all the meaning of an OWEE became obvious to me. The possible “mirror effect” for researchers was there.

We are animals of the inside! We are mainly seated, covered, protected, involved in ritualistic environments such as meetings, seminars, courses, PhD defenses, data collection... Here, I felt clearly outside, with someone looking at my “inside”. My all world is an “inside”, made of activities defining the inside from the outside, and staying in the inside. Lor-K recycles waste and rubbish on site. Her whole world is made of what the inside does not need anymore. She stays courageously on the street, works on the street, includes art in and on street, not from the street or the horizon. She creates beauty in an unexpected way and makes rubbishes nice in an ephemeral way.

Here comes another key temporal difference: I spend the bulk of my time trying to build things made to last, or rather, that I expect will last a little bit. She told us that

she never sells her art. She wants to keep the integrity of it. She sells narratives about her work: pictures in exhibitions, books, articles, activities on social media. She creates continuity and durability with the narrative itself. On my side, I realise I keep settling ephemerality and discontinuity with my individual and collective narratives...



Picture 4. Paris Street; Rainy Day, by Gustave Caillebotte (1877). Flickr

### 2. Alone together

Lastly, Lor-K told us about her loneliness. Her purposeful, chosen loneliness. She preferred to work alone, it’s more effective. At least for the concrete part (maybe not for the narrative part...). She was alone in the middle of us. She is alone in the middle of the city. Street artists are “alone together”, like entrepreneurs, and maybe also like many academics. This is not my case with RGCS and all these great people interested in alternative things. I think precisely that the whole OWEE narrative is about breaking the numerous waves that fragment academia, and to produce (with numerous other initiatives) more synchronicity and duration for our work. This is about re-creating powerful collective narratives for academia, shared collective narratives likely to be more transformative and relevant for the City.

But at some point, the place was so cold. I was happy to come back to my indoor, bounding world. At least for a moment. Just a last thought before coming back to my safe, protected world. **OWEE** is about alternating, encountering, walking, narrating and reflecting. Third-places and collaborative spaces are beautiful levers and contexts to create discontinuities. But I realize more and more that street art, art at large, and all the aesthetic, cultural and historical places of the city I’m not used to cross, can play the same role.

To be continued...

<sup>44</sup> This chapter has been published on the RGCS website in the blog section and also by The Conversation (<https://theconversation.com/academia-in-the-mirror-of-street-art-back-to-a-recent-walk-in-paris-100232>).

<sup>45</sup> Both from PSL, Paris-Dauphine.

## Chapter II.4. What a Difference a Walk Makes? The Impact of Walk and Embodiment in Reflexive Collaboration and Creativity<sup>46</sup>

Olivier Irrmann<sup>47</sup>

In the few months we have been experimenting the type of learning expedition we call **OWEE**, there has been a set of features we observed when a group of people is moving – and walking – together in order to observe, analyze, ponder and reflect upon a set of places or human activities.

### I. Different configurations of the reflexive walkers in OWEE

**[1. The Swarm]** The group gives power and a sense of purpose in any human activity. In OWEE events, there is a certain sense of elation seeing a mass of people engaged into the same analytical activity, all mobilized around a trajectory, and aggregating into a swarm behavior. Like in a swarm, local simple rules allow the aggregation and combined movement of participants: follow someone, listen to someone if you can, keep reasonable proximity, take pictures, talk to your neighbours, look around and walk. OWEE groups differ from guided tours (only one person talks and the group follows the leader) or delegation visits (selected group, controlled access to specific places), though it might look like it from time to time. What differs is the swarming behaviour: there is no central authority, no one is the leader, trajectory might evolve, participants are not quite controllable but still self-coordinated.

**[2. The pack as in wolf pack]** The OWEE group can also display the behaviour of a pack, where the group will benefit from the specific behaviours of a few members who might dare doing things others might not feel allowed to. A “leader”, “deviant”, “alpha” or just “diplomat” researcher will give access to a specific setting or to new informants and the whole group can immediately benefit from it. These boundary crossing roles are often distributed in a group and different participants will become the “alpha” in different situations and at different times. The OWEE protocol gives instant access to a sort of behavioral capital spread across the participants and it helps accessing unpredicted and unpredictable resources and people. In other words, “curiosity feeds the cats”. In London (January 2018), we visited **Containerville**, and could walk around the area but only from the outside of the offices. We could see that in one of the containers a business meeting was occurring. Two participants dared interrupting them and asked them about their experience of the area. The rest of the group rushed to listen to their

testimony. During the Paris StreetArt OWEE (June 2018), a sub group wandered through the labyrinthic corridors of **the Frigo**. It was a purely improvised visit, we were expected by no one and knew no one. On two occasions we literally intruded into the working spaces of two tenants, led by a researcher with a video camera. We were not necessarily welcome but we could engage with them nevertheless, and though we were scolded for intruding in such a way, we spent an extra hour there and discovered a whole new dimension of the history of the space.

### II. Access, socialization and parallel processing

**[1. Power and sociality]** Walking in a group/swarm/pack has a few consequences. First, it gives participants legitimacy to access places they might not have entered as individuals, and sometimes even in a slightly forceful way. When 20 or 30 people arrive unannounced in a site, doors often open even for a few minutes. When the group is announced in advance, we often meet well informed and networked actors who bring higher quality insights. Second, the group/swarm/pack re-socializes the research activity. Talking together for a long time, to different people, in different places reconnects participants to the social dimension of the inquiry. They connect across organizational and occupational boundaries, compare feelings and experiences, and engage in on-the-spot dialectic analysis. In other words, OWEE becomes a mobile third place (close to the original meaning of the term by Ray Oldenburg) for research on collaborative and creative spaces, hanging out for the pleasure of good company and lively conversation.

Finally, the group also generates external attention and curiosity, from time to time. In a few instances, complete strangers joined the group or engaged into the same activities. The open philosophy of the expedition allows and also welcomes such improbable meetings that are the heart of the idea of reconnecting to the environment and social fabric of places and spaces.

### [2. Parallel and redundant processing]

In the OWEE protocols, we observe parallel processing of information. We see quite many people taking pictures of the same areas and talking about the same places. The sheer mass of people engaged in the activity is increasing quite a lot the diversity of experiences and therefore extends the quality of reflections about the places. In

<sup>46</sup> This chapter has been published on the RGCS website in the blog section.

<sup>47</sup> ISEN Lille.

London we visited a locally celebrated site of “Brutalist” architecture and many conversations pointed out how much this was similar to buildings around the world, from Helsinki to downtown Montreal and how the representation and images of such landscapes differed. The group brings a diversity of experiences that can be shared instantly.

Parallel processing means also the production of a lot of redundant information. It struck me that people do mostly take the same pictures from mainly the same point of view. In the London expedition when we went to visit the rooftop of the Village Underground <http://www.villageunderground.co.uk/about/>; most of us took and published on the social media the same pictures with the same perspectives. As such it is interesting to see that we do share a common visual culture of space, but we

might think about how to interpret it and leverage these redundant observations for further analysis.

## **[2. Pondering and reflecting]**

Walkers stop from time to time. Physical limitations of the human body make seating together a de facto compulsory activity, considering the expedition might last the whole day. These pauses are a good opportunity to reflect and ponder about what has been seen and experienced. With a bit of facilitation, the pauses become intense moments of debates and reflection. They can also be used for data production, from sharing photos on a repository or posting them on social media, to writing collaboratively. The pauses are mostly improvised and the group stops wherever it can, often in a café or a public space. This activity of pondering and reflecting collectively brings a moment of deceleration to the expedition, a rhythmic pattern to a day of exploration.

## Chapter II.5. Notes as gestures: The use of log books in ethnographical work<sup>48</sup>

François-Xavier de Vaujany and Albane Grandazzi <sup>49</sup>

Our learning expeditions in collaborative spaces and our ethnographies of new work practices have been the opportunity to use numerous diaries, reports and note books to keep a trace of what we saw, what people said or how we felt.

Such a practice is not new in ethnography and auto-ethnography. Ethnographers have always collected and self-produced the narrative traces of their experience. They have always done it asynchronously (e.g. at the end of the day...) or synchronously (in the flow of what they were observing). We would like to stress here an embodied, material, visible aspect of ethnography as a practice: the gesturing of notes, sketches, traces of our shared experience with the people and societies explored.

More than ever, in a digital, largely disembodied, world, gestures and physical movements of the ethnographer are key micro-practices on the field. Our ethnographies and learning expeditions (in particular the long ones with two, three or four days of field trips with a group) have made this issue particularly visible.

First, using expressively, obviously, visibly logbooks is a way to create boundaries with people encountered. As shown by **Camille Bosqué** in her ethnography of makerspaces and FabLabs, it is a way to create a tie and a bubble with the people we met. In the context of our ethnographies and walks, we noticed the importance of using our logbook, putting it on a table while talking, putting a pen close to it, drawing a figure, a map, a story... and letting implicitly the people interviewed taking the diary and writing, drawing on it (*see Picture 5 below*). Taking at some point a second pen, and doing it together. Some very shy, distant people became much more confident at this point. Most of all, this co-produced and shared trace has been often important to express subtle

things about the place. To help us remember months after our ethnographies, we sometimes attached a picture of the sketch co-produced. In her doctoral work, one of us (**Albane Grandazzi**) uses the notion of “boundary gesture” to label this kind of bounding, spacing, spanning embodied practice.



Picture 5. The use of log books as boundary gestures (source: authors' own)

Then, in particular in the context of makers, hackers, coworkers, i.e. DIY and DIT oriented doocracies, this visible doing has been a way to find our place in. We are also doers, we write, sketch (at least we try...), share, make things concrete and visual! In a place where one of us (**François-Xavier de Vaujany**) conducted another ethnography (an artistic makerspace in Paris), we even felt that it was a way to share a collective dance, to be harmoniously in the shared movement that made the place.

In the context of Open Walked Event Based Experimentations (OWEE), the visible and shared use of log books is important, but also different. We explore societies, but we also share an experience with a group of people who is also part of the observation. Taking notes, in a shared or selfish way is not easy (we move and we walk a lot) and probably counter-productive. But we have also started to experiment the practice while seated, in more transitory situations...

To be continued...

<sup>48</sup> This chapter has been published on the RGCS website in the blog section.

<sup>49</sup> Both from PSL, Paris-Dauphine.

## Chapter II.6. Co-producing traces from our walked discussions: the use of digital tools

Viviane Sergi and François-Xavier de Vaujany<sup>50</sup>

Our learning expeditions and field trips following the OWEE protocol have often resulted in co-produced traces by means of various tools: posts on blogs (e.g. RGCS WordPress, the Conversation, LSE Business Review, LSE impact blog...) written by coordinators during and after the event, social networks (in particular Twitter, Facebook and Instagram), geolocalization systems (e.g. Samsung health systems) but also more specific collaborative technologies such as Stample or Framapads. The use of these tools aimed at narrating our events as they were happening, learning and reflecting from them, searching for political impact through better integrative and connective narratives. We would like here to give a short feedback about two technologies we used: Framapads and Twitter and how they help us to co-produce reflexive traces of our events.

### I. Framapad: great open technology, but atmosphere and animation are key

**Framapad** is a great open source technology developed by **Framasoft**<sup>51</sup> (a fantastic project which was highly inspiring for our first White Paper). This associative network offers various open technology which are seen as a way to 'degoogle' our societies and bring control and power back to citizens themselves. Framasoft offer thus

numerous alternatives to Google Technology such as YouTube, Google doc or the Google search engine.

Since one year, we have had the opportunity to use a technology called Framapad to a dozen of reflexive processes before, during and after our learning expeditions. Framapad is an on-line word processor that makes it possible to write and record what is written. All the participants just need to know and access the Framapad set up for the event. Then, everybody can write directly in the document including our not a pre-defined structure. Interestingly, each participant has a specific color once s/he starts writing, and can link this color to his name. A history of the document is continuously kept, and the process of writing is extremely horizontal (no particular privileges linked to the person setting the link or an administrator). After numerous frustrations expressed after our events (and the traces we kept from them), Framapad seems to be a very interesting way to co-produce a trace. Based on the events during which we used it, we see three main practices which can be enacted from Framapad (*see Table 6*). Each of this practice is likely to make more collaborations in the event, and to produce more narrations in it likely to extend, to connect it to other events.

Practices based on Framapad	Description	Limitations
<b>Practice 1: Onsite emulation with projection on a walloupp</b>	Projecting the Framapad during its use onsite (e.g. a seated discussion, the concluding discussion in a seminar room or a collaborative space). It incites people to write something and see their colour appearing on the wall. It is emulating. If two or three people start playing the game (and this can be agreed), the dynamic can come very quickly.	The size of the projected screen makes that quickly it is not possible to see all the dynamic. This can be a good thing (then people look at their smartphone or laptop) but also very quickly... this can become distracting.
<b>Practice 2: Writing of a collective summary and report of the event</b>	People can write collectively a summary of the event, during and after it. This is a way to create a common memory and a common at large.	Very quickly, 10, 20... 50 (we have experimented different sizes) of people writing together creates a messy result. Creating (even after a collective loop) a first structure can be manipulative. Creating a set of different Framapad (i.e. introducing a revise and re-submit process with different versions) can be facilitated by the tool itself. But this requires a form of community management through one or two leaders... likely to push their own view of the topic. And conversely, not trying to look for community managers can make the process... unfinished. The document is never cleaned and remains very messy and unreadable (which has been the case in several of our experimentations).
<b>Practice 3: Coordinating the walk and the all process</b>	People comment, criticize, guide, deconstruct loudly the process of walking, visiting, discussing of the visit. It turns to be something between a reportage and a 'command car'.	The Framapad is then just a way to have a trace of some live decisions and reflexivities.

Table 6. Framapad based practices of co-producing traces

<sup>50</sup> In the order of appearance: ESG UQAM and PSL, Paris Dauphine University.

<sup>51</sup> Please donate to Framasoft, a generous, open, responsible project!

## II. The use of social media: combining walked with digital navigation

Social media (in particular Twitter) have been at the heart of our experimentations since the beginning. We have always tweeted our events since the beginning (e.g. our two first event in Berlin and Barcelona). Creating a specific hashtag, diffusing it to the participants ahead of the event and to all people likely to be interested has always been part of our processes (with a couple of exceptions at the beginning).

Interestingly, we quickly noticed that the use of Twitter was not limited to communication, and included a few other practices. It was also a narration we could play with, a set of narrations we could combine and re-introduce later in the flow of later events. Based on our experiences, we identified a number of key practices, as summarized in table 2. This list is not exhaustive, and other practices could emerge in other events.

Practices based on Framapad	Description	Limitations
<b>Practice 1: Commenting and sharing the walk and process of the learning expedition</b>	Participants can share on-the-fly observations, take pictures and videos of what they see, hear, feel... and comment on the visual elements they have captured. They can also share their general experience, and include more global reflections about what they are hearing, seeing and discovering.	The use of the Twitter account can be a way to re-tweet, combine, comment on the comments and put (or not) some directions to it. However, the sum of the tweets rarely creates a coherent narration per se. Unless some kind of analysis is made after the event, the traces left on social media remain slightly disjointed. Also, the challenge of tweeting while listening to a presentation and even more while walking should not be underestimated. Users that have already learned the codes of Twitter will be more comfortable in developing their comment in the format of a tweet and also in playing with hashtags.
<b>Practice 2: Putting publications in the live tweet</b>	Books, articles, scientific interviews and podcasts, research posts... have often been put in the line of tweets by participants and community managers. We often noticed that it attracted a new readership. Tweeting research in context... makes it more contextual.	Choosing one research instead of another is not neutral. And tweeting too much research can be counter-productive. A balance must be found between references and on-site observations.
<b>Practice 3: Connecting the event in time and space</b>	We re-tweeted videos, posts, articles about past events in context which made us remind them. We also diffused information about future events (RGCS events or non RGCS events) in the live tweets. We used as much as we can this flow of attention.	Talking too much about the past or the future can cut us from ongoing experience and maybe favour disembodiment.
<b>Practice 4: Building the RGCS network itself, cultivating a sense of belonging and happening</b>	We mention as much as we could RGCS coordinators and RGCS friendly people... This was a way to connect with them and indirectly, a powerful maintenance or developmental practice for our network. Sometimes, we wonder if Twitter is not also great for 'internal' communication.	This practice can also result in a 'club' atmosphere and can become be non-inclusive.

Table 7. Framapad Twitter based practices in our learning expeditions

All practices described in table 2 have been largely present in our last OWEE events. In the context of events like learning expeditions, social media like Twitter offer an easy and very flexible way to integrate comments, photos and short clips while the learning expedition is happening – and also ‘naturally’ create a timeline of the event, from multiple viewpoints. With the exceptions of its technical limitations (e.g. the number of characters), Twitter allows for a wide variety in style, when it comes to the content that is shared. Hence, one of the most interesting effects from using this platform is the accumulation of tweets that have spontaneously been produced by different participants without any form of coordination, each with their personal voice and their own specific message. Using these public platforms also makes visible the OWEE approach, making it known in the community, and generates inputs that might become

data for researchers who may or may not have participated to the event. Having a main account, like that of @collspaces is a useful complement to the accounts of individual participants, as it can be used to curate the content that has been produced. It can be used to amplify some tweets (like, for example, the ones that have captured a key feature of the event), to disseminate the main observations and reflections and also to summarize what might have been expressed in several tweets. In this, the importance of hashtags should not be downplayed. On Twitter (it would also be the case on Instagram), hashtags are crucial – especially having a devoted hashtag for the event, which will allow to trace back all the content produced during the event. The main hashtag for the event should hence be carefully chosen, and communicated in time and clearly to the participants.

## Chapter II.7. Collaborative Ethnography in the Walk: The use of Camcorders

Anna Glaser and François-Xavier de Vaujany<sup>52</sup>

Ethnography is increasingly a collective thing, involving teams of researchers, members of the society explored, and people co-exploring from a distance with digital tools.

In the context of the **Research Group on Collaborative Spaces** (RGCS), we organized numerous learning expeditions, field trips and stays which are opportunities to discover, deconstruct, share, new work practices. These expeditions are more and more part of a research and political new research practice we co-produce at the level of the network itself: OWEE (which stands for **Open Walked Event Based Experimentations**). OWEE implies both an openness to any stakeholder in the exploration and co-construction, an intense use of social media to share and extend the experience, and a strong sense of improvisation (a major part of the places and people we visit are improvised in the flow of our questions and discussions). The protocol shares some similarities with the French "**Dérive**" (e.g. drifting) conceptualized by Guy Debord.



Picture 6. The use of a camcorder at our street art learning expedition in Paris (source: authors' own)

Walk, embodiment and gestures are a key part of our emergent protocol. We would like to focus here on a key embodied practice which is playing an increasing role in our expedition: the role of camcorders in the social dynamic of our events (see their use below in the context of our learning expedition about street art in Paris #OWEESA). The network has two camcorders at its disposal. We have started to use them in the context of two learning expeditions: one in Paris about street art (June, 14<sup>th</sup>) and another one in Boston about the opening and hacking of knowledge in elite institutions (July, 24<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>). Anna used the first camera in the former, and François in the latter. We would like to give here a first feedback about the use of this practice in the context of collaborative ethnography. Our use of camcorder was twofold: keeping a memory of our events (to store them

and diffuse them on line), doing crossed interviews of participants and people encountered (individual and collective, seated or walked). Smartphone could be a way to do both things, but we quickly realized the technical limitations of these tools.

Interestingly, beyond their precious use to collect ethnographical material. Paris and Boston's experience have been a way to realize another key aspect of camcorders. They (re)introduce gestures in the narration and in data collection. Holding the camcorder is also holding obviously and visibly the line of narration. For those interviewed, the cam and the gesture introduced a small tension, a solemnity in the process of interviewing. The cam creates a bubble for those interviewed and those seeing the scene from the outside. It makes obvious that an interview is going on (in contrast, today's tool of data collection are so miniaturized that they become almost invisible, and part of everyday objects, i.e. smartphone). In some context (*see the Picture 7 of this interview below*), the cam can be put somewhere and everybody can feel part of the scene and interview; nobody holds the line.



Picture 7. The putting the camera for a collective discussion at MIT Sloan Business School (source: authors' own)

Gesturing the cam is thus a powerful way to invite narrative and reflective perspectives into the walk and discussion. We are only at the beginning of our experimentation with this tool and other ones (e.g. Framapads, blogs and social networks). Cams have obviously a great potential to introduce new embodiments, new spatialities, new narratives and new temporalities into our events. Among the other experiments we have on mind, the sharing of the cam is one of them. In the context of our next learning expedition, we would like to invite each participant to hold at some point the camcorder and to do films and interviews with it. Let's see what this mediation will create for the group and for the network.

To be continued...

<sup>52</sup> In the order of appearance: ESG Europe and PSL, Paris Dauphine University.

## Chapter II.8. Assembling the old and the new worlds: plugging an unconference into a conference<sup>53</sup>

Marie Hasbi<sup>54</sup>

Summer is filled with notable academic conferences. For organization researchers, July is particularly notable for holding the annual and big conference of the European Group for Organizational Studies (**EGOS**), an interdisciplinary event about organizations, organizing and collective activity. As most academic conferences, EGOS colloquia provide a venue for researchers to present and discuss their research papers through sessions and sub-themes.

In 2017, The Research Group on Collaborative Spaces (RGCS) added an event off the track, an unconference called: “**Organization & Organizing of the Sharing Economy**” (OOSE). I have been part of the organizing committee of the two first sessions in 2017 and 2018.

### 1. Behind the un conference scene

Each season, through a series of Skype planning meetings, our small group of conveners shared visions about a gathering that might both enhance and criticize the current thinking on the sharing and the peer-to-peer economy. Each time, the implicit guideline question for our group was: Since our topics are related to the New Ways of Working (NWW) (Kingma, 2016), how can we gather a new way of conferencing? Unlike traditional conference format that involves passive learning presentations, it was pretty clear to us that a disruptive participant-driven format is more convenient for our unconferences. Once the body of the unconference was organized, settling a location began. In choosing a venue for our unconference, we were keen to situate one part – the workshop- inside the walls of the main conference to facilitate the gathering, and we choose to situate the second part outside the walls of the traditional conference to legitimize our act of rebellion. This was a joint venture between the old and the new world of conferencing.

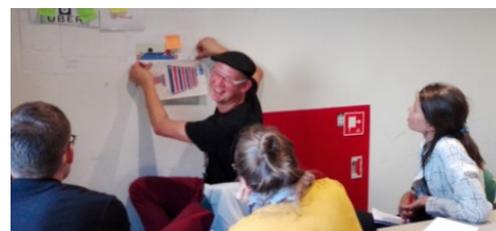
We wanted our unconference to be more inclusive in different ways. We invited keynote speakers passionate about their topics regardless of their seniority. Finally, following RGCS’ spirit to expand invitations beyond academia, we created an Eventbrite, we used RGCS diverse media channel, local meetup forums, etc. Our purpose was to reach out a large and diverse audience including practitioners, activists and Egosians about our untraditional unconference (un)doings.

### 2. The unconference experiences

After nearly two months of organization, our unconference finally opened. My main concern was about participation: how many people will join us? The main conference can involve feelings of physical discomfort caused by travel, dense conference programs, new country and so on. Hence, why people and more particularly Egosians will spend three to four more hours attending an unconference?

Fortunately, I was pleasantly surprised each season to see that nearly 60 participants, including entrepreneurs, activists and Egosians, came together to join our unconference. I recognized familiar faces from EGOS and I could finally put faces on names I have been emailing for weeks about the organization.

In the first unconference, the theme was entitled “Between Autonomy and Control: Contradictions and Paradoxes of the Sharing Economy”. We opened up space for visual co-creation projects and critical conversations and we invited participants to visit a coworking space in Copenhagen. For further details, you can read on RGCS website [this post](#). In the second unconference, the topic was entitled: « Do it yourself! Exploit yourself? » We challenged traditional spatial arrangements by providing a welcoming Fishbowl platform and we offered attendees a tour visit to a hacker space in Tallinn. [Here](#) is a summary of our second unconference. During the two seasons, I was astonished in the most positive sense by the genuine, organic and disruptive participation of attendees. I can remember one of my partners in the



Picture 8 and 9: first OOSE: a visual co-creation workshop and second OOSE: a participant driven fishbowl debate (source: author's own)



<sup>53</sup> This chapter has been published on RGCS website in the blog section.

<sup>54</sup> From Panthéon-Assas Paris 2 University.

organization and animation of these un conferences telling me: “look, they are hacking our un conference!”. both attendees’ and keynote speakers’ engagement were wonderful. They were carving out time to argue, debate and network.

### 3. What can we learn from these experiences?

After the closing of our un conference, we came together to share a dinner. As **the dinner** could be an opportunity to share more reflexive conversations, I approached an entrepreneur asking him his feedback on our un conference (de Vaujany, 2016). “I really enjoyed the tour visits. Though, I didn’t feel comfortable to share my point of view during the workshop. It is too academic for me...”

What can we do to address this issue? To push the boundaries between academia and practice? Including practitioners in keynotes may work well...Holding our un conference completely outdoor as other RGCS un conferences by experiencing the **OWEE protocol** (For instance **RGCS un conference inside the Academy of Management AOM** was held as a walk in the Chicago Millenium Park, **RGCS un conference inside AIMS** was held in a collaborative space) and therefore get rid off the old world may work too... (de Vaujany and Vitaud, 2017). Another challenge comes from the comparison between my un conference experience and other events held by RGCS chapters I experienced. How can we create and maintain a sense of community after these un conferences? How can we go beyond the brief and temporary nature of our un conferences?

Looking ahead, we helped to create spaces inside a traditional conference for authentic conversations. Unlike **traditional conferences** where status matters (Konzett, 2012), I saw an eclectic mix of researchers practitioners, entrepreneurs and activists walking together in our un conferences, gathering outdoor, sharing laughs and challenging theories and practices. Overall, the un conference experience and feedback were so positive that we are planning on gathering for more un conferences. Why don’t you join us to push the boundaries of traditional conferences? See you next summer at EGOS, AoM, AIMS and other conferences in social sciences and humanities where we intend to extend our experimentations!

I want to thank Albane and Aurore for being my partners for two years in this adventure. A big thanks to François-Xavier for launching and convening with us these un conferences.

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## Chapter II.9. An exploration of surrealism as an esthetic activity in collective ethnographic work unconference into a conference<sup>55</sup>

Heloïse Berkowitz<sup>56</sup>

How to jointly develop scientific knowledge from data collected through group, event-based research methodologies like OWEE (Open Walked Event-based Experiments)? In OWEE, ‘field work’ moves beyond both observations or action-research approaches by integrating several new elements of data collection: being in a group, walking, and exploring a spatially and temporally bounded event or happening (de Vaujany & Vitaud, 2017). But we still struggle to find ways to produce innovative collective knowledge that may leverage on such group ethnographic work. Surrealism, a 20th century art movement, could offer fruitful solutions to collectively create knowledge from these group event-based data collections.

### 1. Behind the un conference scene

Surrealism is an activity, rather than a doctrine (Clifford, 1981). In 1924 Breton’s manifesto, the word surrealism describes a “psychic automatism” aiming to explore the deep, true functioning of thoughts, whether this may be through writing, speaking, painting, etc. The objective is not so much to produce anything but to achieve a more profound understanding of the world through experimenting with our sub consciousness, dreams, etc. Surrealist techniques indeed seek to let the flow of thoughts wash unobstructed, without any control of rationality, logic, and without any moral or esthetic concern. Breton’s first version of his manifesto will impact production processes of most art forms (literary, plastic) at that time.

Clifford (1981) argues that ethnography and surrealism fit well together. Ethnography indeed constitutes an attempt to disrupt the way we see, understand and represent conventional objects, identities, practices and socio-materiality. Surrealism offers rich venues for that. Three surrealist writing techniques – exquisite corpse, automatic writing and “meta-textual” collage – may favour collective creativity and reconstruct the reel through pure psychic automatism, associations of ideas and absurd. These tasks have in common to seek to decouple realities, by fragmenting objects, bringing together weird items or ideas into a surprising juxtaposition that provokes reflection. It is the embodiment of surrealist – extraordinary – realities that these esthetic activities perform.

Using surrealist techniques in contemporary ethnographies could involve constituting a surrealist writing group after a collective ethnographic experiment like OWEE. But this may require specific protocols to ensure that actors can fruitfully interact and produce a deep understanding of reality, although that understanding may seem absurd.

### 2. Rules of the activity

It is important to clarify and make explicit common objectives and rules. What is the concrete output? What are we working on? What rules are we using for the exquisite corpse? It could be an addition of one word or of a full sentence for instance. This may vary depending on the group’s characteristics or the activity’s duration. An exquisite corpse usually functions like this: each person adds a word following a given structure Noun>adjective>verb>direct complement>adjective. Repeat. This allows a more curious collection of ideas. For automatic writing, the rule is to write down whatever comes to mind, without editing, and without repressing ideas or trying to organize them. The idea would be to focus on a topic of the OWEE (for instance, entrepreneurs’ comparative philosophies on a given day). Meta-textual collage could be thought of as a shuffling of print screens of tweets or Facebook posts (*see Picture 10*).



Picture 10. first OOSE: a visual co-creation workshop (source: author’s own)

### 3. Challenges of using surrealist techniques in OWEE

Using surrealist techniques has the potential to enrich contemporary ethnographies like OWEE by helping researchers build a collective understanding of the world they have physically explored as a group. This collective, deep understanding of an expanded reality takes the form of an assemblage that may constitute, in a certain manner, the end product of the collective research. Yet many questions arise regarding the organization or the use of the end-product. For instance, regarding the facilitator, how many of them are needed, one per group, fewer? How to deliver to the group? Through a presentation? Through a collective reading? Then, analyzing these

<sup>55</sup> This chapter has been published on the RGCS website in the blog section.

<sup>56</sup> From CNRS TSM Research.

textual and visual products constitute another kind of challenge. This step could and maybe should be carried out afterwards in a smaller set of people. In addition, there is an issue of storage and property rights, all the more relevant nowadays with the RGPD legislation. But finally, the most challenging barrier to the use of surrealism is probably the reluctance to accept and embrace absurdity, the unexpected but also the contradiction and the unmapped territory of giving

control of rationality, in scientific production processes in management sciences.

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**Part III. Building knowledge from OWEE.  
Exploring, reflecting, learning and teaching in  
the walk**

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« Nul ne peut se sentir, à la fois, responsable et désespéré.»  
Antoine de Saint-Exupéry - Pilote de guerre.

## Chapter III.1. An MIT and Harvard: When Elite Institutions Hack and Open Knowledge

Aurore Dandoy, Annie Passalacqua and François-Xavier de Vaujany<sup>57</sup>

As researchers and/or entrepreneurs, we have been absorbing cultural knowledge of collaboration, entrepreneurship, co-worker and maker movements for a number of years. We often face and hear about how to become disruptive by two keywords: opening and hacking. Between July 25 and 28, 2018, we co-created a rich learning expedition organized by the **Research Group on Collaborative Spaces** (RGCS), at MIT and Harvard University, in Cambridge (Massachusetts). This alternative academic network focuses on topics about new work practices inspired by **open science** and **citizen science** cultures.

The starting point of our learning expedition was our astonishment: How can elite institutions (in particular, MIT and Harvard University) and an elite territory originate key collaborative practices and ideology such as hacking, open knowledge and open innovation? How to combine a search for excellence, global leadership and selectivity with horizontal, transgressive, underground cultures of hacking and opening knowledge? Our objective was to understand this paradox with a set of planned and improvised visits and meetings (see the **OWEE protocol**) focused on MIT and Harvard University. Is it possible to be both conformist and transgressive?

We want first to share some astonishing discoveries before focusing on key moments and encounters we see as provisional answers to our initial question. We will thus not detail the whole trip and everything that happened but we want to share here some selected afterthoughts.

### 1. Three striking practices at Harvard university and MIT

We found three practices particularly striking both at MIT and Harvard University and their relationship with opening and hacking knowledge. The first was observing how much students (undergraduate, graduate, master and PhD students) and their theses and projects were made visible and valued by the institutions. Through this, we do not only mean rewarding them and evaluating them (e.g. with awards), but truly putting them at forefront of what the university is and does. At the **MIT Museum**, we participated in the Idea Hub workshop named Hypercube, which was part of a master's thesis from by the Media Lab. In many parts of MIT, students' work is exhibited, part of the storytelling or simply visible on or from the street.



Picture 11. hypercube workshop. Author provided

Second, we were surprised that at a time of global tensions and an obsession with security, there was also a great openness in the semi-public and public spaces. It was easy to simply enter, meet people, ask questions, walk around, and have chance encounters. Even if a lot of doors inside were (hopefully) closed and secured, most places were truly open to the city, its movements, its events, its ideas. Literally, those two campuses are open to citizens.

In continuation to this, the third element we found surprising was serendipity. It felt to be a reality here we could almost touch. It was very easy to connect, move from one meeting to another, and collaborate. But here there was a surprise in the surprise: this has nothing to do with fashionable collaborative spaces nor with a particular urbanism. The **Wyss Institute** we visited or the **Broad Institute** do not appear at all as de-compartmentalized, co-working-like or makerspace-like places. Their offices, meeting rooms and labs are extremely traditional (see **Pictures 12 below**). Nonetheless, collaborative practices occur. We were really surprised by how easy it was to meet and have chance encounters (e.g., with a person who collaborated to the vaccine against cancer).



Picture 12. left: Lobby of the Wyss Institute at Harvard. Right: Entrance of the Broad Institute at MIT. Author provided

### 2. Five key moments in our exploration of opening and hacking knowledge

To introduce and shed light on the identified paradox, we would like here to share five relevant moments of the learning expedition.

<sup>57</sup> In the order of appearance: PSL, Paris-Dauphine, HEC Montréal, PSL, Paris-Dauphine.

**[1. A transgressive interdisciplinary place: the wyss institute at Harvard]** The first encounter we would like to communicate happened at the Wyss Institute “for Biologically Inspired Engineering at Harvard University”. This interdisciplinary place is inspired by nature. It uses biological principles or metaphors to innovate in the health sector. Our meeting took place in the morning of day two of our learning expedition. Two researchers, among whom the founding director of the Institute Donald Ingber, presented us the institute, its activities and organisation. The institute adventure started right after the 2008 financial crisis with a \$125 million donation. Being both inside and outside of Harvard is obviously an interstitiality that fosters innovative collaborations. Can a university accept and host such transgressive projects? Would it be possible to host all those research activities inside a traditional department? Specificities of the organization seem to be based on autonomy, trust and close work with practitioners. Elsewhere, this would probably mean being on one personal academic territory or another. The Wyss Institute appears to be a more neutral zone.

**[2. MIT tour storytelling: all about hacking culture]** The second moment we would like to point out is the official campus tour of MIT (we also did Harvard official campus tour). Tours are key practices in the life of American universities. The meeting point of MIT campus tour was at the entrance of the main building with the famous dome. Our guide was a young undergraduate interested in Science and Technology Studies (STS). Extremely mature, with an already assured sense of public speaking, she produced the story-telling of the tour with a lot of practical, scientific and historical details. We learned everything about the facilities, accommodation, recruitment, history, teaching and research activities of MIT. But most of all, we learned about MIT culture. Two enlightened moments of the tour were focused on hack culture of MIT and they happened to be the two key parts of tour: a stop in front of the most emblematic place and the last stop in front of the iconic hacked police car. In both cases, she put the stress on the importance of small transgressions inside MIT community, impertinence and sense of humour embodied by hacks and hacking culture (see *Pictures 13 below*). We were particularly surprised to see and hear all these official narratives precisely about the



Picture 13, left - the definition of hacking. Right: Display at the MIT Museum of a full-size police car once left parked at the top of a dome on campus as a stunt by students. Author provided (No reuse)

topic of our learning expedition. This was beyond our expectations.

**[3. An intriguing iconic hacker space in the middle of the night]** The third moment we would like to share is our chance to visit a hackerspace. At the end of day 2, we were looking for Tech Model Railroad Club (TMRC), an iconic, mythological place in hackers' history, and incidentally, makers' history. After three wrong places, we finally found the door and building in late evening. But it was closed. We did not see any way to come or call inside and we were waiting seated outside, waiting for someone entering or leaving the place. One of us went on the other side of the street and noticed something that looked like a makerspace with bikes and strange objects suspended in a big room. We went on the other side and knocked at a grimy window through which we guessed the presence of people inside. This was a lovely moment (see *Pictures 14 below*). Six makers (four men and two women) were working on a prototype of a small electric bike for an event the next day. We had a spontaneous conversation with one of them about the place, what it does, how membership was granted, how it was related to MIT teaching. The atmosphere was nice, warm and open. We came from nowhere, it was the evening and the street was already dark, but we felt really welcome. Indeed, TMRC was in the room next to the makerspace, so we also took time looking at it.



Picture 14. Left: The building we saw from across the street. Right: What we saw when we peeked inside. Author provided (No reuse)

**[4. GAFAM unconventional open-office spaces]** The fourth moment happened on the third day. We wanted to look also at more entrepreneurial and independent places. After visiting Cambridge Innovation Centre (CIC) and before WeWork office spaces, we went to a GAFAM (fantasy name) office we spotted the day before, walking down the street. After an extended discussion at the reception desk, we didn't manage to get in touch with anyone and were close to simply leaving when an employee left the building by the other entrance. He



Picture 15. GAFAM office in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Author provided (No reuse)

probably heard us speaking French and stopped. We asked him if he was part of the company, one thing led to another, and he soon invited us to visit their offices the next day. As agreed during the registration process, we cannot explain here what we saw, but again, we were surprised by the fluidity of everything here. Moving from a dream to a concrete possibility.

**[5. A makerspace for social inclusion and innovation: D-Lab]** The last and fifth moment was the visit of D-Lab. This unit is about social inclusion and social innovation. The main idea of the projects they work on is to co-produce with worldwide communities tools they need. Numerous accomplishments of the place were exhibited in the corridor: corn seller, mechanical washing machine, water treatment system... All largely based on material and handed-gestures. Our guide, who accepted to lead the visit just for us, deepened the story-telling of the projects and gave us opportunity to touch and to watch their experimentations in action. We were again surprised by the place's openness. Everything was done to perform and materialise local activities for visitors. The inside was turned towards visitors. Because of another appointment, he trusted us to finish the tour alone and take a few pictures. Even the makerspace room was open to public,



Picture 16. D-Lab display. Author provided (No reuse)

with simply a yellow line on the ground that needed to not be crossed for security reasons.

### 3. From encounters to learning: what did we bring back from Cambridge?

What about the initial paradox? Far from a barrier, the tension we stressed appears as a driver, an energy for the place. MIT and Harvard launch standards they both maintain and transgress in a polite, transparent, community-grounded way. Hacking alone in the dark, just for oneself is not enough. Community and society feedback are always expected. All campus and territory is a powerful storytelling machine. All world of worldwide science, technique and entrepreneurship is expected to be at MIT and Harvard. And in this summer we can testify that we experienced it crossing MIT campus and walking on Harvard campus. We saw big groups of children and teenagers coming to dream about MIT and Harvard. We ourselves dreamt of duplicating this tremendous spirit in our own institutions.

So, what will be our memory of this learning expedition in which two-thirds of the people and places we visited were improvised (see the OWEE protocol)? A big machine made to make one's eyes shine. A funny, energetic, largely outdoor, and beyond any walls place likely to make dream any brilliant teenager and researcher who do want to participate to create a brave new world.

We thank all of our guides who opened their doors to us and answered our questions with passion and kindness. And we hope that this might lead to cross-Atlantic open collaborations.

## Chapter III.2. Street art: who holds the walls?<sup>58</sup>

Renée Zachariou<sup>59</sup>

The promise was enticing, and the menu quite mysterious: OWEE (Open Walked Event-based Experimentations) is a research protocol conducted by international researchers. After several experiments all over the world (in Tokyo and London), a tour in the 13th district of Paris was concocted, open to all. It is difficult to give a precise definition of OWEE without giving in to tautology: it is an experiment, while walking, while seeking. You're welcome.

For this day dedicated to Street Art, we meet at 9 am on a gray Thursday in front of the square Luis Say (founder of Beghin-Say and, fun fact, brother of the liberal economist Jean-Baptiste Say), at the exit of the metro Glacière. Facing us, three facades completely covered with murals. On the left, a delicately rendered cat from the French artist C215, in front, a “freedom-equality-fraternity” muse in the iconic Obey style, on the right, a pop-art-style portrait of London's D \* Face. These details will be commented an hour later, during the guided tour led by Baimba Kamara of the Itinerrance Gallery, which oversees the project.

But the journey begins at the town hall of the 13<sup>th</sup> arrondissement of Paris, an unexpected place for such a rebellious topic ... had we remained stuck in the last century. Emmanuel Koblence, adjunct to the Mayor of the district, presents the ambitious program of murals, aimed at “giving an identity and pride to this borough that has long been associated with a dormitory.” The protocol of a fresco production is simple: the mayor, Jérôme Coumet and Mehdi Ben Cheikh, founder of Itinerrance gallery, agree on a project, and... they do it. No time to consult the neighbors: it's do first, ask later. I can sense a small democratic shudder in the group: what if the locals are not happy? The elected official admits that “it can be controversial, especially if we install a mural in front of your window and that you do not like it! “. What is being implied is that at least this way the projects are sure to go ahead. “The inhabitants know that it is in our interest to suggest something that makes sense, otherwise the project would stop” concludes Baimba Kamara.

Considering the number of frescoes realized since 2009 as part of the project Street Art 13, the project isn't stopping yet. The walk along the boulevard Vincent Auriol is full of anecdotes, from the street artist who changes colors on the first day (“I have 500 orange bombs in stock!”), to the



Picture 17. DFace, 'Turncoat', Street Art 13 Project, Paris 2018, Credit Louis Jensen

one who is so dizzy that Medhi remains on the nacelle to reassure him. We also discover different working techniques: the Chilean Inti painted alone, for thirteen days (“an eternity for us!”). While the American duo Faile lets its efficient assistants take over. Baimba's conclusion: “we have an exceptional collection, yet Parisians do not even bother to come have a look”. Oops.

We then head for the square René Le Gal to meet the artist Lor-K. Her work is as ephemeral and discreet as the frescoes are monumental. She scours the city by scooter to find rubbish and turn it into sculptures: mattresses becomes donut, fridges are “murdered”.



Picture 18. EAT ME, Lor-K, 2016, on the artist website

The process is documented, photographed, and then presented in galleries. Not the simplest way to build a business plan (it would be much easier to sell the sculptures), but a necessary choice until “people understand what I'm trying to do”. Of course, Lor-K does not have much sympathy for the frescoes of the 13<sup>th</sup>, too removed from the local reality, too controlled.

We're starting to feel numb after all this cold and fine rain, a coffee break calls. This is an opportunity to make a mid-day point, and gather participants' opinions. The format is obviously discussed: how to exchange more between participants without the verticality of the guide, should we set up roles, what is the “result” expected, what surprised us ... No single answer emerges, but everybody agrees: it feels good to be out of the office.

The “official” program is finished, but not the exploration: off to the Frigos, a legendary artists' studios at the feet of

<sup>58</sup> This chapter has been published on the RGCS website in the blog section.

<sup>59</sup> Art & Tech Project Manager.



Picture 19. Les Frigos, Photo Kala Barba-Court

the BNF. We roam the corridors in search of graffiti, and we end up meeting Jean-Paul Réti, sculptor and founding president of the association “Les Frigos APLD 91”. After a quick scolding, since “everything is written at the entrance,” he gives us a long talk about the history of the place (a former warehouse cold storage of the SNCF) and its challenges (rising rents). Another faux-pas from us:

mentioning street art, which invades the Frigo walls without taking into account the safety instructions, and which “is recuperated by the galleries”, “without political message”.

The four speakers “interviewed” will not meet (at least not today), and it is in our head that the debate unfolds. An imaginary verbal ping-pong, where the definitions of the city, aesthetics and political action are not the same. To the participants of OWEE, does not fall the role of referee, but that of passer, connector, even secret-whisperer.

Maybe that’s what being a researcher is all about?

### Chapter III.3. Learning differently our teaching: walking with students<sup>60</sup>

Julie Fabbri, Amélie Bohas and David Vallat<sup>61</sup>

“Entrepreneurship is an incredible odyssey whose leaders are the heroes”. These were the first words of the organizer of the **7th Printemps des Entrepreneurs** in Lyon (France), where we spent a whole day with students from emlyon business school. Why? To experience real-life working conditions. How? We led an **Open Walked Event-Based Experimentation** (OWEE) in this context to help them to get the most out of the event. In a nutshell, we lived a spatio-temporal odyssey in and around the fair to grasp, all together, what is at stake in entrepreneurial journeys and what could be the future world of organizations.

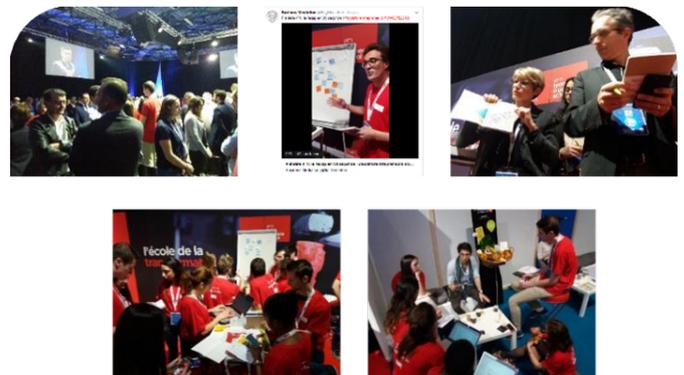
On April 24, 2018, at 8am, about thirty red dressed students gathered in front of the Double Mixte, a well-known business event hall. They are double-degree students in innovation management who proudly wear the same red t-shirt, the official colour of the school. They are far from being the only students present in the alleys of this annual trade fair organized by the main French employers syndicate. But the students in red are not here by chance. They were not looking for business contacts – even if they got some! They were not running the school booth – even if their visible presence during the fair greatly advertised the school. They came – because we asked them to, of course, but then – to collectively answer the broad question underlying the event: “For you, ‘companies of tomorrow’, what does it mean?”.

Seeing and being seen in this kind of business gathering is undoubtedly one part of their future work practices as managers, leaders, or entrepreneurs – whatever one thinks of the usefulness of these events. As students, they already attend a number of large events such as careers days to find internships and first jobs. But they usually don't really know how to behave and underestimate what they can get from such gatherings. On this particular day, we did not teach them how to dress or to pitch in this kind of context. In line with an experiential learning lens, we let them make their own experiences in the field, after having created the conditions to make it happen. We adapted the OWEE protocol to this new context – a learning expedition mainly with students in a closed event space – to turn them into active and reflexive visitors of the fair.

First, students split into four groups to tackle the issue of what tomorrow's company would look like from four

different perspectives – new work and organisational forms, internal and external stakeholders for tomorrow, time & space relationships of tomorrow's company, alternative managerial tools and methods. Then they assigned roles to the group members to gather information about their odysseys. Some were in charge of taking notes – on paper and on the collaborative open platform **framapad**, others of taking pictures and films, and last but not least, of drawing or innovating in the manner of gathering information. Everybody was allowed and encouraged to be also visible on social networks – **twitter, facebook, instagram...** One person per group was in charge of collecting everything in the name of his/her group and to send it to the community manager of the class who retweeted and posted in real time in the blog and the **official twitter account of the program**. Each group had a dedicated coach (a professor or a PhD student members of RGCS). This organisation was implemented the afternoon before the event. D-day was separated into three moments:

1/ In the morning, groups freely occupied the fair space and time by attending plenary sessions and small workshops, moving from booth to booth, interviewing exhibitors and visitors... One intermediary meeting point with the four groups at the school booth was organised mid-morning. It was the inspiration phase.



Picture 20. Snapshots of the learning expedition  
(source: authors' own)

2/ After lunch, we all met in front of the Double Mixte. It was a very sunny and hot day in Lyon whereas the fair was in a large room with neither daylight nor air-conditioning... We could not stand to say any longer in this room. Thus we walked together along the tramline in order that the four groups – students and coaches – formulate and iterate their views on tomorrow's company. At each tram stop, we took a break and repeated the

<sup>60</sup> This chapter has been published on the RGCS website in the blog section.

<sup>61</sup> In the order of appearance: EMLyon Business School, Aix-Marseille University and Lyon University.

itches of each group in front of the entire cohort. Two additional coaches helped us to give rhythm to these two hours around the fair and keep the time.

3/ Mid-afternoon we went back to the event room – and were nicely surprised by the reparation of the air-conditioning system! One student per group was chosen to pitch in one minute in the final plenary session of the event. The four selected students stand at each corner of the central scene. One coach was also in charge of pitching RGCS and OWEE to introduce the students' pitches! To close the day, the organizers invited the Philosopher and Theologian Samuel Rouvillois in his traditional monk's habit to preach a humanistic view of tomorrow's company. Our pedagogical aim was to raise awareness among students of how easy but inefficient it is to attend this kind of events as tourists. Especially in the field of innovation and entrepreneurship, where such fairs are legion and so shiny. Experiential learning experiments do not aim to make them dream of futuristic digital technologies or being the next Zuckerberg, but to expose them to the true reality of work practices – even the unpleasant and unfair ones. For example, students were

very surprised to see the gap between their vision of entrepreneurship and the fairly classical and formal worldview offered by this fair – despite its name “springtime of entrepreneurs”!

The OWEE was a great pedagogical tool to demonstrate that attending such events without any plans, goals, and methods, means losing time, money, and missing opportunities. To put it in another way, experimenting, whatever you experiment is, leads to nowhere if you don't take the time to think about what you are experimenting. But we still have to imagine new types of assessment and feedback to students (Warhuus, Blenker, & Elmholdt, 2018) to generalise and legitimise this kind of practice-based approaches. OWEE is an easy and cheap – but time and energy-consuming – innovative experiential learning approach that comes back to basics: walk together, like Aristotle and his disciples. Following the tradition of Peripapeticians' practice, OWEE builds knowledge from the facts given by experience. OWEE gave the occasion to turn an individual practice – attending a fair – into a collective value creation of meaning – creating a common vision of future of work.

## Chapter III.4. Exploring a territory with OWEE: the case of a learning expedition in Montreal<sup>62</sup>

Aurore Dandoy, Claudine Bonneau and Viviane Sergi<sup>63</sup>

On May 15th, 2018, the Montreal's RGCS (*Research Group on Collaborative Spaces*) chapter organized a learning expedition through coworking spaces and start-up incubators chosen for their diversity (technological and social entrepreneurship) and their location in the city, in order to propose a 1-day walkable **itinerary** through 3 different neighborhoods of Montreal: downtown, Mile-End and Mile-Ex. We experimented some of the **OWEE method's** principles, by walking together in the city, collecting visual and written data, **sharing it on social media** and having informal and semi-directed discussions.

### 1. Welcoming the participant in MTLAB

On the same week, ESG UQAM was holding an international conference on entrepreneurship, the **Journées Georges Doriot 2018**, providing the opportunity to form a group of 20 participants interested in new forms and spaces of entrepreneurship (scholars, students and practitioners).



Picture 21. Snapshots of the learning expedition (source: authors' own)

### 2. An « impromptu visit » to Notman house.

After this first rich encounter, we walked to **Notman House**, a technology hub also located in the city center, on Sherbrooke street. We had planned on visiting this place, but were not able to get a confirmation from their coordinators prior to our visit. We still decided to visit them, given that at least one part of Notman House is open to the public. When we were about to leave MTLab, one of the community managers phoned them and left a message on the answering machine to inform them that we were on our way. Even though we didn't receive a formal confirmation, Jacinthe and Anna, from the events



Picture 22: walking together (source: authors' own)

team, kindly welcomed our group and provided a guided tour of their various spaces (offices, shared spaces), while answering our questions about work practices at Notman House.

During the visit of the room dedicated to special events (Clark room, *see Picture 27 below*), one of the participants noticed: "What I like in this room, it is the atmosphere... I would have transformed it into offices (*Ce que j'aime dans cette pièce, c'est l'atmosphère... moi j'aurais fait les bureaux ici*)", while other participants around her nodded. The importance of events (and spaces dedicated to events) can be noted not only at Notman House, but also at Espace L (see point 4) and from our various investigations of the collaboration ecosystem in the last years. This raises questions regarding the profitability of collaborative spaces. Do coworking spaces' business models absolutely need the "events" component to be viable long-term, in addition to flexible and ephemeral activities (e.g. offices rented by the hour)?



Picture 23. Next steps of our walk... (source: authors' own)

### 3. Walking up « the main »: St-Laurent's street as our bridge from the city center to the mile end neighborhood

We then walked through St-Laurent's street (nicknamed "The Main"), which runs south-north from the city center. We made a quick stop at Parc du Portugal, from where we can observe interesting street art and see the former house where singer and poet Leonard Cohen lived and the restaurants he frequented (Bagel Etc, Main Deli and Les Anges Gourmets).

Both **street art** and cultural knowledge are important to our OWEE method for several reasons that can be



Picture 24. Street art in Montreal (source: authors' own)

<sup>62</sup> This chapter has been published on the RGCS website in the blog section.

<sup>63</sup> In the order of appearance: PSL, Paris-Dauphine, ESG UQAM and ESG UQAM.

understood through Merleau-Ponty (Sens et Non-sens, 1948) “In the presence of a novel, a poem, a painting, a valid film, we know that there was contact with something. Something is acquired by the men, the work starts to emit an uninterrupted message... But neither for the artist nor for the public can the meaning of the work be formulated otherwise than by the work itself; neither the thought that made it, nor the thought that receives it, is entirely mistress of itself.” (authors’ translation)

Thus, street art has long been considered as a political thought about the world, society or any topic street artists found relevant (like famous street artist Banksy). If street art is not directly linked to “new ways of working”, it is still embedded in a public space that hosts these collaborative spaces.

#### 4. Entering a coworking space dedicated to women: visit of espace L

We then reached the Mile-End district to visit a small coworking place located a little further north on St-Laurent’s street. [Espace L](#) has an original strategic focus, which has led to interesting debate related to broader societal issues than only new ways of working. Indeed, this co-working space is dedicated to women and was designed with their specific needs in mind. However, what these ‘specific needs’ are sparked an interesting – and critical in terms of tone – discussion. Some women of our group expressed their surprise to find that stereotyped design elements were specifically chosen: pastel colors, posters of women, pink objects everywhere, etc. This impression was shared with a larger public by a participant who posted a picture of the walls on [Twitter](#), asking “Do women really prefer pastel?”



Picture 25. Atmosphere of a coworking space we encountered (source: authors’ own)

Some men in our group admitted to feeling unwelcomed, even though the space manager and the occupants do not actually ban men in their spaces. This raises questions regarding the ways in which social and political polarization can be embedded and even accentuated in the social and material choices characterizing how a workspace is conceived and lived.

#### 5. Outdoor collective brainstorming: what should we do with the data collected today?

The picture above captures quite completely the essence of the OWEE method:



Picture 26. Time for a collective discussion, important phase of our OWEE (source: authors’ own)

- it is open: happening outside, welcoming diverse participants (women/men, younger/older, academics/practitioners/both/other). Note the seating configuration, which is also open (half of a square).
- it is walked: even though it is not visible in this picture, we had to walk to seat in the park and we then had to walk again to leave the park.
- it is event-based: the temporality of the learning-expedition is shaped by the context of the Montreal chapter (it was the first OWEE conducted by this chapter), and by the context of the whole RGCS network, for which it was the 7th OWEE.
- it is an experimentation: we explored new ways of doing research, with many experimental tools (spy glasses, tweets, a whatsapp group, etc.).

This moment was very productive, opening several lines of thought!

#### 6. Meet the coworkers: an incursion in l’esplanade

The final space visited is located in the heart of the Mile-Ex neighborhood. [L’Esplanade](#) is a collaborative space dedicated to social entrepreneurship. The participants immediately noted that the atmosphere of l’Esplanade was very different from the others spaces we visited on that day and retrospectively, we can see this journey as a gradual process of escaping from institutions: from an academic coworking space to an independent space



Picture 27. New stop at l’Esplanade (source: authors’ own)

focusing on the social economy.

Jonathan, our guide, organized an interesting presentation of l’Esplanade by inviting three of their current 65 members to share with us their experience of the space and their respective participation in this community involved in the local ecosystem. We particularly enjoyed being seated, welcomed an educated through those “return on experience” feedback sessions. It offered us the opportunity to ask many questions to both the community manager and the members. In sum, this

last visit was not only about the spaces, but mostly about the people, their practices and their values

### **7. Wrap-up discussions on Alexandraplatz terrasse**

Beyond the importance of conviviality for this kind of experiment, the need for both a concluding discussion and a bit of rest after such a walk (!), this wrap-up

discussion was also the occasion for other participants of the Doriot conference to join us at the end of the day. We were also able to have a last discussion about the OWEE protocol and on how to improve it for later experimentations. These aspects on the method will be further discussed in forthcoming blog posts. Stay tuned!

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## Chapter III.5. University Beyond the Walls: Experiencing new innovative spaces on Grenoble campus<sup>64</sup>

Sabine Carton<sup>65</sup>

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How to promote innovative educational spaces inside and outside Grenoble campus and get people involved in their uses? In June 2018, Promising<sup>66</sup> and several faculties used **Open Walked Event-Based Experimentations** (OWEE) approach at Université Grenoble Alpes. The event had two main objectives. The first one was external. We wanted to introduce campus innovative educational spaces to the local ecosystem of companies, collectivities, associations from Grenoble. The second was more internal. The idea was to share innovative educational initiatives between teachers, educational assistants and educational engineers in order to help people develop new practices.

Grenoble campus is an open space where companies, associations, are welcome to come and discuss with students and faculties. So an OWEE was a way to introduce innovative educational spaces for companies, collectivities and the local ecosystem. We wanted to show innovative educational initiatives and their diversities, to external actors of Grenoble campus. As a matter of fact, Grenoble campus is not located in the city center. But it can be reached easily by tramway or bike. It is not a place people just cross to go elsewhere. So OWEE was a mean to attract people who were not used to come to the campus and to make them discover innovative educational spaces. Some of these spaces are indeed open to people who are not working in the campus. But few people know it...

The second idea was to share innovative educational initiatives between teachers, educational assistants and educational engineers. OWEE can be a way of helping the transformation of organizational and educational practices. We used OWEE at Grenoble campus to make teachers, educational assistants, administrative staff aware of new practices. In the different spaces we visited, people had the opportunities to touch, ask, use and experiment. Between two spaces, the walk enabled us to discuss, share critical analyses and even co-imagine the design of future courses. Embodied practices in space (walk, sitting in specific chairs, or laying on mattress) participated to the reflection process of each participant, questioned existing practices and eventually led to new ideas for the organization of student classes and lessons.

OWEE's philosophy was also taken into account: the walk was held at the beginning of June and let time people to think of new ways of teaching during summer time, to possibly prepare a new course organization before the beginning of the academic year in September. So OWEE was considered as a relevant and interesting tool to leverage local innovative initiatives to the benefits of interested university members. It was not only a tool for promoting, mixing different kind of audiences and meeting between people but also a way of contributing to reflexivity of faculties' practices and initiating concrete actions to transform practices.

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<sup>64</sup> This chapter has been published on the RGCS website in the blog section and also in LSE Business Review.

<sup>65</sup> From Grenoble Alpes University.

<sup>66</sup> Promising is a Grenoble university project dedicated both to a research program on innovation teaching skills and to the designing of innovating and original modules to inspire creative and innovative students, faculties, companies and more generally society. For more details, you can visit this website: <https://www.promising.fr/promising/>

## Chapter III.6. Fab Lab and D-Lab: Two Different Philosophies of Innovation?<sup>67</sup>

François-Xavier de Vaujany<sup>68</sup>

Between 25 and 28 July 2018, I had the opportunity to participate in a rich learning expedition called #hackingday2018. It consisted of a set of visits and reflexive discussions about Boston's academic, entrepreneurial and innovative eco-system. We followed a protocol combining planned and improvised visits going along with the flow of discussions and questions of the event itself (see the open walked event-based experimentations protocol [OWEE] for details). The expedition was organized by the Research Group on Collaborative Spaces (RGCS), an alternative academic network about new work practices (in particular collaborative work practices) inspired by open science and citizen science cultures.

More than two thirds of the visits were thus improvised. The protocol also relies on openness (anybody can register for free via an Eventbrite link) and long walked-times alternating visits and other seated times. Social media, blogs and videos are used to extend the event in time and space, and link it to other events and published research. Thus, serendipity, by chance encounters, reflexivity and narration were strong parts of this journey which led us to Media Lab, Harvard's Wyss Institute, CIC, WeWork, MIT makerspace, TMRC and different MIT labs. Two of these visits allow me to make more systematic comparisons between two different philosophies of innovation and their political consequences for society.

We first visited the Center for Bits and Atoms (CBA), part of the MIT Media Lab, in which fab labs were co-invented. CBA is presented in its website as an "an interdisciplinary initiative exploring the boundary between computer science and physical science. It studies how to turn data into things, and things into data." In its main building projects, CBA includes start-ups, facilities such as 3D printers, genomics oriented-tools, laser cutters, CAT scanners, etc. It was launched by a National Science Foundation award in 2001. The idea was to "create a unique digital fabrication facility that gathers tools across disciplines and length scales for making and measuring things."

Visiting this place was very interesting for me, as part of my research is focused on collaborative spaces such as makerspaces, hackerspaces and fab labs. CBA is for me an iconic, mythical space, as it is the place where part of the story of open knowledge-oriented spaces began. The

fabrication laboratory (fab labs) program started here with CBA. As explained in its Wikipedia page, the fab lab program was "initiated to broadly explore how the content of information relates to its physical representation and how an under-served community can be powered by technology at the grassroots level". The first fab lab was launched in India in 2002, just one year after the beginning of the project.

What is a fab lab? It is a fabrication-oriented place whose community documents and shares the processes it co-produces. It has to respect the key principles of the fab lab charter. The charter stresses also the importance of the fab lab network, and the possibility for patents and private sponsorship but with an important condition: "Designs and processes developed in fab labs can be protected and sold however an inventor chooses, but should remain available for individuals to use and learn from."

Interestingly, another MIT centre was part of the elaboration of this innovative concept: the Grassroots Invention Group (GIG), which is no longer part of the MIT Media Lab. GIG is "developing a suite of low-cost, powerful personal computation and fabrication technologies along with innovative idea dissemination methodologies to give individuals and communities greater independence over their own learning and development". GIG is rarely mentioned in the articles we read about the history and philosophy of fab labs, but its joint imprint is obvious, in particular in its objectives: "We are actively working with our international partners to ensure that the tools we build and disseminate can be locally reproduced, extended and appropriated in a variety of social, cultural and economic context." The idea is to document procedures, ideas and concepts that can travel it time and space. They appear locally, work as co-production, and need to be shared and appropriated by other people (in particular with the help of digital tools such as wikis).

To return to our CBA visit, I was impressed by the tools and facilities accessible to MIT students and outside projects. I also saw fascinating private projects, but most of all, it was interesting to see that teaching was taking place at CBA, with multiple departments connected to the place. Interdisciplinarity is an obvious practical thing here. And the course "How to do (almost) anything" (set

<sup>67</sup> This chapter has been published on RGCS website in the blog section.

<sup>68</sup> From PSL, Paris-Dauphine University.

up by **Neil Gershenfeld**) is part of the original story about fab labs' birth and lists among the three most requested courses at MIT. Impressive. Is that surprising for an independent, open movement? But fab labs, the myth, visuals and concepts around them, were absent from the spaces I visited. Less than one hour later, we explored another place at MIT, the D-Lab, with both a close and a different philosophy from that of fab labs.

A D-Lab is much more socially and politically grounded in the space itself of the MIT. Their **website** states: "MIT D-Lab works with people around the world to develop and advance collaborative approaches and practical solutions to global poverty challenges." Likewise, it stresses an interdisciplinary orientation (in particular in the courses) and research in "collaboration with global partners, technology development, and community initiatives — all of which emphasize experiential learning, real-world projects, community-led development, and scalability."

The place was founded in 2002, with a strong focus on developing solutions to countries' needs. Although not as widespread as the fab lab network (which is outside the MIT structure), D-Lab has an amazing **international** inscription and is connected to communities in 20+ countries. Two interesting times of the visit epitomise the culture of the lab: the presentations of a corn sheller and a mechanical washing machine rotated by a bike (*see Picture 29*).



Picture 29: A mechanical washing machine and a corn sheller presented at D-Lab source: author's own pictures

In both cases, the community's body gestures (hand gestures, postures, ways of moving...), habits, embodied practices (e.g. of crafting, moving, sharing...) and its needs are both the starting and final points of the co-creative process. The method and output are expected to be documented and diffused globally.

Local availability of skills, habits, knowledge and objects is key. If you have barrels around you, do something with barrels... If you are used to a particular gesture, let's see how to extend it to other routines and artifacts.

This philosophy is interesting to compare with the more digital, global sharing, network-grounded, and documentation focus of fab labs, whose ultimate goal is about co-producing a common good for society.

Interesting ideas can travel in time and space, be full of improvisation and bricolage in their local co-production, and be also adapted later in their appropriation in other local contexts. The use of (still) costly tools can also help to represent the object, which will be later produced with laser or water cutters, 3D printers and other tools likely to be produced locally as well.

In contrast, D-Lab has no expectations about a pre-existing set of tools or skills, and starts with the embodied practices of the community. The possible commodification of knowledge, the articulation of business is not part of the story. Both philosophies could be presented the following way:

	Fab Lab Model	D-Lab Model
Focus	Both the Fab lab network and local communities.	Mainly and ultimately the local communities.
Resources	Knowledge and skills documented by the network, local knowledge and skills. Digitalization of skills and projects in the spirit of a common good for the Fab Lab community and society at large.	Gestures, skills, available objects on site, embodied practices. The local community is the both the starting point and final destination.
Property	Both private and open. Access to facilities and knowledge is a key thing.	Not really the key issue as available objects, gestures and technologies are at stake. Out of reach of effective or potential platforms and markets in a way.

Table 8: Dab lab and D-lab models of innovation

Of course, both models presented here are just 'archetypes' and for sure the D-Lab model exists in local fab lab practices, and vice versa. And to return to the example of the mechanical washing machine (which is a re-invention of an old technology), the tripod at the back of the bicycle (*see Picture 29*) could perfectly be a fab lab-documented and -engineered technology. Both approaches are for sure largely complementary.

But they are not 'open' the same way, and do not raise the same political questions for society and the urgent issues we are coping with in the world. For fab labs, knowledge and skills co-produced need to be part of the 'commons' for all society and humanity. For the D-Lab, local communities, their needs and habits come first, and co-producing 'commons' is ultimately an idiosyncratic, local

thing. The higher commons for D-Lab is maybe a 'meta' thing, a method (i.e. how to identify what is locally available? How to extend it? How to transpose it? How to re-combine it?). Interesting food for thought, both for public policies and corporate strategies coping with distributed, heterogeneous local communities.

## Chapter III.7. “Walking in Berlin”- a Newbie’s reflection on an unexpected OWEE experience during #Collday2017<sup>69</sup>

Johanna Voll<sup>70</sup>

### #Collday2017: 8th-10th March 2017 – Berlin and the Collaborative Economy: Old Friends?

Collday2017 was the first event of RGCS Berlin and combined a conference, a workshop as well as a learning expedition over the course of three days in various locations throughout the city of Berlin. See the full program [here](#) (RGCS Berlin 2017). Highlights were the kickoff at Betahaus with several presentations, a co-creation workshop at Fab Lab, the visit of the French Tech Hub Berlin and some surprises along the way including a vertical farming startup, a concert and even some touristic sightseeing.

#### 1. Fascination Coworking

The practice of “doing coworking”, but also the emergence of more and more coworking spaces has been fascinating to me for the past eight years - both from an academic point of view as well as being a practitioner myself. The numbers speak for themselves: By the end of 2018 there are 18900 coworking spaces and 1690000 people who cowork (Foertsch 2018). During my action research about and within the European coworking movement I have gotten to know many different collaborative spaces. I am especially interested in the driving factors of cooperation within these spaces of communitization. I am part of the German Coworking Federation e.V. (GCF), the European Coworking Assembly (ECA) and involved in a few Coworking related projects such as the Coworking Library – an interdisciplinary open online database with links to all coworking research in various languages. I regularly teach about new work practices and temporary as well as contemporary communities.

#### 2. Research group collaborative spaces and #collday2017

I have met many researchers that are interested in these topics along the way but have never managed to actively start functioning collaborations beyond my university. With great joy did I notice the newly formed academic network exploring communities and collaborative movements (RGCS). I enjoyed the additional insights about innovation labs, coworking spaces, hacker spaces and incubators in Berlin. Little did I know that I was part of an experimental phase of the OWEE-method.

#### 3. Accidental OWEE?

Different parts of the program of #Collday2017 took place in various parts of the city of Berlin. This made it

necessary to move our physical bodies using several modes of transportation, but mainly walking. This felt very strange and unorganized as the program was even adjusted during the day when one participant suggested to add more stops along the way. I felt like no one knew where we were going, and I was constantly trying to suppress the urge to act as a tour guide. After all Berlin is the place I called home for the past seven years. But, being the introvert that I am, I kept the growing anger in me to myself and was wondering why this jolly French professor kept talking so much along the way, while I was more concerned with the practicality of leading 20 people through Berlin – seemingly without any plan. Many minutes were spent waiting on street corners or locations – as is often the case when people move in groups. It became quite a challenge for me to manage my inner conflicts during those days (taking control vs. walking with the crowd; speaking up vs. being introverted; waiting vs. moving; individual needs vs. collective goals; small talk vs. in depth conversations).

#### [OWEE: Open Walked Event-based Experimentations]

“Key to OWEE is spending time among people in third-places, keeping bodies and emotions active, walking and talking, breaking down barriers and creating new synergies. Intended to be open to all stakeholders, OWEE emphasises creativity, experimentation, and improvisation” (de Vaujany & Vitaud 2017). Here we can also link to other parts of the whitepaper about OWEE.

#### 4. Reflections of a newbie

Obviously, I did not know about the meaning of OWEE before being part of one. It very much reminded me of the often-used concept of serendipity when community managers explain the magic of coworking. This refers to an unplanned discovery or happy accident. The method implies a notion of serendipity as well. Yet it provides a framework – just like coworking spaces – that encourage these points of commonality. This walked experience is a direct reaction to the ever same academic principles (submit abstracts, present at conferences, publish papers and books, repeat). The many conversations along the walk, in various settings would not have happened if we had been in a closed conference setting. Conversations started while waiting, riding on the double-decker bus, exploring new collaborative spaces or unforeseen encounters along the way and made it easier for me, as

<sup>69</sup> This chapter has been published on the RGCS website in the blog section.

<sup>70</sup> From European University Viadrina.

someone who is rather shy in public speaking situations, to talk to most people from the group at one point. The governance structure of the OWEE seems very similar to collaborative spaces I have looked at. Formal rules are not explicitly enforced, yet there is a common understanding about them. The value of sharing seems central – during the walk but also afterwards through shared data collections and open data access – possibly followed by open access publications. By using shared hashtags on social media platforms this method offers an interesting approach to involve online and offline discussions in the analysis afterwards. The extensive RGCS network provides a great context for this.

## 5. OWEE outlook

Resembling a discourse that has been discussed within the European Coworking Assembly lately I want to suggest rethinking aspects of openness and inclusion. How open is this movement and how can we make sure that the diversity of the places and the people who work (or even live) within them are represented? Or: How open is the OWEE method? In this process we must critically question the so-called coworking values, namely **sustainability, accessibility, openness, collaboration and community, which are often cited within the lively discussions among practitioners of the coworking scene as well as stated on various websites and social media accounts of coworking spaces** (Coworking Wiki, 2013). With that in mind Yochai

Benkler argues that among other factors it is this *diversity* that makes a system more productive (Benkler, 2011). Comparing this to collaborative spaces we can observe different approaches among rather homogeneous spaces (focus on one industry and/or similar members in terms of race, gender, sexuality, social class, age, disability, religion etc.) and an emphasis on explicitly articulated openness. Moreover, the diversity of personal motivations within a space but also while being part of an OWEE shapes the degree of cooperation. Therefore, I am very optimistic about this new research method of shared learning expeditions and its outcomes for the future.

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## Conclusion. Towards an bodied view of commons: making commons walk, feeling solidarity

François-Xavier de Vaujany and Amelie Bohas<sup>71</sup>

« When you want to build a ship, do not begin by gathering wood, cutting boards, and distributing work, but rather awaken within men the desire for the vast and endless sea. »

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

Where are we now? After the organization of 19 learning expeditions, we feel we are somewhere between a (new) research practice and what could become a new method collectively documented. More and more, we also believe that several kinds of OWEEs and learning expeditions should be distinguished:

**[Exploratory OWEEs]** the idea is to learn, to explore and comment new places. Our learning expeditions in Paris, Berlin, London or Geneva were mainly exploration-oriented (see hashtags #RGCS2016, or #OWEEUN for instance). Exploring places has often been a way to explore practices (of innovation, of work, of communication...);

**[Creative OWEEs]** the key stake here is a co-production, doing and creating something together. We organized two particular learning expeditions (#visualizinghacking2016 and 2017) in Berlin and Tokyo whose aim was to take pictures, draw sketches and paint about hacks, bricolages, DIY gestures and improvisations in new places for entrepreneurship and innovation. Our productions were then exhibited during RGCS symposiums in 2016 and 2018;

**[Inclusive OWEEs]:** inclusion and pacification are here at the heart of the walk and the mix of stakeholders. Playing and co-designing together is a way to better know each other. Participants aim at overcoming stereotypes and tensions by putting them in the flow of the walk. The learning expedition we organized recently in Paris (#OWEESA) has been a first opportunity to experiment that kind of learning expedition.

Of course, exploratory, creative and inclusive OWEEs are just archetypes or caricatures. All learning expeditions draw more or less on the three logics which we would like now to analyze and understand further.

In recent writings and discussions inside the network, we have started to elaborate an Embodied Narrative Temporalities (ENT) perspective which stresses both the importance of narratives and embodiment in our experimentations (de Vaujany et al., 2018). Our idea is that our walks, discussions and writings before, during

and beyond our events, are all part of a verbal and non-verbal (e.g. gestures based) set of narratives that combines different kinds of temporalities and practices. These narratives and temporalities are disparate and often conflicting in contemporary practices. Practitioners need to reflect in the short term, in the flow of their activities. Academics produce long term narratives, often published after very long editorial processes (i.e. revise and re-submit). Activists follow both long-term and short-term agendas. By making academics, entrepreneurs, managers, activists and artists walk and produce visible narratives together, OWEE involves a different in situ discussion. By means of social media, posts (e.g. those reproduced in this document), videos, collective times, walks in the context of the problems encountered, we try to share or articulate usually separate or conflicting temporalities. But the practice we try to co-develop has more and more a political dimension. OWEE endeavors to contribute to the elaboration of commons for the network and maybe at some point, for society.

Notions of commons and commonalisation (see David Vallat's section in this White Paper) keep attracting a growing attention in scientific, managerial and political debates. Co-developing commons seems to be the new black of a generation which hankers for a more altruistic, generous, shared world.

Nonetheless, part of today's world has become disembodied and strangely, communalizing can also mean consolidating, indexing, abstracting, in particular when the common is a knowledge or a set of skills. Documenting processes, sharing online, 'organizing' and 'managing' the commons, can also be a deep misappropriation process which has already been stressed. Merleau-Ponty thus "saw ahead for humanity an increasing reduction of the world of meaning to that of data to be endlessly manipulated in order to solve practical problems; this reduction would ultimately cause us to lose touch with the depth of sense. This depth is comprised of the felt gestures of the world, the imaginal deepening of this felt sense, the poetic articulation of the unique way things appear to each of us, to each group and

<sup>71</sup> In the order of appearance: PSL, Paris-Dauphine University.

age, and a rootedness in deeper and vaster horizons that take us out of the petty and partisan.” (Mazis, 2016: 15).

The ethical and political implications of Merleau-Ponty’s writings are extremely important for our project and the strengthening of its philosophical underpinnings. Flesh, as a set of shared, reversible perceptions, can be the basement of a new ethics and politics for collective activity.

On the issue of enmeshment and solidarity, Merleau-Ponty has borrowed or shared key ideas from Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (e.g. from *Pilote de Guerre*). Basically, “one can feel empty and hollow pursuing ethical action for the sake of an abstraction called “humanity”, unless it is based on a more immediate felt connection with humanity through its concrete presence in one’s life. (...) If there is a depth of perception that encompasses the nexus of relations that are the lining of each percept, then to be immersed in the myriad acts of humanity of friendship, kindness, love, beauty, discovery, creativity, and so on, that have spanned the long history of human beings on this planet in uncountable instances of community, gives us another sense of humanity as inexhaustible and of an unfathomable depth”. (Mazis, 2016: 319).

Eventually, OWEE is a philosophy, an approach of life and the sense of togetherness. In continuation to hackers’, makers’ and doers’ values, it is a co-production in the making.

Walking is a way to elaborate a narrative. This narrative is that of a collectivity, RGCS who does not know where it will go and how. But it walks. Through the process of

walking, conversations, encounters, ruptures in the narratives occurs. Writing posts, articles, tweets, Framapads, messages on Whatsapp or elsewhere feed the narrative and its sharing in time and space. It also constitutes more or less assembled times and space.

Walking and drifting together is a way to make visible for those walking a felt solidarity. In the flow, dangers, unexpectedness of the street and public spaces, we obviously share or do not share something. We are all more or less lost and we depend on each other as much as we rely on our Google maps. To stay together and remain a group, we need to adjust the rhythms and speeds of our walk to the weakest of us. We are all in the airplane described by Saint-Exupéry, and sometimes close to Arras, one of his worst episode.

Co-producing a common may be most of all this process, with its depth and its silence. It may be most of all this felt solidarity and this ethic of flesh at the heart of Merleau-Ponty writings. Let’s document this process, let’s share it, with poetry, humor, numerous encounters and improvisations. The process will always be much more important than the ‘final’ results embodied by this document.

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« Et comme il n'est point de but atteint, ni de cycle révolu, ni d'époque achevée, sinon pour les historiens qui t'inventeront ces divisions, comment saurais-tu qu'est à regretter la démarche qui n'a pas encore abouti et qui n'aboutira jamais — car le sens des choses ne réside point dans la provision une fois faite que consomment les sédentaires, mais dans la chaleur de la transformation, de la marche, ou du désir. »

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *Citadelle*

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« Et le simple berger lui-même qui veille ses moutons sous les étoiles, s'il prend conscience de son rôle, se découvre plus qu'un berger. Il est une sentinelle.  
Et chaque sentinelle est responsable de tout l'empire »

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *Citadelle*

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## Annexes.

References at the heart of the Embodied Narrative Temporalities (ENT) perspective we are building

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## The New Time-Space of Families in a Pandemic World: Invitation to a Nomadology of the sofa

François-Xavier de Vaujany<sup>72</sup>

What is the etymology of the word ‘family’? In early 15<sup>th</sup> century., it corresponded to the “servants of a household” coming from Latin *familia* “family servants, domestics collectively, the servants in a household,” thus also “members of a household, the estate, property; the household, including relatives and servants<sup>73</sup>”. It then evolved in English to the sense of the “collective body of persons who form one household under one head and one domestic government, including parents, children, and servants, and as sometimes used even lodgers or boarders” from 1540s. Later in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, it included the idea of parents with children and/or “whether they dwell together or not”. Although possibly tights to phenomenon such as ‘communities’, ‘contracts or ‘couples’, family is thus a homeport, a time-space of fixity in a world in movement. Initially, fixating and anchoring made possible servitude (‘for’ and ‘in’). Beyond servitude, family has become in the modern and contemporary periods the most primordial time-space of solidarity, a place interwoven with the true locus and power of intimate ‘I’s and ‘we’s, the epitome of a ‘bubble’ grounding experience, the most crucial inhabitation process: home (Sloterdijk, 2011). Indeed, “speaking about inhabitation in the world does not mean simply attributing domesticity within the gigantic to those who exist: for it is precisely the possibility of being-at-home-in-the-world that is questionable, and to pre-suppose it as a given would be a relapse into a physic of containers<sup>74</sup>” (Ibid., p. 335). On this way, the house of being is not “a casing in which does who exist come and go (...). Its structure is more that of a ball of care in which existence has spread out in an original being out “(Ibid., 335).

Familial house has for long been either the main time-space for life and work activities before its separation from a specific place devoted to work (compania, manufactories, firms... see Hatchuel and Glise, 2003; de Vaujany, 2010, 2022) and the emergence of third-places in-between home and work (restaurants, hotels, pubs, malls... see Oldenburg, 1982, 1989). Historically ‘outside’ of what gradually became a workplace, family embodied more and more a private, intimate time-space from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Obviously, modernity set up major bifurcations, although numerous families still hosted couples helping each other in the context of a shared, craft-oriented activity or peasantry.

But the ongoing pandemic revealed in most western countries an increasing pattern of familial activities which has been strengthened by our crisis. More and more, family members, familial spaces, places, and objects, have been contributing to a paradoxical set of loosely coupled and deterritorialized activities, willingly cultivated as ambiguous (i.e., beyond traditional categories such as work-leisure). All members of the same family, men, women, children, are involved today in productive activities taking place within the same time-space, at home. Adults telework at home for their own activities. Women and men manage their activities. Children also work at home, and sometimes (in the context of lockdown or infection), exclusively at home. Everybody shares the same facilities (a wifi, a printer, family tablets, collective laptops...) with different individualized access. Surprisingly, new kinds of mutual help happen at home (couples help each other for their distinct work activities, children help their parents, parents help their children, friends of the children help the children and the parents, etc.).

In big cities, apartments become sometimes contested spaces. Who should access to this room likely to be transformed into an office? Who should have the best seat close to the window in the dining room? Who should work in the kitchen? What should be done when all children are at home at the same time and need to work at home? What should appear on the screen for the collaborators? What should be concealed? Suddenly, the quietness of homes is disturbed. It is not any more a private place including stable sub-private spaces. It becomes a stage, a movie set, a modular space, an unexpected liminality... People keep moving inside of it, from it, around it, through it. The intensity of activity inside home is increased while movements do not accelerate. We move from there, make the world move, keep transforming the world, from an immobile landscape around our sofa. Indeed, the house itself keeps moving. We bring and expand our intimacy in and through our nomadic ways of working. People’s second home becomes a semi-first home part of the week (for families without children or whose children are old enough to have their own life). As people stay longer together at home, quietness is more and more searched in

<sup>72</sup> From PSL, Paris-Dauphine University.

<sup>73</sup> See Oxford Etymology Dictionary here: <https://www.etymonline.com/word/family>.

<sup>74</sup> In a way, Sloterdijk (2011) opens the way to a nomadology, in particular when he defines his theory of spheres as “a morphological tool that allows us to grasp the exodus of the human being, from the primitive symbiosis to world-historical action in empires and global systems, as an almost coherent history of extraversion” (p. 67). But this nomadic path is different from the delezian one I chose for this short essay.

a walk around, a reading in the park, a jogging, an escape in the digital landscape...home and homing experience becomes an itinerant reverie.

### 1. The deterritorialization of familial activities

Family and familial activities, which used to be grounded, emplaced, territorialized a couple of decades ago, are now continuously on the move. Family is continuously deterritorialized. It becomes a continuous deterritorialization, which is the most common experience of any nomad (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980<sup>75</sup>). Family members are the new nomads, tracing their way and their space in movement itself. Indeed, today familial immobility is always an illusion. Family is always making the world moving around. Children with their plays close to work activities at home, keep re-opening the space of home through the space of their play. Children playfulness is much more than a possible interruptions or disruptions of adults' telework activities. It contributes also to a more playful atmosphere and a continuous ambiguity of the space, always (re)opened for children as it can be (re)opened for nomads. Likewise, so-called 'digital space' is always in movement in the seated<sup>76</sup> space of most 'homes'. TV is always on. Tablets and smartphones simply fill the void of any waiting possibly opened by computers and TVs. Work is continuously happening in the precarious inside and bubbles settled at home. It pervades all moments. More subtly, it sometimes appears as something else, which is actually a free work (Casili, 2019). More radically, the occurrence of Twitter, Instagram, Tik Tok, Facebook or Youtube at home, more and more in a commodified way (followers are 'assets'), contribute to the radical metamorphosis of our 'sweet homes' and its aestheticization. What used to be beyond any resource as a 'space' and 'moment' we take care of in the Heideggerian sense of the term (Heidegger, 1927), becomes the mere shelter of heteroclit activities, the most extreme of all facticities enacted for an imaginary gaze 'outside' oppressively inside what used to be comfortable bubbles.

The time-space of families is not any more a territorialized bubble inside a world in movement, a provisional suspension. It is the highest of all intensities of our world. The major nexus of an assemblage

[agencement<sup>77</sup> in French] through which our capitalism is continuously and brutally activated via our orders, our moods, the infinitude of our small movements, our trajectories (which are neither inside nor outside a private bubble but keep expressing intimacy inside the public space). More than ever, a new nomadology is necessary to understand the new time-space of work. Home, 'homing', is an "aberrant movement" (Deleuze, 1980, 1985). Beyond any mean-end rationality, it follows its own concrete logic, primary logic, a nomadologic logic settling its own ephemeral way (Lapoujade, 2017). It happens as an unexpected 'smooth space' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980; Aroles and McLean, 2021; de Vaujany, 2022).

### 2. Invitation to a nomadology of the sofa

What could be the new nomadology from the sofa I want to emphasize here? It is a new time-space<sup>78</sup> revealed (not just 'produced' or 'accelerated' by our contemporary crisis). Beyond the idea of the blurring of private and public spheres (which would appear as pre-constituted or essential categories<sup>79</sup>), *I want to stress here a new eventfulness of our world, a cosmological move*. Spacing and timing of the world happen differently. The intensity of our world is different. It keeps swirling and bifurcating because ontologically all the assemblages that constitute it draw and exploit a continuous incompleteness of the world (de Vaujany, 2022). Ontologically, novelty is continuously called beyond what could be continuously new (a primordial originarity, see Heidegger, 1938). Managerial apocalypses are part of this new world as the continuous revelation of a new world already in the process of becoming in our present, imminent in our experience, already at stake now. "Buy this new version of software Omega. The last version we sent you one year ago is obsolete." Or more surprisingly: "Do not change your smartphone, we will update all its surface and give you a new software to make it last.". Even sobriety becomes a new time-space for incompleteness.

We are stuck in a 'One Thousand- and One-Nights' type of narrative, continuously calling for the next sequence. This is a material force part of the assembling process (agencement) itself. Narrative events inside managerial assemblages continuously reinforce this nexus of 'incompleting' events. Homing opens the way to an

<sup>75</sup> A category they carefully distinguish from those provisionally deterritorialized and in search of territorialization (e.g., migrants). Nomadism is a continuous, cultivated, ambited experience of deterritorialization.

<sup>76</sup> For Deleuze and Guattari (1980, p. 472): "Of course, the nomad moves, but he is seated and he is never more seated than when he moves".

<sup>77</sup> According to Deleuze and Guattari (1980, p. 629): "Assemblages [agencements] are already something other than strata, but they operate in zones of decoding of environments: they first take a territory from the environments. Any assemblage is first and foremost territorial. The first concrete rule of assemblages is to discover the territoriality they envelop, because there is always one: in their trash can or on a bench, Beckett's characters make up a territory. (...) But what already means that the assemblage is not reduced to layers, is that expression becomes a semiotic system, a regime of signs, and that the content becomes a pragmatic system, actions and passions."

<sup>78</sup> Something very close to the Riemannian space described by Deleuze and Guattari (1980, p. 60). A non-homogeneous space made of neighbourhoods whose closeness is indeterminate in the broader time-space. The experience of soon-late, close-far between these different prehensions (neighbourhoods) is indeterminate.

<sup>79</sup> Directions I find highly problematic.

unexpected 'smooth space'. For Deleuze and Guattari (1980, p. 472), sedentary space is striated by walls, enclosures and ways between enclosures, whereas nomadic spaces are smooth, only marked by lines erased by the trajectory. (...) The nomad distributes himself in a smooth space, he occupies, lives, and holds this space, and here is his territorial principle".

Home is becoming the strange core of this phenomena. What used to be the stable homeport of the becoming of our societies, what made possible sometimes the worst conditions 'outside', at work, is part of the new managerial apocalypses. It is the main part of its pre-figuration. Incompleteness mainly happens there. And lockdowns, quarantines, remote work just make this trend stronger and most of all, more visible.

Developing a nomadology of the sofa is becoming urgent. Beyond mobile work, digital nomads and gig economy (which are also important topics but are not at the heart of my argument here), it is becoming urgent to understand the nomadology that produces our ephemeral selves which are not yet subjectivities. Why? Far from the expectations of Deleuze and Guattari (1980), we are authentic nomads in practice, but we are not free. Our patience and ability to wait is lower than ever<sup>80</sup>. Our smooth spaces and spacing contribute indirectly to striating the space of others or the space of our future. The State and war machines described by Deleuze and Guattari (1980) are not so much the problem. Indeed, they do not seem to fight the kind of nomadism or State I describe here. During the pandemic, the State kept encouraging and inciting the paradoxical familial nomads pointed out in this short essay. Both the State and capitalism seem to find their way with this new nomadism.

We walk more and more on an infinite desert of bits, inside a huge landscape of digital sand. But on this way, provisional passage points and the lack of destination are illusory. The assemblage borrowed for the process of walking keeps performing subtly our non-destination, our drift, while it transforms gradually smooth spaces into striated spaces and striated spaces into smooth ones.

In a way, we come back to the old world of 'families', that of servants, of a domesticity. But this domesticity is not a place here and a time now for those involved in it. It is more and more a comfort for others, farther and later. Those likely to exploit the data.

Maybe it is time to contest and question politically the most intimate time-space we share with those and that closest to us? Maybe it is time, in the studies and

experimentations about so called new ways of working and living, to elaborate of politics of home? A politics of home and homing grounded into nomadology.

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<sup>80</sup> In strong contrast to the kind of nomads described by Deleuze and Guattari (1980, p. 472): "The nomad knows how to wait, he has infinite patience."



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