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

Paula Ungureanu
DISMI
University of Modena and Reggio Emilia

Stefan Haefliger
Bayes Business School
City University of London

François-Xavier de Vaujany
DRM
Université Paris Dauphine-PSL

The adventure of the Research Group on Collaborative Spaces (RGCS)¹ started in March 2014. At that time, our network was not an association. It was a Working Group settled in France, in the UK and in Canada gathering researchers and practitioners interested in topics of new collaborative work and collaborative spaces². Quickly came on the way the issue of Open Science (OS) and Citizen Sciences. To develop knowledge commons (for society and organizations) and to explore impactful, inclusive, responsible, resonant new practices, methods and concepts about and for collaborative practices, OS appeared quickly as a promising space.

Our network thus started to co-produce its own knowledge commons. Topics such as “new (open) research methods” for social sciences and humanities (Aubouin et al, 2018), new (open) academic events and new academic practices (de Vaujany et al, 2018), “open education” and “open university” (Aroles et al, 2020; de Vaujany, Bohas and

Irrmann, 2019), third-places and their role in our cities (Bohas et al, 2017) or new democratic practices (Bohas et al, 2016 ; de Vaujany, 2021) paved the way of our documented and shared discussions. In particular, the practice of “walking ethnographies” and “collaborative learning expeditions” (see the OWEE³ protocol co-produced by the network in the spirit of a knowledge commons, Aubouin et al, 2018; de Vaujany and Vitaud, 2017) became a central part of our co-production of a knowledge commons. RGCS organized more than 32 OWEE experimentations in more than 20 countries with no other resources than enthusiasms and the affordances of open science. All these discussions have for sure strong continuities with past discussions about “actionable knowledge” (Argyris, 1996) or “practitioners’-academic’ collaborations” (Carton and Ungureanu, 2017), but they also

¹ See <http://rgcs-owee.org/> and @collspaces for more information.

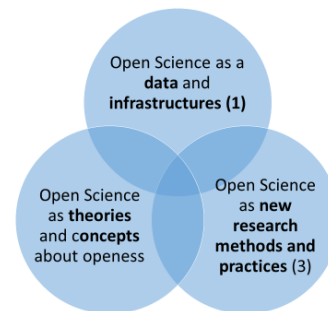
² Acronym in French : NETC which stood for Nouveau Environnement de Travail Collaboratif, i.e. new collaborative work environment.

³ OWEE (i.e. Open Walked Events-Based Experimentations) is a collective walk in a city, mixing local people with new comers, partly improvised, and aiming at offering a co-produced narrative and inquiry about a local territory and its problems. It is inspired namely by Debord (1958) famous “derive” and American Pragmatism and its theory of inquiry (see Dewey, 1938).

involve discontinuities because of the standards, connectivity and political philosophies at stake in open science and citizen science (Frieske et al, 2015; Fuller, 1999; Gieryn, 2006; Herther, 2012).

In 2019, we felt that the time had come to offer a more lasting landmark to all people interested in OS in the context of social studies at large, and in Management and Organization Studies, in particular, with a stress on methodological issues (how to do collectively open science?) and philosophical debates (what is the meaning of open science, with which political implications for our societies and organizations)?

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



• **Figure 1: What is at stake with Open Science (source: authors’ own)?**

Open science practices often regard a shared “access to” something (1), or “opening” data such as surveys, interviews, measures or field notes. Various protocols, norms, licenses and infrastructures of the last decades have made real-time accessibility and collaboration within our reach. More and more, OS promoters realize that there is a mismatch between the model that they propose and the state of the academic fields which seek adoption, such that the theoretical lenses and concepts they use need to be aligned with the openness philosophy itself (2) (see Leone, Mantere and Faraj, 2021). OS thus may gradually be faced with the need to conceptualize a broader, non-dualistic process including both data collection, data diffusion and recursive and inclusive communication. In turn, these theoretical issues trigger reflections on methodological issues (3). Part of the traditional research methods do not fit with the objectives of OS (de Vaujany et al, 2018). And the problem is not just about opening as much as possible traditional spaces of academic discussions. Beyond spatial issues, at the heart of the discussion are new ways of co-narrating knowledge, new research temporalities (de Vaujany et al, 2018), new philosophies⁴ which go beyond the closeness

⁴ With promising discussions around American Pragmatism (Lorino, 2018; de Vaujany, 2021),

of the finite and the final, a paper which ‘dies’ as soon as it reaches destination in the academic journal⁵.

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

The diversity of research approaches and designs can lend critical perspectives a voice as well as break established wisdom. It is noteworthy that the phenomenon of openness has had multiple declinations in the last decades, and that we are still very much in need of comparisons across paradigms, practices and processes of openness. We know that the discovery of openness followed a similar path from subverting established paradigms of building software (Kelty, 2001; Moody, 2009) to breaking established ways of

knowledge anarchism (de Monthoux, 1983) or post-Marxism (Therborn, 2018).

⁵ See also this RGCS open seminar organized in July 2020 and entitled : “Re-inventing academic events: how to co-produce different conferences, workshops and seminars?”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nDhGBwaalo4>

describing job roles (Alexy et al., 2013) all the way to questioning strategy making (Luedicke et al., 2017), and new forms of organizing for public governance (Erikson, 2012; Macintosh & White, 2008; Skelcher et al., 2005). However, more research into what differs and what stays the same across different phenomena of openness would be benefic to making openness a distinct, consistent and integrated field of research. Research designs addressing openness may include ethnographies and questionnaires, online observations and conversations, video and multimodal research, experiments and simulations, testing prior work as well as grounded theorizing about what openness means in specific contexts or across different contexts.

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

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

- History of work and management in an open world;
- Changing nature of work: New ways of working, of managing and organizing in an open world;
- Understanding change in professions and expertise in an increasingly open and interconnected society;
- The blurring of work and leisure categories in the context of new ways of working;
- Collaborative entrepreneurship and coworking;
- Hackers and makers movements;
- Hackerspaces, makerspaces, FabLabs, biohackerspaces, third-places;
- Open Innovation;
- New practices and cultures of participation in technology and knowledge communities (crowdfunding, crowdsourcing, participation in open source technologies and decentralized technologies such as blockchains);
- New forms of collaboration, partnerships and participation in addressing grand challenges at the societal level (e.g., SDGs);
- Open strategy;
- Open policies;
- Open sciences and citizen sciences;
- Collaborative ethnography;
- Crowd research and new research practices exploring the crowd;
- Knowledge and digital commons;
- Theories of commons and communities;
- Communalizations practices and societies;
- Philosophies of commons and communities (e.g. based on phenomenology, sensible ontologies, pragmatism, Marxism, post-Marxism, critical perspectives...);

- Public policies devoted to commons, common good and communities;
- Education to openness, open knowledge and common good;
- Learning processes of openness and common good;
- New research methods devoted to openness, commons and common good;
- Open data based research.

Articles involving researchers, but also practitioners, artists, activists, are welcome. We expect in particular contributions likely to leverage the organizational and political potential of commons and OS for our societies.

Looking forward to reading your propositions (collaborativespaces@gmail.com)!

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