

Labour Theory: Architecture, Work and Neoliberalism

Zaha Hadid has found herself at the centre of recent controversies concerning the conditions of labour under which her projects are constructed.¹ She has been criticized for distancing herself from these concerns, and for arguing that conditions of building construction are beyond the control and responsibility of the architect. Rather than evidence of the moral failings of the architect, however, Hadid's perspective is perfectly consistent with the 'new agenda' of architecture already theorized by her partner in practice, Patrik Schumacher. Social, political and governmental matters are not to be reflected upon or criticized by architects. The discipline is to operate strictly within the confines through which it is autopoietically circumscribed, adhering only to its own 'societal function'. This, argues Schumacher, consists solely in 'the ordering and framing of communicative interaction'.²

The reluctance to dwell on the conditions of labour through which projects such as Hadid's stadium are built and the efforts to distance the architect from this work are also logically consistent with the conformity of this architecture to the commodity form. The 'mysterious character' of this form, as Marx noted, lies 'simply in the fact that the commodity reflects the social characteristics of men's own labour as objective characteristics of the products of labour themselves, as the socio-natural properties of these things'.³ If labour is to appear as the 'socio-natural' property of the commodity itself, then it cannot appear, at the same time, as the property of the labourer. The mystifying, 'phantasmagorical', form in which the commodity appears is predicated on maintaining the invisibility of the concrete labour through which the commodity is produced.⁴

Architecture and the image of labour

In his *In Search of Wagner*, Adorno, extending Marx's critique into the sphere of cultural production, described the compositional and scenographic practices of Wagnerian opera as premised on the 'occultation of production by means of the outward appearance of the product'.⁵ The stagehands working the machines that make the Rhine Maidens appear to float above the stage in *Der Ring des Nibelungen* are obscured from the audience. The musicians – the productive forces – are hidden from view in the orchestra pit. Following Marx's criteria, Adorno identifies Wagner's operatic works as essentially phantasmagorical. Conditions of labour are concealed so that the products of these can appear in the commodity form, as fetishized objects of consumption.

As stages for the mass consumption of cultural production, the contemporary architecture of stadiums, concert halls and museums is obedient to the same formal laws. Today's architectural phantasmagoria is similarly invested in the 'occultation of production'. The work of building is of no concern to architects because the real work of architecture, as a commodity, is to positively express the abstract structures and concepts of neoliberal capitalism while mystifying its actual conditions of production. This work acquires a special sense in those forms of architecture most closely aligned with the ontology of neoliberalism. The formal tropes of an architecture of flexibility and adaptability advertise accommodation to the spontaneous order that stands as the truth of the neoliberal way of the world. Free of any suggestion of internal contradiction or struggle, their pliant envelopes and organic contours read as affirmations of the immanent and self-realizing powers of life and matter. Productivity appears as the innate property of natural forces to materialize themselves in architectonic form. The real material conditions of architectural construction are most forcibly occulted where architectural form most emphatically affirms its autogenic powers.

Not only is what Marx called 'concrete labour' occulted in the phantasmagoric appearance of the commodity, it is also disavowed as the means through which our social relations might be grasped. In capitalism, argued Marx, these relations cannot be experienced directly through labour, but only through the exchange of commodities produced from it. As Moishe Postone elaborates, 'A new form of interdependence comes into being where no-one consumes what they produce, but where, nevertheless, one's own labor or labor-products function as the necessary means of obtaining the products of others.'⁶ In neoliberalism the disavowal of labour also extends to the types of labour the subject must

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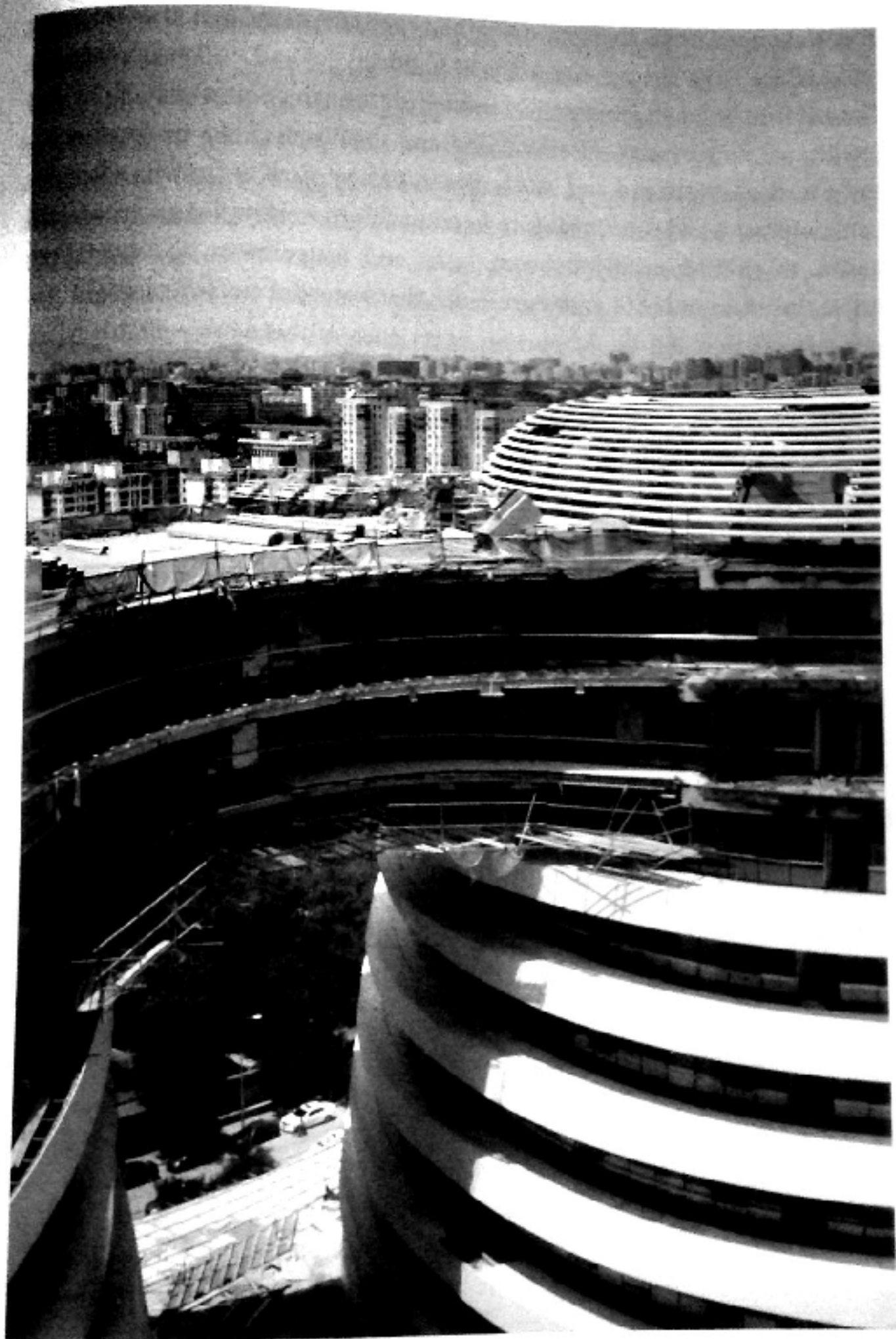


Figure 5 Zaha Hadid Architects, Galaxy Soho, Beijing, 2009–12, photo: Shengze Chen, 2012.

undertake upon itself. There must now be a continuous, and ever more intensive, undertaking to work upon the self so as to qualify for and sustain employment. The self is to be an ongoing project fashioned through programmes of physical, intellectual and psychological training and qualification. Its performance is to be tracked, measured and rated. It is to present itself as flexible, adaptable, communicative and enterprising, to be amenable to working long or unsociable hours, to shifting swiftly between tasks and assignments, to undertaking unpaid work in order to gain experience that potential employers might look upon favourably. But the labourious experience of this work – its hardships, stresses and burdens – cannot be acknowledged as such. The imperatives of neoliberalism are spun into the positive-speak of choices and freedoms. Life as competition is affirmatively ontologized as the natural way of things. There is no struggle, there is only opportunity. The belief in universal laws that state that all things possess the capacity to spontaneously develop, evolve and order themselves, without need of external compulsion, obscures all signs of struggle, tension or contradiction. In neoliberalism, everything is productive but nothing is laboured.

Labour is also disavowed in neoliberalism in another sense. The narrative of the post-political has no role for labour as the antagonist or antithesis of capital. The class struggle is overcome in the discovery of the evolutionary nature of the social order, the proletariat relieved of its historic mission in the process. In this natural order everyone is at liberty to find their opportunities and take their chances. The real burden of having to work at one's employability, as well as at one's employment – the labour of qualifying for the opportunity to labour – cannot be acknowledged, as such, within the political and managerial discourse of neoliberalism. Instead the old question of whether one lives to work, or works to live, is rendered seemingly redundant in the merging of the one into the other. This is accomplished through the practice of skills, habits and techniques required of both work and non-work within an overall schema of productivity. These practices are accommodated in spaces designed to productively blur the boundaries between work and its other.

Ubiquitous workspace

The desire to eliminate the boundaries erected between work and life is not in itself necessarily neoliberal. This same desire had, for instance, an earlier iteration in the thought of Henri Lefebvre. In the new spaces of leisure of the 1970s – the

hotels, chalets and tourist resorts developed for the new industries of mass tourism – Lefebvre identified the traces of a utopian impulse. These spaces spoke of a wish to abolish the existing fragmentation of everyday life into separate practices, times and spaces. ‘Leisure’, wrote Lefebvre in *The Production of Space*, ‘is as alienated and alienating as labour; as much an agent of co-optation as it is itself co-opted; and both an assimilative and an assimilated part of the “system” ... leisure has been transformed into an industry, into a victory of neocapitalism and an extension of bourgeois hegemony to the whole of space.’⁷ And yet, paradoxically, as Lefebvre argued, ‘The space of leisure *tends* ... to surmount divisions: the division between social and mental, the division between sensory and intellectual, and also the division between the everyday and the out-of-the-ordinary (festival).’⁸ Spaces of leisure are at the same time the ‘best’ and the ‘worst’ of capitalism. They are ‘parasitic outgrowths on the one hand and exuberant new branches on the other – as prodigal of monstrosities as of promises (that it cannot keep).’⁹

These promises have been fulfilled in neoliberalism – the divisions in question have indeed been surmounted – but in monstrous form. The separation between work and non-work is progressively dissolved so that a general condition of constant productivity prevails at all times, in all spaces. Rather than the hoped for dissolution of the alienating condition of labour, or the (at the time) seemingly reasonable expectation that living standards would continue to rise and working time be lessened, the reach of work, as productivity, now extends far beyond the nine-to-five of the workplace. At the same time, the image of labour, as such, tends to be obscured behind an appearance of convivial and casual informality. As Moishe Postone has argued, the extension and expansion of labour is an inevitable feature of capitalism:

Higher socially general levels of productivity do not diminish the socially general necessity for labor time expenditure ... instead that necessity is constantly reconstituted. In a system based on value, there is a drive for ever-increasing levels of productivity, yet direct human labor time expenditure remains necessary to the system as a whole. This pattern promotes still further increases in productivity.¹⁰

The imperative towards ever greater levels of productivity is served, in part, by new managerial strategies arguing for the gains in productivity to be achieved through informality, interaction, cooperation and networking within the workforce, particularly that of the office. The implementation of this strategy has been dependent, to a significant degree, on the design of spaces supposed to

facilitate the cultivation and performance of the requisite workplace dispositions. In a report titled 'The Future of the Workplace is Now', the British office design group DEGW stated: 'The office has to be designed as a centre of high intensity collaboration, formal and informal, scheduled and ad hoc, large and small scale, virtual and real. The paradigm of the office as a centre of collaboration replaces the paradigm of the office as a place where the staff is physically gathered to work individually.'¹¹ Likewise, the 'Future of Work' report produced by Capital One in 2005, in consultation with DEGW, focuses on 'enabling mobility and workplace settings that support knowledge work when and where it is most effective', and 'enabling work, anyplace, anytime.'¹² Capital One subsequently introduced collaborative and mobile working practices within a workspace now reorganized into team-based 'neighbourhoods'. The returns on these investments were reported as greater 'portfolio flexibility', 'business agility', 'productivity' and 'employee satisfaction.'¹³

Managerial strategies premised on informality, collaboration and mobility as the means to render workers, and space itself, more productive, are widespread. The workspace of the office is re-shaped to accommodate work 'anyplace, anytime', to inculcate in employees flexible, adaptive and communicative dispositions. The spatial typologies of non-work – the cafe or the lounge – are transplanted into those of work. Spaces outside that of the office are progressively transformed to accommodate the new modalities of labour. Office team-based working lunches are catered for in bars and restaurants furnished with elongated refectory tables. Domestic spaces are reappropriated for the home office. The availability of wireless and mobile computing technologies, coupled to a ubiquitous telecommunications infrastructure, enable the extension of work, and working hours, into the spaces of leisure and travel, its extensive dispersal into domestic and public space.

The popular literature of management presents the new practices of labour, and the reconfigurations of space designed to serve them, as progressive. Don Tapscott and Anthony D. Williams, in their *Wikinomics: How Mass Collaboration Changes Everything*, write that in the past corporations were run as rigid hierarchies: 'Everyone was subordinate to someone else,' there was always someone or some company in charge, controlling things at the "top" of the food chain.'¹⁴ Now, though, 'profound changes in the nature of technology, demographics, and the global economy are giving rise to powerful new models of production based on community, collaboration and self-organization rather than on hierarchy and control.'¹⁵ Breakout spaces, open offices, informal dress codes, the casualized deportment of bodies and the flexibility

of working patterns afford escape from the confinements and constrictions of less enlightened (and less productive) regimes. These new freedoms are valorized as affording workers the liberty to engage in what are presented as the essentially human practices of being communicative, cooperative and sociable. Naturalized, the instrumental contrivance of the new managerial strategies and any struggle of workers to accommodate themselves to the demands of these are obscured.¹⁶

Boltanski and Chiapello, Postone, and the thesis of 'immaterial labour'

Schumacher's argument, that the new post-industrial and post-Fordist models of managerial and workplace organization constituted 'progressive realities,' 'forced upon the capitalist enterprise' is contradicted by that put forward by Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello in their *The New Spirit of Capitalism*.¹⁷ The strategies of the new managerialism, rather than forced upon the 'capitalist enterprise,' were, they argue, recuperated from an earlier critique of alienated labour. Autonomy, spontaneity, availability, informality, conviviality – the central features of this managerialism – were appropriated from the 'repertoire of May 1968'.¹⁸ This repertoire, originally directed against capitalism, was seized upon within management literature and detached from the broader context of its attack on all forms of exploitation. Its themes were then 'represented as objectives ... valid in their own right, and placed in the service of forces whose destruction they were intended to hasten'.¹⁹

Rather than motivated by any concession to the validity of worker's demands, the subsequent dismantling by managers of workplace hierarchies and bureaucratic structures was adopted so as to increase productivity. Recognizing the organizational advantages latent in workers' demands for 'self-management' employers now required workers to manage themselves. Self-motivation, flexibility and interpersonal skills become the requisite attributes of a new organizational paradigm in which mechanisms of control were to be effectively internalized by the worker. As Boltanski and Chiapello suggest, "Controlling the uncontrollable" is not something with an infinite number of solutions: in fact, the only solution is for people to control themselves, which involves transferring constraints from external organizational mechanisms to people's internal dispositions, and for the powers of control they exercise to be consistent with the firm's general project.²⁰ The critique of alienated labour is reappropriated by

management, who, in their tactical concessions to demands for autonomy, use these to render labour more efficient and productive.

Boltanski and Chiapello's thesis, though, can only account in part for the new strategies of labour management. These are derived not only, and not most substantially, from the recuperation of critique, as they are from the truths propagated within neoliberal thought. More than the critiques and practices for which May 68 was the epicentre, contemporary managerialism draws on a specifically neoliberal conception of liberty, on the ontologies supposed to legitimate it, and on the organizational forms supposed to be consonant with its realization. People are most free when they are able to act in concert with the universal laws of self-organization, when they are not subjected to external commands and interference. Neither the evolution of the corporation nor its workforce can be effectively directed by individuals isolated at the summit of a rigidly hierarchical structure. As Hayek wrote in *Law, Legislation and Liberty*, 'The only possibility of transcending the capacity of individual minds is to rely on those super-personal "self-organizing" forces which create spontaneous order.'²¹

These are the truths that inform contemporary forms of managerialism, and through which its practices are rationalized. The universal laws of spontaneous order, essentialized as innately human properties and predispositions, legitimate the pursuit of de-hierarchization, self-organization, connectivity and mobility as simultaneously natural, liberating and productive. In *The Digital Economy*, Don Tapscott claims that 'industrial hierarchy and economy are giving way to molecular organizations and economic structures.'²² The new enterprise, he continues, 'has a molecular structure. It is based on the individual. The knowledge worker (human molecule) functions as a business unit of one. Motivated, self-learning, entrepreneurial workers empowered by and collaborating through new tools apply their knowledge and creativity to create value.'²³

Theories of complexity and emergence feature frequently in such manuals of business innovation. Rather than as an antagonistic force to be disciplined by management, workers are figured through these theories as molecular agents. In a book whose title makes plain the vitalist tenor of its contents – *It's Alive: The Coming Convergence of Information, Biology, and Business* – business gurus Christopher Meyer and Stan Davis claim, 'We will again have scientific management – but this time the underlying science will be "general evolution." The theories that drive biology will be adopted in the way we use information, and the way we manage our enterprises. Biology, information, and business will converge on general evolution.'²⁴ Reinscribed within a scientific discourse, the naturally adaptive

potential of worker-molecules resides in their capacity to spontaneously 'self-organise' into larger aggregates of 'distributed intelligence' or 'swarms': 'A type of collaboration in which large numbers of geographically dispersed people quickly self-organize in a peer-to-peer network to deal with a problem or opportunity ... a fluid, shifting network with no central control or hub.'²⁵

The so-called 'immaterial labour' thesis, derived from the Italian Marxist current of post-autonomia, has come to serve as something of a default position from which to critique these new forms of managerialism. Maurizio Lazzarato, one of the originators of the term, defines it as 'the labor that produces the informational and cultural content of the commodity'.²⁶ The informational content concerns 'the changes taking place in workers' labor processes in big companies in the industrial and tertiary sectors, where the skills involved in direct labor are increasingly skills involving cybernetics and computer control'.²⁷ The cultural content of the commodity, on the other hand, 'involves a series of activities that are not normally recognized as "work" – in other words, the kinds of activities involved in defining and fixing cultural and artistic standards, fashions, tastes, consumer norms, and, more strategically, public opinion'.²⁸ The immaterial labour thesis has also been taken up in Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's works *Empire* and *Multitude*.²⁹ As does Lazzarato, though in slightly different form, Hardt and Negri recognize two distinctive features to immaterial labour. The first is 'primarily intellectual or linguistic' and produces 'ideas, symbols, codes, texts, linguistic features, images'.³⁰ The second is subcategorized as 'affective labour'.³¹ This is labour that 'produces or manipulates affects such as a feeling of ease, well-being, satisfaction, excitement, or passion', the kind of labour put to work in the service and hospitality industries.³²

However inflected, the thesis invariably proposes that immaterial labour appropriates various competences either innate to, or created by, the worker as a social being. Affective skills, linguistic and communicational capacities, creative dispositions and inclinations to collective cooperation all exist prior to their instrumentalization within new modes of capital accumulation. As Lazzarato argues, 'The cycle of immaterial labor takes as its starting point a social labor power that is independent and able to organize both its own work and its relations with business entities. Industry does not form or create this new labor power, but simply takes it on board and adapts it'.³³ If industrial capitalism exploits the muscle power of manual labour, then post-industrial capitalism goes further, deeper into the core of the human, to mine its very essence. Capitalism is not content with our bodies; it now demands our minds, even our souls. Lazzarato writes, 'Today it is "the soul of the worker which must come down

into the factory." It's his personality, his subjectivity which must be organized and commanded.³⁴ Similarly, Franco 'Bifo' Berardi writes in his *The Soul at Work* that 'industrial exploitation deals with bodies, muscles and arms The rise of post-Fordist modes of production ... takes the mind, language and creativity as its primary tools for the production of value.'³⁵ 'Our desiring energy', he argues, 'is trapped in the trick of self-enterprise, our libidinal investments are regulated according to economic rules, our attention is captured in the precariousness of virtual networks: every fragment of mental activity must be transformed into capital.'³⁶ Capitalism captures and exploits what is properly the property of the worker - 'our' sociability, language, ideas, emotions and desires.

The thesis of immaterial labour and the discourse of neoliberal managerialism, then, share a common proposition, though seen from opposing perspectives. Both assert the self-organizing and productive potential of the communicative subject, and that its faculties, qualities and dispositions exist prior to any use made of them by capital. One talks negatively - in the language of exploitation - of the capture of this potential in 'production for production's sake', the other talks positively - in the language of emancipation - of the release of this potential within humanized conditions of productivity.³⁷ Neither can conceive, openly at least, of the ways in which the subject may be transformed by capitalism. Were neoliberal managerialism to credit itself with producing the facilities it claims to find, already formed in the subject, it would have to forego its claims that it is liberating anything in its new modes of labour and workplace organization. Post-autonomist thought argues that what is captured of the subject, as immaterial labour, might escape and overcome capital. The potentials of cooperation, communication and self-organization, as the properties of the social subject, might be realized in the form of the 'multitude', capable of collectively refusing 'the rule of capital'.³⁸ Creativity and productivity cannot be conceded, within this schema, to capitalism itself.

Neither perspective has any investment in considering production - the production of subjectivity, the production of mentalities, the production of apparatuses of power - as a property of capitalism. By default, post-autonomist accounts of labour reinforce the 'truth games' of neoliberalism. The productive - as distinct from simply exploitative - mechanisms and apparatuses through which power operates on and through the constitution of the subject remain obscure. Contrary to this, Foucault's anti-essentialist critique of 'human nature' circumvents the transhistorical tendencies of the immaterial labour thesis, as does Simondon's account of the production of technological mentalities. Moishe Postone's critique of traditional Marxism, especially in its theorization of the

relations between labour and capital, also runs counter to both post-autonomist theory and neoliberal discourse so as to address how contemporary forms of power are invested in the constitution of subjectivity.

In *Time, Labour and Social Domination: A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory*, Postone argues, against traditional Marxism, for a 'critique of labour in capitalism', as opposed to a 'critique of capitalism through labour'.³⁹ In traditional Marxism, the proletariat is charged with the historic mission of overcoming capitalism. Postone counters – following the mature Marx of *Capital* – that the proletariat has itself been constituted, through and for capital's production process, as a historically specific class.⁴⁰ 'Marx's critical theory', he writes, 'tries to show that labor in capitalism plays a historically unique role in mediating social relations, and to elucidate the consequences of that form of mediation.'⁴¹ The consequences, argues Postone, are that in capitalism labour 'mediates a new form of social interdependence'.⁴² From this perspective, the self-organizing, sociable and productive qualities attributed to the subject in neoliberal doxa, and within post-autonomist theory, cannot be conceived as either immanent or transhistorical properties. These are in fact mediated by the practices of labour constituted by capital, becoming 'the necessary means of obtaining the products of others'.⁴³

In specifically neoliberal conditions of labour management and organization, then, it is not the 'soul' of the worker, or some transhistorical being whose essence is dragged into the factory or the office to be exploited. The already mediated skills and dispositions of a subjectivity practised in the fields of consumption, exchange and self-management are productively recirculated within the new conditions of labour. If, as Postone asserts, following Marx, the 'fundamental form' of social relations is that of the commodity, then it is in this form that the social relations mediated by labour in neoliberalism must be addressed. The outer appearance with which neoliberalism and its managerial strategies imbue the appearance of work – a humanized practice now giving free reign to naturally sociable and cooperative forms of productivity – has to be understood as phantasmagoric, as the 'occultation of production by means of the outward appearance of the product'. The labour that is disowned and disavowed through this appearance, the struggles, contestations, strategies and designs at work in the production of new forms of labour and its requisite subjectivities are the productions that demand explication. A critique of the architecture of the workplace in neoliberalism, in turn, would need to explicate its role in the production of spaces designed both to produce the productivity of the worker, and to advertise this productivity, in phantasmagoric form, as a 'progressive reality'.

Zaha Hadid Architects and BMW Leipzig

In 2001 BMW launched a competition for the design of a Central Building for its new production plant in Leipzig. This was to serve as the plant's 'central nervous system'. It would connect the three production facilities clustered around it – car body manufacture, car assembly and paint shop – and join these to the office and administrative areas contained in the Central Building itself.⁴⁴ The brief also specified that the production line be routed through the Central Building so that the BMW 3 Series produced at the plant would be visible to all employees, the 'quality of the product transparent in the centre of work activities'.⁴⁵ The Central Building was to be 'a "marketplace" for information', its architecture serving to 'improve communication'.⁴⁶ Located at its centre there would be an 'audit area' where the workforce would spontaneously gather, inspect and discuss the resolution of any problems on the production line.⁴⁷ The production process is placed centre stage, presented as a new commons in an environment of collective participation and mutual endeavour. It is not enough that employees turn up to work simply to do their jobs. They must feel themselves to be part of a community. They must share, with management and each other, a common set of values, beliefs and goals. They must act as one, exchanging ideas and knowledge, so as to maintain and improve the process of production and the quality of the product. Peter Claussen, responsible for the planning of BMW Leipzig, noted that at other plants shop-floor workers 'didn't feel they could speak up'.⁴⁸ This issue would be addressed at the new plant.

BMW Leipzig was not the company's first venture into new modes of workplace management and organization. Since the 1970s, when it first introduced performance-related pay, BMW had been moving from Fordist models of production towards the Toyota system of 'lean' and 'just in time' production.⁴⁹ It turned to strategies of 'continuous improvement', developing the new forms of workplace organization through which these were to be realized. It adopted practices already prevalent within the 'knowledge economy' – the levelling of workplace hierarchies and the move towards collaborative team work. Through these it would generate environments from which ideas and innovation could be cultivated from the workforce as a form of 'knowledge work'.⁵⁰

BMW developed new models in plant circulation and layout towards this end. The company's Spartanburg site in South Carolina, on whose plan the Leipzig plant is based, located executive management alongside manual workers so as to facilitate communication between both parties.⁵¹ BMW Leipzig's Central Building would further integrate the circuits of production with those



Figure 6 Zaha Hadid Architects, exterior, Central Building, BMW Leipzig, 2001–5, photo: the author, 2009.

of communication. The company's movement from a classically Fordist model of mass production towards one of mass customization also demanded the reprogramming of these circuits. Introducing the provision of online custom-ordering for its vehicles, it had plugged consumer-generated specifications directly into the production process.⁵² As a consequence it would need to address

complexities in the organization, planning and execution of production – not typically encountered within the Fordist factory. Workers, at all levels, would be required to cooperate in order to respond effectively to these. The circuits of the contemporary factory would be radically reconfigured from those formulated in the first half of the twentieth century.

Albert Kahn, the architect of the Ford River Rouge Complex (1917–28), had standardized the design of industrial manufacturing facilities by the 1920s: a ‘one-story structure of incombustible materials, with enormous uninterrupted floor spaces under one roof, with a minimum number of columns.’⁵³ This formula derived from the functional requirements of the production line. ‘The form of the building,’ notes Federico Bucci, ‘was determined by its floor plan; and in turn, the floor plan was determined by the manufacturing flow.’⁵⁴ The industrial factory was designed ‘according to a single idea of simplification of the flow of materials.’⁵⁵ The contemporary factory, however, no longer serves so straightforwardly as a site for the repetition of simple and identical tasks performed on identical products. The production line need not necessarily consist of a procession of identical commodities. The flows that constitute the kind of production process exemplified at BMW Leipzig are structured around more complex, networked and recursive patterns, ones composed not simply of material processes, but that also comprise information, communication and ideas. The architecture of the contemporary factory has to provide for the spatial and environmental conditions of this new mode of productivity. It has to articulate the material flows of industrial production in relation to the circulatory patterns of the workforce, to equip the corporation with a spatial environment through which the perceptual, affective, and communicational capacities of its employees are to be collectively engaged in the technical supervision of the production process.

In Zaha Hadid Architects, who won the competition to design the Central Building, BMW engaged the services of an architectural practice already concerned with the productive articulation of complexity for a client similarly engaged with the application of new organizational models in the workplace. The abstract formal manoeuvres developed earlier in Hadid’s practice, combined with the strategies for mobilizing collaborative and knowledge-based work practices gleaned from Patrik Schumacher’s Corporate Fields project at the Architectural Association, were recruited to the agenda of contemporary industrial manufacture. The full significance of the type of work being performed here by the architect for the client, though, can only be fully grasped through an understanding of the kind of post-communist territory into which BMW were venturing at Leipzig.

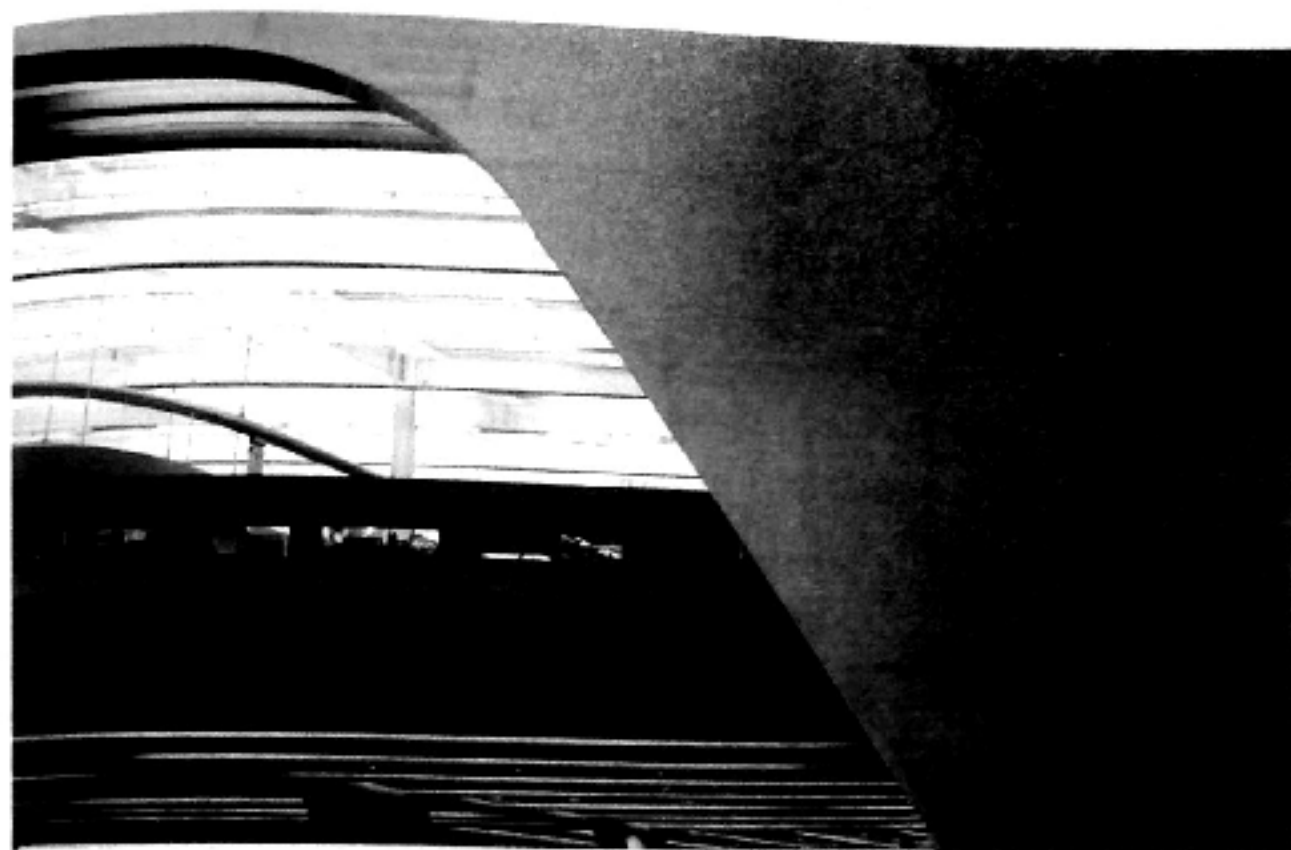


Figure 7 Zaha Hadid Architects, interior open structure, Central Building, BMW Leipzig, 2001–5, photo: the author, 2009.

Locating its new plant 9 kilometres north of Leipzig, within the former East Germany, BMW qualified for an EU subsidy of \$454 million towards a total construction cost of \$1.6 billion.⁵⁶ It placed itself in proximity to a regional tradition of car manufacturing and its 'skills pool'; to favourable transport and infrastructural conditions and, critically, to the availability of a 'flexible' workforce.⁵⁷ The unemployment rate for the region, stood at the time, at 21 per cent – double that of Western Germany.⁵⁸ This put the company in an advantageous position from which to negotiate with works councils and the metal workers' union IG Metall, as the precondition for its investment in Leipzig, an agreement to set wages at 20 per cent below those of its other plants in Germany.⁵⁹ It would also be able to implement a labour regime based upon variable shift patterns, productivity bonuses and the extensive use of a temporary workforce.⁶⁰ This 'formula for work' was designed by BMW's management to enable the plant's production routines to be readily responsive and adaptable to economic and market fluctuations.⁶¹

What was described as a 'community of fate' was founded for BMW with the cooperation of local government, employment agencies and the nearby University of Halle in establishing a training and recruitment programme, 'Poleposition', for the new factory overseen by PUUL GmbH (an enterprise set up for this purpose by BMW itself).⁶² Conditions favourable to new modes of workplace management are found in the territory newly exposed

by the withdrawal of state socialism – a potential labour force incentivized by economic hardship to accept work under almost any terms and conditions, and an apparatus of governmental agencies and trade unions willing to fashion and offer up, to the corporation, those it is charged with representing. In this respect BMW Leipzig is as much a social project invested in the production of subjectivity as it is a manufacturing enterprise.

In itself, this is not entirely novel. The history of the corporation is also one of social engineering. Nineteenth-century industrial communities such as Saltaire, Bournville and Port Sunlight in England, and Pullman in the United States, were strategically located, by their paternalist patriarchs, beyond the supposedly corruptive realms of the city. Henry Ford pursued similar pastoral ambitions, his desire to model the moral substance of his employees exemplified, especially, in his Village Industries and Greenfield Village museum enterprises.⁶³ Tomáš Baťa, with his company towns such as those established in Tilbury, England, in 1933, catered to the health and recreational needs of his employees. In the aftermath of the Second World War, the Italian Adriano Olivetti, at his Olivetti plant in Ivrea, pioneered the use of psychoanalytic and sociological perspectives in industrial management.⁶⁴

What is distinctive of the kind of neoliberal managerial practices exemplified at BMW Leipzig is that the company no longer even feigns concern with the ongoing welfare of its individual employees, but only – if and when these resources might be called upon – with their efficient functioning as ‘molecular’ components, as inputs and relays within an always adaptable system. It offers no commitment, and concedes no responsibility, to the worker. It deals only in opportunities – to be offered, withheld or withdrawn as it determines economically efficient – to join its putative community on an always provisional basis.⁶⁵

Under these conditions – variable shift patterns, temporary contracts, low wages – the post-political ideal of the workplace as a site of mutual cooperation and endeavour will be especially hard won by management. Antagonisms, inequalities and insecurities will need to be smoothed over if the circuits of communication and cooperation are to function effectively, if the factory is to operate as an ‘open’ and apparently self-organizing system. The production of this apparition, as absent of tension, conflict or hierarchy, and the productive channelling of the system’s components through its open circuits, will be the phantasmagorical and organizational work of architecture. BMW’s awareness of the nature and significance of this task, and of the importance of architecture’s

contribution to its achievement, is made plain in its report on the progress of the Central Building:

On the one hand, this building is to serve as the main entrance for employees and visitors. On the other, it is to be the site of all the plant's planning and administrative employees' workplaces. ... There are no hierarchies or managers' offices in this open space, just 740 identical workplaces for everyone from the trainee to the plant director. Here everyone is immediately accessible to everyone else. 'Structure creates behaviour' is the motto, and the open structure of the central building creates greater motivation, more intensive communication and thus higher productivity.⁶⁶

The urban diagram of the new factory

In the planning and design of BMW Leipzig Hadid and Schumacher invoked the dynamics of the city and the collective order of the urban. Hadid proposed, in response to the complexity of the programme, to 'urbanize' the site.⁶⁷ Schumacher's stated ambition was to reproduce within it the 'complexity and the unpredictability of city life'.⁶⁸ Seeking to articulate and organize the multiple circuits passing through the Central Building in accord with these ambitions, Hadid first calibrated their dynamics through a series of vector diagrams from which both the building's plan and its internal circulatory pattern were derived. Hadid has described this technique as a process in which she is attempting to 'turn space into linear lines', a generic design tool employed in a number of her projects, such as the MAXXI Museum in Rome.⁶⁹ For the Central Building, this technique is brought to bear on the particular task of channelling the movements of the plant's workforce according to the cooperative and communicative programme advanced by its managers.

Production line workers, office workers, administrative staff and management alike are gathered together, as they enter the plant, through the Central Building's single point of collective access. The various currents converging on this gateway are then released into the open arena of the building's 'market place' – a reception and social area designed to promote the interaction of employees as they cross paths or congregate in its cafeteria. This serves to channel the workforce towards the forms of socialization from which collective knowledge can be harvested. According to the plant's tour guides, this is where employees gather to freely exchange knowledge of the production process. The collectivized



Figure 8 Zaha Hadid Architects, radial cornering patterns, Central Building, BMW Leipzig, 2001–5, photo: the author, 2009.

knowledge accumulated at this point is then fed back into the system to further its 'continual improvement'. Likewise the attention of workers is directed towards the audit area, in Hadid's vectorized diagram of the plant, by locating this at the intersection of the main routes through the building.



Figure 9 Zaha Hadid Architects, main entrance, Central Building, BMW Leipzig, 2001–5, photo: the author, 2009.

Other means are also employed to articulate what Hadid has referred to as the 'transformation of a production field into an urban field'.⁷⁰ Rather than vertically stacking the programmes of the Central Building within discrete floors assigned to specific functions, the floor plates are modulated by inclines, openings and cantilevers. These are designed to articulate an interactive spatial condition. 'Although the structure is open', said Hadid, 'it's the layering that makes it complex. Our idea was to achieve openness, layering and complexity simultaneously.'⁷¹ All workers will encounter and communicate with one another on equal terms in a deterritorialized environment: 'The idea is that you have a wide range of activities happening together in one space. There's a mix of blue- and white-collar areas, which prevents an exclusive domain from being established.'⁷²

As well as mobilizing the putatively open and interactive conditions attributable to the 'urban field' to this end, Hadid also invokes the topographical qualities of the design of the Central Building. 'The interior structure', she says 'has a landscape quality to it.'⁷³ These qualities are apparent in the terraced 'cascades' that accommodate the plant's planning and administrative offices. In their open-plan layout these adhere to a by now generic model of the 'office landscape' or *Bürolandschaft* developed in West Germany in the 1950s. But these offices are landscaped in section too, through a stepped and 'cascading' floor plate that forms a continuous terrain between offices and other elements of the Central Building. The effect of continuity is reinforced through the open

trusses designed so as not to obscure the vista of the workplace as 'artificial landscape'.

The architecture's scenographic performance and the smooth trajectories of its circuits are underscored in the visual orchestration of its components and the use of materials. As Schumacher states:

We employed only homogenous, continuous materials such as concrete and welded steel; we strove to eliminate as many columns as possible; and we minimized the number of corners. ... The eye is drawn along continuous concrete walls; seamless, welded steel handrails; even the conveyor belts overhead. These lines flow in parallel, they bifurcate, they travel up and down through the section, but always tangentially. ... Here, the eye never comes to rest. As one moves around a corner, new vistas open up in all directions. In the best instances, it almost gives one a sense of flying.⁷⁴

The aesthetics of controlled convergence and continuous mobility also appear in the Central Building's exterior cladding. Here the vector diagrams used to plan the building's circulation patterns are presented in ornamental form. Translated from plan to elevation, their parallel trajectories promote the qualities of the factory's managerial paradigms. Fluidity, responsiveness, circulation and mobility are reassuringly aestheticized in forms advertising the ease, efficiency and elegance with which these qualities can be achieved. The organizational imperatives of neoliberalism are rendered appealingly in their dynamism.

In the sense that the appearance of architectural form gives positive expression to these imperatives, it constitutes a practice of what Manfredo Tafuri, in his analysis of the German architecture of Erich Mendelsohn, termed (borrowing from Adolf Behne) *reklamearchitektur* – advertising architecture. In adapting avant-garde modes of formal expression to serve commercial interests, Mendelsohn occupied a singular place within the architectural culture of Weimar Germany, argued Tafuri. In his department stores, cinemas and factories the formal 'exasperation' of Expressionism was sublimated to the dynamics of the capitalist metropolis: 'Mendelsohn chose to work for monied capitalist clients who could sponsor projects that permitted him to enter into the quick of the urban substance.'⁷⁵ Mendelsohn's architecture 'took its place in that chaos of stimuli which is the commercial center and which, with him, could lose that anguished aspect attributed to it by Expressionism and propose itself anew as a dynamic force to the public of Weimar Germany.'⁷⁶

The cornering of Mendelsohn's buildings, confluent with the circulation of the city's traffic, and the articulation of their stacked horizontal elements, underscored by artificial illumination, advertised speed and mobility as the essence of the metropolis and its new architecture. This architecture – the

Mossehaus press offices in Berlin (1921–3), the Shocken department store in Stuttgart (1926–8) or the Woga-Komplex and Universum-Kino, also in Berlin – acted as shock absorbers for the experience of the metropolis. The frenetic effects of the city were harmonized so that the public might be actively immersed within, rather than alienated by, what Simmel had termed its *nervenleben* (nervous life). The stylistic evolution of Hadid's architecture recapitulates this movement from the avant-garde to the commercial. The constructivist- and suprematist-inspired aesthetics of earlier projects – The Peak, Hong Kong (1982–3), the Vitra Fire Station (1994) – have been largely abandoned since around the time of the design of the Central Building for BMW. The juxtapositional and explosive dynamics of the 1980s and 1990s have given way to ones that speak of composure and elegance. In projects such as the Central Building, the MAXXI Museum and the Innovation Tower in Hong Kong (2014) massed linear elements, recalling those employed by Mendelsohn, describe parallel circuits around facades and form smoothly contoured patterns of circulation within.

What is advertised in these architectures is a *Weltanschauung*. The world view of neoliberalism in phantasmagorical form. An appeal to alignment with continuous variation rendered as a 'progressive reality'. Emancipation from stasis and constraint. Schumacher has claimed that the kind of formal elegance that now typifies Hadid's projects is the means through which their architecture articulates



Figure 10 Zaha Hadid Architects, exterior panelling, Central Building, BMW Leipzig, 2001–5, photo: the author, 2009.

complexity so that its work appears as 'an effortless display of sophisticated design',⁷⁷ Elegance works to conceal and to doubly disavow labour – both that involved in the subjection of the worker to the new conditions of labour in neoliberalism, and that of architecture in accommodating itself to the new managerialism.⁷⁸

Koolhaas, OMA and CCTV

Designed by Rem Koolhaas/OMA as a new headquarters for CCTV (China Central Television) within Beijing's Central Business District, CCTV HQ is located on an 180,000 square metre site that also accommodates a cultural centre – 'TVCC' – a service building and a media park within its complex. Completed in 2012, CCTV HQ is 234 metres in height, with a total floor area of 465,000 square metres. It is designed to be in continuous occupation by 10,000 workers, and accessible to the public through its internal 'visitor's loop'. Combining production, administration and management facilities within its structure, it also serves as the centre from which 250 television and radio channels are broadcast.

Ole Scheeren, Koolhaas's chief partner in the project, described CCTV as 'some kind of new utopia, partly social, partly constructive, [that] reclaims



Figure 11 OMA/Rem Koolhaas, construction, CCTV Headquarters, Beijing, 2002–12, photo: Ana Abram, 2008.

the ground from the seemingly rational territories of the global market economy It is a scale beyond the simple addition of its individual components: Bigness.⁷⁹ Such statements exemplify the ways in which OMA has sought to manage the perception of this project. In its conception and design, however, CCTV reclaims ground for, and not from, the 'global market economy'. It manages subjectivity for the new conditions of labour now being realized in China. CCTV is a governmental, not a utopian project. Rather than realizing the promise of 'Bigness', or the related theorems of *Delirious New York*, the project makes apparent the distance travelled by Koolhaas in his journey from the avant-garde to managerialism, from theory to work.

Challenging the modernist conception of metropolitan 'efficiency', Koolhaas turns, in *Delirious New York*, to the surrealism of Salvador Dali and his 'Paranoïd Critical Method', or 'PCM'. 'Dali', he writes 'proposes a second-phase Surrealism: the conscious exploitation of the unconscious through the PCM.'⁸⁰ The PCM, he continues, 'is defined by Dali mostly in tantalizing formulas: "the spontaneous method of irrational knowledge based on the critical and systematic objectifications of delirious associations and interpretations"'.⁸¹ Dali's PCM, Koolhaas suggests, promises that 'the world can be reshuffled like a pack of cards whose original sequence is a disappointment'.⁸² It is through this method that Koolhaas identifies, within the singular history of Manhattan's urban and architectural development, within the proto-surrealist spatial juxtapositions of its skyscrapers, the project of 'Manhattanism': a delirious mode of urban production – a 'culture of congestion' and a 'technology of the fantastic' – that will inform his own 'metropolitan architecture'.

These ideas are carried forward into Koolhaas's essay 'Bigness: The Problem of Large'.⁸³ Concerned with the emergence of large-scale architectural and infrastructural projects in Europe in the late 1980s, Koolhaas channelled lessons learnt from the New World back to the Old: 'Against the background of Europe, the shock of Bigness forced us to make what was implicit in *Delirious New York* explicit in our work'.⁸⁴ Bigness is conceived of as a 'radical break', 'with scale, with architectural composition, with tradition, with transparency, with ethics'.⁸⁵ Like Manhattanism, Bigness is opposed to architectural rationalization and normative perceptions of the city: 'Where architecture reveals, Bigness perplexes; Bigness transforms the city from a summation of certainties into an accumulation of mysteries. What you see is no longer what you get'.⁸⁶ The juxtapositions of spaces and programme potentiated at the scale of Bigness enable 'the assembly of maximum difference'. 'Only Bigness', writes Koolhaas, 'can sustain a promiscuous proliferation of events in a single container'.⁸⁷ As a kind of refuge from the organizational protocols of contemporary urbanism, Bigness stands against and

in contradistinction to its urban context: 'Bigness is no longer part of a urban tissue. It exists; at most, it coexists. Its subtext is fuck context.'⁸⁸

The tenets of Bigness are reversed in the CCTV project. Coherence and transparency are substituted for perplexity and mystery so that what you see is, after all, what you get. Programmes are productively integrated rather than deliriously juxtaposed. The building is conceived as a complement to its urban context – Beijing's Central Business District – rather than as offering refuge from it. In place of the intensification of difference promised by the Paranoid Critical Method, CCTV is designed to produce identity and erase paranoia. Where the shock effects, schisms, and juxtapositions of earlier projects by OMA – the Kunsthal in Rotterdam, or the Deux Bibliothèques Jussieu, in Paris, for instance – originate in the discoveries of *Delirious New York*, the architecture of the CCTV building emerges from the model of the 'hyperbuilding'.

The hyperbuilding makes its first appearance, as a new object of research and possibility for OMA/Koolhaas, in their project for the headquarters of Universal Studios in Los Angeles in 1996. In place of the deep volumetric massing characteristic of Bigness, the architecture of the Universal Studios headquarters is composed of four vertical towers connected by a horizontal slab of office floors. Each tower is designed to serve a specific component of the corporation. Suspended between them is the 'Corporate Beam': 'A glass volume that consolidates corporate activity with special needs and shared support departments.'⁸⁹ The composite structure of the hyperbuilding is likened to urbanism in its organizational capacities: 'At this scale of organization, architecture approaches urbanism. Universal is not so much an office plan as an urban plan, a map: the building as an organizer of different elements. The organizational diagram resonates more with a subway map than with a building plan.'⁹⁰

Much as in Hadid and Schumacher's trope of the 'urban field', the organizational powers of architecture are likened to those of urbanism. This conception is foregrounded in the form of the hyperbuilding. Its bundled towers and intersecting beams – Universal Studios headquarters, the Hyperbuilding in Bangkok and the Togok Towers in Seoul – imply a compositional logic of infrastructural integration; its task to facilitate systems of circulation and communication, rather than to contest or critically reconfigure these from within its own territory. Subsuming architecture to urbanism's organizational imperatives, OMA's hyperbuilding architecture aligns itself with an essentially governmental and managerial practice that first emerged in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

With Ildefonso Cerdá's plan for the extension of Barcelona (1859), and his *Teoría general de la urbanización* (The General Theory of Urbanization), published

in 1867, as its founding instruments, urbanism was, and is still, premised on the planning and optimization of circulation. Urbanism *engineers* the movement of goods, services and citizens throughout its territory. Its infrastructural components choreograph these movements, systematically, and integrate them according to principles of efficiency and productivity. The development of urbanism coincides, historically, with that of large-scale factory production, and with the managerial practices designed to produce forms of subjectivity compliant with the imperatives of urban industrialization. Ross Exo Adams has described Cerdá's *urbe* as 'the simultaneous enclosing of all of society in a new "urban" order which systematizes (and thus *politicizes*) life's natural cycles of production and reproduction'.⁹¹ Urbanism, Adams continues, produces a 'new order of life' founded 'on the *normalization and management of human behavior*'.⁹² These conditions of reproduction now extend to the organization and distribution of knowledge and information – laterally dispersed as well as hierarchically orchestrated – upon whose exchange the modern corporation depends. Mentalities of cooperation, social exchange and interaction are, through the order of the urban, to be elicited and maintained as the new conditions of labour.

These are the managerial demands on the production of subjectivity that the hyperbuilding is designed to serve. It offers the 'virtue' of 'an enormous controllable critical mass' with the capacity to 'forge a new entity from disparate parts'.⁹³ In an interview conducted in 2008, Koolhaas remarks: 'When we were planning the Universal Studios headquarters in Hollywood, a problem we had was that the company's individual components are spread across a large area – so we designed the building to bring the components together again. It includes a common space where people who work in distant offices could pass and run into each other.'⁹⁴

This 'common space' – the 'beam' that integrates the company's various departmental components – becomes a 'corporate theatre', rather than the 'collective' one affirmed within the theorems of Bigness. The now corporate articulation of common space is framed in the language of managerialism: the 'calculated integration of Universal City's current fragments ... improves its flaws and corrects its flows'; 'No matter how turbulent the composition of the company becomes, the office floors provide the necessary flexibility'.⁹⁵ Business, according to the Koolhaas of *Delirious New York* is only an 'alibi' for Manhattanism, only one of its possible worlds.⁹⁶ The skyscraper is a 'laboratory'; 'the ultimate vehicle of emotional and intellectual adventure'.⁹⁷ The hyperbuilding, though, posits an architecture in which business, and its management, is the world. The CCTV headquarters project, designed, with its composite form of inclined towers and

horizontal bridging structures, to produce interdepartmental integration and to manage flows of workers and visitors, further develops the hyperbuilding technology.

Given the fact that CCTV functions, still, as the mouthpiece of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), OMA have had to carefully stage-manage the perception of their involvement in this project. Koolhaas has presented OMA's decision to compete, in 2002, for the CCTV project over that of the Manhattan World Trade Center competition as being driven by a principled choice to pursue 'integrity', and an architecture of 'the people', over that of business and monumentality.⁹⁸ His rationalizations ought also to be understood within the context of the controversy surrounding his decision to work in China. Ian Buruma, for example, wrote that China's 'record on human rights is still appalling. ... It's as though Tiananmen never happened.'⁹⁹ He described OMA's decision to build for the 'centre of state propaganda, the organ which tells a billion people what to think' as nothing short of 'reprehensible'.¹⁰⁰

In their counteroffensive against this kind of criticism, Koolhaas and Scheeren justified the CCTV project as representative of their commitment to the public over the private, to communism over the capitalist free market. Koolhaas argued against capitalism's negative effect upon architecture in producing a situation in which 'there's no more public'.¹⁰¹ CCTV should be understood, he continued, as an 'attempt by us to see whether the more traditional work of the architect – somebody working for the public good – would still be possible in a communist context'.¹⁰² He has also described the project in relation to his early interest in the 'communist architecture' of Russian Constructivism: 'It's a kind of re-visiting the communist history, and moving beyond a classical position of "capitalism good, communism bad."'¹⁰³ In the introduction to the issue of *Architecture and Urbanism* in which these comments were published, Scheeren similarly glossed the 'public' and 'democratic' qualities of the CCTV headquarters: 'The declared aim is to become the BBC of China, and the many publicly accessible functions of the new building program point towards a democratization of the institution ... becoming the icon for a new contemporary China.'¹⁰⁴

Koolhaas and Scheeren refuted the kind of argument raised by Buruma against building in China. While Scheeren conceded the role of CCTV in editing and censoring the 'voice of China', he argued that it was 'also driving forward the transformation process and opening up of this country. On its path, it is carefully manoeuvring between (radical) change and (apparent) retention of existing principles'.¹⁰⁵ 'Risks are inherent – central control paired with untamed financial dynamics,' he continued, 'yet the emerging hybrid also creates new dimensions of visionary scope and quality'.¹⁰⁶

The argument that China has not embarked on a straightforward path towards capitalism, particularly in its current and globally hegemonic neoliberal form, has some element of truth to it. Giovanni Arrighi, in his *Adam Smith in Beijing: Lineages of the Twenty-First Century*, for example, challenges the notion that the recent global ascent of the People's Republic can be understood simply on the basis of its 'alleged adherence to the neo-liberal creed'.¹⁰⁷ 'The success of Chinese



Figure 12 OMA/Rem Koolhaas, construction detail, CCTV Headquarters, Beijing, 2002–12, photo: Ana Abram, 2008.

reforms,' he argues, 'can be traced to *not* having given up gradualism in favor of the shock therapies advocated by the Washington Consensus.'¹⁰⁸ Equally, this doesn't legitimate Koolhaas and Scheeren's narrative of China as a still communist state in pursuit of the kind of reforms that would offer architects the opportunity to work, free from the demands of the market, for the 'public good'. Rather than operating beyond the logic of the market, China's reforms have been understood by some as directed towards a very particular form of market-based economy. Rather than Deng Xiaoping's 'socialism with Chinese characteristics', Wang Hui has written of 'a special character to Chinese neoliberalism'.¹⁰⁹ 'China,' he writes, 'has promoted radical marketization; in addition, under the guidance of state policy, China has become one of the most enthusiastic participants in the global economy.'¹¹⁰

The 'special character' of neoliberalism in China lies in its structurally unique combination of market and state – a market-oriented political economy under the strict management of a centralized state authority. That the state should have a role within neoliberalism – principally that of legislating for and legitimating the conditions of the 'free market' – is, of course, by no means unique to China. It is the state form – that of the single party – and the powers of governance it has inherited from the era of Mao, that defines its 'special character'. The apparatus of the party has been retained but redirected towards managerial rather than political objectives. As Hui observes of the party's depoliticization: 'In contemporary China the space for political debate has largely been eliminated. The party is no longer an organization with specific political values but a mechanism of power.'¹¹¹ This 'depoliticization process,' he continues, 'has had two key characteristics: firstly, the "de-theorization" of the ideological sphere; secondly, making economic reform the sole focus of party work.'¹¹²

China's movement towards a market economy, whatever the supposed gradualism of its transition, has involved the country in massive upheaval. While there is huge investment in urbanization and infrastructural development, arable land has become scarce. This has led to environmental crises and concerns over food security. The *danwei* (labour units), which once functioned as the essential instrument of social and political cohesion, have been progressively dismantled, cutting the citizen loose from their point of access to party ideology, as well as adrift from the basic mechanisms of social welfare. These radically changed conditions have not been received passively. Protests and 'mass incidents' of social unrest (scrupulously monitored and recorded by the CCP), around environmental and social problems, are frequent and numerous. Stabilizing these volatile conditions has become central to the work of the party, a task for which the mechanisms of neoliberal governmentality have been recognized as key.¹¹³ Lisa Rofel identifies neoliberal governmentality as a 'project ... to remake

national public culture'.¹¹⁴ Aihwa Ong, theorizing neoliberalism as 'a new relationship between government and knowledge through which governing activities are recast as nonpolitical and nonideological problems that need technical solutions',¹¹⁵ notes the emergence of the concept of 'reengineering the Chinese soul' within organizational discourse in China: 'Reengineering has become a metaphor for converting Chinese employees from particularistic cultural beings into self-disciplining professionals who can remanage themselves according to corporate rules and practice.'¹¹⁶

In the post-political, post-ideological conditions of post-reform China, image management has also become a central concern of the CCP. As Yuezhi Zhao writes, 'As part of Deng's "no debate" decree and perhaps the party leadership's own increasing cynicism over its "truth," the party has more or less given up its mission of political indoctrination to simply concentrate on the management of its own publicity.'¹¹⁷ These, then, are the practices of governmentality in which OMA's CCTV headquarters are implicated – reengineering labour, remaking the public, stabilizing the social and managing the image.

Architecture as infrastructure

As with OMA's earlier hyperbuilding projects, the form and structure of the CCTV headquarters is designed to integrate multiple departments within a coherent whole. Each section of CCTV – administration, broadcasting, news, production, new media, service – is assigned a particular location within an architectural loop that links them in a productive circuit. This looped structure, and the now seamless continuity of its towers and bridges, suggests a further refinement of the hyperbuilding. The management of organizational efficiency is signified, and in such a way as to authorize a certain discourse about its operation.

Describing the significance of the building's looped form, Ole Scheeren states that 'CCTV is a loop folded in space, it creates a circuit of interconnected activities and joins all aspects of television making in one single organism. The loop acts as a non-hierarchical principle, with no beginning and end, no top and bottom, in which all elements form part of a single whole.'¹¹⁸ The 'non-hierarchical principle' of the loop is supposed also to integrate CCTV's employees within an organic whole:

The coexistence of all functions involved in the process of television-making in one single building allows administration and management, production

studios and news departments, research and training divisions, technical areas and broadcasting centres to enter into a continuous dialogue – not only reminding all parts of each other's existence, but clearly illustrating their mutual dependence: a system, in which the 'heads know what the hands are doing' – and vice versa. There are hierarchies – of managers and workers – but the building is not simply broken down into different sections, but a loop of communal circulation with associated social areas, canteens and meeting rooms exploits the shape of the building and promotes direct exchange and contact between the departments. The organisation is more continual than vertical; the top floors of the skyscraper – normally reserved for the board and leadership – are accessible to all employees in the 'Staff Forum'.¹¹⁹

Despite the fact that such strategies of integration can be found within the West, and that these have been developed precisely to facilitate a form of neoliberal managerialism, Koolhaas claims them as possibilities only to be found in the exceptional conditions of China. 'In the free market,' he writes, 'architecture = real estate.'¹²⁰ 'But in China,' he argues, 'money does not yet have the last word. CCTV is envisioned as a shared conceptual space in which all parts are housed permanently, aware of one another's presence – a collective. Communication increases; paranoia decreases.'¹²¹ With such claims Koolhaas manages the publicity of his practice no less than the leadership of the CCP now manage theirs. If the creation of the shared space of a 'collective' were only possible outside of a market economy, then how could OMA have argued for the design of 'common spaces' of interaction for their Universal Studios headquarters in Los Angeles? If this type of space were only realizable for architects working in China, then how is it that precisely the same means – the articulation of circulation, proximity and transparency – have been employed for precisely the same ends – the integration of the production process, and the workforce, into a seemingly non-hierarchical and self-aware whole – in projects such as Hadid's BMW Central Building in Leipzig? Rather than a possibility unique to a putatively communist China, the 'collective' Koolhaas speaks of is a function of a now globalized model of labour management – such as is employed in Toyotaism – designed to optimize productivity and to minimize antagonism. It is within the context of this instrumentalization of the 'collective', as well as its specific resonance within post-reform China, that the motivations for increasing communication and reducing paranoia appear.

The elimination of paranoia emerges as a governmental concern in post-reform China, in general, and in the specific case of CCTV, as a consequence of its social instability. Chinese society, writes Zhao, is 'one of the most inequitable



Figure 13 OMA/Rem Koolhaas, exterior, CCTV Headquarters, Beijing, 2002–12, photo: the author, 2011.

in the world ... characterized by a fractured structure, acute divisions along class, rural/urban, ethnic, and regional cleavages, and heightened conflicts.¹²² Rather than led by concerns to produce a 'collective' which emanate, as Koolhaas implies, from an essentially communist political programme, the elimination of paranoia is a post-political strategy designed to manage the deterritorializing forces set in motion by China's turn – however qualified by its special circumstances – to neoliberal marketization. Efforts to stabilize the workforce of CCTV, in particular, respond to changed employment practices resulting from the withdrawal of state funding for the broadcasting institution and its increasing commercialization. Zhao, describing conditions of employment at CCTV, around the time at which OMA were awarded the project for its redevelopment, writes: 'CCTV, with its five classes of permanent employees and flexible casual workers with staggeringly different job security and welfare entitlements well into the early 2000s, epitomized the hierarchical, highly exploitative, and almost feudal labor structure in the Chinese media industry.'¹²³

The flexibilization and casualization of employment at CCTV, the turn to outsourcing and temporary contracts – under the liberalizing reforms of its presidents Yang Weiguang (1991–9), and then Zhao Huayong (1999–2009) – are documented in Ying Zhu's *Two Billion Eyes: The Story of China Central Television*.¹²⁴ These practices are also recorded in a report, by Shu Taifeng, on CCTV's system of 'remuneration by invoices' through which it sought, beginning in the early 1990s, to bypass China's labour regulations.¹²⁵ These methods, writes Taifeng, have 'lead to a series of negative consequences ... caused the existing wage system to collapse, brought about huge income gaps and sowed the seeds for corruption.'¹²⁶ It seems not unreasonable to suggest that it is the paranoia induced by these conditions of labour that OMA's CCTV is designed to remediate.

Communication – the remedy prescribed here for paranoia – is to be increased through the arrangement of departments and facilities within the building, through their orchestration within the 'non-hierarchical' structure of the loop. In the skyscrapers of Manhattan there are no loops to circuit, just the vertical movement articulated by the elevator and punctuated by the miscellaneous programmes to be found on each floor: the stacking of an 'exquisite corpse' of incommensurable experiences. CCTV, though, is zoned for organizational efficiency. Each facility is consigned to a designated stack of floor plates and located within the loop according to a logistical syntax of productivity. These floor plates also serve to structure the relations within the workforce according to

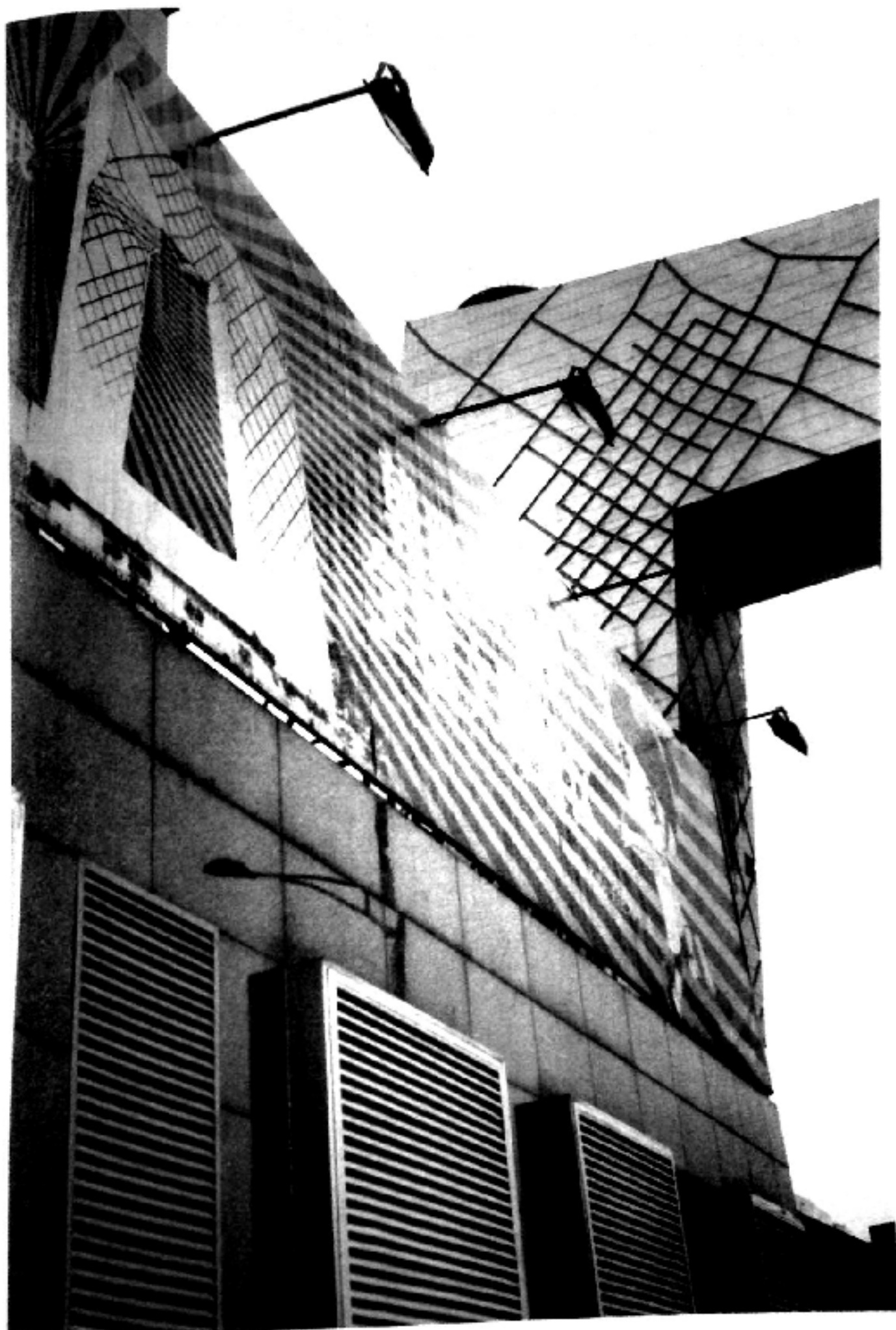


Figure 14 OMA/Rem Koolhaas, exterior with advertisement, CCTV Headquarters, Beijing, 2002–12, photo: the author, 2011.

the model of the 'typical plan' first referred to by Koolhaas in an essay appearing in *S,M,L,XL*.

Written in 1993 'Typical Plan' has been described, by Roberto Gargiani, as 'another chapter of *Delirious New York*' since its subject matter – the floor plan of the American office – appears to coincide with that of the earlier publication.¹²⁷ This assessment neglects a crucial distinction: 'Typical Plan' affirms an architecture of business rather than one of delirium. 'From the late 19th century to the early 1970s', writes Koolhaas,

there is an 'American century' in which Typical Plan is developed from the primitive loft type (ruthless creation of floor space through the sheer multiplication of a given site) via early masterpieces of *smooth space* like the RCA Building (1933) – its escalators, its elevators, the Zen-like serenity of its office suites – to provisional culminations such as the Exxon Building (1971) and the World Trade Center (1972–73). Together they represent evidence of the discovery and subsequent mastery of a *new architecture*.¹²⁸

'The ambition of Typical Plan' argues Koolhaas, 'is to create new territories for the smooth unfolding of new processes, in this case, ideal accommodation for business.'¹²⁹ The typical plan is a neutral ground, a 'degree-zero' of architecture, whose open spaces give free rein to the essentially 'formless'¹³⁰ existence of business: 'Typical Plan is to the office population what graph paper is to a mathematical curve. Its neutrality records performance, event, flow, change, accumulation, deduction, disappearance, mutation, fluctuation, failure, oscillation, deformation.'¹³¹

Manhattanism figures the metropolitan subject as the agent of his or her own experience of the city, the architect of a critical paranoia, but the 'typical plan' is an exercise in efficiency. It posits the subject as a component of an 'office population' whose performance it orders, modulates and records. The mode of subjectivation valorized in 'Typical Plan' is thoroughly managerial. The appearance of the 'generic floor plate', in the hyperbuilding architecture of Koolhaas/OMA, and, specifically, in the 'Universal Floor' of the Universal Headquarters building, has been traced to the ideas expressed in the 'Typical Plan' essay.¹³² The generic floor plate, as a managerial instrument, appears too in the CCTV headquarters. The vast 'smooth spaces' of the administration sections, located in the overhang joining the building's two towers, for instance, enable 'staff circulation' and 'communal facilities'.¹³³ The 'formless' practice of business is accommodated within the 8,000 square metres floor plates 'allow[ing] for ultimate flexibility in office layout'.¹³⁴ Many of the 'staff facilities' –

meeting rooms, canteens, gyms, lobbies – occupy similarly large-scale floor areas. These are designed to ‘allow workers to gather, socialize, and exchange information’, a kind of forced collectivization falling into line with contemporary managerial strategies in the West – knowledge management and the extension of work into the spaces and times of recreation.¹³⁵ It appears designed also to minimize, through communication, the paranoia born of workplace divisions and inequalities. Workers will understand their place and significance within a coherent and cooperative whole.

Through the device of the visitor’s loop, relations between CCTV and its public, like those within its workforce, are similarly subject to ‘collective’ refashioning. These relations have been strained both by the continued perception of CCTV as the mouthpiece of state propaganda, and by the implications of its turn to seemingly Westernized commercial values. OMA’s CCTV complex has itself become the focus of animosity towards the institution. Ying Zhu, writing of the impact of the fire that severely damaged TVCC (adjacent to CCTV headquarters) notes: ‘Since its groundbreaking in 2004, the building had been the subject of popular jests – though one could argue that citizens resented less the building itself than what it stood for: CCTV and the Chinese Communist Party – and once the fire broke out, *schadenfreude* spread throughout the city and online.’¹³⁶

The visitor’s loop is designed to admit the public to CCTV headquarters, channelling them through the building along its prescribed circuit. Koolhaas and Scheeren describe it as ‘a dedicated path circulating through the building and connecting to all program elements while offering spectacular views across the CBD and the city’.¹³⁷ ‘Multiple event spaces’, they continue,

allow for divers programming and direct views into some of the technical areas of the building give the visitors insight in the functioning of a television station. The visitors enter the main lobby in Tower 1 and descend to the first basement level. After passing security control, wardrobe and a cafe, the path moves along a media wall around the central production area while providing views into television studios and actors lounges.¹³⁸

Opening up a previously closed organ of the state to public inspection, the visitor’s loop is to serve as an instrument through which the image of CCTV, and by extension that of the party itself, may be remade. Exposing its inner workings to the public CCTV shows it has nothing to hide, that a new rapport, based on openness and transparency, can be established between itself and its public. As crucial as this image management is to both CCTV and the party, the visitor’s loop is also implicated in a reciprocal transformation of the very idea

of the 'public'. Indeed the 'public', and the 'public sphere', are currently subject to processes of refashioning in accord with the radical marketization of China's economy and the de/post-politicization of the party. The central role of state media in these processes has been to maintain the image of the People's Republic of China as a still communist society, while, at the same time, reconstructing and managing its subjects as an 'audience' according to commercialized models of media production and reception. As Zhao argues in *Communication in China*: 'To stay in power, the party must continue to articulate and rearticulate its communistic pretensions, otherwise ... communism threatens to once again become a powerful subversive ideology against party-led capitalistic developments in China.'¹³⁹

Without entirely disposing of Leninist and Maoist strategies of propaganda, the party has also turned to the public relations and image-making techniques of the West. 'Leadership image design', notes Zhao, 'has become a new topic for applied communication research and everyday media management practices' (ibid).¹⁴⁰ Included among its techniques are methods previously castigated by the party as 'bourgeois', such as opinion polls and audience surveys, and the broadcasting of images of the party's leadership interacting with, and coming to the aid of its citizens that are 'designed to project a "pro-people" popular leadership'.¹⁴¹

The perspectives offered from the visitor's loop out onto the activities of workers in the studios, suites and production facilities of CCTV, and those of the organizational integrity of the entire operation, are to perform an image of communicative efficiency. They are to impress upon the visitor a picture of interactive coherence, the productive cooperation of a whole that stands both for the work of CCTV and, analogously, for that of the party for which it is still the official voice. The visitor's loop articulates communism's core values via the very operations through which these are being refashioned into a neoliberal governmentality – the mobilization of cooperative productivity in the service of accumulation. At the same time, the loop inducts the public into the role of a participatory audience, a 'critical mass' whose opinions are to be solicited so as to secure their contribution to a 'pro-people' China.

Circulation as labour and image

Both at BMW Leipzig and at CCTV architecture is implicated in the introduction of new and distinctively neoliberal modes of labour and its organization. It is engaged in the retraining of subjectivities, in rendering them cooperative and

flexible. It smoothes over precarities, struggles and contradictions. Architecture finds its turn from theory to work rewarded. It is enlisted in the inscription of neoliberal governmental and managerial practices in the workplace. It finds its concerns with post-political ontologies of complexity and emergence, with the self-organized massing of swarms, mirrored in the discourse and agenda of managerialism. Architectures centred on the design of open, landscaped and connective spaces, on the production of spaces designed to facilitate communicative, networked, cooperative behaviours and dispositions, proclaim themselves – as does the managerial agenda they work to realize – to be aligned with a progressive reality. In order to sustain this deception, the image of labour as strife, struggle or hardship has to be absolutely negated, eradicated through elegant design and phantasmagoric appearance.

The image of the worker is refashioned into that of a molecular component of a naturalized order, occupied – naturally – in the business of circulation, cooperation and communication. In the architecture of BMW Leipzig and CCTV, and numerous other instances of contemporary workplace design, this image itself is subject to circulation. The circulatory performance of labour is made visible, throughout the new landscapes and collective commons of corporate space, so that it will serve as a motivational example, as a catalyst for participation in the forms of conduct it advertises. This spatial technique originates within cybernetically inspired architectural practices of the late 1960s and has, latterly, found employment not only in the production of spaces of labour, but in other realms – education, culture, retail – where circulation operates as a primary instrument in processes of neoliberal valorization and subjectification.