Stealing Time

The Temporal Regulation of Labor in Neoliberal and Post-Fordist Work Regime

Andrew Stevens and David O. Lavin

The construction, commodification, and regulation of time in workplaces should be seen as a political economic process. This article examines the emergence of "time theft" as it arose in a neoliberal ideological climate. The rise of time theft as a new type of crime against capital is contextualized within organizational changes that demarcate neoliberal economies, namely the emphasis on decentralized, post-Fordist, outsourced, and increasingly competitive labor-market conditions. This paper begins by examining the theoretical elements of time theft and moves on to draw from empirical evidence gathered from a case study of an outsourced, non-unionized call center in Ontario, Canada, and explores how workers' time is regulated by management using advanced information and communication technologies. It concludes that despite the gains made by individualized acts of resistance and informal collective resistance by employees in call centers which make the working environment somewhat tolerable, collective resistance through unionization is central to make far-reaching changes in the sector.

This article explores the emergence of "time theft" as it developed under the auspices of an economic and political project commonly referred to as neoliberalism, and builds upon a seminal article by Laureen Snider that examined "the genealogy of crime creation through an investigation into the discovery and management of a new type of crime against capital" (Snider 2002, 90). As we argue, the construction, commodification, and regulation of time in workplaces should be seen as a political economic process. The rise of time theft as an emerging type of crime against capital is contextualized within organizational changes that demarcate neoliberal economies, namely the emphasis on decentralized, post-Fordist, outsourced, and increasingly competitive labor-market conditions. By looking at industry and media publications from the early 1980s to the present, this exegesis will reveal how time theft was, and continues to be, vilified as a counterproductive behavior allegedly costing Canadian and American companies billions of dollars each year in lost profits and business failures. The first section of this article explores the political and theoretical elements of time theft, including its

relationship to the political economy of neoliberalism and how it developed within the corporate consciousness. Section two deploys the concept by examining how time is regulated for disciplinary purposes by management in a Canadian call center.

This investigation used a case study of one non-unionized call center located in a mid-sized southern Ontario city (identified throughout this article by the pseudonym OnCall). OnCall is a US-headquartered company that specializes in outsourced telecommunication contracts and has eighteen other call centers throughout the United States and Canada. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a snowball sample of rank-and-file employees between September 2005 and March 2006. The twelve workers interviewed were Canadians of European descent, half were female and half were male, all between the ages of 19 and 40, and their educational attainment ranged from high school to university. All interviewees have also been given pseudonyms to protect their identity since management was not aware of the study. In addition, a sample of Canadian and American media and industry publications between 1980 and 2006 was used to research the prevalence of time theft as a concept in the corporate and public consciousness.

To be sure, the concept of time theft is not entirely new. In the early twentieth century Frederick Winslow Taylor, referring to it as "systematic soldering," believed that this sort of activity constituted "the greatest evil" and was a threat to America and its overall productivity (Taylor 1947, 20). Because of this belief, Taylor was determined to eliminate any sort of waste in the labor process. We argue that contemporary management theory pertaining to knowledge-based workplaces continues to make similar assertions, as management practice remains determined to structure the labor process according to scientific principles. While current approaches to management often deploy more sophisticated strategies—many of which have been adapted to advances in information and communication technologies (ICTs)—the same Taylorist discourse about discipline and revoking worker control over labor still appears. In the business press, similar moralistic comments as those espoused by Taylor arise, but with an added criminalizing emphasis.

Our study also reaffirms a number conclusions arrived at in existing literature on the call center industry, namely that the work is highly routinized, subject to extensive electronic monitoring, acutely stressful and leads to high levels of labor turnover as well as physical and psychological health problems (Bain et al. 2002; Taylor and Bain 2001; Taylor and Bain 1999; Baldry, Bain, and Taylor 1997). Furthermore, as Zuboff (1984), Garson (1988), and a host of other scholars have pointed out, the rise of ICTs in the workplace has resulted in more managerial control over the labor processes and the workforce itself, rather than realizing the possibilities for emancipation. For decades, critical surveillance and labor process theorists have suggested that management needs a strict regime of surveillance and control (Rule 1996; Lyon 1994; Edwards 1979; Braverman 1974). While our research supports the argument that management's power is enhanced by surveillance technologies, the model of Foucault's Panopticon utilized by some authors (Fernie and Metcalf 1998) to describe call centers inaccurately portrays the management's control over labor as absolute and thus negates the possibility and actuality of resistance. Indeed, as Bain and Taylor (2000) suggest, management *would like* to wield

ultimate control over the labor process, although the actual conditions prove otherwise. While surveillance remains a key mechanism of control, the workplace is not a total institution and workers can and do evade many elements of management's technological gaze. Applying the panopticon to workplaces can become problematic and it must also be stressed that this concept is only one aspect of Foucault's wider theorization on the disciplinary society. Yet even with this in mind one caveat is warranted: formal management policies are not enacted in their entirety at all times on the floor. While management's task is to ensure that employees do their assigned work, often through the use of discipline and surveillance, some of the actions by workers that may constitute resistance are overlooked by supervisors if the outcomes are limited—that is, if they have a negligible impact on overall productivity. Furthermore, as we discovered, a subordinate group may exercise its power to resist in some circumstances and not in others, and the very nature of this resistance can relate to particular forms of control (see Jermier, Knights, and Nord 1994).

Finally, we argue that the rising prevalence of time theft—or rather the identification by management of non-productive activities by employees while at work as constituting theft—in workplaces loosely categorized as knowledge- or communication-based is related to the low union density in these sectors. Under Fordist economic models, dominated by industrial firms in monopoly capitalism, unions successfully bargained for a restricted workday, overtime pay, break-times, paid vacations, grievance procedures, and in some cases provided workers with a degree of control over their work. Without some form of collective representation, the only protection that employees in the service sector have is the basic labor laws and standards, which most often privilege employers. And while unions are not the only response, they cannot be overlooked when examining possible avenues of resistance by labor against management's increasing and technologically facilitated scrutiny over the labor process.

Before we go further with our discussion on time theft, a brief overview of the political economy of call centers in North America is necessary. Call centers are relatively new and first appeared in the early 1980s in the US. Call centers and call center work have experienced rapid expansion in Western countries and increasingly throughout the world, and since the mid 1990s they have received a significant amount of academic and media attention (Bain et. al, 2002). With the convergence of computing and telecommunications technologies, falling communication costs, and liberalized national telecommunications policies, corporations can easily relocate service work to call centers almost anywhere in the world. The growth of the call center sector is also linked to the increasing tendency of corporations to outsource or offshore services, such as technical help, billing inquires, and customer complaints, allowing corporations to realize substantial savings in labor costs. It is particularly important to note NAFTA and other international trade agreements, as these are some of the mechanisms through which US-based corporations facilitate the offshoring—or nearshoring in the case of Canada—of call centers. This is part of the larger business-led process of North American continental integration and economic globalization. These undemocratically reached agreements, such as NAFTA, guarantee transnational corporations, among other things,

unrestricted flows of information, both data and voice, through the communication networks of Mexico, Canada, and the US (Levy 2005; Mosco 2005; Rideout 2003; Schiller and Mosco, 2001).

Call centers are seen by many at all levels of government as sources of economic stimulation and growth, particularly in regions of higher unemployment rates, which has resulted in fierce competition to attract these businesses. Because of this, both regional (that is, provincial, municipal, etc.) and national governments are compelled to offer corporate welfare in the form of tax abatements or reform labor regulations in the interest of business. Relatedly, many local economic development corporations and provincial governments purposely note the low union-density rates within the call center industry in their jurisdictions (see London Economic Development Corporation 2006). The growth of the outsourced call center sector also runs parallel with the increasing polarization of jobs and income in Canada, and is encouraging a race to the bottom in terms of wages and working conditions (Clott 2004; Larner 2002; Richardson and Belt 2001; Buchanan and Koch-Schulte 2000). In 2005, Canadian call center workers earned on average Can$12.15 per hour, substantially lower than the average Canadian wage of Can$18.50 (Statistics Canada 2005). OnCall is at the lower end with a starting wage of Can$9 per hour. As research has shown, American corporations can save 35 percent on labor costs by outsourcing service work to call centers located in Canada (Canadian Customer Contact Center Industry 2004). And as the 2004 United Nations *World Investment Report* highlights, a substantial amount of outsourced and offshored business process and support services are being handled in Canada by call centers such as OnCall. In fact, Canada is among a group of advanced capitalist societies including Ireland and Israel that are attracting the bulk of offshored service work from the United States (Mosco 2005).

The Theft of Time: neoliberalism, discourse, and power

Neoliberal policies, developed and executed by corporate, state, and other institutional powers, are fundamentally an assault on the working class, with capital benefiting greatly from this encroachment on political economic relations. Neoliberalism, then, "is the ideological expression of the reassertion of the dominance of finance" (Duménil and Lévy 2001, 579). In this sense, time theft is based on the notion that time is a measurable commodity that can be allocated value. Workers have been accused of stealing almost everything from their employers, but the emphasis on the worker as a criminal as opposed to just slacking off or being lazy is relatively new.

Developing along a similar trajectory, post-Fordist economic models are largely based on the rise of global competition, changing patterns of consumer tastes, "flexible specialization" (Vallas 1999), and the demands for new ICTs—uncertain job prospects and insecurity are hallmarks of this system. Productivity and efficiency remain the important components in this new system of production, distribution, and consumption. Indeed, OnCall exemplifies such features, given its

status as an enterprise that markets itself as a leader in business process outsourcing. Organizational change within the knowledge- and communication-based firm must be met with an equally impressive drive to substantially alter the cultural composition of particular companies and the industry as whole (see *The Economist* 2006; *Business Week* 2005; Davenport 2005; Liker 2004). Consequently, corporations demand more work and longer hours out of fewer staff in even more precarious employment circumstances. When the corporate community was complaining of the dangerous effects of counterproductive time theft, companies were simultaneously demanding more work out of existing workforces. Despite the major increases in productivity and a rapidly growing economy over the past thirty years, the vast majority of Canadians during the same time period have seen no increase in real wages and those at the lowest end of the wage structure have experienced a decrease in real wages while corporate profits continue to rise (Russell and Dufour 2007).

Scholars of contemporary labor market conditions have also pointed to the rise of casualized and precarious employment within neoliberal and post-Fordist socioeconomic environments. As one leading academic in the field points out, the current employment regime which began in the 1970s is marked by atypical employment contracts, limited benefits and entitlements, low wages, more job insecurity, and increased risks to health (Vosko 2005). Extremely restricted employee control over the labor process, working conditions, wages, and importantly for us here, pace of work, constitute one dimension of precarious employment (Vosko and Zukewich 2005). Demands for "just-in-time" production, competitive and "flexible" labor markets provide employers with more freedom to regulate the working day as they see fit, and thus permit cutbacks in paid hours, benefits, and wages, and fosters a speed-up in production—in some cases only the enforcement of existing labor legislation prevents them from doing otherwise. None of this, of course, is new to capitalism.

Conceptualizing Employee Time-Theft, Deviance and Counterproductive Behavior

The concept of time is a crucial point of departure. For the notable Canadian writer, George Woodcock, "The clock represents an element of mechanical tyranny in the lives of modern [people] more potent than any individual exploiter or than any other machine" (Woodcock 1992, 105). In England during the eighteenth century, when large parts of the peasantry were forced into industrializing urban centers as a consequence of the Acts of Enclosure, routinized time increased in significance. It is here that time began to become money, the employer's money. "In mature capitalist society", E.P. Thompson wrote, "all time must be consumed, marketed, put to *use*: it is offensive for the labor force merely to 'pass the time'" (Thompson 1967, 90-91). The reconfiguration of capitalism that stemmed from the economic crises of the 1970s also resulted in an ideological shift involving both political and economic actors, which put additional pressure on the social sphere – the way work is done and the way life is ordered in fast-paced Western lives (Menzies 2005).

In the 1980s Robert Half (1983) concluded that time theft was "the deliberate abuse and waste of time on-the-job" and "usually unrecognised, unchecked, and unpunished" despite its cost to the economy. "People who purposefully abuse their paid working time are stealing from their employers," Half said, "just as they would be if they stole money or products" (cited in Boswell 1989). In 1985, Half's survey calculated that the weekly time theft per employee in the US was 4 hours and 26 minutes, which amounted to roughly $1,924 a year (cited in *Ottawa Citizen* 1985, B4). This alleged villainy also included the final fifteen minutes each day that employees prepared to leave the office (Scelsi 1988). Crucial to our focus on knowledge work, Half also estimated that the average office worker stole more time than the average manufacturing worker (Half 1983).

Over the past two decades the definition of time theft has changed very little, and is often defined as: arriving for work late or leaving early (Kamp and Brooks 1991); making personal telephone calls (*Ottawa Citizen* 1985); taking long lunches and coffee breaks (Kamp and Brooks 1991); working at a slow pace in order to create overtime (*Ottawa Citizen* 1985); leaving work to go shopping or run errands (Ford 1990); excessive socializing with other workers (*Ottawa Citizen* 1985); using company time and premises to conduct other business; arguing with customers (Snider 2002); faking illness and claiming unwarranted sick days (Hollinger and Clark 1983); falsifying time sheets (Snider 2002); sleeping on the job (Dickens, Katz, Land, and Summers 1989); working under the influence of alcohol and drugs (Kamp and Brooks 1991); as well as the unauthorized personal use of company e-mail and Internet systems (Shaw 2005). In some instances scholars have constructed deviant archetypes that are prone to slack on the job and engage in theft (Hollinger and Clark 1983), while others have described theft at work as a form of resistance used by employees against management and employers (Mars 1982). Workplace deviance is not only defined as a form of material theft in the literature, but becomes broadly perceived as any attempt to subvert the prescribed labor process by intentionally or unintentionally reducing productivity.

Following Snider (2002) and Foucault (1980), we see the significance of truth claims as ideological claims to power in this public discourse. The construction of time theft as a behavior in need of discipline by management is grounded in a deliberate assault against the working class. In some cases employees adopt these claims as truth, or rather, accept the supposition that employers *should* have the right to ask of workers what they will based on the "legitimate" proprietary relations. Time at work then *belongs* to the employer. As critical scholars have long maintained, such social realities take on ideological forms that express certain objective relationships arising from the social relations of production (Pashukanis 1978), with law serving a normalizing function (Foucault 1978). There also persists an overriding assumption that the *profit-making* activities of corporations are inherently good (Bittle and Snider 2006) and behaviors at work that do not contribute to this goal are broadly cast as deviant or criminal (see Sieh 2001, 81). Surveillance techniques are deployed, and justified, largely on these grounds. It must also be conceded that this ruling order is not maintained by force alone but by also winning the active and passive consent of those over whom it rules (Gramsci 1971), namely the employees. Contemporary managerial rhetoric of emancipation and

empowerment, such as that presented by Davenport (2005), Hammer and Champy (2003), Hammer (1996) and others, obscures a deeper reality of work intensification and increased managerial control (Sewell 1998). Indeed, the business-centred theories developed under the moniker of "knowledge management" involve the centralization of collectivized or shared knowledge, and are largely responses to organizations' need to intensify the creation and appropriation of knowledge itself (Scarborough 2005).

"If there's time to lean, there's time to clean"

It was in the 1980s that time theft grabbed a remarkable amount of attention from the media as well as business and industry publications, even though there was nothing profoundly new about capitalist organizations rigorously controlling time in the workplace. What industry and journalist pundits clearly focused on was the alleged economic impact of employee theft in general, and time theft especially, in the midst of recession and mounting pressures from corporate lobbyists for more profitable and globally flexible economies and labor markets. The financial consequences of time theft varied wildly and the accused travesty of employee crimes against the corporation and the economy, overall, were extremely spurious. It would seem, if one takes the figures at face value, that the economic woes of the time could ultimately be pinned on a workforce that was not only unproductive, but also largely criminal. But none of this developed in a political vacuum. In addition to the crisis of falling rates of profit experienced by Western firms and economies, the productivity squeeze and broad assaults on working class power took place under the ascendancy of neoliberal governments and their ideological indebtedness to a supposedly laissez-faire capitalism. In the Anglo democracies, conservative and market-oriented governments cleared a path for reducing the strengths and gains made by organized labor over the past century. By displacing existing forms of social solidarity with that of entrepreneurial individualism, a moral and economic argument was constructed against hard-fought social programs and a sense of entitlement to good working conditions, benefits, and pay by the working class.

In 1982 it was argued that time theft cost the American economy $125 billion and by 1988 this figure sky-rocketed to $200 billion (Ratliff 1989; Towler 1988; Half 1983). According to the Conference Board of Canada, wasting time in the workplace was costing employers in Canada $15 billion in 1982 (Boswell 1989). From this it was concluded that workers were responsible for a quarter of overall business failures because of their long lunches and idle chat around the water cooler. As a reaction to these fears, the introduction of surveillance technologies and increased disciplinary measures (that is, dismissals) were emphasized as the means of removing counterproductive employees and activities from the workplace (Latshaw 1997; Scelsi 1988). In a lucid point of clarity another writer stated, "Management increases profitability and maintains control of labor and benefit costs by preventing 'time theft'" (Mancini 1994, 19). Punch clocks, a continuing reminder of industrialism's rational ordering of the working day, and automated time and attendance systems are means of rationalizing the management of time through computerization and automation.

Despite the proponents of increased workplace surveillance as a response to time theft, the conceptualization of time theft as a crime committed by workers is not without its challengers, even amongst some academics within the ranks of business schools. Many of these critics have refuted the alleged consequences of employees not using every moment in the workplace to labor (Ratcliff 1989), with one writer calling Half's research "half-baked" (Boswell 1989). Indeed, these arguments also represent an acknowledgement that there are limits to how much can be demanded from employees before efficiency and worker morale suffer as a result of excessive time-discipline. Not only do we find opposition to the alleged consequences of workplace slacking, but also a thorough recognition of capital's oppressive deployment of time theft as a categorical vilification of employees who resist managerial control over the labor process. What is considered as theft by employees could be, and has been, considered as a response by workers to existing economic inequities (Greenberg 1990).

In summary, time theft emerged as a unique form of counterproductive behavior that quickly grabbed the attention of mainstream media from the early 1980s onwards. With the sophisticated development of ICTs, electronic monitoring and surveillance devices, as well as bodies of science that seek to deploy these instruments, managerial practice has in the process become more refined and precise. The next section will examine how the construction of time theft impacts the organization of call center work and charts workers' responses to oppressive features of managerial control.

Technology, Surveillance, and the OnCall Call Center Labor Process

The technological surge over the last twenty-five years has given management new tools to aggressively thwart time theft among other forms of employee behavior perceived as deviant. Drawing on empirical evidence from a case study on a non-unionized outsourced call center, this section examines technology and surveillance practices in relation to the regulation of time and control over the labor process. However, even with the development of more sophisticated surveillance technologies workers still find creative ways to resist management's encroachment on the labor process by re-appropriating such things as time. Indeed, it is because of this resistance that disciplining employees' use of time becomes an ongoing task. This section also confirms the conclusions reached by others that resistance is alive and well in the call center industry. Research has documented a wide range of worker resistance including using cynicism and humor to undermine managerial authority, faking telephone calls to avoid work, calling in pretending to be sick and other forms of truancy, walking out, and undertaking unionization drives (Mulholland 2004; Taylor and Bain 2003; Fleming and Swell 2002; Callaghan and Thompson 2001; Bain and Taylor 2000).

Despite the ambivalent nature of technological systems, when technology is introduced into capitalist workplaces it is often wielded as a weapon of control.

There is a tendency for capital to deploy technology as a means to systematically subvert worker empowerment rather than to facilitate it (Marx 1976; Braverman 1974). Indeed, manufacturers of workplace surveillance equipment highlight the time theft thwarting capabilities of their new technologies as a selling point (Marx 1999). For example, the Abacus Group (n.d.), which describes itself as "Telecom Billing Experts," notes the "seriousness" of "time theft" and contends that its *Proteus Communications Management System* can eliminate, or at least reduce time theft. The company claims that the software it develops will "tell you which members of the team are idling away their time" and "prevent fraudulent and abusive use of your phones and networks." Surveillance techniques, a crucial element of Taylorism, are complimented and re-invented by the introduction of new technology.

The Regulation of Time at OnCall

The idea of time theft stems from Taylorist discourse, especially its concern with efficiency and productivity. Indeed, technologically-enabled surveillance techniques are crucial elements of scientific management and of detecting and thwarting time theft. Emphasizing the worker's time as an object of surveillance and regulation is reflected in the weekly statistical calculations of employee performance and behavior at OnCall. These reports indicate a strict adherence to break-times, punctual arrival and departure from work, attendance, average call handle time, percent of time spent entering customer details in accounts, the amount of idle time, and the number of calls taken in a particular span of time. As one employee, Bill, commented, "There is heavy monitoring everywhere. They [management] know when you sign in. They know how many calls you've had. They know your handling time. They know when you have gone on breaks, and everything else." The point is to document the entirety of the working day and with this, management has in its hands an exhaustive statistical computation of how each employee spends his or her day at work. Employees are enmeshed in an assemblage of calculative and calculating practices. Indeed, this exemplifies the preoccupation that management has with regulating time. Joe, another employee at OnCall, discussed the intensity of this monitoring.

> Your breaks are monitored; they [management] try to get people in the habit of being right on time with your breaks. By the end of [our breaks], we were counting down to the second and punching in. As long as you are within in a minute of your fifteen minutes that's fine. But if you were over a minute, [management] would be able to see that, and would indicate that to people, and make them sign things stating that they acknowledged that they [employees] went over their break.

Employees are forced to officially acknowledge this by filling out statements declaring that they have caused a transgression against the employer. This information

is then included in the employee file and can be used to discipline workers in the present or at some point in the future.

These comments on the meticulous accounting of seconds suggest that management encourages workers to monitor, regulate, and shame themselves so that strict adherence to the schedule is maintained. Employees do internalize the monitoring process and see the notion of time theft as legitimate. Lucy, another employee at the call center, commented, "If you're taking eighteen minute breaks everyday and you're only supposed to be having fifteen minute breaks, you're robbing the company." This lucid statement also indicates an employee's internalization of the ideologically constructed, and legally sanctified notion of capital's supremacy over labor at work. In workplaces such as call centers a variety of tactics are employed in an attempt to break the habits of employees that are undesirable to capital with the aim of crafting workers who are dependable and predictable with their use of time. Capitalism has consistently required a systematic restructuring of working habits. Break times are not to be based on the amount of rest that a worker might need, which would naturally fluctuate based on the circumstances and individual requirements. Instead, it is the employer that dictates the break schedule, forcing workers to catch a moment's rest at a time decided by management. These changes in the natural cycle of rest necessitated a disciplinary regime, a process that is ongoing.

Firing, disciplining, and belittling workers for time theft is quite prominent at OnCall, and exemplifies the punitive management style that is quite pervasive in this sector overall. At various points throughout the year, management goes on a mass-firing spree and uses the pretext of time theft as a reason for terminating employment. Jack, another employee at the call center, recounted these occurrences. His comments are especially illuminating.

> We call it the clean-up time where all of a sudden it seems as if management is looking for anything…The biggest thing for them is when they go on a cleaning binge, which is usually in the fall. They will start nailing people for taking an extra minute on their break or two minutes on lunch.

In this workplace, as in many others, management policies are often enacted selectively. Nonetheless, workers are expected to be at the workstation throughout the entire day, apart from the prescribed breaks. If workers need to leave they are required to ask their supervisors and sign out of their workstation. Another employee, Frank, remarked, "If you have to go to the bathroom, and if it is not during one of your scheduled breaks, you're supposed to inform your supervisor that you're leaving your telephone to go to the bathroom…It really feels like I am in a kindergarten class." Requiring workers to ask for permission to go to the washroom is not unique to OnCall and is seen by many workers as a part of the general degrading and dehumanizing working experience prevalent in many call centers (van den Broek 2004). Snider (2002, 103) notes that this has been referred to as "bathroom break harassment" and workers may hesitate to go to the washroom out of fear of being fired or otherwise disciplined. And, as Linder (2002) points out, in

a unionized workplace employers could not get away with banning or having such tight restrictions on toilet access.

If workers leave their workstation too often during their shift apart from the allotted time, no matter what the reason, they can be disciplined. It is common in call centers for workers to be written up, coached, and fired if they take too many breaks or spend too long on them (Head 2003; Rose 2002; Bain et al. 2002). Exceptional circumstances are not necessarily considered. For example, Elizabeth, another worker at the call center, had more than reasonable grounds to leave her workstation often during the workday. She stated:

> When I was pregnant, I was leaving my computer four or five times a shift to go to the washroom, and I got coached on it. And I was like 'Excuse me, I am pregnant, and when I have to go to the washroom, I am going regardless.' They are very strict on things like that.

These sorts of threats to productivity and efficiency become a concern for management, with time spent urinating being considered as stolen time (Snider 2002). Telling pregnant women that they are going to the washroom too often is not an isolated incident in the sector. Head (2003) reports on a call center in Arizona where a pregnant worker was also told by her supervisor that she was going to the washroom too frequently and that she should throw up in the garbage can next to her desk instead. In other call centers, employees are expected to make up the time for taking washroom breaks (Rose 2002). In such circumstances workers are deemed to be miscreants by employers, and are perceived to invariably commit offences against capital if aspects of their bodily functions are not controlled.

While even employees in some unionized call centers have very tight toilet restrictions, the presence of a union can radically improve this access. In the case of Faneuil, a 300-employer facility located in the US, workers won "freedom to go to the bathroom anytime" after they organized with the United Food and Commercial Workers (Linder 2002, 311-12). In this instance collective representation secured what may be considered a basic right—the right to go to the washroom. The presence of this problem at other facilities indicates that unions must focus their organizing efforts on appealing to the processes of work and regulation of time as a significant part of their recruitment strategy. Wages and benefits remain crucial of course, but allowing workers some autonomy at work is also vitally important. Indeed, when some workers at OnCall attempted to organize—unsuccessfully because of the ruthless suppression of the union drive—the punitive management style was highlighted as one of the main motivating forces. Jack, who was active in the unionization attempt, explained, "I wanted [the union] in big time, just to stop the bullshit. I went to the union meetings, and we never once brought up pay. Not once, we just wanted the bullshit from management to stop." In non-unionized call centers workers are left with individual or informal means to resist aspects of the labor process. Some workers at this call center do want to undertake another union drive, but this has yet to occur.

Contested Terrain: Employee Resistance at OnCall

As with other aspects of the labor process employees will, in one form or another, struggle against management's attempt to control time. Indeed, employees can utilize the same technology that is required for the job to resist the pace of work at inbound call centers. Even though unions can greatly improve the work environment where they exist, there remain aspects of work that often cannot be negotiated, which can breed a culture of discontent among employees. Another study has found individual and informal collective resistance similar to what we have discovered occurring in a unionized context (Mulholland 2004). At OnCall, as in other call centers, individual and informal collective resistance arises out of the daily experience of work. The volume of calls can be quite high and employees must often take one call after another, which is both frustrating and exhausting. Judi, another worker at OnCall, complained:

> We had queues of three to four hundred people everyday. That's hard to deal with. It can be stressful. You do not have time between calls to gather yourself. If you had a difficult call and then you have to take another call, it is difficult sometimes to get it together.

Employees will find ways to grab a moments rest, whether management gives it to them or not. Lucy, who has to a certain degree internalized the managerial conception of time theft, commented, "You got to say to yourself that you don't care, and put yourself in wrap up for a bit or roll the queue, and take a little break and step away." In some call centers workers have time in between calls to enter details or notes into the customers' accounts, referred to at this call center as *wrap time*. To get a decent break between calls, workers can do what is known at this call center as the *double wrap*, which is hitting the wrap up button twice to extend the amount of time in between calls. If this is not done, workers will be thrown back into the queue and will have another call fired at them right away. If employees are not compensated with reasonable breaks they will resist and re-appropriate their time, especially if they feel cheated by the employer (Townsend 2003). The double wrap is an example of workers creatively employing the technology required to do the job in order to resist management's constant emphasis on productivity and "proper" use of time. This also indicates the employees' propensity to shape the working environment into something bearable, and does not necessarily indicate an opposition to managerial authority or rules. Nonetheless, as new technologies are harnessed by management to control the labor process, new and innovative forms of worker resistance to these tools arise (Marx 1999).

Management is aware of the double wrap and does consider this, explicitly, as time theft. As Lucy says, "You can sit there for a few minutes, but if it shows that you're doing this an hour a day, it is obvious that you're goofing off." To resist, workers at this call center, as in others, need to know how long they can extend the time not taking calls before management considers it as worthy of disciplinary action (Callaghan and Thompson 2001). It is a delicate game that workers must play

if they are to make the workplace a somewhat bearable environment. If this form of resistance is identified by management and deemed a transgression against capital, workers may face the threat of having their employment terminated.

Workers at OnCall use other methods to grab a few moments reprise for themselves during the workday including *rolling the queue*, which is similar to the double wrap. Joe explained:

> There are ways that you can avoid doing some work. It is called 'rolling the queue.' You have an available button, and you got an outside line. So if you are in available and hit the outside line, say if you just finished a call, you are going to be the last person in the queue to expect the next call, and as calls come in it is going to move closer to you; so if you hit outside line and then hit available again, you have bumped yourself to the back of the line again.

However, like the double wrap there are limits to rolling the queue. Time spent rolling can be monitored as well, and workers are disciplined if they perform this tactic to the point that management sees it as impacting productivity. But explicitly coercive practices are not the only means used to discipline workers. Peer pressure, which is an aspect of normative control, also limits the amount of time workers spend rolling the queue. "I could sit there all day and roll the queue and not take one call," Lucy commented, "but my poor buddy beside me is panicking, taking a hundred calls." This form of collegial concern among employees can be used to the advantage of management to subvert worker resistance. Employees can and do fiddle with the technological systems to get some free time. However, they realize that if they do this it means more work for their colleagues (Brannan 2005). If workers do not avoid doing work so that they do not overburden their co-workers, management is likely to foster this sort of sentiment, and it is a reason to put employees who do very individualized work into otherwise arbitrary teams. Indeed, some have argued that call centers agents can be more effectively exploited and controlled by management when working in such groups (Van den Broek et al. 2004; Mulholland 2002). In the end management gets what it wants: hardworking and productive workers.

Employees are aware of the limits that they can push when it comes to grabbing a few moments for themselves between calls, and have to maintain constant vigilance if they are to successfully manipulate the prescribed labor process. As Jack explained:

> If you hit the double wrap, you can sit there indefinitely, but if you're not paying attention, all of a sudden a team leader will come down and say 'You've been in wrap-up for ten minutes, what are you doing?' And it is like, 'Oops, sorry.'

Employees in this call center have had their employment terminated when determined by management to have committed an offence against capital. Employees

have to use the double wrap and rolling the queue methods sparingly, if they do not want to be fired or otherwise disciplined. But management at OnCall uses other methods beyond the threat of dismissal, to bring out labor's full productive capacities. As Judi noted, "If you are rolling the queue they can tell. They can also push me back into the queue…The supervisor can just hit a button and throw you back in the queue." As soon as the worker is back in the queue, the calls are forced fed to him or her again. This is an example of what Edwards (1979) referred to as a form of direct and technical control, both of which are used to thwart time theft. As with most workplaces, a plethora of techniques are deployed by management to enforce control over the labor process and workers themselves.

Even though call centers are often touted as high-tech and professional working environments, like that espoused in Daniel Bell's (1973/1999) vision of post-industrial workplaces, the use of ICTs is tightly regulated. Lucy commented on this stringent control:

> They took away internet privileges other than specific sites that were to do with our jobs. IT had us blocked out of everything. You weren't able to use [Microsoft Messenger]. They blocked most things out. IT can get at anything and see what you're doing, like any Internet system. They took away emailing and being able to go out freely on the Internet. There was no way to surf the net.

Through the use of filtering software, Internet activity is restricted to business related websites and e-mail is only available for work-related purposes. Anything sent over the corporation's communications network is subject to surveillance. Again, technology is used to restrict labor's capacity for time theft by virtually eliminating the possibility of engaging in acts of personal recreation on company computer systems.

When workers re-appropriate their time it is considered a criminal offence against capital. However, when management steals employees' time, such as expecting them to do extra work for no pay, the discourse changes. As Snider notes, "Theft of time by employers…is neither disciplined nor criminalized" (2002, 109), especially in non-unionized environments. Employees are expected to do extra work to increase their own productivity and efficiency. However, they will resist this imposition on their own free time. Frank commented:

> We're supposed to come in ten or fifteen minutes early to get our computer set up and open up all of our computer programs, and then sign on to our phones, and then that is when we start getting paid. But if I start at 10:30, I'll sign into my phone at 10:30, and then I turn on my computer. It is not as if I enjoy booting up the computer. It is not a hobby of mine that I do for fun. If I have to come in to boot up the computer I am going to get paid for that.

Workers are not allowed to take an extra minute or two on their breaks or lunches, but management expects workers to give up their own free time to contribute to corporate profitability and efficiency, thus lengthening the working day without additional remuneration. Frank's comments echo Braverman's assertion that "in a society where labor power is purchased and sold, working time becomes sharply and antagonistically divided from non-working time, and the worker places an extraordinary value upon this 'free' time, while on-the-job time is regarded as lost or wasted" (1974, 278). Employees are expected to be productive even before they are officially on the clock by preparing the workstation in advance. Without the collective power of a union there is little formal recourse for workers to challenge this rule. Employers insist the time spent at work is time spent being fully productive while at the same time continually encroaching on employees' free time, as Ehrenreich (2002) has observed, which is, not surprisingly, valued much more than time spent at work.

Conclusion

With the emergence of industrial capitalism, the organization of work became increasingly structured by the rigours and discipline of time. The construction and regulation of time should be understood as a political economic process. This is evident with the emergence of time theft as part of the neoliberal vocabulary, constructed largely by ideological claims reified in the industry and business press. At the same time, management theory has been used to articulate more "rational" and scientific measures to control the productive capacity of knowledge and communication workers in post-industrial workplaces. Just as industrialization redefined the working day, so too has the corporate-led and state-supported project of neoliberalism restructured the labor process to underline the pressures for short-term capital accumulation; productivity and efficiency and how an employee spends his or her time at work remain incessant preoccupations for management.

As this article has argued, time theft has become a serious concern for capital and management in the information, communication and knowledge industries in general, and the call center sector particularly. Part of the disciplining of the workforce in call centers is accomplished by constructing the concept of time theft as an emerging form of workplace deviance, almost entirely outside historical or economic contexts. The strict regulations on how office employees spend their time while at work coincides with the development of routinized and regimented labor processes in this industry. Indeed, as many have argued, call center work retains many of the general characteristics of Taylorism as a management practice, especially Taylor's determination to eliminate any sort of waste in the labor process as well as revoking worker autonomy over the performance of tasks at work.

The managerial practice of eliminating what it deems as wasteful time has been intensified. As we have seen, the measurement and management of time is quite meticulous. The demand on workers to always be productive and highly efficient in the context of a competitive global economy has led to increased surveillance of the labor process, which has negative ramifications for employees' physical and mental

well-being (Zweig 2005). Advances in information and communication technologies, especially their capacity for surveillance, gives management the opportunity to monitor and thereby exercise more detailed control over the labor process—an opportunity that management has eagerly seized. Information and communication technologies have become a powerful—but not a determining force—in advanced capitalist workplaces. In call centers such as OnCall we see the tendency of capital to present a systematic assault on worker autonomy and empowerment through these advanced technological systems.

Yet even with these advances, managerial surveillance practices have yet to accomplish the omnipresence envisioned by Bentham's notion of the Panopticon. A workplace is not a total institution. As has been documented in numerous studies including this one, worker resistance to management practices continually arises; the organization of work and the disciplinary management of time are not going unchallenged. New forms of managerial control are often met with innovative forms of worker resistance, such as those charted in this article. But the task at hand for workers remains daunting. Despite the gains made by individualized acts of resistance that make work somewhat tolerable, collective resistance is the mainstay for making far-reaching changes in the sector. But in Canada, organized labor has been unwilling or, in some cases, unsuccessful at making electronic surveillance a central bargaining issue (Kiss and Mosco 2005; Bryant 1995). This is not to say that the matter is of peripheral importance, quite the opposite. Some rightly believe that surveillance needs to be addressed in the larger political sphere, and not in collective bargaining. Yet the global Union Network International (UNI) has identified workplace surveillance as a sight for opposition, and recently published a policy paper on the topic (Union Network International 2006a and 2006b).

Further to the topic of unionization, while there is an abundance of literature—both academic and union-based—looking at how unionization has impacted the labor process, levels of workplace surveillance, and managerial authority in unionized call centers, there is far less work that strenuously discusses the successful and unsuccessful strategies for union organizing. We have shown earlier that unions have been proven to make gains for employees, such as the right to use the washroom (Linder 2002). But when we look at the larger picture, with specific reference here to the recently released *Global Call Center Report* (Holman, Batt, and Holtgrewe 2007) a more impressive image appears. Call centers in countries with higher union density rates (i.e., Germany, France, the Netherlands, Denmark, Austria, etc.) have been shown to exhibit higher job quality, lower turnover rates, and lower wage dispersions than centers located in liberal market economies such as Canada and the US. Furthermore, as the *Report*'s authors point out, the intensity of workplace monitoring is less, and job discretion is relatively higher, in economies and call centers where unionization is prevalent. Union contracts in call center facilities in Canada have also resulted in paid breaks, paid and unpaid leaves, scheduled vacations, and enhanced job security (Guard 2003). This evidence suggests that there is indeed reason for both greater call center unionism and labor regulations that favor employees more so than business.

What we have argued, building upon existing scholarly work, is that collective resistance in knowledge- and communication-based workplaces must increasingly

target managerial surveillance techniques and encroachments on employee privacy as sites of opposition. Even though informal, localized, and individual forms of resistance can alter the landscape of work slightly to make it more bearable for employees, widespread change needs collective action on a national and, perhaps even more so, international scale. What is more, future research on the theft of time demands a global perspective so that the complexities of an international division of labor in the call center industry can be more fully understood. Just as the rapid assent of industrialization had dramatic consequences for the European population and their existing rhythm of time, the specificity of these tendencies within knowledge and communication-based firms located beyond the West must be examined in greater depth. And while this article only touched upon the active complicity of software and technology firms in the conceptualization and actual policing of time theft, much more needs to be done to understand the political economic scope of this phenomenon.

References

Abacus Group. n.d. *Telephone Systems, Mobile Phones, Internet and Email: Proteus Enterprise 5.0 Information Guide*, http://abacusgroup.com/dls/ Proteus_Enterprise_Information_Guide.pdf (accessed April 1, 2007).

Statistics Canada. 2005. *Perspectives on Labor and Income* 6(5).

Bain, Peter, Aileen Watson, Gareth Mulvey, Phil Taylor, and Gregor Gall. 2002.Taylorism, targets, and the pursuit of quality and quantity by call center management. *New Technology, Work, and Employment* 17(3): 170 – 184.

Bain, Peter and Phil Taylor. 2000. Entrapped by the 'Electronic Panopticon'? Worker resistance in the call center. *New Technology, Work, and Employment* 15(1): 2 – 18.

Baldry, Chris, Peter Bain, and Phil Taylor. 1997. Sick and tired? Working in the modern office. *Work, Employment, and Society* 11(3): 519 – 539.

Bell, Daniel. 1973/1999. *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture is Social Forecasting*. New York: Basic Books.

Bittle, Stephen and Laureen Snider. 2006. From manslaughter to preventable accident: Shaping corporate criminal liability. *Law and Policy* 28(4): 470 – 496.

Bliss, Shepard. 2006. Wal-Mart workers fight back. *Dissident Voice*, http:// www.dissidentvoice.org/Jan06/Bliss17.htm (accessed April 1, 2007).

Boswell, Randy. 1989. Goofing off at work. *The Ottawa Citizen*, August 6: E8.

Brannan, Mathew J. 2005. One more time with feeling: Ethnographic reflections on the mediation of tension in a small team of call center workers. *Gender, Work, and Organization* 12(5): 420 – 439.

Braverman, Harry. 1974. *Labor and Monopoly Capitalism: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century*. Monthly Review Press: New York.

Bryant, Susan. 1995. Electronic surveillance in the workplace. *Canadian Journal of Communications* 20(4): 505 – 521.

Buchanan, Ruth and Sarah Koch-Schulte. 2000. Gender on the Line: Technology, Restructuring, and the Reorganization of Work in the Call Centre Industry.

Ottawa: Status of Women Canada.

Business Week. 2005. Taking a page from Toyota's playbook. August 22: 69 – 72.

Callaghan, George and Paul Thompson. 2001. Edwards revisited: Technical control in call centers. *Economic and Industrial Democracy* 22(1): 13 – 37.

Canadian Customer Contact Centre Industry. 2004. *The Canadian Customer Contact Centre Landscape: An Industry in Transition*, http://www.contactcentrecanada.ca/cm/index.php?q=en/node/view/17 (accessed July 26, 2007).

Clott, Christopher B. 2004. Perspectives on global outsourcing and the changing nature of work. *Business and Society Review* 109(2): 153 – 170.

Davenport, Thomas H. 2005. *Thinking for a Living: How to Get Better Performance and Results from Knowledge Workers*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Deak, Ed. 2006. Le Monde Diplomatique on Wal-Mart. *Vive le Canada,* http://www.vivelecanada.ca/article.php/20060120111904255 (accessed May 31, 2006).

Dickens, William T., Lawrence F. Katz, Kevin Land, and Lawrence H. Summers. 1989. Employee crime and the monitoring puzzle. *Journal of Labor Economics* 7(3): 331 – 347.

Duménil, Gerard and Dominique Lévy. 2001. Costs and benefits of neoliberalism: A class analysis. *Review of International Political Economy* 8(4): 578 – 607.

The Economist. 2006. Survey: The new organization. January 21: 1 – 18.

Edwards, Richard. 1979. *Contested Terrain: The Transformation of the Workplace in the Twentieth Century*. Basic Books Inc. Publishers: New York.

Ehrenreich, Barbara. 2002. Time Theft. *New Internationalist*, November, Issue 351: 16.

Fernie, Sue and David Metcalf. 1998. *(Not) Hanging on the Telephone: Payments Systems in the New Sweatshops*. London: Center for Economic Performance, London School of Economics.

Fleming, Peter and Graham Swell. 2002. Looking for the good soldier, Svejk: Alternative modalities of resistance in the contemporary workplace. *Sociology* 36 (4): 857 – 873.

Ford, Ashley. 1990. "Time theft" a crime of our busy times. *The Province*, April 15.

Foucault, Michel. 1980. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Foucault, Michel. 1978. *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, vol. 1. New York: Vintage Books.

Garson, Barbara. 1988. *The Electronic Sweatshop: How Computers are Transforming the Office of the Future into the Factory of the Past*. New York: Penguin Books.

Gramsci, Antonio. 1971. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. New York: International Publishers.

Greenberg, Jerald. 1990. Employee theft as reaction to underpayment inequity: The hidden cost of pay cuts. *Journal of Applied Psychology* 75(5): 561 – 568.

Guard, Julie. 2003. *Manitoba's Call Centre Explosion: A Preliminary Overview*. Toronto: United Steelworkers.

Half, Robert. 1983. How to prevent "Time Theft." *Small Systems World* 11(2): 34.

Hammer, Michael and James Champy. 2003. *Reengineering the Corporation: A Manifesto for Business Revolution*. New York: Harper Business.

Hammer, Michael. 1996. *Beyond Reengineering: How the Process-centered Organization is Changing our Work and our Lives*. New York: Harper Business.

Head, Simon. 2003. *The New Ruthless Economy: Work and Power in the Digital Age*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hollinger, Richard C. and John P. Clark. 1983. *Theft by Employees*. Toronto: Lexington Books.

Holman, David, Rosemary Batt, Ursula Holtgrewe (2007) *The Global Call Center Report: International Perspective on Management and Employment*. Ithaca, NY, Sheffield, UK, Vienna, Aus.: Global Call Centre Project.

Jermeir John M, David Knights, and Walter R. Nord, eds. 1994. *Resistance and Power in   Organizations*. London: Routledge

Kamp, John and Paul Brooks. 1991. Perceived organizational climate and employee counterproductivity. *Journal of Business and Psychology* 5(4): 447 – 458.

Kiss, Simon and Vincent Mosco. 2005. Negotiating electronic surveillance. *Canadian Journal of Communication* 30: 549 – 564.

Latshaw, Jamie. 1997. On time recorders. *Office Systems* 14(8): 36 – 39.

Levy, David L. 2005. Offshoring in the new global political economy. *Journal of Management Studies* 42 (3): 685 – 693.

Liker, Jefferey. 2004. *The Toyota Way*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Linder, Marc. 2002. *Void Where Prohibited Revisited: The Trickle-Down Effect of OSHA's At-Will Bathroom-Break Regulation*. Iowa City, IA: Fanpihua Press.

London Economic Development Corporation. 2006. *Vibrant and Growing: A Survey of London's Contact Centre Sector*. London, ON: London Economic Development Corporation.

Lyon, David. 2004. *Electronic Eye: The Rise of the Surveillance Society*. Cambridge: Polity
Press.

Mancini, Rich. 1994. Beat the clock. *Office Systems* 11(8): 16 – 20.

Mars, Gerald. 1982. *Cheats at Work: An Anthropology of Workplace Crime*. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Marx, Gary. 1999. Measuring everything that moves: The new surveillance at work. *Research in the Sociology of Work* 8: 165 – 189.

Marx, Karl. 1976. *Capital*, vol. 1. Toronto: Penguin Books.

Menzies, Heather. 2005. *No Time: Stress and the Crisis of Modern Life*. Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre.

Mosco, Vincent. 2005. Here today outsourced tomorrow: Knowledge workers in the global economy. *The Public*. 12(2): 39 – 56.

Muholland, Kate. 2004. Workplace resistance in an Irish call center: Slammin,' smokin,'
and leavin'. *Work, Employment, and Society* 18(4): 709 – 724.

Mulholland, Kate. 2002. Gender, emotional labor, and teamworking in a call center. *Personal Review* 31(3): 283 – 303.

Pashukanis, Evgeny B. 1978. *Law and Marxism: A General Theory*. London: Ink Links.

Ratliff, Rick. 1989. Employees' slacking off called "time theft." *Toronto Star*, July 17.

Rideout, Vanda. 2003. *Continentalizing Canadian Telecommunications: The Politics of Regulatory Reform*. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Rose, Ed. 2002. The labor process and union commitment within a banking service call center. *The Journal of Industrial Relations* 44(1): 40 – 61.

Russell, Ellen and Mathieu Dufour. 2007. *Rising Profit Shares, Falling Wages*. Toronto: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

Scarborough, Harry. 2005. Knowledge management. In *The Essentials of the New Workplace: A Guide to the Human Impact of Modern Working Practices*, eds. David Holman, Toby D. Wall, Chris W. Clegg, and Ann Howard, 133 – 152. West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Scelsi, Paul. 1988. Time is money – lots of it. *Management World* 17(6): 19 – 20.

Schiller, Dan and Vincent Mosco. 2001. Integrating a continent for a transnational world. In *Continental Order?* eds. Vincent Mosco and Dan Schiller, 1 – 34. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Ltd.

Sewell, Graham. 1998. The discpline of teams: The control of team-based industrial work through electronic and peer surveillance. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 43(2): 397 – 428.

Shaw, Gillian. 2005. Computer abuse at work takes many forms. *The Gazette*, December 14: B9.

Sieh, Edward W. 2001. Garment workers: Perception of inequity and employee theft. In *Occupational Crime,* ed. Gerald Mars, 81 – 98. Dartmouth: Ashgate.

Snider, Laureen. 2002. Theft of time: Disciplining through science and law. *Osgoode Hall Law Journal* 40(1): 90 – 112.

Taylor, Fredrick W. 1947. *Scientific Management*. New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers.

Taylor, Phil and Peter Bain. 2001. Trade unions, workers' rights, and the frontier of control in UK call centers. *Economic and Industrial Democracy* 22(1): 39 – 63.

Taylor, Phil and Peter Bain. 1999. An assembly line in the head: Work and employee relations in the call center. *Industrial Relations Journal* 30 (2): 101 – 117.

Thompson, Bob. 2005. This could happen to you. *The Ottawa Citizen*, September 18, C8.

Thompson, E.P. 1967. Time, work-discipline, and industrial capitalism. *Past and Present* 38: 56 – 97.

Towler, John. 2002. Dealing with employees who steal. *Canadian HR Reporter*, September 23: 4.

Townsend, Keith. 2005. Electronic surveillance and cohesive teams: Room for resistance in an Australian call center. *New Technology, Work, and Employment*

20(1): 47 – 59.

Union Network International. 2006a. *You're Being Followed: Electronic Monitoring and Surveillance in the Workplace*. Nyon: Union Network International.

Union Network International. 2006b. Unions want curbs on hi-tech snooping. *UNI Press Release,* http://www.union-network.org/uniindep.nsf/ d34dbcc804498029c1256de400420f86/304003ecc3ebbf6 0c1257199002f9cfd?OpenDocument (accessed April 1, 2007).

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. 2004. *World Investment Report 2004: The Shift Towards Services*. Geneva: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

Van den Broek, Diane. 2004. Call to arms? Collective and individual responses to call center labor management. In *Call Centers and Human Resource Management*, eds. Stephen Deery and Nicholas Kinnie, 267 – 283 Houndsmill: Palgrave MacMillan.

Van den Broek, Diane, George Callaghan, and Paul Thompson. 2004. Teams without teamwork: Explaining the call center paradox. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*. 25(2): 197 – 218.

Vallas, Steven P. 1999. Rethinking post-Fordism: The meaning of workplace flexibility. *Sociological Theory* 17(1): 68 – 101.

Vosko, Leah F. 2005. What is to be done? Harnessing knowledge to mitigate precarious employment. In *Precarious Employment: Understanding Labour Market Insecurity in Canada*, ed. Leah F. Vosko, 379 – 388. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Vosko, Leah F. 2000. *Temporary Work: The Gendered Rise of a Precarious Employment Relationship*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Vosko, Leah F. and Nancy Zukewich. 2005. Precarious by choice? Gender and self -employment. In *Precarious Employment: Understanding Labour Market Insecurity in Canada*, ed. Leah F. Vosko, 67 – 89. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Woodcock, George. 1992. *Anarchism and Anarchists: Essays by George Woodcock*. Kingston: Quarry Press.

Zuboff, Shoshana. 1984. *The Age of the Smart Machine*. New York: Basic Books.

Zweig, David. 2005. Beyond privacy and fairness concerns: Examining psychological boundary violations as a consequence of electronic performance monitoring. In *Electronic Monitoring in the Workplace: Controversies and Solutions,* eds. John Weckert, 101 – 122. Hershey, PA: Idea Group.

Acknowledgements

Andrew Stevens is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Sociology at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. He is currently researching the political economy of outsourcing and offshoring of IT work, as well as union organizing within the call center industries in Canada and India.

David O. Lavin is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Sociology at York University in Toronto, Ontario. He is currently researching trade union convergence in the communications industries and the restructuring of work in the twenty-first century.