

**Call for papers – Special Issue for
*Organization: The Critical Journal of Organization,
Theory and Society***

**‘Licence to kill? – The organization of destruction
in the 21st century’**

Deadline 1 December 2015

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Overview

War, the intentional destruction of human beings, of human lifeworlds and modes of livelihood, may appear far from the usual preoccupations of organization studies but nevertheless constitutes a prominent manifestation of the organized character of the contemporary world. The relationship between the organization of production (as exemplified by the factory) and the organization of destruction (as exemplified by the battlefield) is of course as longstanding as it is well known (Pickering, 2001). Max Weber saw violence and its monopolization as crucial to the development of state bureaucracies, and it might also be argued that the institutional form of the ‘arsenal’ has been the site of many organizational innovations such as Eli Whitney’s development of the ‘American System of Manufacture’ or the rejection of Taylorism at the Watertown Arsenal. More recently, the RAND Corporation came to be seen as synonymous with the development of military-managerial techniques which aspired to be as applicable to the organization of destruction as they were to the organization of production. Yet, important and well-documented as such histories may be, what we wish to encourage in this Special Issue is a more direct engagement with *contemporary* forms of organized destruction such as ‘war’, ‘terror’ or ‘insurgency’ and with the apparatuses through which they are enacted. We therefore seek to understand the links between organization and destruction by military/para-military forces within the very circumscribed time frame of the still young (but already quite bloody) 21st century (Scahill, 2008).

Invitation to authors

This call is unusual in its request for contributions from both within social scientific approaches to business and management on one hand and what might be called ‘war studies’ on the other, in order to develop concepts from a variety of perspectives to critically analyse those organizations and those processes of organizing which are implicated in the wholesale organization of death and destruction. In so doing, we build upon a small but burgeoning body of work in which authors have engaged with these ideas, including the Workshop held in Lancaster on 15 September 2014. As evidenced by the number of international submissions to this Workshop, organized by the co-editors of this Call, there is deep interest in this topic across a wide number of fields.

Topics

Our Special Issue makes space for representatives of these fields to provide a specific focus on new critical, ethical and political perspectives on the organization of destruction. We invite contributions that consider aspects including but not limited to

1. Who or what are the *agencies* of organized destruction (whether military, terrorist, political or other) and how are they enacted (e.g. Gray, 2007; Singer, 2006, 2007)? What role do these agencies play within contemporary democracies (Malesevic, 2010)?
2. How can we best understand the *processes* through which destruction is conceptualized and organized by such agencies (e.g. Bauman, 1989; Butler, 2010; Dillon and Reid, 2009; Gregory, 2011; Virilio, 2000)?
3. What are the *spaces* of organized destruction and how are they produced (e.g. Bauman, 2001; Rasmussen, 2009; Shaw, 2005; Sorkin, 2007)?
4. What are the *technologies* of organized destruction and what is their role in the 21st century (Benjamin, 2013; De Landa, 1991; Singer, 2011; Suchman, in press; Virilio, 1989)? What role do particular state and corporate actors play in facilitating or impeding such technological developments?
5. What are the *ethics* of organized destruction and are they changing compared to those in the past (e.g. Bauman, 1989; Butler, 2010; Gray, 2007; Pinker, 2011; Riza, 2013; Shaw, 2005)?

In summary, the Special Issue will seek to engage with the issue of how organized destruction in the form of warfare and related forms of violent conflict can be better understood and theorized, and with the consequences such an understanding might have for organization studies as a whole.

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Submission

Papers may be submitted electronically from 31 October 2015 until 1 December 2015 to SAGETrack at <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/organization>

Papers should be no more than 8000 words, excluding references, and will be blind reviewed following the journal's standard review process. Manuscripts should be prepared according to the guidelines published in Organization and on the journal's website: <http://www.sagepub.com/journals/Journal200981/manuscriptSubmission>

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