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Social Media as a New Workspace: How Working Out Loud (Re)Materializes Work

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Introduction

New ways of working exemplify how network technologies have rendered work more virtual and mobile (e.g. Aroles, Mitev, & de Vaujany, 2019). While work can now basically be done anytime, anywhere, it continues to be linked to specific spaces to be carried out, such as the home office or so-called new spaces of work including coworking spaces, fab labs or maker spaces (e.g. de Vaujany, Dandoy, Grandazzi, & Faure, 2018; Salovaara, 2015). However, as we suggest, work is also currently performed in another space that has, up to now, rarely been conceived as a 'workspace', namely social media. Given the relative newness of social

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media, proposing that these platforms might present similarities with traditional and physical workspaces is a timely project. Despite the fact that many workers spend a lot of time on social media during work and non-work time, social media tends to be seen mostly as a simple communication channel or as a stage for self-presentation, but seldom as a workspace *per se*. Yet, recent studies of online activities suggest that work is not only shown but is actually 'taking place' on social media under different forms. For example, critical studies of digital capitalism have shown that the activities performed by social media end-users—which generate data and content that are monetized by the platforms' owners—constitute new forms of unpaid digital labor (Fuchs, 2014; Scholz, 2012). Management scholars and sociologists of work have also looked into the online labor platform workforce in the context of the 'gig economy' (Casilli & Posada, 2019; Kuhn & Maleki, 2017). Meanwhile, a wide spectrum of new roles has flourished under the label 'social media professionals', which encompass various responsibilities, such as creating and distributing content across platforms, acting as community managers and monitoring content, to name only a few (Duffy & Schwartz, 2018).

Social media has also become a workspace outside the media and marketing industries, for entrepreneurs, freelancers, consultants and artists, who now include online content creation in their daily work practices in addition to their primary work. For instance, they write articles on *LinkedIn*, share stories on *Facebook* and *Twitter*, upload videos on *YouTube* and post images to *Instagram* to maximize their exposure and to present themselves as "hirable" (Gershon, 2016). These changes suggest that social media is more than a communication channel but rather constitutes a new workspace that is voluntarily inhabited by different types of workers, not only in settings where digital interactions are important (such as software developers or marketing professionals) but also by people who are performing more conventional work (e.g. farmers or bakers) that does not necessarily require the use of online tools (Sergi & Bonneau, 2016).

In a context where work and organizations are undergoing significant changes, and where boundaries between work and non-work activities are becoming blurrier (Fleming, 2014; Ollier-Malaterre, Rothbard, & Berg, 2013), social media offer valid and rich entry points into a variety

of organizational phenomena (Leonardi & Vaast, 2017). Our study focuses on social media platforms as distinct yet complementary workspaces where people do things related to their work: they develop and test their skills, craft ideas and devise solutions, express and present themselves, share knowledge, think reflexively and experience a full specter of emotions (Sergi & Bonneau, 2016). We hence suggest to explore the idea that these platforms are more than virtual spaces for banal interactions or personal content sharing, but that they fully constitute workspaces where what is done and what is happening can have significant implications for both workers and organizations. But in which ways are social media platforms akin to workspaces? This is the central question that we will explore in this chapter.

To do so, we build on our previous work; this allows us to examine a variety of sociomaterial practices on social media, gathered under the broad label of 'working out loud' (WOL), where individuals voluntarily turn to public social media platforms (such as *Instagram* and *Twitter*) to share what is part of their daily work (Bonneau & Sergi, 2017; Endrissat & Sergi, 2017; Sergi & Bonneau, 2016). These previous studies have led us to uncover a variety of forms the WOL practices can take. At the heart of our inquiry lies the observation that individuals use these sites to share material (thoughts, impressions, experiences, moods, etc.) linked to their personal life, but that they also invest social media to perform activities that are related to their working life. While our previous work has led us to also discuss the performativity of WOL tweets, in this chapter, we move from individual posts to consider in a broader view how we can conceive social media sites in themselves as workspaces.

This chapter is structured in the following way: we begin by describing empirical examples that were collected on *Instagram* and *Twitter* outlining what we can see when we look at workers' working out loud posts. Our inquiry is hence empirically led, as we elaborate our reflection on social media as workspace based on our ongoing analysis of the data collected. We will highlight five dimensions that render visible elements of work and rematerialize, so to speak, elements of workspaces as we know them including (1) the work, (2) the worker, (3) the work process, (4) the experience of work and (5) the work context. This allows us to describe various ways in which social media is integrated in the work of different types of

professionals, artists and creative workers, and to examine New Ways of Working featured in that workspace. This presentation is followed by a discussion in which we propose that these work dimensions—including those that are intangible or usually invisible such as the experience of work—are rematerialized through these WOL practices, and that it is by combining them that we can see that social media are more than simple tools used by workers: they constitute workspaces. These observations echo ideas found in the literature on workplace studies, organization studies as well as space design, which have each developed different aspects that characterize workspaces (i.e. their location, properties and constitutive nature). We conclude by presenting a brief research agenda that indicates how these streams could open interesting lines of research and could inform future studies on work practices on social media.

Elements of Method

Since the emergence of sites like *Facebook* and *LinkedIn* in 2003 and 2004, social media have become increasingly integrated into many individuals' everyday habits, and now also span personal and work domains (Boyd & Ellison, 2008; Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013; Pigg, 2014). These technologies comprise 'Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User-generated content' (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 62). The term 'social media' thus refers to different types of online platforms, such as social networking sites (SNS), wikis and blogging platforms. Before going further, it is important to distinguish 'enterprise social media platforms' (ESM), which are corporate versions of social media platforms, designed only for internal audiences (Oostervink, Agterberg, & Huysman, 2016) from extra-organizational tools such as public social media (e.g. *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *Instagram*). In our study, we are focusing on the latter in order to see how workers are using the same social media tools that are already integrated in their personal life to perform work activities. Considering these public social media is also relevant as their use is mostly voluntary and not made mandatory by the organization that employs the workers.

Researchers studying social media at work have mostly looked at the interactions and articulation practices these tools afford in the workplace and in virtual teams. Yet, these studies mostly focus on formal aspects of work and how they are supported by social media, such as online collaboration and knowledge creation (Leonardi & Meyer, 2015; Leonardi & Vaast, 2017; Majchrzak, Faraj, Kane, & Azad, 2013). Here, we rather consider public social media as a workspace located 'outside' of the organization, but alongside to it, and open to anyone who chooses to join it, on a voluntary basis.

The reflection we propose in this chapter builds on an inquiry into work-related sharing practices on social media by workers, professionals and artists we have started in 2015. This inquiry has led us to document a new practice, labeled 'working out loud' (hereafter WOL) that we define as a communicative and sociomaterial practice where individuals voluntarily turn to social media platforms to narrate and broadcast what is part of their daily process of work (Sergi & Bonneau, 2016). In this chapter, we are focusing on *Instagram* and *Twitter*, which are social networking sites where users publish short posts combining both visual and textual elements. Our methods rest on a qualitative approach, inspired by digital ethnography (Hine, 2015) and is based on the manual collection of three small corpus of posts between 2014 and 2017: 200 *Twitter* posts from workers and professionals in several domains; 20 social media profiles of artists, mainly mobilizing entries on *Instagram*, but also posts on *Twitter*; and 150 *Instagram* posts from workers and professionals in several domains. Such a 'small/thick data' approach allowed us to capture the specificities of the phenomenon under study, since we explored the "traces in their 'native' format, as they are envisioned by social media users" (Latzko-Toth, Bonneau, & Millette, 2017, p. 204).

On an operational level, we connected to *Instagram* and *Twitter* platforms with our own accounts and manually extracted data from the user interface. We began the data collection with the general aim of documenting the kind of work practices taking place on social media. We began this general data collection process by using the site search engine to find posts using work-related hashtags (e.g. *#work*, *#working*, *#showyourwork*, *#shareyourwork*). Using a snowball sampling approach on the posts we already collected, we were able to find new users through their

comments and to find other hashtags describing work contexts (e.g. *#workingforaliving*, *#behindthework*). In order to collect posts in various professional areas, we also performed queries on *Instagram*'s and *Twitter*'s internal search engine after asking ourselves, 'Who would share his or her work and what would he or she say about it?' For example, we searched for domain-related hashtags such as 'nurse', 'firefighter', 'accountant' and so on. All posts collected were captured using a screen capture tool and were documented in a log, along with their date of publication, URL and details about how we found them and field notes. Qualitative textual analysis was used to proceed to a manual thematic coding of each post in an open and inductive manner (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2013). We considered posts as "holistic units, in which images/videos, text, emoji, and hashtags should be interpreted together" (Laestadius, 2017, p. 588). Therefore, our analysis considered the visual and textual elements of posts together, using the descriptions, hashtags and comments to contextualize the pictures. For example, the hashtag *#deadline* adds a temporal context that would not be considered if only images content were analyzed.

Delving into WOL

Having assembled this repertoire of illustrations of the broad WOL practice, we have been able to consider different facets of working out loud. Building on a performative understanding of language, we have first identified the various forms the WOL practice can take on *Twitter*, revealing how these tweets produce actions (such as creating ambient awareness or a cathartic space) that are useful for the continuation of work (Sergi & Bonneau, 2016). Then, our analysis of WOL practices on *Instagram* revealed that the visual, photographic aspect of work-related posts made visible elements linked to the daily accomplishment of work and the mundane side of organizational life (Sergi & Bonneau, 2017). Finally, we focused our attention on artists and creative workers, and found out that their WOL practices revealed specific aspects of the artistic work that are now conducted on social media, such as providing access to the progression of the making, documenting the creation process and sharing

incomplete pieces of work (Bonneau, Endrissat, & Sergi, 2018). All this material also lends itself to the inquiry we pursue here, and considering the posts collected allowed us to see how workers actually constitute social media as a workspace.

Figure 3.1 illustrates the type of publications we collected as part of our research.[1] In this example of an *Instagram* post, we see a photo taken during an educational activity taking place in the classroom, which involves the manipulation of LEGO blocks and the use of a videoconferencing platform. The textual description and the hashtags inform us about the objective of this activity ("experimenting distributed collaboration") and the location where it takes place ("UQAM", a university in Montreal). This instance of working out loud on *Instagram* makes the work of a professor visible to people outside her class, and gives access to the context and material aspects of her work activity.
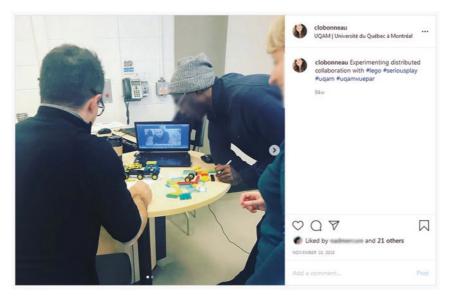

Fig. 3.1 A teacher shows an educational activity taking place in her classroom

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[1] As the material we have collected could not be included in this chapter for copyright reasons, we provide this example which was published on *Instagram* by the first author.

When working out loud on social media, we noted that users are presenting their work, revealing themselves as the worker they are, documenting their work processes, sharing their experience of work and describing their work context. Building on our empirical observations, we provide an overview of these five dimensions of work that are made visible through WOL practices on social media (see Table 3.1 for an overview). In the next sub-section, we go through each dimension and illustrate them with examples.[2]

1. Work

Social media offer opportunities in terms of space to present one's work. Workers expose, present or exhibit their results and share their finished work output. For example, a designer of wall banners shows her products ready to be shipped to customers. A farmer shares a picture of his orchard to illustrate the result of his planting efforts. Knowledge professionals and service workers—whose work does not necessarily generate tangible manifestations or material output that can be captured and

Table 3.1 Dimensions of work on social media (authors' own)

Dimensions of work	Description
1. Work	Presenting and exhibiting the work output (product, service, art, performance).
2. Worker	Projecting elements of people at work, such as expertise, identity, managerial style, skills, assets, experiences and relationships.
3. Work process	Providing the recipient access to the process of the making, sharing ideas and knowledge, and giving advice.
4. Experience of work	Showing the meaning of work and particularly how it is experienced by workers, through its affective, expressive, embodied and aesthetic dimensions.
5. Work context	Describing the organizational life and showing the environment in which work unfolds, its spatial and material setup.

[2] We should note that this separation in five categories is more analytical than empirical. Indeed, posts like the examples we are presenting here offer the possibility of combining several of these dimensions.

shared by themselves—can present their work by reporting their achievements. For example, an ethnographer provides a textual account of the milestones completed (fieldwork and interviews), while an accountant posts a picture of her computer screen and describes the finality of what she is doing.

In traditional workspaces such as corporate offices, workers have different opportunities to show their achievements to their peers and managers, for example, during joint work sessions, meetings, formal presentations or informal interactions. Their work might also be visibilized through internal communication channels, such as an Intranet or a newsletter. By showing their work on public social media, workers are not limited to a specified showcase opportunity targeting a predefined audience. They can reach users sharing the same interests, even if they do not know them (or if their profiles are not connected), by using hashtags in their posts. Hashtags, which are commonly used on most social media platforms, is a convention developed by users to self-categorize their posts by adding the '#' sign in front of keywords (e.g. *#work*). They affect the visibility of post, as users can access all posts containing the same hashtag by clicking on them. They therefore facilitate the articulation of collective narrative activities on a specific topic, which can lead to open conversations between users sharing the same interests. For example, the hashtags #planting and #farm on a post published by a farmer has the potential to reach a community of farmers outside the boundaries of the user's personal and professional networks, thereby extending the possibility of showing and discussing each other's work results.

As for artists and creative workers, they are not only showcasing their pieces of art or sharing pictures taken during an exhibition or a show but are also performing directly on social media. For example, a performance artist posts a photo of an intervention in the urban public space documenting its performance as it is happening. Similar to the *Instagram* post above where a videoconferencing platform is used while working with the LEGO blocks, in this example, the art performance is not only reproduced on social media afterwards but actually 'taking place' *in parallel* on the street and on social media. This is a good illustration of how social media is not only a stage for self-presentation but actually constitutes a workspace, a space where work is conducted and performed. What seems

obvious for people whose work entails a 'performance' aspect, such as video bloggers and cam stars who perform and conduct their work on video platforms, is also true for other workers from various fields. Indeed, when professionals expose their work on social media and ask the crowd for feedback and advice, they are performing aspects of their work on social media.

2. Worker

Working out loud on social media is also about presenting oneself in relation to one's work, either through selfies, pictures of the worker in action, or textual descriptions of expertise, specificities, skills or managerial style. For example, a naval mechanic shares a picture showing himself in his work environment while he is repairing a boat engine. By doing so, he shows sides of him that are rarely seen by others, since his work setting and practices are hardly accessible to anyone besides those who put a foot on this specific boat.

Public social media provide a space to create and express professional identities in more flexible ways than what is possible or permitted in traditional workspaces. Workers deliberately choose what they make visible in order to define themselves as members of specific groups or categories or to identify the distinctive traits that define them at work. For example, the hashtag *#tradergirl* is used by a trader in her posts not only to reflect a professional identity but also to affirm a sense of distinctiveness by categorizing herself as a girl in a male-dominated profession. In other cases, these identity markers are not directly work-related, but are self-used to define the person at work. For example, when a graphic designer presents herself with the hashtag *#workingmom*, she is not only referring to her as a worker but calling forth another facet of the life in relation to work. While considering herself as a working mom might also be expressed in various ways in traditional physical workspaces, social media facilitates this as they allow for representing in an effective and visual way what, specifically, the person wants to showcase about the juxtaposition of identities and roles (e.g. by showing a picture of herself working with her child playing beside her).

Showing oneself at work does not necessarily imply the crafting and promotion of an 'ideal version' of the self. When they are working out loud, workers are also—and often—revealing aspects of themselves that are flawed and publicly displaying moments of failure and self-doubt at work, much like they could do informally with some of their colleagues in traditional workspaces. For example, a teaching assistant shares a selfie showing his discouraged face as he admits, in the comments, that his procrastination has put him in a difficult situation where he is overworked. This practice is particularly pronounced among artists such visual artists, photographers or painters (see e.g. https://vivian-fu.tumblr.com/). Making their imperfections visible on social media can thus be seen as one of the various micro practices through which new subjectivities as artists are enacted (Bonneau et al., 2018).

3. Work Process

Workers also expose their ways of doing things, including the ordinary and ephemeral aspects of their work. They share details about the work as it is unfolding and show sketches, intermediary products, incomplete versions and work in progress. They document the various steps of their work processes and, by doing so, share tacit knowledge and test ideas. For example, a designer shares early versions of sketches of her design, asking her followers/her community for feedback. Workers also reveal their workarounds (see Sachs, 1995) and the little solutions they devise to solve their daily problems. An example of this in our material is the case of an administrative assistant who shows her email interface and explains that she sends messages to herself to remind her of important things.

These posts provide an exclusive access to behind-the-scenes work and informal work processes that are not part of anybody's job description but which are crucial for the achievement of an individual work task. In some cases, the posts even highlight elements central for the collective functioning of the organization. For example, an accountant provides a glimpse into her work process as she explains the various steps of the work of account reconciliation. While traditional workspaces show many traces of work processes such as those sketches or paper piles, social media rematerializes those traces and turns the inside of the workspace outside,

thereby extending it to a greater audience and also allowing for new possibilities for the work process to be documented and reassembled, illustrating a new modality of "spacing" organizations across space and time (Vásquez & Cooren, 2013) through the use of social media.

4. Experience of Work

Workers not only document how they work but also how they experience life at work. Hence, social media represent a rich site to explore the subjective and experiential side of work and organizations. This is what we are seeing in the content we are analyzing: part of the workers' subjective experiences at work, as they are seeing it and choosing to expose it.

For example, the fun and informal aspects of work are the social side of the mundane life at work and office humor, such as in an example where an office worker shows how her colleagues decorated her work environment for her birthday. We also get to grasp the aesthetic side of organizations and its atmosphere, which is conveyed through pictures, descriptions, storytelling and contextual hashtags, such as *#havingfunatwork* or *#companyculture*. Other broad hashtags, such as *#accountinglife*, echo the mundanity of work and can also be interpreted as evoking what users associate with their daily experience of work, hence constituting a form of meta-reflection on the post itself.

Through those posts we gain an understanding of the workspace as it is enacted and lived by the employees, providing possibilities to also express forms of resistance or consent to organization-based identities that have been identified in organizational analysis of traditional work spaces (e.g. Wasserman & Frenkel, 2011).

Working out loud is also a way to render explicit the affective and expressive aspects of work including 'how it feels to work here' (e.g. Warren, 2002). We found a great number of expressive posts in which workers verbalize and exteriorize their emotions and feelings, whether positive (e.g. joy and happy moments) or negative (e.g. boredom, stress, anger or sadness). For example, a nurse explains how she felt when she had to put a patient in restraints and the emotional tensions she experienced. As such, social media makes visible elements of work that otherwise remain hidden or are not explicitly addressed. Through working out

loud, those elements of work are not only made explicit but are also explicitly 'linked' to the actual workspace and thus might become a topic of open discussion among members of the actual work organization. As such, social media adds an additional space where employees can express their emotional experience of work that, in turn, might lead to changes in the actual work space and culture.

5. Work Context

Workers also describe and show the environment in which work unfolds, its spatial and material setup. They not only reveal the specific materiality associated to different work activities or professions but also how these elements are used, the bricolage that is sometimes needed to complete a task, the gestures and series of actions associated to using these tools. For example, a web developer shows his work environment and tools, consisting of several computer screens used simultaneously and displaying code that he is currently programming.

These posts allow to situate the work activities within the larger context in which they occur and to identify the material, temporal and spatial connections among those activities.

For example, the use of hashtags *#working* and *#Sunday* along with a picture of a bottle of champagne on a work table reinforce the statement made about the temporality of work and the conditions in which work happens. Visualizing this on social media extends the work context into the online space rendering social media into a work context themselves.

Discussion

The empirical example provided in Fig. 3.1 along with the description of other working out loud posts that we find on social media illustrate how social media platforms make possible new hybrid forms of visibilizing and materializing work, combining finished work outputs (product, service, art, performance), the process, context and experience shaping the production of this work and the workers themselves. More precisely, we have shown that social media make visible our five work dimensions

(work, worker, work process, experience of work and work context), which include elements that are usually hard to reveal in an explicit or formalized way (such as mundane aspects of work). This is the case because they do not generate tangible manifestations (such as service work), they are related to work activities that would not 'naturally' be visible to the public in the first place (such as backstage work) or they otherwise tend to remain hidden, private or difficult to share in traditional workspaces (such as emotions and inner thoughts). Social media afford aesthetic and expressive functions that can be put to use by workers to visibilize such elements, or present them in a different way, to a different public. The use of visual features, for instance, provides an immediate, multisensory impact (Whiting, Roby, Symon, & Chamakiotis, 2018, p. 193; Endrissat, Islam, & Noppeney, 2016) even for elements that are difficult to verbalize or 'textualize'.

Because "work is, in a sense, always invisible to everyone but its own practitioners" (Nardi & Engeström, 1999), workers 'dramatize' their work in the form of digital texts and images to make it visible (Leonardi, 2014). In that sense, we propose that these dimensions of work are made material or even rematerialized through social media, hence supporting our initial proposal that these platforms are not only a communication tool or a vehicle for branding, but have an active contribution to the accomplishment of work, elevating them to workspaces. More generally, this new way of talking about work and performing work with social media represents, in our view, a new way of working, which comes with new practices (e.g. Aroles, Mitev, & de Vaujany, 2019). For instance, when workers are documenting their achievements on social media, they create a trace of their work in the form of a digital post, which not only materializes the work but also provides an opportunity to reflect on it, get feedback and potentially provide a source of inspiration or help for others who might be facing similar challenges in their work.

Given the properties of social media, such posts also open the door to impromptu conversations with people the workers may or may not know, conversations that in turn can spark further ideas, reflections and action. Even more: unless they are consciously deleted by users, these posts—which often, as we illustrated—capture ephemeral experiences and fleeting moments *and* keep them visible for a longer time than what could be

achieved otherwise. Could this help workers think through of what they are doing and understand better the challenges they might be facing, while serving a basis for creating connections? We suggest that this (re)materialization can afford the production of reflective artifacts about work, which can be used by workers to make sense of their work, while also opening these inner reflections to others, outside the boundaries of the formal organization. Hence, these posts not only have an 'attention-generating' or self-promoting function but also allow workers to be more conscious of their own experience and might encourage other users to discuss and also reflect about it, either in the comments directly in the post or using the same hashtags, allowing a form of "reflexive sociability" (Frosh, 2015, cited in Locatelli, 2017).

In the following sections, we will see how these observations echo three key ideas found in the literature on workplace studies, organization studies as well as space design, when it comes to the notion of workspace. As we will discuss, these parallels may help in identifying future avenues for research on social media as workspaces. First, as workplace studies and computer-supported collaborative work studies have highlighted, the workplace is a site where work is performed (location). Then, as studies on the design of workspaces reveal, design dimensions and affordances play a key role in influencing what can happen and what can be done in the workspace, pointing to the importance of the characteristics of the workspace (properties). Finally, we link our findings to processual and sociomaterial approaches to space, which put forth the notion that a workspace is never simply 'out there', as a container in which 'things' happen: rather, space, the people who inhabit it and what they do in it are mutually influencing each other, all the while constituting each other (constitutive nature). By highlighting the links between our findings and these three strands of research, we not only reflect on what constitutes a workspace but also add to this understanding by showing how working out loud practices contribute to the constitution of social media as a workspace.

Social Media as a Site Where Work Is Taking Place (Location)

In the ethnographically informed studies of work, the workplace refers to the physical settings in which work activities 'naturally' occur. For sociologists of work and organizational ethnographers, a workplace is a field site for the study of organizational life and how work is actually accomplished (Strauss, 1985). Hence, the study of a workplace allows the researchers to situate the work activities within the larger context in which they occur and to identify the material, temporal and spatial connections among those activities. If we look more specifically at workplace studies (Heath, Knoblauch, & Luff, 2000; Schmidt, 2000), which build on the ethnographic tradition and involve doing fieldwork within an organization or work practice, the workplace is a localized worksite or a set of worksites in a particular work domain. In the seminal studies that have shaped this field, exemplified by the Lancaster University's interdisciplinary study of air traffic control (Harper, Hughes, & Shapiro, 1989) and the study of the London Underground control room (Heath & Luff, 1992), the workplace is "delimited by situation relevant boundaries, such as physical, technological, organizational, institutional, or geographic borders" (Blomberg & Karasti, 2013, p. 385).

As computer systems have over the years become part of the mundane fabric of work and organizations, the work context became also of interest to ethnographers interested in analyzing the use of technology at work as well as developers who need to take this context into account when designing organizational information systems. From the moment when, in 1984, Irene Greif and Paul Cashman coined the term computer-supported cooperative work (CSCW) to describe the multi-disciplinary discipline involving both the study of cooperative work per se and the construction of systems that can support cooperative work, the work context was always part of the agenda and the research questions. Indeed, the emphasis put on the work context was instrumental to the development of important concepts in CSCW, such as "awareness" (Heath & Luff, 1992), "articulation work" (Schmidt & Bannon, 1992) and "situated action" (Suchman, 1987), to name but a few.

The settings in which early CSCW researchers examined work were not always tied to a single physical place. When studying the operations room of an airline, Suchman (1996) also included other sites for the airline's operations at the main airport, other airlines' territories at this same airport, other airports with which members of the operations room interact, and other related locations. Here, we can note a shift from the 'workplace' to the term 'workspace'. The 'shared workspace' not only refers to the main workplace in its own right but also includes a larger network of environments that constitutes the distributed setting of a specific work activity.

With the advances made on the technological side, physical workspaces now represent only partially the settings in which work occur. Activities are partly or completely conducted in digitally mediated environments (technological platforms, online spaces, mobile device infrastructures, mixed reality environment, etc.). In the computer science (CS) and information systems (IS) literature, the term 'shared workspace' is used to designate computer-based systems that support information sharing and collective work in a group across space and time (Ellis, Gibbs, & Rein, 1991). Hence, a workspace, especially if it involves online components, is not spatially and temporally bounded. It is, by definition, more distributed and open-ended and, therefore, goes beyond the traditional workplace (at home, on the road, in cafes, in coworking spaces, etc.). This reflects the increasingly heterogeneous, distributed, online, mobile, nomadic and networked quality of many work activities conducted these days (e.g. Aroles et al., 2019; Ciolfi & De Carvalho, 2014; Kingma, 2019).

While traditional workspaces might be delimited by physical and geographical boundaries, corporate virtual environments can be delimited by organizational boundaries (when the employer provides the platforms and functionalities to be used by the employees). With public social media, we note that these boundaries tend to become more open and fluid. Hence, social media platforms constitute a site where work happens (and can be studied), like the work settings described in workplace studies and CSCW. As our empirical examples suggest, when workers, professionals and artists share elements related to their work, social media takes on the form similar to "third places" (Oldenburg, 1999) where

work and community building takes place that we usually find in the home (first place) or workplace (second place). Understood as third places, we can see that social media provide people to engage in activities they usually do at work, and also offer new potentialities. In the same way that "liminal spaces" allow workers to operate in parallel with more formal organizational spaces (Concannon & Nordberg, 2018), workers can use public social media to momentarily suspend their allegiances to their 'home' organization or to identify with other communities.

Hence, what is shared on social media is not disconnected from the traditional physical workspace: it is positioned as fully complementing that workspace, while allowing other practices, such as connecting with a wider audience that may benefit the work and the worker (something that would not necessarily be possible in a traditional workspace). For that reason, we even posit that the workspace created on social media is not limited to being an extension of traditional/physical workspaces: both workspaces should rather be understood as linked to each other in a dialectic relationship. Working out loud also highlights that workers not only follow officially encouraged New Ways of Working including mobile or telework, but actively take initiative and explore New Ways of Working through social media use thereby shifting part of their work to new workspaces.

However, the boundaries of social media workspaces are more fluid, situating them within a "network composed of fixed and moving points including spaces, people and objects" (Burrell, 2009, p. 189, cited in Marwick, 2014, p. 116). This fluid and networked nature is in part a consequence of social media affordances, which we will discuss in the next section.

Social Media and the Characteristics of Workspaces (Properties)

In spite of the proliferation of non-traditional work arrangements, the literature on spaces and design reminds us that the material properties of workspaces impact the work that is done as well as the experience of work (e.g. Elsbach & Pratt, 2007). Elsbach and Bechky (2007) have presented

a framework describing the instrumental, symbolic and aesthetics functions of office design, in order to show which design choices can be made to optimize these functions. For example, they explain how specific room designs (e.g. round, curtained team rooms with rolling white boards and pivoting screen projector screen that can cover entrance way) can be used to optimize not only the instrumental functions of the workspace (i.e. improve decision making, collaboration) but also its symbolic function (i.e. affirm individual distinctiveness, group status) as well as its aesthetics functions (i.e. allows for customized aesthetic experience, inspires place attachment). Hence, the managers responsible for the decisions regarding room design are also defining the functions of a workspace. For instance, architecture and interior forms can be manipulated to facilitate supervision and also to communicate what kind of social activity is appropriate within the workspace (Baldry, 1997). In other words, spatial configurations mediate social relations in specific ways (Dale & Burrell, 2008).

Halford (2004) uses the expression "social landscape" to describe such interplay between space and social relations. For instance, it is easier for workers to sit with friends (or away from managers) in some spatial configurations as opposed to more restrictive ones. Fayard and Weeks (2007) have relied on environmental affordances to show how the way the physical spaces are designed can have a substantial impact on the patterns of informal interaction and communication that occur there. The concept of affordances, drawn from ecological psychology (Gibson, 1979) and later adopted in design studies (Norman, 1988), provides a lens to consider how the material and social characteristics of an environment jointly shape the perceptions and actions of actors. In the same manner, the concept of affordances allows us to grasp the potentialities and constraints of digital space design and functions. Highlighting their relational aspect, Treem and Leonardi (2012) situate affordances as the variable process that mediates between properties of an artifact (features) and what subjects do with the properties of an artifact (outcomes). The perceptibility, accessibility and understandability of an artifact's features vary between subjects and depending on the context of use, creating a range of possible outcomes (Evans, Pearce, Vitak, & Treem, 2017). The concept of "imagined affordances" also captures such variability by considering the ways in which the technology is imagined by its users (Nagy & Neff, 2015).

In the context of social media, affordances are enabled by the functionalities of the platforms, but they are enacted through their situated uses (Bucher & Helmond, 2017). Just like the managers responsible for the decisions regarding office design are also defining the functions of a workspace, the platforms' owners are controlling the functionalities that define the instrumental, symbolic and aesthetics functions of social media as a workspace. However, these functionalities can be shaped and appropriated in a variety of ways by social media users. Treem and Leonardi (2012) identified four affordances of social media that distinguish them from other communication technologies commonly used in organizations: visibility, persistence, editability and association. As we have tried to show in the description of our empirical examples, workers can use the visibility affordance of social media to express their inner thoughts, struggles, reflections and much more. Indeed, social media can provide an emotionally supportive environment where workers can 'blow off steam' and receive support through comments from other users that are not directly involved in their struggles. The higher level of openness and the 'many-to-many' communication patterns inherent to social media platforms put no a priori limits in terms of an audience, which results in a broader reach. Contributions to social media (posts, status updates, comments, etc.) are visible to all who have access to the user's profile, as opposed to email, where the visibility of a message is limited to those to whom the message was addressed.

Working Out Loud Practices on Social Media and the Active Production of the Workspace (Constitutive Nature)

Work practices are not only structured by what would be an 'exterior' workspace: they are also creating the workspace (Dale & Burrell, 2008). In other words, rather than being a 'container' for practices, workspaces are socially produced and constituted through practices. This leads us to the broader notion of space, which is in the backdrop of this reflection on workspaces. To study work and organization from a spatial perspective is of great interest to scholars of organization studies (e.g. Beyes & Holt,

2020; Dale, 2005; Dale & Burrell, 2008, 2010; de Vaujany & Mitev, 2013; Kornberger & Clegg, 2004; Taylor & Spicer, 2007; Van Marrewijk & Yanow, 2010; Vásquez & Cooren, 2013; Wasserman & Frenkel, 2011), who usually conceive of space not as deterministic but as processual and brought into being through social relations (Lefebvre, 1991; Massey, 2005). Accordingly, space does not consist "only of physical structures but is part of the inter-subjective and subjective realms that make up our social relations. And in turn, the physical world made social comes to constitute people through its very materiality" (Dale & Burrell, 2008, p. 1).[3] Hence, examining workspaces implies paying attention to the "relations between lived work practices and the material environments they inhabit" (Suchman, 1996, p. 35). We hence borrow from these studies the general idea that workspaces should not be viewed in fixed terms, but that they are continuously redefined and produced through the interactions that workers have with each other and with their environment co-constituting each other.

Empirical examples of working out loud posts suggest that through the practices of working out loud, five dimensions of work are not only visibilized and made material (or rematerialized) but have an active contribution to the accomplishment of work, at the same time epitomizing a new way of working. If people turn to public social media for a variety of uses, they also use them to talk about their work; even more, what they do on social media is not just about sharing information about their work but also composed of work-related activities 'in themselves'. More generally, this new way of talking about work and performing work with social media represents not only a new way of working but a new social practice that produces and makes up social media as a new workspace. In a time when technology tends to dissolve work and organizations, the practice of working out loud serves as an illustration of what Halford (2005) has termed the re-spatialization of work and organization. Extending her focus from physical places to social media, our argument is that through the use of technology and the practice of working out loud, work gets

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[3] See also Dale (2005) and Orlikowski (2007) for the entanglement of the social and the material in "sociomateriality", and Vásquez and Cooren (2013, p. 25) for "space as sociomaterial interrelations".

re-spatialized and rematerialized on social media thereby constituting social media as a new space of work.

Conclusion

By studying what people in work situations are doing on social media, and more specifically, by focusing on practices of working out loud, we have proposed that we can access five key dimension of work including the work, the worker, the work process, the work experience and the work setting. By combining these dimensions, we can consider social media platform not merely as communication tool or vehicle for self-promotion but rather as a genuine workspace where people perform and accomplish their work, exhibit and document their work process, where we learn about the atmosphere and emotional experience of work and the work setting. At the same time, public social media extends the traditional notion of workspace through is specific affordances and fluid boundaries, making the workspaces accessible not only for the people who work there but to a larger audience. They present a degree of informality and openness that might be difficult to find inside the organizational realm, while it might also be sought for by workers, and which might even be becoming even more important in the context of the current intensification of work.

This presents an unprecedented opportunity for research to explore questions of workspace through public social media accounts. For example, building on research that has highlighted the role of workspaces for identity building (e.g. Petriglieri & Petriglieri, 2010), future research could explore the possibilities that social media as workspace provides us an opportunity to try out and experiment with new or different digital identities and professional selves that we might be too shy to express in 'analog' worlds. This is not dissimilar to the literature that has explored the notion of 'online persona' and has discussed how online activity offers the potential to try out and express new identities and personas (Marshall, Moore, & Barbour, 2015). In a similar vein, building on research that has highlighted the role of workspaces on identity regulation and resistance (e.g. Hancock & Spicer, 2011; Wasserman & Frenkel, 2011), research

can explore the opportunities of social media for workplace resistance and emancipation, for example, by considering in greater details the ways in which workers narrate and distance themselves from their workspace. As opposed to a traditional workplace, social media as workspace is not a mandatory place but provides the possibilities for new forms of community and emancipatory actions similar to third or liminal places (Shortt, 2015). As such, social media can be seen as a space of potentialities. More actions can emerge, such as opportunities for extra-organizational collaboration and knowledge sharing, as well as new risks and dangers. As the consequences of working out loud are not well documented yet, we invite future research to explore what is achieved through working out loud in the long term. Finally, as in all other workspaces, social media as workspace is prone to questions of power and privilege (Fleming & Spicer, 2014). For example, social media platform providers have repeatedly closed the accounts of artists whose art has been deemed as too provocative, censoring the work and silencing her voice (Lefebvre, 2016). Other examples suggest that social media is not a workspace that enforces equality but instead privileges celebrity accounts over regular accounts (Cath-Speth, 2019).

To conclude, much can be learned about work when we turn to public social media with a qualitative and 'thick data' approach. Although limited in terms of empirical demonstration, our argument has tried to illustrate the ample opportunities opened by considering social media as a workspace, where New Ways of Working are taking place and constituting—as much as they are constituted by—the space in which they are taking place. In a context where work and working may be in transformation, we consider that it is of primordial importance to inquire into the daily experiences and ordinary practices of workers: beneath the surface of their banality, the material shared on social media demonstrates the unfailing inventiveness of workers. While understanding New Ways of Working might be achieved through a variety of research projects, we argue that focusing on practices of working out loud that document work 'in situ' on social media might be one of the most fruitful paths to follow.

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