IS CALL CENTRE SURVEILLANCE SELF-DEVELOPING? CAPACITIES AND RECOGNITION AT WORK

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Is Call Centre Surveillance Self-Developing? Capacities and Recognition at Work

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Summary: This paper analyses call centre work in light of two philosophical approaches to self-development at work. The first approach stems from James Murphy’s (re)reading of Aristotle; it argues that working can develop technical, social and moral capacities that are constitutive of human flourishing. The second approach is derived from Axel Honneth’s and Christophe Dejours’s theories of recognition, in which institutional and interpersonal recognition at work can develop the practical self-relations that are necessary for autonomous action. From both theoretical perspectives the contribution of work to self-development is Janus-faced, because work can either create or destroy pre-conditions of workers’ well-being. The experiences of call centre workers under intense workplace surveillance illustrate both these possibilities. Résumé, p. 103. Resumen, p. 103.

Philosophers have long compared work unfavourably with other human activities. Work may provide the material necessities of life, but for many philosophers it is either neutral or an impediment to realising what is most valuable in human life. On Hannah Arendt’s typology, which draws on Aristotle, labour sustains our biological processes, work creates enduring objects, but it is in politics—in reasoned public discourse—that humans realise their unique essence. From this perspective, the most urgent threat posed by the

contemporary organisation of work is not the degradation of working
conditions, because work is already a degradation, or at least a limitation,
of the highest human capabilities. Rather, in Jurgen Habermas’s terms, the
primary threat of the prevailing economic order is that the instrumental
imperatives of work will colonise the capacities and shared public spaces
that sustain our capacity for political action: That the factory, office and
marketplace will subsume the polis.

More recently however, philosophers have begun to reconsider how
work might not only provide the material conditions of life, but also deve-
lop the linguistic, cognitive and moral capabilities that a full human life
requires. This re-evaluation of work leads in turn to different kind of eco-

omic critique, because if work can be a source of self-development, then
philosophers need to pay much closer attention to whether contemporary
working conditions realise this potential. In this paper, I begin by distin-
guishing two philosophical models of how work might be self-developing:
a ‘human flourishing’ approach adapted from Aristotle (Section 1); and
a recognition-theoretic model drawn from Axel Honneth and Christophe
Dejours (Section 2). I then consider what these models reveal about one
significant trend in the contemporary organisation of work: the intense sur-
veillance and control of workers in call centres (Section 3). This study of
call centre work shows how philosophical models can usefully distinguish
the sometimes contradictory effects of different methods of workplace
organisation on workers’ opportunities for self-development. Conversely,
the experiences of call centre workers illustrate how philosophers can
learn from workers’ understanding of, and struggles to improve, their own
working conditions.

An Aristotelian Model of Self-Development at Work

The first philosophical approach to how work can be self-developing
is derived from a broadly Aristotelian ideal of human flourishing or eudai-
monia. The starting idea is that a flourishing life consists of cultivating and
exercising properly human capacities. For Aristotle, this means that human
flourishing is found in praxis – in actions pursued for their own sake – and

2. For example: N.H. Smith and Jean-Philippe Deranty, eds., New Philosophies of Labour
(Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012). Of course, there are many earlier theories of this kind,
most notably by the young Karl Marx; see: Axel Honneth, “Work and Instrumental Action”,
in Fragmented World of the Social: Essays in Social and Political Philosophy, ed. C. Wright
(New York: State University of New York Press, 1995); J.L. Jenkins, “Marx on Full and
in virtuous action in particular. For example, part of the ‘good life’ for him is acting courageously, not because courage brings money or fame, but because courageous action realises an intrinsically valuable human capability. By contrast, Aristotle thinks that productive activity (poiesis) aims only at realising the goods or income that work provides, and so that work is solely of extrinsic or instrumental value. Nonetheless, James Murphy has shown how Aristotle’s concept of flourishing can be usefully adapted to explain how work can also realise intrinsically valuable human capabilities if we retain Aristotle’s concept of what a flourishing life requires while disregarding his sharp distinction between praxis and poiesis as qualitative distinct human activities.

Two broadly Aristotelian ideas are significant in Murphy’s approach. The first idea is that a flourishing life is found in the exercise of capacities; which is to say, in what we do rather than what we have. This essentially active concept of the ‘good life’ is intuitively applicable to work because work is a paradigmatic form of human action in the world. Contra-Aristotle himself, the strong links between unemployment and diminished well-being, even when a person’s income remains fairly constant, imply that the opportunity to act through work directly contributes to at least the psychological pre-conditions of human flourishing. To be sure, this does not mean that people must work to flourish, because work in the sense of paid employment is only one form of action in the world. Yet it does suggest that work is a more fundamental determinant of flourishing than consumption beyond some minimal consumption threshold. Moreover, as paid employment comes to constitute a greater proportion of our action in the world, so too does our well-being become increasingly dependent on the opportunities that work provides – or fails to provide – to exercise our capabilities.

The second significant Aristotelian idea is that human flourishing is found in the exercise of certain realised human capacities, where we develop or realise our capacities by repeatedly performing the right kinds of actions over time. The role for capacity development at work in human flourishing is derived from Aristotle’s distinctive claim that acquiring moral

4. ‘Action’ is used broadly here; clearly, Hannah Arendt’s definition of action in The Human Condition excludes work.
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virtues is not simply a matter of applying moral rules, but also cultivating the habit of virtue through one’s actions. So to become courageous, one must not only conceptually grasp what courage is, but also develop a courageous disposition by repeatedly acting with courage over time. This picture of how we realise capacities can be extended to work because work is again a paradigmatic way of developing our capacities through action. Indeed, Aristotle uses work to illustrate how human capabilities are developed in this way, writing that ‘men will become good builders as a result of building well, and bad ones as a result of building badly’. The point Aristotle intends to make here is that our habits shape our character: We become virtuous people by acting as virtuous people do. Yet he also illustrates how work can be an educative process in precisely the same way. Just as for Aristotle performing virtuous actions develop a virtuous character, so too performing the right actions at work can develop a range of other fundamental human capabilities. If flourishing consists in the exercise of fully developed capabilities in poiesis as well as praxis, then the opportunity to develop capacities at work is fundamental to flourishing in this sense.

We can further advance Murphy’s Aristotelian approach to flourishing at work by distinguishing three types of capacities that work could develop, and which might be conducive to flourishing in the broadly Aristotelian sense outlined above. The first type is technical capacities or techne, which designates the skills and knowledge of a profession: knowledge of building for builders, knowledge of legal processes for lawyers, and so on. While Aristotle’s analysis implies that the value of developing technical skills at work is only increased efficiency in producing goods, there is evidence that developing more complex technical skills at work is also linked to increased satisfaction at work. Moreover, as Murphy notes, there is empirical evidence that those who have complex and demanding work also tend to have more complex and demanding leisure activities. Provided

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8. As Murphy notes, there is a tension here between Aristotle’s claim that work is only of instrumental value and his claims elsewhere that work can develop capacities; see: Murphy, *The Moral Economy of Labour*, esp. p. 99.
that there is a causal relation here rather than merely a correlation, work that develops workers’ technical capacities may contribute to a flourishing life by encouraging more complex and satisfying action outside of work as well as in the workplace.

Second, work might also develop social capacities, by which I mean the capacities required to interact competently and successfully with others; for example, to communicate what one thinks and desires, to observe relevant social conventions and to avert or cope with conflict. Social capacities will overlap with technical capacities in service industries like sales and hospitality where the ability to interact competent with others is a requirement of the job; indeed, in some cases it is the job. Nonetheless, social capacities can be roughly distinguished from technical capacities in being part of social interaction outside of work as well as at work. For example, while the ability to communicate the content of a building plan or an academic paper is a technical capacity, these activities will also develop the more generic social capacity of being able to communicate one’s ideas and thoughts with others.

Since even the production of physical objects usually requires social interaction, work can develop social capacities that are also valuable outside of work. One obvious use of social capacities is instrumental, because the capacity to communicate effectively will improve one’s ability to attain what one wants from others. However, social capacities can also be intrinsically valuable, as in the case of shared human endeavours like friendship and love. In such cases, communication is not a means to get what we want but rather is what we want; namely, a life lived together with another. If we take the Aristotelian model seriously, there is also reason to think that there is intrinsic satisfaction to be found in exercising social capacities well. Again, work is by no means the only way to develop such capacities. Yet, as the function of work in social integration increases relative to other collective activities, the importance of work in developing social skills will also commensurately increases. For instance, if Robert Putman is right that community activities declined in the United States, then people’s access to work that develops their capacity to engage with others will have a proportionately greater effect on their well-being overall.11

The third set of capacities that work might develop is moral capacities, which include the ability to recognise and adhere to relevant moral norms and being motivated by the right kinds of considerations. For example, acting justly requires that an agent can recognise what justice

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demands and has the skill to act accordingly, but also that a person desires to acknowledge and respond to this moral demand. Given popular representations of work as either amoral or immoral, and influential representations of work as solely instrumental action in both philosophy and economics, it may seem puzzling to claim that work can develop moral capacities in this sense. However, Christophe Dejours’s research supports the Aristotelian model on this point, because Dejours shows how work always requires cooperation with others. On Dejours’s analysis, work is necessarily cooperative because the work task is under-determined by formal instrumental imperatives, such that cooperation requires that workers arrive at a consensus on how action should proceed. For instance, if there is no one technically correct way to build, then building a house requires negotiation amongst the various participants, all of whom have their own beliefs and preferences, about how to proceed.

Significantly, Dejours has used Habermas’s model of discourse ethics to explain how this consensus amongst workers emerges, and in this model communication requires and generates commitment to basic moral norms. For example, cooperation may require and engender a commitment to a basic level of truth necessary for a consensus to emerge and be sustained over time, as well as a base level of consideration of the needs of other workers. If this is correct, then work can develop the capacity for moral action by initiating workers into a moral community. Of course, this potential may be not fully realised. Or worse, as in cases of workplace bullying, the norms a workplace realises may be pernicious. Yet even these cases can provide indirect evidence of the capacity of work to create and sustain commitment to (sometimes pathological) norms.

A Recognition-Theoretic Model of Work

Where the Aristotelian model of work highlights how the activity of work can develop workers’ capacities, recognition-theory reveals how
relationships at work can develop workers’ self-identity. The word ‘recognition’ has different possible meanings, but in this context it denotes a generally positive evaluation of one’s attributes or achievements by others, as when we recognise a person’s career achievement. Axel Honneth distinguishes three main ways in which we can be recognised in this sense—love, rights and esteem—which he claims are necessary to develop and sustain the practical self-relations that autonomous action requires. A paradigmatic example he provides is love relations between mother and child. Based on the developmental psychology of Donald Winnicott, Honneth argues that maternal care at key stages of a child’s development supports self-confidence in the child that her needs will be met, and that this self-confidence in turn allows her to form healthy relations with others later in life. In this way, recognition is both binding and enabling, because relationships of mutual recognition with others paradoxically enables us to act freely in the world.

We can see the same basic idea – recognition as developing the self-relations that makes autonomous action possible – in Honneth’s analysis of recognition at work. The first work-related form of recognition is rights, which recognise our basic equality others as rational agents. Where love develops self-confidence, Honneth argues that having equal rights enables us to view ourselves as a proper object of respect, and so supports a basic level of self-respect. Honneth’s methodology here is negativistic: he draws on the psychological damage caused by racially discriminatory laws to show how unequal rights are damaging at the level of self-conception. Honneth’s analysis of human rights can be extended to the workplace rights expressed in national laws or collectively negotiated enterprise agreements. In either case, Honneth’s approach implies that inequalities in workplace rights can be harmful not only because they limit some workers’ entitlements, but also in the disrespect that lower rights represent. An indicative case in Australian is the extensive use of so-called ‘casual’ labour contracts, where workers performing the same work as their colleagues on ‘standard’ employment contracts lack rights to on-going work, regular shifts and sick pay and holiday pay. Consistent with a recognition-theoretic framework,

qualitative studies show that one harm of casual work is the marginalisation and disrespect that the lower rights and entitlements of casual workers represent 17.

The form of recognition Honneth more directly applies to work is esteem, which is recognition of the value of our individual contribution through the work that we perform. Being esteemed enables a person to see herself as a unique object of value, and so develops self-esteem. For Honneth, especially in his most recent writings, esteem at work is recognition of the value of a worker’s contribution to society according to prevailing social norms and is embodied in wages and in general social discourse 18. An instance of a lack of esteem in Honneth’s sense would be the relatively low wages and low regard for care work, which, in many Western nations at least, is disproportionate to the education and skills that care work requires and to the substantial contribution that care work makes to the maintenance and reproduction of society 19.

However, in an independent analysis of recognition at work, Dejours has shown the fundamental importance of a different type of esteem to autonomous self-development, which is esteem for the quality of the work a person performs. While still an evaluation of a worker’s individual contribution, esteem in Dejours’ sense is a judgement by a worker’s peers, craft or industry as to whether the worker met trade or profession-specific

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19. For example, a study finding lower wages for paid care workers controlling for the education, experience, personnel characteristics etc of the workers is Paula England, Michelle Budig, and Nancy Folbre, “Wages of Virtue: The Relative Pay of Care Work”, Social Problems 49, no. 4 (2002). The judgment that these wages are disproportionate to the value of their contribution to social reproduction is more conceptual than empirical, although the authors summarize the significant social contribution of care work to society on p. 469. Emmanuel Renault also gives a similar example in referring to a strike by nurses in France in the 1990s demanding that the social value of their labour be recognized, in: Emmanuel Renault, “Taking on the Inheritance of Critical Theory: Saving Marx by Recognition”, in The Philosophy of Recognition, ed. Hans-Christoph Schmit am Bush and Christopher Zurn (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2010), p. 246.
standards of knowledge and skill, rather than a judgement by the labour market or broader community according to shared ethical ideals. For instance, while surgeons generally enjoy high wages and social esteem for their contribution to the generic social goal of good human health, the quality of a surgeon’s work is principally judged by those other surgeons who possess the knowledge that such judgements require. By combining Honneth’s and Dejours’s approaches, we can therefore distinguish three types of recognition that work might provide, and which might contribute to the development of healthy self-relations. These are: workplace rights, the social esteem represented by wages and social discourse; and the esteem of one’s colleagues and peers for the quality of one’s contribution.

Self-Development and Call-Centre Surveillance

In this final section I consider what Aristotelian and recognition theoretic models of work reveal about contemporary experiences of work, and how empirical studies of workplace organisation can inform philosophical theorising about the contribution of work to self-development. I use call centre work as a case study because this is a large and growing form of employment and because the intensive surveillance practices in call centres are the foremost contemporary example of Taylorism in white collar work. Consequently, the organisation of work in call centres is significant both in its own right and as indicative of broader management practices.

Sociologists define call centres by the integration of phone and computer technology and by the use of Automated Call Distribution (ACD) systems in particular. As has been extensively documented, these systems...
allow intensive surveillance of workers' activities. One type of surveillance is for managers or supervisors to listen to operators’ calls and manually assess their performance. Since workers are often not informed when their calls will be monitored, this practice pressures workers to constantly perform as if each call was subject to surveillance. The second main type of surveillance is measurement of the time that workers spend on each work task, such as the average call time and administrative ‘wrap’ time once each call is complete. How long workers spend in non-work activities can also be monitored because ACD systems can record the amount of time that workers are not logged onto the system to receive new calls. By requiring workers to enter a code designating the reason for logging off the system, supervisors can also track the total time that workers spend in any ‘offline’ activity, such as toilet breaks for instance. These quantitative performance measures are automatic and constant, and are generally paired with performance targets such as a maximum average call time. As sociologists have stressed, such practices exemplify the Taylorist strategy of concentrating the planning function of work in the hands of management, and then using performance targets and surveillance to constrain workers’ ability to act outside of management directives.

By limiting workers’ capacity to take independent action, workplace surveillance appears inimical to workers’ self-development. However, while Aristotelian and recognition-theoretic models of work can inform a critical analysis of call centre surveillance, it cannot be simply on the basis that all surveillance at work is inimical to self-development in this way. To the contrary, both Aristotelian and recognition-theoretic models of work imply that some kinds of workplace surveillance might contribute to workers’ self-development. First, the Aristotelian account of how workers develop their capacities implies that workers’ actions are observed by


25. Bain, Watson, Mulvery, Taylor, and Gall, “Taylorism, Targets and the Pursuit of Quantity and Quality by Call Centre Management”; Carter, Danford, Howcroft, Richardson, Smith, and Taylor, “‘All they lack is a chain’: Lean and the New Performance Management in the British Civil Service”.

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competent others. To see this, consider again Aristotle’s remark that ‘men will become good builders as a result of building well, and bad ones as a result of building badly.’ This statement makes no sense except insofar as unskilled workers have their actions monitored by skilled others who direct their actions in the right way. Only through this kind of monitoring and direction of their activities can unskilled builders nonetheless act in the same way that good builders would, and thereby progressively acquire the capacities and judgement required to build well themselves.

Second, while not a point emphasised by Honneth or Dejours, recognition in the thick normative sense of having one’s contribution at work esteemed logically requires that one’s contribution is seen or made visible to others. At the social level analysed by Honneth, one way to properly value marginalised work activities like care work is to more adequately document the contribution that these workers make. Observation and assessment of workers’ activities might—under the right conditions—help bring the often hidden value of care work into public view. At the workplace level analysed by Dejours, adequate esteem for a worker’s efforts requires that her colleagues notice and assess what she has produced. Insofar as recognition at work is a pre-requisite of developing and sustaining the kind of self who is capable of autonomous action, workplace monitoring might in some cases aid self-development by bringing workers’ specific contribution into view. Workplace surveillance is thus double-edged in both Honneth’s and Dejours’s analysis, because observation risks a worker’s actions being controlled by others and provides one means of acknowledging the value of their contribution.

While not providing a critique of all workplace surveillance, what Aristotelian and recognition-theoretic models of work do provide is a more precise critical account of how specific types of surveillance practices visible in call centre work can undermine self-development, on at least three main issues. First, one contribution of a recognition-theoretic approach to distinguish different forms of recognition that surveillance might affect; namely, rights and esteem. A large part of what seems damaging about intensive monitoring in call centres is a lack of or invasion of rights, or lack of voice to prevent the incursions that rights should protect. In extreme cases like the monitoring of toilet breaks for example, workers lack the capacity to demand control of even their most basic needs. Since workers in call centres are often vulnerable, on poor contracts or poorly unionised, intensive monitoring is often forced on them without proper consultation or control. One way that intensive surveillance is inimical to self-development then is that it practically and symbolically reinforces the inequality of workers relative to their employers, because workers are incapable of
resisting invasions into their most basic personal spaces and functions. We can then criticise this denial of rights irrespective of any subsidiary benefits workplace monitoring that was designed in consultation with properly protected workers could have to recognising workers’ performance, such as to providing recognition as esteem at the workplace level.

A second distinction stems from often-reported conflicts between the goals of managers and the goals of workers in call centres. Despite the often tedious and repetitive nature of much call centre work, many call centre workers still report a desire to work well, if by working well we mean responding well to the needs of call centre customers. However, many call centre workers subsequently report that they are prevented from providing good customer service by a preoccupation amongst managers with keeping call times short, a pre-occupation which is enforced by electronic surveillance of call times using ACD systems. For instance, a survey of the largest call centre operator in Australia found that while 98% of call centre workers thought customer service was important, 72% thought that management did not have a high regard for service quality. This broad sentiment is supported and elaborated in more detailed interviews with workers, as where one worker remarks that:

When I started it was more customer service orientated, so you had to give good service to your customer, take time. But now you feel you’ve got to get the customer off the phone.

For present purposes, the point here is that in both the Aristotelian and recognition-theoretic approaches to flourishing the potentially constructive function of monitoring at work stems from its capacity to improve the quality of work people produce. In the Aristotelian model, one potentially constructive function of monitoring is to develop workers’ technical capacities by guiding workers through the actions that good work requires. In Dejours’s recognition-theoretic approach the developmental potential of monitoring at work is in allowing workers to be esteemed for good work. Workplace surveillance which produces poor quality work thus fails to have a developmental function from either theoretical perspective. Indeed, as Dejours has stressed, being forced to work badly can itself be a major source of suffering. These findings are supported by Holman et al’s study of psychological well-being in call centres, which found that while intensive surveillance of call times was correlated with

reduced self-assessed measures of well-being, surveillance that workers perceived as aimed at improving their ability to provide good quality work could actually improve well-being overall

Third, even where call centre surveillance does produce a quality work product, an Aristotelian model also distinguishes how Taylorist methods of organising the work process might undermine workers’ capacities. An example is the use of scripts in call centres, which prescribe the exact words that workers must use in their conversations with customers. Even if this technique produces a minimal level of quality, it does so by removing workers ability to exercise and develop their technical capacities in action

While the deskilling effect of Taylorism is well-known, less well analysed is how centralised surveillance and control might restrict the development of social and moral capacities by restricting the scope for cooperation in Dejours’ sense. Recall that cooperation for Dejours is a corollary of work being under-determined by formal imperatives. While potentially a source of suffering, the need to collectively negotiate how work is performed is also an opportunity to develop social and moral capacities through achieving consensus. By contrast, management practices that specify how every aspect of the work task is to be performed, and enforce this plan through intensive surveillance, progressively restrict the field of cooperative action. In this way, the narrowly hierarchical working relationships that intensive call centre surveillance creates limit workers’ opportunity to develop social and moral capacities that may be in part constitutive of a flourishing life on the Aristotelian approach.

So far, we have seen how Aristotelian and recognition-theoretic models of work can develop our understanding of call centre work by distinguishing different processes by which workplace surveillance might develop or repress workers’ capacities. There is also evidence that unresolved issues in philosophical models of work can be addressed by closer attention to call centre workers’ own understanding of their experiences. One such philosophical issue is how to distinguish genuine recognition of workers’ efforts from control by other means. For example, Kinnie et al document one call centre’s use of rewards such as chocolates, wine and sporadic small cash payments as

29. Murphy provides a more detailed account of how capacities are developed in action using an Aristotelian analysis of a unity of conception an execution in: Murphy, The Moral Economy of Labour.
prizes for workers who meet performance standards. While such practices might legitimately recognise workers’ efforts, they might also be interpreted as disingenuously displays of public ‘recognition’ with the sole goal of intensifying workers’ efforts at low financial cost. Honneth would describe the latter case as ‘ideological recognition’, and he has introduced a range of criteria to distinguish ideological recognition from sincere esteem. These include: that genuine recognition must be unambiguously positive, must intend to affirm workers, and must be credible in the eyes of the addressees.

However, while these criteria clarify Honneth’s intent, empirical case studies of call centre workers suggest that workers themselves might be better placed to distinguish ideological from non-ideological recognition. Ursula Holtgrewe provides an example of a campaign by call centre workers that began with workers’ resistance against a management increase in the price of coffee, which Holtgrewe interprets workers’ response to a failure by management to recognise the demands of call centre work at a very basic bodily level. Subsequently, the campaign used the ideals of ‘service professionalism’ and ‘customer orientation’ more typically advanced by managers to demand pay and conditions that were commensurate with importance of customer service in the organisation’s success. The first promising finding of this study is that workers recognised when management ideals that formally recognise the value of their work are not reflected in practice. Second, workers were able to mobilise what might otherwise be considered ‘ideological’ recognition as part of a campaign to improve their working conditions. In addition to questioning whether Honneth’s formal philosophical criteria between legitimate and illegitimate recognition are required, these actions also suggest that even disingenuous recognition can be marshalled by workers to demand pay and conditions constitutive of real recognition, in what might well be termed an ‘unintended consequence’ of management attempts at control.

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31. Nick Kinnie, Sue Hutchinson, and John Purcell, “‘Fun and Surveillance’: the Paradox of High Commitment Management in Call Centre”, in International Journal of Human Resource Management (Routledge, 2000).
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Keywords: Work, surveillance, Aristotle, recognition, call centres.

La surveillance dans les centres d’appel est-elle un vecteur de self development ? Capacités et reconnaissance au travail

Résumé : Cet article analyse le travail dans les centres d’appel à la lumière de deux approches philosophiques portant sur le self-development en situation de travail. La première approche est tirée de la (re)lecture d’Aristote par James Murphy, pour lequel le travail peut développer les capacités techniques, sociales et morales constitutives d’un accroissement de la subjectivité. La seconde approche est tirée des théories de la reconnaissance d’Axel Honneth et Christophe Dejours, au sein desquelles les formes de reconnaissances institutionnelle et interpersonnelle du travail peuvent développer le rapport de soi à soi qui est au principe d’une action autonome. À partir de ces deux perspectives théoriques, il apparaît que la contribution du travail au self-development est biface, le travail pouvant soit créer soit détruire les conditions présidant au « bien-être » des travailleurs. Les expériences des travailleurs en centre d’appels, évoluant sous étroite surveillance, servent d’illustration de ces deux destins possibles.

Mots clés : Travail, surveillance, Aristote, reconnaissance, centres d’appel.

¿La vigilancia en los centros de llamadas promueve el self development? Capacidades y reconocimiento en el trabajo

Resumen: Este artículo analiza el trabajo en los centros de llamadas a la luz de dos enfoques filosóficos de self development en el trabajo. El primer enfoque surge de la (re)lectura que hace James Murphy de Aristóteles, quien sostiene que trabajar puede desarrollar capacidades técnicas, sociales y morales que son constitutivas de un incremento de la subjetividad. El segundo enfoque se deriva de las teorías de reconocimiento de Axel Honneth y Christophe Dejours,
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en las cuales las formas de reconocimiento institucional e interpersonal en el trabajo pueden desarrollar la relación a sí mismo que se encuentra a la base de una acción autónoma. A partir de las dos perspectivas teóricas, la contribución del trabajo al self-development tiene dos caras, ya que el trabajo puede crear o destruir las condiciones previas para el “bienestar” de los trabajadores. Las experiencias de los trabajadores de los centros de llamadas que se encuentran bajo intensa vigilancia laboral ilustran estas dos posibilidades.

**Palabras clave:** Trabajo, vigilancia, Aristóteles, reconocimiento, centros de llamadas.