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Out of the Panopticon and into Exile: Visibility and Control in Distributed New Culture Organizations

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Abstract

This paper builds a theoretical argument for *exile* as an alternative metaphor to the panopticon, for conceptualizing visibility and control in the context of distributed "new culture" organizations. Such organizations emphasize team relationships between employees who use digital technologies to stay connected with each other and the organization. I propose that in this context, a fear of exile – that is a fear of being left out, overlooked, ignored or banished – can act as a regulating force that inverts the radial spatial dynamic of the panopticon and shifts the responsibility for visibility, understood both in terms of competitive *exposure* and existential *recognition*, onto workers. As a consequence these workers enlist digital technologies to become visible at the real or imagined organizational centre. A conceptual appreciation of exile, as discussed in existential philosophy and postcolonial theory, is shown to offer productive grounds for future research on how a need for visibility in distributed, digitised, and increasingly precarious work environments regulates employee subjectivity, in a manner that is not captured under traditional theories of ICT-enabled surveillance in organizations.

"Until you conquer the fear of being an outsider, an outsider you will remain"

C.S. Lewis, The Inner Ring (1966)

1 Introduction

It is today difficult to pinpoint where any organization "is" in time and space. Knowledge work in particular regularly takes place beyond the four walls of a conventional office building and "nonstandard" workers take advantage of arrangements that offer temporal and spatial flexibility, such as working part time or from home or on the road (Ashford, George, & Blatt, 2007). Such a blurring of traditional organizational parameters has been taken as grounds to claim that organizations are now "boundary*less*" (Ashkenas, Ulrich, Jick, & Kerr, 2015; for an alternative perspective see Fleming & Spicer, 2004). After all, technology allows workers to connect, communicate, and collaborate from "anywhere at anytime" (Mellner, Kecklund, Kompier, Sariaslan, & Aronsson, 2016).

In such a networked work environment, it has been argued that there is no longer much sense to the notion of being "in the office" (Fried & Heinemeier Hansson, 2013). These transformations, which reconfigure notions of spatial boundaries and relatedly presence and visibility in the workplace (de Vaujany, Leclercq-Vandelannoitte, Munro, Nama, & Holt, 2018) have informed growing critique of a mainstay concept of critical studies of technologically supported disciplinary dynamics in organizations: the panopticon.

The panopticon metaphor has long been considered "archetypal of IT-based social control" (Leclercq-Vandelannoitte, Isaac, & Kalika, 2014, p. 545; Willcocks, 2004). Developed conceptually by Foucault and based on Bentham's design for an efficient

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prison, the panopticon has been a powerful source of inspiration for critique of managerial practices emboldened by information technologies that permit fine grained observation and monitoring of employees, even at a distance. Yet the panopticon's potency as a metaphor falters in the recognition that today's organizations are often distributed and digitally networked (Munro, 2000), with unclear boundaries (Bauman & Lyon, 2013), flatter team structures and increased mobility and autonomy (Brivot & Gendron, 2011; Leclercq-Vandelannoitte, 2013). Brivot and Gendron (2011, p. 140) further point out that in such working environments, "individuals can also actively participate (wittingly or not) in their own visibility, thereby creating new potentialities of surveillance by others".

Stretched beyond its original emphasis on observation through individualization and isolation, the panopticon is tasked with supporting analyses of phenomena that are increasingly tangential to its original explanatory strength (Leclercq-Vandelannoitte, 2013; Leclercq-Vandelannoitte et al., 2014; Munro, 2000). While there have been calls to "go beyond" (Brivot & Gendron, 2011; Leclercq-Vandelannoitte, 2013; Leclercq-Vandelannoitte et al., 2014; Martinez, 2011) or to "tear down" (Haggerty, 2006) the panopticon, a productive alternative root metaphor (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2011) is not yet available.

In response, I introduce the alternative metaphor of 'exile'. I argue that a threat of exile compels distributed employees to make themselves visible at the perceived centre of organizational life. Exile has a spatial logic of expulsion rather than containment, and control stems from the need for 'exposure' and 'recognition' rather than through the expectation of surveillance. Exile is a useful alternative because voluntary 'visibilizing' practices do not make sense from within the popular panopticon metaphor, yet are a logical response to a fear of exile.

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I begin by arguing that we need another way of thinking about how visibility plays a role in control in a particular kind of contemporary organization: distributed new culture organizations. This organizational archetype has two main features: knowledge worker employees make use of digital technologies to work both in and beyond the organizational head office, and management actively supports what has been termed a "new culture" (Casey, 1999) work structure where employees collaborate in teams and are more or less implicitly encouraged to think of one another as 'family'.

This dual condition is analytically significant because employees are both 'freed' from the physical enclosure of the head office but also work and collaborate within teams that are treated as central to a sense of identity and belonging in the organization. The consequence is that employees are still bound existentially and practically to one another even though they may not be co-located. In such organizations there is a need to be integrated within the organizational 'family' in order to 'belong' (Casey, 1999), yet this cannot be achieved through physical proximity and instead needs to be worked at (to a greater or lesser extent) via digital communication and collaboration technologies.

I further argue that the threat of exile - a fear of being overlooked, forgotten, left out - is intensified by the late neoliberal conditions of precarity and recession (Alberti, Bessa, Hardy, Trappmann, & Umney, 2018; Fleming, 2017). Subjective and objective experiences of precarization (a sense that one's employment is insecure) are prevalent in modern capitalist economies across social strata, as the future feels less certain and "more areas of life are subordinated to the needs of the economy" (Alberti et al., 2018, p. 449; Shukaitis, 2013). A sense of uncertainty is reinforced by individualization, competition, and radical responsibilization that jointly deliver the message that "if you're a loser in the new world of work it must somehow be your fault" (Fleming, 2017, p. 703).

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Within such a competitive entrepreneurial logic (Bröckling, 2015), employees are presented with a Darwinian narrative of survival: "if you fail to adapt, no one - not your employer, not the government - is going to catch you when you fall" (Hoffman & Casnocha, 2012, p. 8). Yet as vulnerable beings, humans fundamentally suffer from and try to immunize themselves against such precariousness by seeking out social and familial bonds (Alberti et al., 2018; Butler, 2016). New culture organizations are therefore existentially attractive in the context of increased precarization, but they also reinforce the idea that belonging needs to be worked at, for fear of being 'left out in the cold'.

In the following I use problematization (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2011) to generate a conceptual argument for exile as a way of understanding these emerging organizational dynamics. The aim of problematization is "to illuminate and challenge those assumptions underlying existing theories (including one's own favourite theories) about a specific subject matter" (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2011, p. 53). The aim of research guided by problematization is to generate "interesting theory" that is relevant to the field to which it contributes and that can drive forward new lines of enquiry.

I examine the "ideological assumptions" (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2011) behind the belief that workers use technology to escape from the "managerial gaze" (Harrington & Ruppel, 1999) and examine the "root metaphor assumptions" (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2011; see also Cornelissen, 2005) behind understandings of visibility and control in organizations. I draw on existential philosophy, postcolonial theory, and governmentality to challenge the organizational and critical management literature's "in-house assumption" (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2011) that technological *surveillance* is the primary or sole visibility related control mechanism in worker-manager dynamics where technology plays a key role (Ball, 2010; Fairweather, 1999; Sewell, 1998).

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The following process of problematization is informed by interviews with remote workers, however the paper is conceptual in nature. Selected empirical material is used for inspiration and illustration (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007) and not as a 'proof' of the conceptual contribution. Instead I use empirical material to highlight key issues and to illustrate links to otherwise quite abstract concepts from existential philosophy. In particular I place interview extracts into dialogue with the work of Merleau-Ponty (1962), Arendt (2009, 2017), Vallega (2003), and Saïd (2012) in order to show how existential notions of spatiality in the 'exilic experience' offer fertile conceptual ground from which to build an alternative understanding of visibility and control in contemporary workplaces.

2   Visibility and control in studies of distributed work

Literature on virtual work, telework, and remote work has long been concerned with the loss of organizational and managerial control that occurs when distributed employees are "out of sight" (Sewell & Taskin, 2015). This literature has tended to take the view that an employee is essentially "a person who is genuinely a member of the organization but who is subversive and is trying to destroy it" (Checkland & Howell, 1998, p. 80). This view echoes McGregor's assessment of Theory X managers who assume that their employees dislike work and will avoid it where possible (McGregor, 1960). Against such an understanding, a lack of visibility over workers is a problem for management because it is assumed, aligned with Taylor, that workers will take advantage of a lack of supervision by doing less work (O'Neill, Hambley, & Chatellier, 2014).

These assumptions have consequences for how distributed and remote workers have been treated both conceptually and in practice. The 'Theory X' attitude is for example apparent in the research findings of O'Neill et al. (2014, p. 152), who recommend "closer managerial monitoring" of remote workers with certain personality types. The

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assumption that is revealed here is that if a manager's "presence" is taken to be the key force that coerces a worker to perform, then remote and distributed workers are conceptualized as having escaped the "managerial gaze" and therefore the manager's "control" (Harrington & Ruppel, 1999). As a consequence, technologies "that enable virtual work environments" (Harrington & Ruppel, 1999) have largely been perceived as representing a freedom for employees that correspondingly jeopardises managerial control.

As forms of teleworking became more popular however, technologies were adapted and better understood in terms of how they could enable supervisors to engage in electronic surveillance of remote workers (Fairweather, 1999). Technological methods of remote surveillance were even considered superior to traditional methods of managerial supervision because they offered more detail, were more efficient, and had further reach (Fairweather, 1999; Zuboff, 1988). In response to these technological surveillance efforts, teleworkers started to retreat from technological means of communication, becoming more reluctant to engage with the technologies that were being used by management to keep track of them (Fairweather, 1999). This then compounded the issue of isolation that was beginning to emerge as a significant issue for remote working employees (Fairweather, 1999; Whittle & Mueller, 2009).

This tension, where technology is seen to both free workers from the managerial gaze and yet also to subject them to greater scrutiny and surveillance is still prevalent today. Remote working for example has been positioned as a way for employees to increase their "flexibility" (Fried & Heinemeier Hansson, 2013), whereas managers remain unsure about whether workers can be trusted in their absence (Leeds, 2007; Mazmanian, Orlikowski, & Yates, 2013). Technology is sometimes then introduced both as a means of connecting remote workers, and as a means of controlling them. Here a kind of cat-

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and-mouse dynamic arises, where managers enlist technologies for supervision and remote workers retreat, thereby exacerbating both managerial efforts to gain control and the problem of worker isolation (Fairweather, 1999).

In response to this situation, Harrington and Ruppel (1999, p. 223) have recommended a change in management style to accommodate "new methods of employee communication and interaction". These "new methods" of relating to employees include an emphasis on *commitment*, *trust*, and *engagement*, as a way to regain managerial control when remote workers are permitted to sit beyond the "managerial gaze" (Harrington & Ruppel, 1999). In this way of thinking, technology is no longer positioned as the problem nor the solution. Rather, it is suggested that managers and employees should change how they think about their relationship to one another, so that remote workers can be better trusted to act in the organization's best interests even while "out of sight" (Sewell & Taskin, 2015).

3   The context of distributed new culture organizations

Commitment, trust, and familial relations are also considered hallmarks of the "new culture" (Casey, 1999; Roberts, 2009). In the "new culture", the organization is a primary site for identity and identification: organizational teams become the "family" to which one belongs (Casey, 1999). While the very notion of organizational culture has been critiqued as a technique for managerial control (Knights & Willmott, 1987; Willmott & Alvesson, 2002), the new culture goes a step further by promoting familial thinking and flat structures in the worker's relationship to colleagues and management, so that the team becomes a key source of 'horizontal' forms of control, for example through peer-surveillance (Sewell, 1998), but also as a site of social pressure to belong.

The new culture organization archetype is prevalent today in knowledge industries, particularly in start-ups and scale-ups that appeal to a younger, educated and ambitious

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workforce. The new culture is for example modelled by large Silicon Valley companies where workers are encouraged to travel together to the organizational "campus" (Saval, 2016), share cafeteria meals and work in close-knit teams in offices replete with fridges, snacks, games tables, and in some cases even nap rooms (Cassidy, 2017). While such conditions evoke a sense of friendliness and fun, the popular transition to work environments based on team-as-family structures can be linked to an historical trajectory of strategic managerialist efforts aimed at lessening the influence of collectivised workers who resisted efficiency initiatives in the 1980s (Peters & Waterman, 1982).

Walton (1985) for example famously urged managers to move from a managerial model of "control" to one of "commitment", but this shift was not motivated by a moral or virtue imperative, rather it is positioned as a rational response to the disruptive effects of antagonistic industrial relations that were negatively impacting profits in the late 1980s (Casey, 1999). An "us" versus "them" dynamic was common in workplaces at the time, and the adversarial relationships that transpired were bad for business. Walton (1985) advocated for corporate cultures that emphasised familial relationships and teams because they were more efficient.

This historical trajectory is relevant to new forms of organizing that rely on distributed work. As was previously mentioned, new culture style organizations have been positioned as better suited to remote working arrangements (Harrington & Ruppel, 1999; Hunton & Norman, 2010). This is because it is assumed that employees in a commitment-based environment can be better trusted to act in the organization's best interests (Hunton & Norman, 2010), even when "out of sight" (Sewell & Taskin, 2015).

Although the notion of an organizational "family" may seem a positive alternative to the increasingly individualized work environment (Fleming, 2017), productivity gains are

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sought by requiring organizational members to feel that they should *work at* their membership and *demonstrate* their commitment: the new culture is associated with competition between workers, who engage in "interpersonal suspicion, sibling-like rivalry, and nepotism" (Casey, 1999, p. 167; Roberts, 2005). I will draw on this analysis to argue that *distributed* new culture employees feel that they need to show that they are part of the team, manifesting in a competitive *quest for visibility*.

In the following I introduce in more detail how visibility and control have predominantly been explored in technologically enabled work: by means of the panopticon metaphor. The section makes possible an articulation of assumptions that prevent further insight into how voluntary visibility contributes to control in distributed new culture organizations.

4   The panopticon and its limits

In the panopticon, visibility is guaranteed, with the effect of inducing "in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" (Foucault, 1977/2012, p. 201). However in the organizational context I take as the basis for this analysis, visibility is reserved for those who compete for it via digital self-disclosure (Leclercq-Vandelannoitte et al., 2014) that can take the form of exhibitionism (Brivot & Gendron, 2011; see also Cristea & Leonardi, 2019). Thus while surveillance may be the *result* of employees using digital technologies, Foucault's early work on the panopticon does not on its own offer a way of grasping the willingness with which many employees contribute personal information online in an apparent effort to be seen.

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Foucault (1977/2012) famously adapted Jeremy Bentham's[1] prison model of the panopticon as a metaphor for the disciplinary effects of pervasive surveillance when combined with division. The following quote explains how the panopticon was designed to work as a prison by ensuring that prisoners were visible at all times:

> Bentham's (1787/1995) panopticon prison design, which directly inspired Foucault (1977), featured a central tower in a circular building, divided into individual cells. The panopticon is based on the organization of bounded enclosures, or divisible, observable, calculable spaces. Prisoners have no idea whether they are being watched; they are painfully aware though that they are being observed, so the persistent visibility of the guard tower, combined with uncertainty about when they might be watched, encourage internalisation of a disciplinary gaze. (Leclercq-Vandelannoitte et al., 2014, p. 545)

Though his analysis of panopticism (Caluya, 2010) was only one component of Foucault's extensive work on how "human beings are made subjects" (Foucault, 1982, p. 777), the panopticon metaphor has been widely embraced in studies of organizations and control. It was for example adapted to include ICTs, in the "electronic panopticon" (Lyon, 1993), which is a key concept in Zuboff's (1988) study of how automation leads to increased visibility of work processes with implications for worker autonomy (see also Burton-Jones, 2014).

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[1] The idea for which is attributed to his brother Samuel Bentham (see Steadman, 2012)

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Today, the panopticon metaphor is so commonly applied that "the very mention of the term in conferences immediately leads scholars to roll their eyes in boredom" (Caluya, 2010, p. 621). In response to its overuse, Haggerty (2006) argues for "tearing down the walls" of the panopticon, assumedly along with transmorphisms such as the 'superpanopticon', 'electronic panopticon', 'post-panopticon', 'ban-opticon', 'pedagopticon', 'fractal panopticon', 'synopticon', and 'neo-panopticon' (Caluya, 2010; Haggerty, 2006), and more recently the 'portable panopticon' (De Saulles & Horner, 2011), which is enabled by mobile technologies.

Apart from being burdened with overuse, the panopticon metaphor is now challenged by technologies such as mobile information systems that are ubiquitous and so bring into question the notion that management's capacity to observe workers is "confined to company premises" (Leclercq-Vandelannoitte, 2013, p. 543). New forms of organizing, supported by now emerged technologies such as laptops, smartphones, and tablets that enable spatially and temporally distributed work, now contribute to a need for critical 'logics of control' that have a greater scope to account for the nuances of spatial distribution and willingness to participate than the panopticon can cope with (Brivot & Gendron, 2011; Leclercq-Vandelannoitte, 2013; Leclercq-Vandelannoitte et al., 2014; Martinez, 2011).

The panopticon metaphor thus rests on certain assumptions about how power and status are exercised in architectures of control (Dale, 2005) that are tied to a way of organizing that is no longer as dominant as it once was. Nevertheless, attempts continue to be made to adapt the panopticon to encompass developments, for example the popularity of social media technologies where people willingly share information about themselves with one another:

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> In disciplinary society, the occupants of the panopticon were isolated from each other for more thorough surveillance, and they were not permitted to speak. The inhabitants of the digital panopticon, on the other hand, engage in lively communication and bare themselves of their own free will. (Han, 2015b, p. viii)

In this appraisal of the "digital panopticon", key elements of the original design are subverted. The panopticon prison's architecture was expressly designed to isolate inhabitants from one another, rendering them calculable, their only opportunity for recognition (Roberts, 2009) coming from a centralised pillar of authoritative observation. The concept is thus now severely stretched: what meaning does this penal metaphor of enclosure hold when "inhabitants" are engaged in "lively communication" and actively produce and share personal information and "bare" themselves to one another "of their own free will"?

Leclercq-Vandelannoitte et al. (2014, pp. 546-547) have characterised four further developments that present a challenge to the metaphor of the panopticon : 1) *From a subdued prisoner to a voluntary participant* 2) *From hierarchical surveillance to distributed control* 3) *From an enclosed physical prison to potential unbounded control* and 4) *From unilateral constraints to dialectics of control and autonomy*. In response to these challenges to the panopticon, the authors draw on Deleuze's (1992) notion of a 'control society', which is "based on the elimination of physical enclosures" where "free-floating control [is instead] facilitated by the development of modern IT" (Leclercq-Vandelannoitte et al., 2014, p. 547).

The observation that subjects are now not straightforwardly in the role of "subdued prisoners" submitting to acts of surveillance is pertinent in the context of distributed and

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digitally enabled work (Brivot & Gendron, 2011). As Leclercq-Vandelannoitte et al. (2014, p. 546) point out, "unlike IT-based panoptic arrangements, which have long been initiated in companies by a superior hierarchical authority without the consent of those being controlled, mobile IS are frequently introduced, adopted, and demanded by the employees, who are not necessarily aware of [the technologies'] potential for control". This shift is a major challenge to the logic of panopticism. Seeking opportunities to be seen may still result in surveillance, but it is not always the experience of employees that their visibility is 'guaranteed' or even sufficient.

I query, however, the notion that control is now 'free' (Deleuze, 1992) in the sense of being diffuse or amorphous. Although it has been said that "control is now flowing throughout the open social landscape" and that the exercise of disciplinary control is no longer confined within "institutional boundaries" (Martinez, 2011, p. 201), a *radial* spatial dynamic to forces of visibility and control is preserved in distributed organizations that conform to a new culture style of management. Although the boundaries of certain contemporary organizational forms are difficult to define in Cartesian space, an organizational 'centre' – perhaps a head office (Goodall & Roberts, 2003) or a more subjectively defined locus of decision making power – still plays an important role in organizing existential spatial dynamics of visibility and control.

When there is a centre, real or imagined (Roberts, 2005), there inevitably corresponds a boundary that denotes who is 'in' or 'out' (see also Lewis, 1966 for a literary perspective). Under such a dynamic of perceived insiders and outsiders, control does not flow freely or haphazardly, but rather draws employees forward towards a perceived centre of visibility,

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in what amounts to an inversion of the panopticon's spatial logic.[2] Foucault's later work on governmentality is valuable here (Foucault, 1991; Foucault, Davidson, & Burchell, 2010), because it supports an investigation of how and why individuals take on the responsibility of 'visibilizing' themselves in order to compete in the neoliberal workplace as 'enterprising subjects' (Fleming, 2017; McNay, 2009; Rose, 1992).

But what can we say about the *spatial* dynamics of power, control, and visibility in distributed work environments, when we leave the panopticon metaphor behind? And what scope is there for resistance when one is nominally already 'free'? My aim in the following is to show that there is an alternative way to theorise the 'social dependency' on digital tools and activities of digital participation in the distributed workplace: with the metaphor of *exile*. 'Exile' allows organizational scholars to grasp how and why, beyond convenience or logistical necessity, employees can be driven to participate in digital self-disclosure due to an *existential* need to be seen as a legitimate member of the organization - to remain 'on the inside' of organizational life.

5 Exile and Existential Space

In this section I put forward the notion of 'exile' as an alternative root metaphor for theorising dynamics of visibility and control in distributed new culture organizations. I argue that in such organizational contexts, a fear of being exiled from the idealised or imagined organizational centre can compel distributed workers in particular to enlist

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[2] The 'synopticon' also offers an inverted conceptualization of the panopticon, to theorise how mass media, in particular television, permits the observation of the 'few by the many' (to trace the development of this concept see Mathiesen, 1997; Bauman, 1998; Boyne, 2000; Doyle, 2011). The radial dynamic I describe is instead concerned with how and why workers on the periphery of organizational life are active in their efforts to make themselves visible at the perceived centre.

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technologies that allow them to digitally display themselves in a manner they perceive will garner attention, influence, and approval from peers, management, and decision makers. Selected material from interviews with remote workers is used to illustrate key conceptual points.

5.1   Introducing 'exile'

Being ex-communicated, banished, exiled, or even simply *ignored* has for centuries been invoked as a powerful punitive measure, used as a spectacle both to punish transgressors and, by way of warning, to induce existing members of a community to conform. Foucault (1999) himself made several references to exile in his work, for example in his discussion of parrhesiastes who were exiled from society in ancient Greece for speaking threatening truths, and the practice of expelling lepers to keep the city safe from contamination (Foucault, 1977/2012). The tactic of exiling criminals beyond a country's boundaries was still in operation as late as the 19th century, when English law offered criminals the option of being banished to its penal colonies as an alternative to capital punishment (Abbott, 2016).

The boundary between inclusion and exclusion that exile hinges on can sometimes be mapped in Cartesian terms (for example with reference to the perimeter of a community's habitat), but it is more significantly experienced *existentially*: the space of exile is the "perilous territory of not-belonging: this is to where in a primitive time peoples were banished" (Saïd, 2001, p. 140). The exile's "territory of not-belonging" is thus distinct from arrangements where the 'Other' is kept in a separate enclosure, in order to maintain a "pure community" (Foucault, 1977/2012, p. 198) through simultaneous exclusion and containment, for example in a camp (Agamben, 1995), prison, asylum, or colony (Foucault, 1977/2012).

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Essential to the threat of exile is the perceived home or centre that one fears exclusion *from*. As Saïd points out: "in a very acute sense exile is a solitude experienced outside the group: the deprivations felt at not being with others in the communal habitation" (2001, p. 140). The space of exile is thus two-fold - there is an 'inside' and an 'outside', but this 'outside' is indistinct, and its borders are usually defined *existentially*, that is in terms of how one feels and experiences them, rather than through explicit barriers or observable geographies. Organizational forms that emphasize commitment and belonging can more forcefully engender a fear of being left out as their existential complement. A fear of being exiled is therefore perhaps an inevitable counterpart to the organization becoming the heart of identity, belonging and security in the face of increased experiences of precarization of work (Alberti et al., 2018).

5.2   Away from the 'centre of real life'

Exile always highlights a relational dynamic between (imagined) centre and periphery, based in an experiential sense of 'where the action is' and where one is 'not'. An existential comprehension of spatiality is needed to further explore this point. To illustrate: in *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty (1962) recounts a story where he is holidaying in a village some distance from his home in Paris. For a while, this seaside village feels like a temporary home. He enjoys himself until he receives news of important events unfolding in Paris, at which point he describes feeling immediately "exiled" and "excluded" from "real life":

> ...then I feel exiled in this village, excluded from real life, and imprisoned far away from everything. Our body and our perception always solicit us to take the landscape they offer as the centre of the world. But this landscape is not necessarily the landscape of our life. I can "be elsewhere" while remaining

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> here, and if I am kept far from what I love, I feel far from the centre of real
>
> life. (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 299)

Here Merleau-Ponty (1962) emphasizes that spatiality is not determined by Cartesian coordinates, but rather is experienced in relation to what we find significant for our lives and practices at a particular time.

Conventional understandings of proximity and distance are shifted in this conceptualization, because feeling "far away" appears here not as a matter of kilometres but as an experiential distinction that is made against what is important, what *matters* to a person (Heidegger, 1927; 1962). A sense of being far away can be understood here as a *relational effect*, where "the modalities of proximity and distance have to be derived from presence and absence" (Merleau-Ponty, 1936, p. 107). In Merleau-Ponty's story, the traveller only feels absent from Paris when he hears news of events unfolding there. Receiving this news triggers an *experience* of exile: of feeling "excluded from real life" and being "imprisoned far away…from the centre" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 299).

Though this comparison may seem extreme in the context of a discussion of distributed organizations, the issue of defining oneself against where one is not emerged in interviews with remote workers who worked for new culture organizations as a source of anxiety and existential concern. For example, one remote worker referred to his company's head office as the "centre of the universe" which, after moving city, he was now "out of". The place where decisions are made and important events unfold is seen as the centre, and if one feels far from this place, then one can feel exiled "from the centre of real life". The feeling of exile can manifest when those who already worry that they are on the 'outer' cannot access or enter conversations and decisions that they feel are important to them. As one remote worker put it, they feel left on the "edge" of organizational life.

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5.3   The impossibility of returning 'home'

A solution to a remote workers' fear of exile might be to bring them 'back' to the centre, for example through more frequent visits to the head office. However, the notion that an exile "is no one, and belongs nowhere" (Vallega, 2003, p. xi) reflects the remote workers' experience of visiting their head office: they ended up feeling a greater sense of exclusion and isolation than when working from home. A manager of remote workers explained that remote employees visiting the office expected fun and "cupcakes", but were disappointed when no one had time to talk with them as everyone was "bums up heads down" working.

The impression that head office was "fun and games" had however been reinforced by a company practice of posting to Enterprise Social Media photographs of birthday and milestone celebrations held in the office: the image of the office as family "home" had been carefully cultivated. When remote workers arrived at the office however, they instead witnessed the humdrum of daily working life, often with nowhere available to sit and few people to speak with. They left feeling even more excluded from organizational life than when they worked 'remote'.

Here exile is again a useful conceptual framework, because an important part of the exilic experience is that an exile cannot access the place that they define themselves against. As Vallega (2003) points out, the home from which one is exiled becomes idealised and cannot live up to the exile's expectations or memories of it. It is not possible to stabilize distant homes in time or place; the memory of them becomes nostalgic, romanticized, and enlarged.

The notion of 'returning home' is in the exilic experience therefore treated as a compelling yet futile proposition. The home that is pined for can never be accessed in

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'real life' and attempts to do so are wrought with a sense of disappointment and even despair (Vallega, 2003). Correspondingly, the exile and their experiences can never quite be comprehensible to those who are left behind. Understanding the melancholy of exiles 'returning home' can help make sense of how remote workers were not satisfied and even were "let down" by their return to what they perceived to be the centre of organizational life.

6 Exile and visibility

Those who feel on the 'outer' of organizational life are thus not in any simple sense 'free'. While the panopticon guarantees containment, exile threatens expulsion. In significant ways, this inverts the ways in which visibility and control operate – while both dynamics are radial, the panopticon pushes visibility outwards 'onto' the surveilled, who is a subject by nature of being fixed in this gaze, while a fear of exile compels the peripheral subject to come forward 'toward visibility', seeking grounds for intelligibility.

Visibility is not presented as straightforwardly 'good' in the exile metaphor, but it is worth recognising that visibility is not always experienced as a negative force or in terms of surveillance by workers. Rather, fearing ending up 'outside the walls' of the organization, when commitment, trust, and engagement are emphasized as conditions of belonging and advancement generates an incentive for employees to *work at being seen*, in order to maintain a sense of *being* a 'self' in relation to the team-family.

6.1 Working at being seen

Having a sense of self requires the feeling that one is known by the identity-giving community. Being 'known' can revolve around remembered details that build into a social reputation. Hannah Arendt explains that losing a sense of being known, along with one's reputation, is a source of pain for those exiled from their communities: "Once we were

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somebodies about whom people cared, we were loved by friends, and even known by landlords as paying our rent regularly...[but] nobody here knows who I am!" (Arendt, 2017, pp. 269-270). A detail like being known to pay the rent may seem trivial in light of the extreme hardships faced by exiles such as Arendt, but her comment highlights that these details are what constitute being a "somebody" in the course of everyday life. As a result, the loneliness of exile can manifest in the realisation or fear that one is not truly remembered or *known*.

Such a worry was for example raised by a remote worker who had been an original member of an educational start-up organization, yet felt her identity slipping away as new employees joined. She worried that no-one in the head office was advocating for her, and that her work ethic (a source of personal pride) was not recognisable to new hires: "I can't see them, no one knows me!" To try to regain a sense of herself in the organization, she requested the creation of an intranet site that allowed workers to each create a profile, upload a photograph and describe themselves. This offered her an infrastructure for regaining the grounds of subjectivity in an organization from which she was gradually, in her view, being excluded and forgotten. Today, teams in her organization use group messaging platforms to chat and share photographs of their teaching sites throughout the day. This requires looking for "interesting" things to capture and share. Because these chats are interactive and occur in real time, one team member described them as a way of "hanging out together whilst being in a big empty room by ourselves".

In a further example of how a desire to be known may lead to the instalment of voluntary visibility infrastructure, a team of remote programmers who work for a large technology firm wanted to become more connected to one another and to their colleagues in the office. To do this, they described an arrangement they had set up of their own accord, where each of the team members working from home would dial into a video conference

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in the morning and remain connected via this video link for the entire day. A screen displaying this conference call was also set up in the head office. One member of the team described feeling somewhat "chained to his desk", but over time he became more comfortable stepping away or "muting" the video link when he needed a break. He pointed out that he had requested the arrangement because he had been isolated, and that it overall made him feel like a "part of the team again".

6.2   Catching management's eye

The role of management in this dynamic is to an extent passive; waiting until someone 'catches their eye'. To illustrate this point: a manager of remote workers shared that she was impressed with one of her remote employees who had "made himself visible" by quickly learning how to post updates (inspirational quotes, informal reports of activities and photographs) on the company's Enterprise Social Media platform, Yammer. She further pointed out that it is up to remote workers to make themselves visible in this way, and that if they do *not* use this technology effectively, to display themselves to management and the organization, they remain "invisible" and therefore "unknown". In practice, this means that these remote workers are not mentioned or referred to in management meetings or informal discussions. They would then only become 'discussable' in the case of problems with their performance, revealed numerically through performance metrics.

It may seem irrational or naïve to request an arrangement where one is continuously filmed while working, or to voluntarily submit updates on one's movements during the working day (see also Cristea & Leonardi, 2019). Yet seeking to be seen is one way that workers assert their identities and attempt to gain access and status in what they perceive to be the centre of organizational life. This self-disclosure may *result* in surveillance, and it certainly places restrictions on their lives, for example by feeling "chained" to a desk.

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Yet the trade-off makes sense in light of a fear of exile, because "we are - and always were - ready to pay any price in order to be accepted by society" (Arendt, 2017, p. 273). These employees can be understood as trying to combat a sense of exile by using technologies to regain "the grounds for making sense of life and the surrounding world" (Vallega, 2003, p. xi), to (again) become known, as "somebodies about whom people cared" (Arendt, 2017, p. 269).

7   Exile's epistemological potential

So far this analysis has focused on how a *fear* of exile can lead to self-disclosure by distributed workers who are struggling to be known and to belong. Unlike the panopticon however, exile can also offer a more rebellious, hopeful and agential role for workers. Edward Saïd points out that "the exile" is an important figure in critical modern thought. Many of the 20th Century's influential thinkers and artists (for example Theodor Adorno, Hannah Arendt, Igor Stravinsky, and Saïd himself) created their novels, theories, essays, music, and artworks from a position of exile (Barbour, 2007; Horowitz, 2008). I will here consider the unique vantage point that exile offers, and how such a position and its potential for resistance may translate to an organizational context.

A certain creative scepticism and worldly perspective is attributed to the figure of the exile, who has learned firsthand that architectures of belonging are ambivalent and not to be relied upon:

> The exile knows that in a secular and contingent world, homes are always provisional. Borders and barriers, which enclose us within the safety of familiar territory, can also become prisons, and are often defended beyond reason or necessity. Exiles cross borders, break barriers of thought and experience. (Saïd, 2001, p. 147)

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A flexibility of thinking is engendered from the exilic position, which incorporates a beneficially fluid yet "interested" (Spanos, 2012) stance. In contrast to an unquestioning effort to 'assimilate' to the dominant culture in efforts to belong, this attitude bears similarities to Arendt's description of the "conscious pariah" (Arendt, 2009), a figure who is an "outsider insider", aware of their uneasy position yet concernfully "in-the-midst" of public life (Spanos, 2012, p. 152).

The notion of being constructively ambiguous in one's relationship to the organizational centre was reflected in the comments of an older remote worker, a programmer who had been involved in the open source community for many years. He now worked for a large technology firm which emphasised teamwork. He stated that he existed *deliberately* in an organizational "no-man's land", as a result of carefully cultivating an autonomous position in the organization, where he was neither a manager nor directly managed by others. Working from home most days, he was determined to let his work speak for itself and avoided "administrivia" wherever possible. Occupying "no-man's land" was positioned as a choice and an achievement - he did not see it as a punishment. He stayed connected selectively to the centre, for example by regularly joining colleagues via video conference on a laptop that was placed at the office lunch table. At the same time, he engaged in tactical hiding by avoiding most meetings, as he found them pointless. At times this remote worker struggled with feeling far away, for example when his Internet did not work reliably, but he also crafted benefits from his ambiguous position as both insider and outsider.

The illustration above reflects a key point in Saïd's autobiographical novel "Out of Place", which he ends by composing an account of himself interwoven with the ambiguity of exile:

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I occasionally experience myself as a cluster of flowing currents. I prefer this to the idea of a solid self, the identity to which so many attach so much significance. These currents, like the themes of one's life, flow along during the waking hours, and at their best, they require no reconciling, no harmonizing. They are ''off '' and may be out of place... sometimes against each other, contrapuntally yet without one central theme. A form of freedom, I'd like to think, even if I am far from being totally convinced that it is. That skepticism too is one of the themes I particularly want to hold on to. With so many dissonances in my life I have learned actually to prefer being not quite right and out of place. (Saïd, 2012, p. 295)

The exile living "contrapuntally" (a concept from music where two melodies play at once) is a compelling proposition, because it embraces a lack of fixity. This resonates with how the remote worker described his job description: it had always been "fuzzy", and he used this ambiguity to balance working on what he thought he was "supposed" to be doing with "speculative long term stuff", and "crazy, out there, might be useful in a few years kind of stuff". He used his position on the periphery of organizational life to work creatively and autonomously, and hadn't been fired "yet" - his definition of success.

The extent to which embracing the exile position truly enables "creative dissonance" at work requires further empirical investigation. It is also likely that inhabiting exile as a constructive rather than oppressive position depends on being to a certain extent indispensable to the organization - in the example above, the remote worker is a skilled programmer whose services are not easily replaced. Literature that explores the potential of being "out of place" would however suggest that certain remote workers may be able to embrace a position of exile - to resist strict new culture ideals of familial belonging and gain a unique vantage point, by not being, nor aiming to be, entirely knowable. Not fitting

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in to one place, moving between inside/outside positions without the expectation that either will stabilize as 'home', could thus enable a way of knowing and thinking 'beyond the centre'.

8   Discussion

In the context of fear of exile, visibility needs to be considered in two ways: *exposure*, and *recognition*. Where the former is tied to neoliberal ideals of the market and self-promotion, the latter refers to the fundamental need for social acknowledgement. When the two are considered in tandem, an exilic dynamic of regulatory control arises that is, I argue, prevalent in distributed new culture organizations.

The disciplinary power associated with the panopticon shapes and normalizes subjects through calculation and comparison, so that what is abnormal is 'corrected' through therapeutic techniques (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2014). The fear of exile instead normalizes by requiring that subjects make themselves intelligible, by drawing on technologies of visibility to display themselves in a recognisable form to peers and management. What 'catches attention' is not explicitly defined, and so employees need to anticipate and trial different versions of themselves to see what 'sells'. "Shaping and managing visibility" in this way involves a great deal of work that must be done "tirelessly" (Brighenti, 2007, p. 237).

8.1   Visibility as competitive exposure

The idea that visibility is a 'good' that needs to be worked at for purposes of self-promotion is based in a market logic of neoliberal governmentality (Barratt, 2008; Dean, 2010; Foucault, 1991; Munro, 2012; Rose, 1999). Under advanced liberalism, the state is downsized and citizenship is enacted by exercising choice, for example through consumption or employment, forming a "government through freedom" (Rose, 1990, p.

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xxiii). Within this political rationality of 'freedom' arises the "enterprising self" (Rose, 1992), or the "entrepreneurial self" (Bröckling, 2015), where "social existence is to be ensured not by centralised planning and bureaucracy, but through the 'enterprising' activities and choices of autonomous entities" (Rose, 1992, p. 10).

Under such an individualistic market logic, it is common for visibility to be positioned as a positive *goal* for employees, who are encouraged to think of themselves as 'brands' (Vallas & Christin, 2018). The brand ideal is for instance promoted by the founder of LinkedIn in a co-authored self-help book titled "The Start-up of *You*: Adapt to the Future, Invest in Yourself, and Transform Your Career" (Hoffman & Casnocha, 2012). This personal brand framing encourages individuals to become skilled in presenting themselves in a coherent, distinctive, and competitive (Willmott & Alvesson, 2002) 'package' to achieve *exposure* by gaining *visibility* in a target market; concepts familiar to marketing discourse (Lair, Sullivan, & Cheney, 2005; Vallas & Christin, 2018).

Achieving such a personal brand requires relentless production of content for, and tending to, whichever digital platforms are popular at that moment: LinkedIn, Slack, Twitter, Instagram, even Pinterest. The pervasive marketing paradigm informing work practices today has thus been attributed more broadly to the "Social Media era" (Turco, 2016). The implications for the exile dynamic are that maintaining visibility in these 'markets' requires constant (and often unpaid) work, where each individual is ultimately responsible for protecting their own position relative to others (Fleming, 2017).

8.2   Visibility as existential recognition

While neoliberal discourses of entrepreneurialism and branding link visibility to battles for 'exposure' within a competitive market, employees also need visibility to achieve social recognition. A subject is constituted as intelligible through "fair visibility", which

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relies on significant others who 'test' and 'testify' "our existence by looking at us" (Brighenti, 2007, p. 327). Especially where teams are treated as if they are family (Casey, 1999), and where work is a "key site for the formation of persons" (Miller & Rose, 1995, p. 428), there is enormous pressure to fit in and belong. Discourses of freedom, choice, and independence (Rose, 1999) are here confronted by an existential dependence on others for the kind of social recognition that is required to maintain a secure subjectivity within the organization (see also Knights & Willmott, 1989).

A sense of belonging in the organization is thus centrally important in terms of the "subjectivity it confers or denies" (Rose, 1992, p. 11), yet distributed workers do not have immediate access to the established grounds of intelligibility that are readily available to co-located colleagues (e.g. a catch up at the coffee machine, small talk before meetings). A need for recognition, a desire to belong and a fear of missing out (FOMO) (Przybylski, Murayama, DeHaan, & Gladwell, 2013) can therefore drive the installation of social media technologies accompanied by guessing games of what kinds of images, posts, and signs of commitment (e.g. sending emails after hours, 'liking' company messages online, posting updates on Enterprise Social Media) will render them intelligible as a legitimate 'team-family member' to distant others.

8.3 The double bind of the quest for visibility

Given a fear of exile, visibility is something that we "cannot not want" (Butler & Athanasiou, 2013, p. 75; Spivak, 1988). Yet it is "inherently melancholic" because the "struggle for recognition" implies contending with the norms that determine what counts as a "viable human subjectivity" (Butler & Athanasiou, 2013, p. 78). Workers who try to counter the fear of exile through individual self-promotion are confronted with the reality that the conditions that sustain life "are pervasively social, establishing not the discrete ontology of the person, but rather the interdependency of persons" (Butler, 2016, p. 54).

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When the field of visibility (what there is possible to see) is enlarged, for example through the proliferation of Social Media technologies in contemporary organizations (Turco, 2016), the "market of recognition" intensifies and becomes more competitive (Butler & Athanasiou, 2013, p. 66; Roberts, 2005). In light of the fear that "being invisible means being deprived of recognition" (Brighenti, 2007, p. 329), employees respond by further regulating, curating, and promoting their self-image to accomplish "existential aspirations" (Ekman, 2014, p. 1161) of belonging.

Attempting to immunize against exile by embracing the quest for visibility in distributed new culture organizations is thus a double bind that ultimately regulates how and what subjectivity 'counts' as intelligible and therefore viable. Resistance against the regulatory effects of the exilic dynamic cannot comprise merely of opting out of visibility, rather it involves "taking issue with precisely those regulatory ideals that determine who can and cannot be an intelligible subject" (Butler & Athanasiou, 2013, p. 67).

8.4   Agency and resistance

Rather than opting out, perhaps the fear of exile can be resisted by fully embracing the marketing logic of exposure, for one's own benefits? For example, by harnessing digital technologies to enhance visibility in a flattering manner (Brighenti, 2007) such that dependence on any one organizational centre is lessened, enabling success in a 'boundaryless career' (Arthur & Rousseau, 2001)? After all, in the face of neo-liberal dynamics of flexibilization and casualization "employees surf the employment networks strategically" and "opportunism and self-exploitation may very well be combined" (Ekman, 2014, p. 154). Yet, I maintain that embracing a competitive approach to visibility (at different scales: industry, instead of organization for example), ultimately *increases* the normative effects of the fear of exile, because of the associated heightened risk that recognition will be withdrawn: *what if people cease to pay attention?* Furthermore, efforts

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to compete for exposure may conversely alienate one's peers, a threat to visibility as *recognition*; an existentially hazardous endeavour in the new culture context.

As the example of the remote worker who chooses to live in 'no-man's land' began to illustrate however, there is an alternative way of thinking about exile: as a potential site of resistance that offers a specific kind of freedom offered through living "contrapuntally" (Saïd, 2012) with "creative dissonance" (Butler & Athanasiou, 2013, p. 194). Existing neither 'here nor there' presents as a challenge to the single, unitary, competitive, individual entrepreneurial self that is privileged in neoliberal rationalities (Bröckling, 2015; Fleming, 2017; Rose, 1992).

When understood in terms of such ambiguity, the exile figure is unlike a brand, because in being neither here nor there the exile avoids being recognized immediately and coherently as a unitary subject fixed in place and time (Driver, 2009) and thereby refuses to re-enact dogmatic rituals of belonging (cf. Fleming & Spicer, 2003). Rather than treating precarity as a condition to be evaded, it is to an extent appropriated as the basis for a pluralistic subject position. Foucault himself perhaps embraced this constructively ambiguous and uncertain position, given his proclamation: "Do not ask who I am and do not ask me to remain the same" (Foucault, 1972, p. 17; cited in Munro, 2012, p. 350).

It is important to note that inhabiting exile in this way does not represent a complete rejection of organizational or social life. Rather, this exile figure draws on their contrapuntal perspective to remain concernfully "in-the-midst" (Spanos, 2012, p. 152) of

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organizational life.[3] While acknowledging that this may depend on a degree of privilege, for example in the form of recognised skills or personal resources that allow them to take on greater risks, it is worth exploring further how living "out of place" and "out of time" may enable the exile figure to redefine regulatory ideals of intelligibility, by first resisting the fear of exile and correspondent anxiety to belong that I have argued motivates visibilizing practices in distributed new culture organizations.

9   Implications and conclusion

The 'quest for visibility' amongst distributed workers that I have outlined in terms of an attempted immunization against the fear of exile could be considered in terms of "empowerment" (Brighenti, 2007). However, as Foucault has warned, "visibility is a trap" (Foucault, 1977/2012, p. 200 in Brighenti, 2007, p. 336). Making oneself visible can still *result* in surveillance, measurement, and calculation. The need to be seen is after all caught up in a "liberal discursive incitement to recognition as a regulatory ideal" (Butler & Athanasiou, 2013, p. 75). "*Who can appear*" (Butler & Athanasiou, 2013, p. 194), what 'counts' as worthy of attention, as well as how visibility and privacy are managed (Flyverbom, Leonardi, Stohl, & Stohl, 2016), therefore are central concerns that deserve further empirical attention.

Visibility understood as both *competitive exposure* and *existential recognition* develops surveillance research by emphasising the complicity of organizational members in their

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[3] Although the exile figure is remote, they are not entirely 'detached' (hence the contrapuntal nature of their engagement with the organization as both outsider *and* insider). In this sense the exile is related to other organizational figures of resistance, for example whistleblowers (Munro, 2017), who at least in some instances are motivated to take the risk of challenging the status quo because they have some care for the future of the organization or broader social context in which they operate (Kenny, Fotaki, & Vandekerckhove, 2018).

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own surveillance. These notions present a challenge to the view that surveillance can be primarily understood as a tactical counterpart to an individual's imperative to protect their privacy (Marx, 2003). In such a privacy oriented view, which is reflected in critical research on distributed work, *resistance* to surveillance usually amounts to individuals concealing themselves from those who "seek to break through the personal borders that protect privacy" (Marx, 2003, p. 370). Yet this assumption is challenged when we acknowledge that employees now actively partake in self-disclosure activities (Leclercq-Vandelannoitte et al., 2014) in a quest for visibility that I have argued is motivated by a fear of exile, in contrast to a fear of observation.

Rather than assume that people unwillingly or at least unwittingly submit to surveillance regimes (e.g. see Zuboff's 2019 characterisation of consumer involvement in Surveillance Capitalism), it is important to recognise the backdrop of perceived precarity - the feeling that one's social and financial position is insecure - that may induce workers (and in other contexts, citizens) to willingly and effortfully present personal information about themselves in digital settings. To this end, the notion of *visibility as competitive exposure* prompts surveillance researchers to consider how employees make use of surveillance infrastructures for their own gains, while *visibility as existential recognition* draws attention to who is able to be seen, on what terms, and who remains invisible and thereby marginalised in systems of observation. Drawing on the exile framework as a whole prompts a consideration of what motivates such visibilizing practices, how they intersect and clash, and what new forms of resistance are possible in response to the fear of exile.

Future research is also needed to empirically investigate what I have introduced as the 'epistemological potential' of exile. Empirical studies could for example look into whether, and how, remote workers resist the incentive to present themselves as coherent personal brands, and how they experience and navigate the consequences of such

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resistance, both in relation to their peers as well as management. It is also important to consider the resources that enable employees to embrace exile's potential - for example via difficult to replace skills, knowledge, or access to personal resources that reduce the risk or consequences of genuine expulsion from the organization. 'Rebellious' exiles could be contrasted both with those who have been exiled in a more conventional sense (e.g. by being relocated to a failing branch of the organization), versus those who seek to avoid exile by engaging fully in visibilizing practices. How does each circumstance and strategy inform and shape daily routines, personal identity, relationships with organizational others, and career paths? What specific technologies are enrolled, and what role does the materiality of these technologies play (Treem, Leonardi, & van den Hooff, Forthcoming) in the navigation of core-periphery relations in the exile dynamic?

From a managerial perspective, exile's regulatory effects as outlined in this paper may seem an endorsement of Walton's (1985) advice to manage through commitment rather than explicit control: promising *less* managerial attention for *more* employee effort. For managers too however there are downsides to cultivating an intensely competitive and potentially narcissistic quest for visibility amongst employees (Goodall & Roberts, 2003; Roberts, 2005). For one, it may lead to an increased dependence on management for attention and recognition (Ekman, 2013, 2014), prompting a digital form of "competitive presenteeism" (Simpson, 1998) that may negatively impact company culture, reduce productivity and even disadvantage certain demographic groups who cannot (or will not) play the visibility game. On the other hand, playing the game too well may lead to a level

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of over-commitment (Knights & Clarke, 2014) and self-exploitation that is unsustainable, resulting in overwork, stress and even burnout.[4]

While I have focused on image and text related forms of voluntary visibility in this paper, future research could also explore the manipulation of performance data and metrics, which may already be a part of employee efforts to 'catch management's eye'. As employees become more adept at manipulating metrics through self-reflexive "calculative practices" (Hayes, Introna, & Kelly, 2018), a sophisticated numerical mode of self-disclosure could become more prevalent.

The bodies of literature that have informed this paper are extremely rich and deserve further exploration in developing our understanding of exile, belonging, visibility, and control in new forms of work and organizing. For example, postcolonial and decolonial theory is attuned to issues of exclusion, belonging, nostalgia, and dispossession (e.g. Butler & Athanasiou, 2013; Frenkel & Shenhav, 2006; Saïd, 2012). Combining insights from these literatures with existential understandings of space can offer a fertile base for exploring the spatial logic of control in distributed work, where boundaries are constituted through practices of inclusion and exclusion. Finally, through analogous reasoning, literature on nationalism (e.g. Anderson, 2006; Billig, 1995) can productively inform further critical investigations of new culture organizations where the visible demonstration of commitment to notions of 'home' and 'family' are key to both individual and collective identity.

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[4] For a philosophical discussion linking burnout to 'achievement culture' see Han (2015a)

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Not only surveillance but also voluntary visibilizing practices are important to further study and understand, both for their *impetus* as well as for their consequences. The exile metaphor prompts scholars of organizational control to consider how visibility is *experienced* and responded to by workers who do not feel that visibility, nor their place in the organization, is 'guaranteed'.

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