

Call for Papers

The Transparency Imperative: Norms, Structures, Practices

Edited by

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The call for »transparency« is currently ubiquitous. The concept seems to offer a solution for very diverse problems of social life. However, we know little as to whether the many visions of transparency converge or rather create conflicting imperatives. How do transparency norms translate into practices and technologies? How do norms and practices interact on the societal micro, meso and macro-levels? And, finally, how do they relate to other normative demands of modern societies? This edited volume investigates the relationship between norms, practices, and structures of transparency. Aiming for an integrative analysis of transparency, we call for papers from all fields of social science.

In recent years, transparency has repeatedly been under scrutiny of social sciences (e.g. Han, 2012; Hood & Heald, 2006; Jansen et al., 2010; Power, 1997; Rzepka, 2013; Osrecki, 2015; Strathern, 2000). On one level, the body of literature consists of *normative perspectives* that either support transparency, for instance by stressing the positive effects on accountability, or criticize its corrosive effects on privacy. Sometimes, both aspects are combined in a narrative about the changing norms of modern societies. A different perspective deals with the *practices of ›transparenting‹*, looking empirically into techniques of verification and evaluation, such as audits, indicators or rankings, and the regulation of behavior by codes of conduct, surveillance technologies or ›nudging‹. Finally, a third perspective highlights the (unintended) consequences of *transparent social structures*. By analyzing patterns of transparent decision-making, these studies also look into the costs and benefits for social actors and expose the power constellations behind transparency claims.

Encouraging a dialogue between those perspectives, the volume aims for a synthesis of the current research on transparency. It is our goal to reveal the **relationship between norms, practices and structures**, while, at the same time, locating them in their **historical and empirical contexts**. The volume wants to address those relationships from a wide range of perspectives. Engaging in case studies, comparative approaches or theoretical reflections, papers could discuss one of the following topics:

Transparent interactions: How do participants of face-to-face interactions indicate transparency, and how, on the other hand, do they shield their actions from external views? What characterizes social roles specialized on making interactions visible, e.g.,

detectives, secret service agents or therapists? How and why do people circumvent rules of transparency? Where, if at all, are the legitimate boundaries of transparency?

Transparent groups: What groups are trusted to enforce transparency claims, and what groups are targeted by them? How can we explain the distribution, change and stability of such expectations? What are the reasons for externally controlling, e.g., medical, scientific or administrative staff? How do professional groups react to being made transparent?

Transparent organization(s): What concepts of leadership and self-conduct are connected to transparency? How do organizations implement and measure transparency? How do transparency claims translate into procedures and regularities of, for example, political institutions? What are the (unintended) effects when organizational decision making is made transparent?

Transparent technologies: What technologies are designed and used to implement transparency? What unites or separates the perspectives on transparency technologies held by designers and users? What role do modern communication and surveillance technologies play in the enactment of norms, practices and structures of transparency? How is resistance against transparency technologies voiced?

Transparent discourses: Are there symbolic practices of transparency, for instance in architecture? What are the epistemological aprioris of transparency claims? What insights offers a conceptual history of transparency? How can we understand the claims for transparency in terms of discourse? What do narratological analyses reveal about the subjects, inherent perceptions and effects of transparency?

Transparent societies: To what challenges does transparency respond? Who are the main actors in formulating the norms of transparency – states, NGOs, companies? (How) Can we compare different norms of transparency in different systems, fields or spheres of society? Are there, historically or currently, different norms and practices of transparency regarding politics, law, economics, science, media, sports or education? What opportunities and challenges of governance arise with transparency? And is there resistance to transparent governance? What alternatives are possible? Do societies develop different norms, practices and structures of transparency, for instance outside of Western democracies?

Please send an abstract to the email addresses below until **March 1, 2017** (up to 1000 characters, German or English). After reviewing the abstracts, we will ask selected authors to write a full-length manuscript until **August 1, 2017** (70 000 characters, German or English). We are looking forward to your proposals reflecting on the relationship of norms, practices and structures of transparency.

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