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Call for papers for an *ephemera* special issue on:

Standby as mode of organization

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Standby, in its technical sense, refers to devices that are neither on nor off. It designates an operating state in which, despite apparent shutdown, energy continues to flow to guarantee sudden reactivation. However, the term does not only appear in technological data sheets or user manuals. Standby increasingly acts as a *mode of organizing* in our daily life worlds. Comparable to the 'sleep mode' of a laptop, workers use non-active phases to recharge which, unlike designated breaks, constitute a state in which they must be ready to be re-activated at any time. While being on standby is a common experience amongst professionals such as medical doctors or service personnel, more and more sectors require such availability 'on short call'. However, it is not only humans but also the material and technical elements of our infrastructures that remain under constant tension. From transport terminals to power plants, even the seemingly motionless state of production stoppages or seasonal breaks

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is accompanied by a nervous humming, ticking and pulsating of bodies and things.

In this special issue, we aim to explore the socio-technical organization of standby. We ask how standby functions as social ordering principle, regulating and synchronizing the arrangement of people, things, natural elements and technical devices (Zerubavel, 1982). What guides our interest, first and foremost, is the insight that organizing processes and organizations – considered as coordinating collective efforts, usually involving some division of labor, degree of control and joint objective (Child, 2005) – do not necessarily depend on 'full operation'. Forms of coordination and cooperation also emerge within the in-betweens of stillness and movement. We call for conceptual, analytical and methodological explorations that scrutinize especially the frictions and forces that organize such a mode of 'active inactivity'.

Standby is distributed amongst a vast set of more-than-human actors participating in organizing processes (Latour, 2005; Coole and Frost, 2010). When a food delivery driver checks her smartphone for the next order, when an allegedly rough neighborhood is equipped with security cameras to observe potential perpetrators, or when a technical protocol controls heating and illumination inside a vacant terminal building, it becomes apparent that the process of organizing standby is maintained by socio-technical infrastructures (see Graziano and Trogal, forthcoming). How does this set of heterogeneous actors – of people and devices often widely scattered – become operable? How do such constellations oscillate and switch between 'being on' and 'being off', and how are those dis/connections distributed?

Standby's fluctuations between in/activity make it difficult to manage and control. Translated to the organization of contemporary life worlds, we wonder how standby's ephemerality produces a state of ambivalent feelings, affective tensions, and sometimes even harmful relations. What happens if the delivery-driver cannot access her employer's website because of a server crash? How can the sleepy security officer know whether he is looking at a frozen camera or not? What intensities fill buildings or spaces, that are both abandoned and held 'available'? Lastly, the uncertainty of standby also raises important questions about the

implications of such a mode of organizing. How does it create and, perhaps paradoxically, affect tense and active states of exhaustion and/or endurance (Anderson 2004, Jackson and Carter 2011, Povinelli 2011)? We might also ask: does standby's inherent tension as not-so-static standstill carry any transformative potential? Or is standby's ticking rhythm (cf. Berlant, 2011) paralyzing as it limits the capacity to act, for example, against harmful working conditions?

In summary, standby reveals new perspectives on a wide range of contemporary debates in organization studies and the broader sphere of social theory, including (but not limited to) work, socio-technical collectives, space-times beyond the dualism of standstill or movement, and new forms of cooperation and resistance. We therefore invite contributions across academic disciplines that engage in reflections on the sociopolitical effects of contemporary standby modes, exploring both its potential for further theorization as much as the empirical value of the concept. Possible themes of interest are:

- Organizations on standby: struggles over power and control outside the logic of "full operation"
- More-than human standby (animals, plants, elements)
- Standby labor and human interaction with technological innovations (i.e. apps, tracking devices, monitoring software)
- Temporalities and durations of standby: between inertia and swiftness, routine and singularity, short-termed incidents and cyclical movements
- "Standing by" urban transformations: Neighborhood organizing and local practices of organizing everyday life in the city, the capitalist economy, or resistance to all of these
- Genealogies of standby: theoretical references and semantic fields beyond the technical origin of the term
- The moral and ethical ambiguity of standby and its possible sociopolitical implications ("intervening" or "standing apart")

Deadline for submissions: May 15th 2019.

All contributions should be submitted to the issue editors: Laura Kemmer [laura.kemmer@fu-berlin.de], Annika Kühn

(annika@ueber3.de), and Vanessa Weber (weberv@hsu-hh.de). Please note that three categories of contributions are invited for the special issue: articles, notes, and reviews. However, we are also open for discussing the potential publication of other types of submissions, such as interviews, interventions, or documentations. Information about the different types of contributions can be found at: http://www.ephemerajournal.org/how-submit.

Contributions will undergo a double-blind review process. All submissions should follow ephemera's submissions guidelines, available at:
http://www.ephemerajournal.org/how-submit.

For further information, please email the issue editors.

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