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

Organised ignorance: The practices and politics of the organisation of ignorance

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The purpose of this special issue of *ephemera* is to explore the potential of theorizing and unpacking analytically the role of ignorance in contemporary organizations. We are particularly interested in conceptual development and empirical studies that go beyond an understanding of ignorance as something performed by individuals and explore the practices, techniques, artefacts, affects, infrastructures and different organisational rationalities involved in organized ignorance.

The concept of ignorance may help us conceptualize phenomena that are otherwise difficult to grasp. Simmel talks about trust being an intermediate state between knowledge and non-nonknowledge (1992: 393). This intermediate state is, we claim, also a zone of ignorance. It is a zone of hunches, suspicions and sensations but also of denial, repression and tactful inattention. It is a zone of potential but un-actualised issues, of ambiguity and uncertainty. It is the zone of pretending that things are okay even when they are not (but we do not know what to do about it). It may be the zone of uncomfortable (Rayner, 2012), awkward (Heimer, 2012), potentially destructive (Goffman, 1990) or disconfirming (Schaefer, 2018) knowledge.

If the political is the constitutive moment of the social (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985) then ignorance is definitely political. Ignorance involves deciding what can be talked about and what cannot be talked about, what should be remembered or forgotten, known or ignored, seen or unseen (Otto et al., 2019). Knowledge is power, but so is the control of ignorance.

To grasp ignorance, we need concepts that help us capture the ambiguities and the in-betweens of knowledge and non-knowledge. We need concepts that can help us avoid a naïve position of ignorance as a simple lack of knowledge. Studies of ignorance are currently experimenting with such conceptualizations. Concepts like nescience (Gross, 2010), negative knowledge (Knorr Cetina,

1999: 63ff), non-knowledge (Luhmann, 1998), active ignorance (Medina, 2013), strategic ignorance (McGoey, 2012a) and willful ignorance (Schaefer, 2018) do not simply treat ignorance as a lack of knowledge, as an absence, but as something present, as a phenomenon in the world.

The concept of ignorance has attracted increasing interest in fields such as economics (Davies and McGoey, 2012), psychology (Hertwig and Engel, 2016), anthropology (High, Kelly and Mair, 2012), environmental studies (Gross, 2010; Kleinman and Suryanarayanan, 2012), sociology of medicine (Duttge, 2015; Heimer, 2012), and feminist and race studies (Sullivan and Tuana, 2007; Staunæs and Conrad, 2019). Recently, a small but growing number of studies have explored processes of ignorance, hiding and secrecy in organisations (Bakken and Wiik, 2017; Costas and Grey, 2014; McGoey, 2012a, 2012b, 2019; Gross and McGoey, 2015; Knudsen, 2011; Roberts, 2013; Schaefer, 2018).

Inspired by this emerging field of ignorance studies, this special issue strives to develop new conceptual frameworks for grasping the complexities of organized ignorance. A central aspect of ignorance which we want to highlight is its peculiar double structure: you need to know something in order to ignore it. You cannot ignore what you do not know. What kind of work does it take to ignore or repress what you know? What kinds of practices of 'unseeing' allow organizational actors to know what not to know (Otto et al., 2018)? We will look into the dynamics and the functions of diverse forms of ignorance with a special focus on the different kinds of work it takes to produce and sustain it.

We invite papers that explore ignorance theoretically and/or in diverse empirical fields. Particularly, we are interested in work that offers new conceptual understanding of ignorance apt to grasp the different kinds of operations and processes involved in organizational ignorance as well as the politics of organised ignorance.

Contributions may explore:

- How to conceptually move the field of ignorance studies forward?
- What kinds of conceptual reconfigurations or reshapings would allow organization theory to better understand and capture organized ignorance?
- How can new conceptual and empirical understandings of ignorance enrich established theories of organizing, such as e.g. knowledge management or transparency?
- How can we understand and explore relationships between ignorance, risk, uncertainty, secrecy and knowledge?
- How can key concepts in classic organisation theory be reconfigured to allow for a better understanding of ignorance?

- What are the methodological challenges of studying organized ignorance? How to study that which organisational actors work to make invisible?
- Affects and embodiment: How does ignorance involve tacit knowledge, training of senses and sensuous apparatuses, the construction and maintenance of certain organisational atmospheres?
- The practices, subjectivities and performative effects of secrecy and public secrecy in organisations.
- The ethical stakes accompanying organized ignorance

Contributions

All contributions should be submitted to the special issue editors at jgp.mpp@cbs.dk. Please note that we invite three categories of contributions for the special issue: research papers, notes, and reviews. Furthermore, we are indeed open for discussing the potential of other types of submissions, e.g. interviews, interventions or documentations. More information about the different types of contributions that ephemera is interested in 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 special issue editors.

Deadline for submissions: November 20, 2020

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