

# THEORIZING THE DIGITAL – SESSION III

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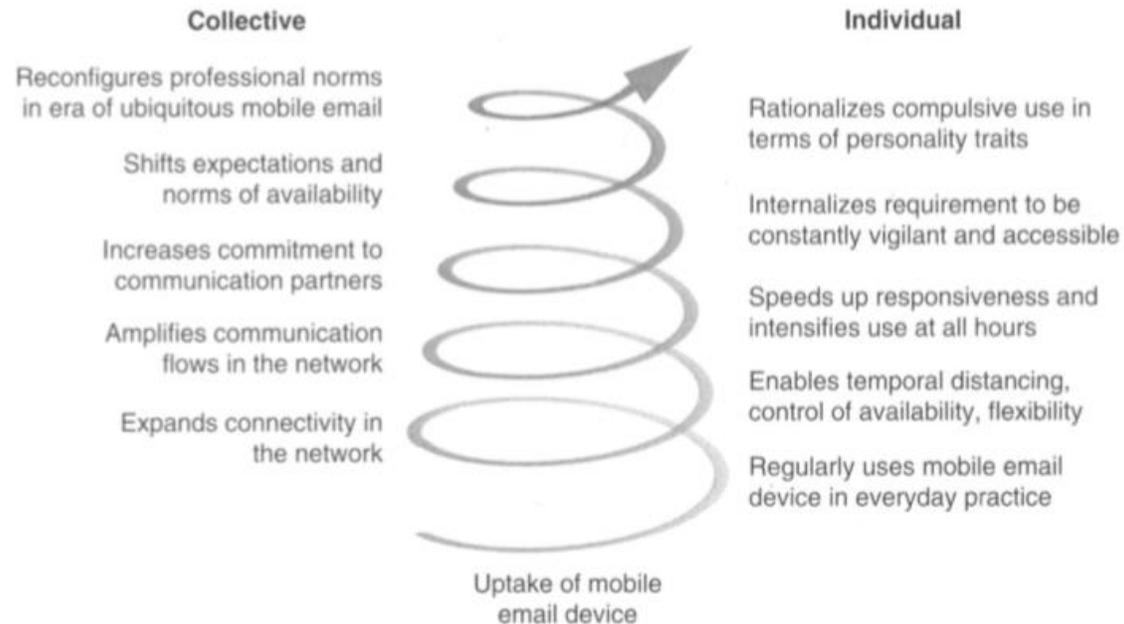
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# RECAP

Mazmanian, M., Orlikowski, W. J., & Yates, J. (2013):  
*The autonomy paradox: The implications of mobile email devices for knowledge professionals.*

Dery, K., Kolb, D., & MacCormick, J. (2014):  
*Working with connective flow: how smartphone use is evolving in practice.*

**Figure 1 Dynamics of Escalating Engagement and Diminishing Autonomy**



# THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Mazmanian et al. (2013)	Dery et al. (2014)
Extending the stable notion of <b>autonomy</b> towards a more <b>dynamic</b> understanding	Advancement from “duality of connects and disconnects” to <b>continually managing “connective flow”</b>
Outlining (unintended) <b>collective consequences of individually-restricted autonomy</b> emerging from the use of mail devices	Smartphones as <b>devices for enhancing human agency</b> through connective choice
Definition of <b>job ideals as ongoingly enacted together with technology</b> (“performativity”)	Away from a deterministic understanding of the impact of smartphones as neutral and objective tools towards a “ <b>performative</b> ” understanding → <b>Work is reshaped by the affordances of technology</b>

# WEAKNESSES AND SHORTCOMINGS

Mazmanian et al. (2013)	Dery et al. (2014)
<b>Inadequate</b> conceptualisation of the notion “ <b>commitment</b> ”	<b>Unpolitical</b> or even <b>downplaying</b> the difficulty and hazard of continually managing “ <b>connective flow</b> ”
<b>Normativity:</b> Autonomy = good and Commitment = bad	Assuming <b>agency exclusively in humans</b> and not opening up for a perspective that agency could also lie in technology
<b>Respondents</b> treated as <b>not capable of explaining</b> their associations to technology correctly → impression of “force fitted” interpretations, <b>bias</b> towards the <b>negative consequences</b> of the use of mobile mail devices	<b>Overemphasizing</b> the impact of individual <b>smartphone</b> use and <b>neglecting</b> the effects of <b>further social and material</b> aspects

# NEW AND OPEN QUESTIONS

Mazmanian et al. (2013)	Dery et al. (2014)
Are current reconfigurations of job ideals now fixed or rather temporarily emergent? If the latter, then how could future job reconfigurations look like?	What could be the larger consequences stemming from individually regulating the “connective flow”?
Who decides when it is too much commitment and too less autonomy? Is there a solution to the autonomy vs. commitment tension ?	What is the right or wrong way of engaging with smartphones, if there is one at all?
What positive collective consequences have been established through the use of mobile email devices?	Asked the other way round: How is people’s behaviour impacting technology?

# DISCUSSION

- ❖ Are technological devices enhancing (Dery et al., 2014) or inhibiting (Mazmanian et al., 2013) autonomy/human agency?
- ❖ Were the articles rather focussing on technology, people, or on the practices of humans together with technology?
- ❖ Could it be that the “overachievers” from today are the “regular achievers” from tomorrow? If yes, is that a desirable or rather undesirable development?