Université catholique de Louvain

Louvain School of Management
Doctoral Commission of the Domain Economics and Management

Unveiling the organisational identity: a spatial approach based on the office.

The case of ORES Picardy Wallonia *transition towards an activity-based workspace.*

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Philosophiæ Doctor in Management Science

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August 2018

Ne pas révéler les implicites moraux, c'est se satisfaire d'y souscrire en silence.

Pierre-Yves Gomez

Remerciements

S'il y a bien des pages que j'ai eu hâte d'écrire depuis le début de ce parcours doctoral, ce sont celles qui suivent. Ces remerciements, je les ai longtemps imaginés, il me reste désormais à les coucher sur papier et à rendre, à mon tour, un peu du temps et de l'attention dont tant de personnes m'ont fait cadeau ces dernières années.

Tout d'abord, je souhaiterais adresser mes plus sincères remerciements à mon promoteur de thèse, le Professeur Laurent Taskin. Ces quatre années de thèse ont été un parcours intellectuel et humain au cours duquel tu n'as jamais cessé de m'accompagner, mettant ton temps et ton énergie au service de cette recherche. Par tes conseils, nos discussions, tes encouragements mais aussi tes critiques constructives, tu m'as transmis ta passion pour la recherche et as aiguisé mon esprit critique. De nombreux moments importants ont jalonné cette thèse, mais je n'oublierai sans doute jamais notre réunion du 6 octobre 2017 au cours de laquelle nous avons longuement parlé de mes résultats et catégories et qui a, pour moi, marqué un tournant essentiel dans ce parcours et confirmé mon souhait de poursuivre une carrière dans la recherche. Je te remercie également d'avoir fait en sorte que je réalise cette thèse dans de bonnes conditions, tant matérielles que non-matérielles. Tu as su veiller à ce que j'évolue dans un environnement profondément bienveillant, et où je puisse m'épanouir tant intellectuellement, professionnellement qu'humainement. Pour tout cela, je te suis profondément reconnaissante.

Je voudrais également exprimer toute ma gratitude aux membres de mon jury. Merci aux Professeurs Evelyne Léonard, Anne Rousseau et Andre Spicer pour avoir accepté de faire partie de mon comité d'encadrement depuis le début de cette thèse. Je vous remercie pour le temps que vous m'avez accordé, vos conseils pour que j'adresse au mieux ma question de recherche, ainsi que tous les commentaires et questionnements qui m'ont forcée à peaufiner ce travail de recherche. Mes remerciements vont également au Professeur Pierre-Yves Gomez pour avoir accepté de faire partie de ce jury de thèse, et pour ses commentaires et questions extrêmement encourageants et stimulants à l'occasion de ma défense privée. Pour les discussions que nous avons partagées lors de ma défense privée, qui reste l'un des meilleurs moments de ce parcours doctoral, je tiens à remercier l'intégralité de mon jury de thèse.

J'adresse également mes remerciements envers mon institut de recherche, le LouRIM, ainsi que mon centre de recherche, le CIRTES. Ces deux lieux ont su, chacun à sa façon, m'apporter le soutien nécessaire à la réalisation de cette thèse, en particulier en m'encourageant à confronter mon travail à celui d'autres chercheurs et à leurs critiques et questionnements, toujours avec l'intention de me pousser à améliorer ce travail. Je remercie également particulièrement Sandrine Delhaye pour les réponses qu'elle a su apporter aux nombreuses questions et angoisses que j'ai eues, et ce avec une inaltérable gentillesse (et patience, il faut le dire !).

Cette thèse n'aurait pu être réalisée sans l'aide du terrain. Je remercie donc très sincèrement l'entreprise *ORES* et tout particulièrement le site d'*ORES Wallonie Picarde* pour m'avoir ouvert ses portes. Merci à Bénédicte Vandevelde pour m'avoir introduit au projet DOMO, à Chantal Pont pour avoir accepté ce partenariat de recherche, et à Olivier Francotte pour toute l'aide apportée durant le temps passé sur le site *WaPi*. Je remercie aussi tous les travailleurs et toutes les travailleuses que j'ai pu rencontrer et qui ont accepté de me donner de leur temps et me confier leur expérience.

Le collectif de travail me tenant énormément à cœur, ma gratitude s'exprime aussi envers toutes et tous les collègues qui ont croisé mon chemin et ont rendu cette thèse moins solitaire. Un merci particulier à toi Michel qui a été là depuis le début (depuis ma lettre de motivation !) et dont l'écoute et les conseils ont été de précieux alliés tout au long de ce parcours. Je remercie également chaleureusement les chercheuses rockeuses de la Chaire laboRH. Chloé, Laurianne et Marine, merci pour votre soutien et vos encouragements ces derniers mois, votre gentillesse et la flexibilité dont vous avez bien voulu faire preuve, tout particulièrement cette dernière année dans la finition de ma thèse. Vous êtes la meilleure équipe qui soit et j'ai hâte de vous voir évoluer avec succès dans vos projets de recherche respectifs ! ☺ Un immense merci également à toi Céline pour ton enthousiasme, ton soutien et la confiance que tu avais envers mon projet quand j'en manquais. Merci aussi au Professeur Florence Stinglhamber qui, avec les autres académiques de la Chaire laboRH, a veillé à ce que cette thèse puisse se réaliser dans de bonnes conditions. J'adresse également toute mon amitié et mes remerciements à Stéphanie C., Thomas, Michaël, Olivier, Kamila, Des, Géraldine, Annick, Françoise, Camilla, Corentin, Yannicke, Maxime, et Stéphanie D. pour les moments partagés au cours de ces quatre années.

Ces remerciements ne seraient pas complets si je ne mentionnais pas celles et ceux qui sont là au quotidien. Je pense aux amis et amies rencontré(e)s sur les bancs des Facultés Universitaires Notre-Dame de la Paix : Natacha, Aurélie, Bruno, Rémi, Arnaud et Virginie. Que de chemin parcouru depuis l'année 2009. Je suis tellement heureuse de vous compter dans ma vie depuis cette époque, vous êtes des piliers indispensables, merci. Merci également à Sandy, Diane, Vicky mais aussi à toutes celles et ceux qui constituent ma seconde famille et qui m'ont aidée à garder le cap dans cette thèse, notamment lors de tous les moments de célébration des différentes étapes franchies : la confirmation, la première publication, la défense privée, MT 180... Enfin, merci à ma première famille, celle qui m'a vue naître et grandir, et qui m'a fourni de nombreuses clés me permettant de mener à bien ce projet. Merci à toi Jérémy de m'avoir initiée à la critique – celle qu'on donne mais aussi celle qu'on reçoit –, et pour toute l'énergie que tu as su mettre à me vanner pendant 4 ans afin de veiller à ce que je ne prenne pas trop la grosse tête avec cette thèse ;-) Merci pour cette complicité à laquelle je tiens énormément. Merci Maman pour tout le temps que tu as donné sans jamais compter, pour l'éducation dont tu m'as fait cadeau, et pour ton éternelle gentillesse et ton oreille attentive, souvent utile dans les moments de fatigue, de stress et de doute. Merci Papa pour avoir toujours soulevé la barre pour l'accrocher plus haut, pour « la fierté des Antoine » qui m'accompagne et me caractérise plus que je n'aime l'admettre, et pour ta grande générosité. Merci à vous deux pour l'amour et le soutien sans faille que vous me témoignez depuis toujours. Je vous aime. Et puis enfin, à toi mon Sam, merci d'être là au quotidien, pour ton soutien, tes encouragements et ton amour. Tu n'as jamais cessé de croire en moi, considérant chaque étape réussie comme une évidence. Pourtant, j'en ai passé du temps à essayer de te prouver par A + B que rien n'était gagné, et qu'il restait encore temps à faire. Mais rien n'y faisait, pour toi j'allais forcément y arriver. Merci d'y avoir cru, de croire en moi pour tout ce qui s'annonce, et d'être toujours aussi enthousiaste à l'idée de célébrer ces étapes réussies. Tout est plus facile à tes côtés et je me réjouis déjà de savoir que nous pourrons compter l'un sur l'autre pour toutes les prochaines étapes à franchir.

Merci, à vous toutes et tous.

Marie,
Bruxelles, Juillet 2018.

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General introduction

Since the 1960s, the office has been subjected to numerous transformations: the *Quickborner Team* launched this movement with the open-space, then other new forms of offices configurations followed (Evette & Fenker, 1994; Haigh, 2012; Pillon, 2016). These transformations in the work environment, notably enabled and encouraged by the development and increased usage of the new technologies of information and communication, the growth interest towards individuals' needs in terms of wellbeing and balance, and the internationalisation movement of companies, belong to a broader movement labelled "the new ways of working" (Ajzen, Donis, & Taskin, 2015; Gavroglou, Ford, Totterdill, Savage, & Sacquepee, 2001). While this movement, popularised by *Microsoft*, can be characterised by (i) practices of spatio-temporal flexibility, (ii) practices of participative management, and (iii) collaborative work organisation methods (Taskin, Foor, Rousseau, Nils, & Léonard, 2013), this thesis focuses on the first aspect and, in particular, on the new offices configurations.

In line with the spatial turn that has impacted social and management sciences, numerous scholars have already demonstrated that the work environment was not a neutral dimension in the organisational landscape: building's architecture, office decor, interior design, the type of office, etc. partly alter individuals' relation to their work, the relations with their co-workers, their wellbeing at work, their perceived status, etc. (Donis, 2015; Hancock & Spicer, 2011; Hirst, 2011; Sewell & Taskin, 2015; Wapshott & Mallett, 2012; Wasserman & Frenkel, 2011; Zhang & Spicer, 2014). In a critical perspective, some of these pieces of research have unveiled the unintended deleterious effects resulting from these spatial arrangements, bringing them into question. In particular, a few authors in environmental psychology, sociology and management have interested in the identity consequences of the introduction of the new types of offices (Dale & Burrell, 2008c; Donis, 2015; Elsbach, 2004; Hirst, 2011; Linehan, 2012; Millward, Haslam, & Postmes, 2007; Minchella, 2015). Among these new types of offices, a few studies have focused on the activity-based workspace (also called clean-desk, or non-territorial office). This type of office has the feature that it displays a large space with different types of work areas, with the idea that each of these areas provides an atmosphere specific to certain tasks: areas for individual work requiring much concentration, areas for collaborative and team-work, etc. Another feature of this activity-based workspace is that workers are no longer assigned to a personal office: they share the whole environment with their co-workers and supervisors. The only remaining personal space attributed to individuals in the organisation is a personal locker inside which workers are asked to put their belongings in the end of each day in order to leave the space empty and clean. Researchers having studied this activity-based workspace and the identity issues it raises, have highlighted that this type of office was likely to arouse harmful consequences for the individual's identity: workers in this type of office would be subjected to feelings of identity threat, dispossession, invisibility, homelessness and vagrancy, challenging therefore the positive ideal of nomadism this office is often associated to (Connellan, 2013; Donis, 2015; Elsbach, 2003; Hirst, 2011; Warren, 2006). While these pieces of research have mainly focused on the individual identity issues raised by the activity-based workspace, studies focusing on the organisational identity issues seem rather scarce.

In keeping with research studying the identity issues at the heart of the offices reconfiguration, the research question I formulate is the following: "What is the role of the office in the construction of an organisation's identity?". This research question aims at understanding how the introduction of an activity-based workspace alters workers' shared understanding of the organisation's identity, that is its essence characterised in this research by the specific ways of being, ways of working promoted and valued in the organisation and contributing to its distinctiveness (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Gomes Da Silva, 2010).

In order to address this research question, I mobilise scientific literature in sociology of space, recent studies about the organisational space and the office, and literature about organisational identity (Alvesson & Empson, 2008; Gioia, 1998; Gombault, 2003; Hatch & Schultz, 1997; Lefebvre, 1991; Taylor & Spicer, 2007). Regarding the analytical framework chosen to investigate this question, I mobilise Gomez's French theory of conventions (Gomez, 1994, 1995, 1996; Gomez & Jones, 2000). On the basis of this theory, I argue that an organisation's identity is a convention in management, that is "a behaviours coordination structure offering a recurrent problem-solving process by delivering more or less complex information on mimetic behaviours so that the interpretation of this information by the adopters do not question the collective procedure" (Gomez, 1994, p. 194; *translated from French*). In other words, I consider that an organisation's identity is a common knowledge shared and constructed by workers in the organisation, and that informs them how to behave in an appropriate manner. The conventionalist approach enables me to analyse the changes resulting from the transition to the new office according to the convention morphology, that is its material apparatus and statement.

Since the purpose of this research is to understand how the transition to a new office challenges workers' perceptions of their organisation's identity, this research subscribes to an interpretivist posture. In line with the objectives of the research, I have recourse to a qualitative methodology based on a single-case study. The empirical research investigated the case of *ORES Picardy Wallonia*, a regional office of the Belgian company *ORES*, the main distribution system operator for electricity and natural gas in Wallonia (one of the three Belgian regions). During three months, data were collected through 81 semi-structured interviews, observations and documentary analysis. After being transcribed, data were analysed and coded in themes and categories of concepts, following Paillé and Muchielli's method (2012).

The present thesis is structured in three main sections, and ten chapters.

The first section, consisting of the three first chapters, provides the theoretical framework of this research, that is the main concepts that I mobilise in order to address the research question. The first chapter presents the object studied in this thesis, that is the office. In particular I explain the larger notions of "organisational space" and "contemporary offices". On the basis of the general notion of "organisational space", I attempt to trace the life history of contemporary offices, that is the new forms of work environments and in particular, the open-space, the activity-based workspace, and the home-based office. Drawing on Henri Lefebvre's seminal book "The production of space" (1991), I propose a theoretical framework on the basis of which I analyse the open-space, the activity-based workspace, and the home-based office. The second chapter presents the main concept of this thesis, that is organisational identity. This chapter extensively explains this concept, distinguishes it from other related theoretical constructs, and clarifies the different epistemological postures from which authors have studied this concept. This allows me to precise the epistemological posture from which I stand, and that contributes to explain the way I consider organisational identity in this thesis, and the way I study it in the empirical section. In line with my epistemological posture, I detail the power issues that circumscribe the concept of organisational identity. The third chapter of this thesis connects the two preceding chapters. In this chapter, on the basis of previous research, I defend the idea that studying the effect of the office in terms of organisational identity is worth of interest. In particular, I present the French theory of conventions and explain why I mobilise this theory as an analytical framework in this thesis.

In the second main section of this thesis, which comprises the chapters four and five, I present the empirical research that has been conducted. Chapter four describes the epistemological posture I subscribe to, and the methodological design chosen in order to address the research question. Thus, I explain how data were collected, how I chose the investigated organisation, and how I analysed the data. In chapter five, I describe the organisation that I focused on in the framework of the single-case study conducted in this research.

In the third section, including chapters six to ten, I analyse the results of the research, and discuss them. In chapters six, seven and eight, I describe the results of this research: the objectives of the project of work environment reconfiguration, workers' perception and appropriation of the project, the work and behavioural practices in the new work environment, and the discourses that highlight the organisational identity struggles at the heart of the project. In the two last chapters, the results of this research are analysed and discussed. In chapter nine, I analyse the results in the light of the French theory of conventions, that is the analytical framework underlying this research. This analysis allows me to answer the research question in a conventionalist perspective. Finally, the chapter ten leads the research results at a more theoretical level by discussing the learnings of this research with other authors' works. This chapter details the scientific contributions stemming from this research: (i) on the different levels of the identity concept, and their interrelations, (ii) on the materiality of the identity, (iii) on the attempt to unveil Lefebvre's perceived space, (iv) on the methodological use of the French theory of conventions, (v) on the societal convention in place, and (vi) on the recognition of work identities at the heart of workers' resistance practices. In line with the results of this research, I also suggest a few recommendations addressed to management and space designers.

Finally, in the general conclusion, the main learnings and the limits of the thesis are presented, as well as the perspectives for future research.

The figure 1 on the next page provides a visual presentation of the structure of the thesis.

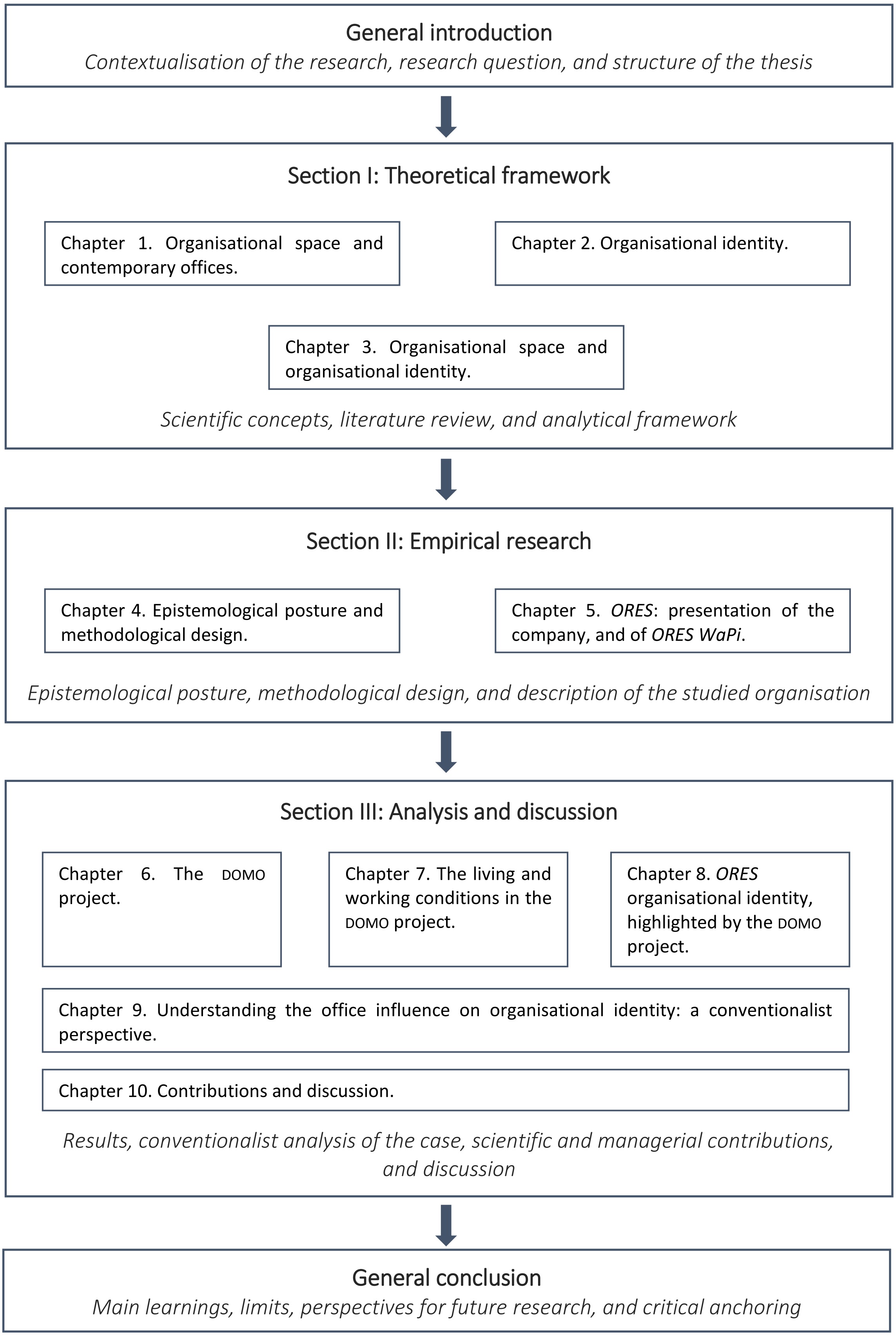

Figure 1 - Structure of the thesis

SECTION I

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Section I: Theoretical framework

Chapter 1. Organisational space and contemporary offices.

Chapter 2. Organisational identity.

Chapter 3. Organisational space and organisational identity.

Scientific concepts, literature review, and analytical framework

Structure of the upcoming section

Chapter 1. Organisational spaces and contemporary offices

1. Introduction

The aim of the first chapter is to (i) historically situate contemporary offices, (ii) propose a framework for analysing organisational space (the organisational space triptych) based on a simultaneous consideration of three complementary approaches of space (i.e. space as a tangible and material feature, space as a managerial intention and space as a symbol), and (iii) present the individual and collective implications of contemporary offices according to the organisational space triptych.

In the first section, I consider the historical apparition of contemporary offices, that is the open-space, the clean-desk, and the home-based office. These offices are regarded by taking into account the evolutions that appeared in the socioeconomic and in the labour contexts since the eighties.

Second, I present different theoretical perspectives in order to define “space” and “organisational space”. Defining these concepts leads me to propose “the organisational space triptych”. This is the framework of analysis I use to consider the types of offices considered in this thesis (i.e. the open-space, the clean-desk and the home-based office).

In the final sections, I turn to the literature on organisational spaces, and more precisely, on open-space, clean-desk and home-based office. Drawing on the scientific literature and on the triptych previously presented, I outline the implications of the contemporary office at the individual and collective levels.

2. Contextualisation of contemporary offices

In this section, I contextualise the apparition of three types of offices, which are the open-space, the clean-desk, and the home-based office. In order to do so, I highlight the offices changes that have affected organisational workspaces since the eighties in the light of certain socioeconomic transformation. Before this, I clarify why I focus on three specific types of offices.

2.1. Contemporary offices: open-space, clean-desk, and home-based office

This thesis aims at understanding the role the office plays in the construction of organisational identity. While the term “office” covers a diversity of workspace designs, this doctoral research focuses on three specific types of offices which are open-space, clean-desk and home-based office. I justify the choice of these configurations because, according to recent and less recent surveys, they seem to be the most current types of organisational workspaces (e.g. Actineo & CSA, 2014, 2015; Eurofound, 2016; SPF Economie, 2016).

According to several surveys among European employees, 75% of European employees mainly work from their employer’s premises (Actineo & CSA, 2014; Eurofound, 2012, 2016). Regarding most common office configurations within organisations, according to surveys conducted in Europe (i.e. Germany, Sweden, Spain, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and France), the majority of workers occupy closed offices, either individually or with co-workers (Actineo & CSA, 2014, 2015). According to a French survey (conducted in 2015 on a sample of 1204 employees from private and public companies), 34% of workers occupy an individual closed office, and 33% of workers share an office with two to four persons (Actineo & CSA, 2015). But during the past years, the presence of the individual closed office seems to have diminished (40% of employees occupied an individual closed office in 2011 (Actineo & CSA, 2015)) in favour of the open-space. Indeed, according to the same French survey, in 2015, 18% of employees worked in an open-space (versus 11% in 2011), mostly occupied by four to nine persons (Actineo & CSA, 2015). Regarding the clean-desk, it seems that its presence is still limited but increasing since, in 2015, 9% of employees occupied a clean-desk (versus 5% in 2011) (Actineo & CSA, 2015). Regarding the home-based office (often referred to as the practice of teleworking), according to Eurofound (2016), around 3% of European workers mainly work from home. That being said, this number does not allow to measure the proportion of employees who only work occasionally from their home. According to the Belgian Federal Public Service Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy (2016), the number of employees working occasionally or regularly from home (excluding teachers who are more subjected to it) has gone from 4,6% to 12,2% during the two past decades (from 1995 to 2015). Perin (2008) suggests that figures regarding the amount of teleworkers in Belgium tend to differ from one survey to another because of the methodological framework and the definition of telework, and she indicates that “figures on the number of teleworkers generally range from 7% to 10.6%” (Perin, 2008).

Unfortunately, these surveys do not allow to measure the exact proportion of employees working in Belgium in an open-space, a clean-desk, or from home, nor the evolution of these offices presence. However, according to the surveys mentioned above and the increasing interest for these types of offices in professional as well as in scientific literature, it does not seem mistaken to conclude that, besides the closed office, the open-space, the clean-desk, and the home-based office are the types of offices that are the most likely to be met in contemporary organisations in western countries.

As previously said, work might take place in other spaces, such as telecentres (i.e. satellite offices set up by one or several companies and hosting their workers), co-working spaces (i.e. shared workplaces mostly used by self-employed workers and freelancers), or elsewhere (in the practice of mobile teleworking, for instance) (Ajzen et al., 2015; Gandini, 2015; Moriset, 2011; Oestmann & Dymond, 2001; Spinuzzi, 2012). That being said, these offices are not the subject of the present research. Indeed, regarding co-working spaces, as said by several authors (Gandini, 2015; Moriset, 2011; Spinuzzi, 2012), these offices mostly concern self-employed workers and freelancers. Yet, this thesis focuses on organisational identity and, by extension, on workers belonging to a specific organisation. Therefore, it does not seem relevant to take co-working spaces and their occupants into consideration. Regarding telecentres, they do not appear relevant either for this research since, according to previously mentioned surveys, they do not constitute a type of office that is widespread in Belgium.

Finally, for the past decade, professional and business magazines (e.g. Burg, 2013; Giang, 2012; Lloyed, 2005; Meister, 2013; Schawbel, 2015; The Economist, 2008; Tutton, 2008) have tended to emphasise the apparition of an "office of the future", or even "the death of the office". However, as clearly shown by scientists, these claims are exaggerated since, even though offices transformations cannot be ignored, "changes in the location of work are more gradual with work becoming increasingly, but slowly, detached from conventional places of work" (Felstead, 2012, p. 37). In conclusion, even though the terms "open-space" and "clean-desk" are not entirely new, their presence (and the presence of the home-based office as well) did not become commonplace and their study is still worth studying, in particular in the light of recent surveys attesting their – slowly – increasing presence.

2.2. Contemporary offices: historical context

This section aims at contextualising the apparition of contemporary offices (i.e. open-space, clean-desk, home-based office). In order to do so, I briefly clarify when these three types of offices have appeared, and explain their emergence in light of the socioeconomic context.

2.2.1. *The open-space*

The open-space (*bürolandschaft*) appeared in the deindustrialisation era, more precisely in Germany in the 1960s. It was invented by the *Quickborner Team,* a consultancy group (Evette & Fenker, 1994; Fischer & Vischer, 1997; Haigh, 2012; Pillon, 2016) before expanding to other countries during the 1970s (Brennan, Chugh, & Kline, 2002; Evette & Fenker, 1994). Several authors (Brennan et al., 2002; Danielsson & Bodin, 2008; Fischer & Vischer, 1997; Haynes, 2008; Oldham & Brass, 1979; Smith-Jackson & Klein, 2009) have attempted to define the open-space (also called "open-plan office"). From these definitions, an open-space can be defined as a wide, opened area where employees work all together, regardless of their position. These areas are "characterized by a lack of interior walls, tend to be larger and contain greater numbers of workers, with individual workstations arranged within the office in groups" (Davis et al., 2011, p. 193).

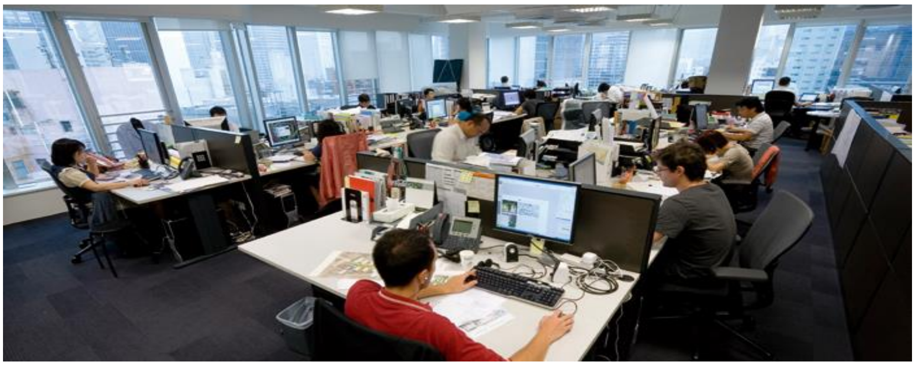

Illustration 1 - Illustration of an open-space (photo credit: http://www.humanosphere.info/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/open-space.jpg; available on the 25th of August 2015)

The semi-closed office is a variant of the open-space. Unlike the open-space, the semi-closed office is delimited by removable panels. It is designed to receive work teams. According to Fischer and Vischer (1997) and to Evette and Fenker (1994), this type of workspace layout was introduced to avoid the detrimental effects of the open-space (i.e. lack of acoustic and visual privacy, disturbances, etc.) (Brennan et al., 2002; Smith-Jackson & Klein, 2009; Vischer, 1995) while maintaining the possibility of flexibility through the removability of panels.

By paying attention to the socioeconomic context at that time, one might observe that the open-space was aligned with several changes related to the deindustrialisation era.

First, it appears that the introduction of the open-space was motivated by the so-called communication improvement between individuals and teams (Brookes & Kaplan, 1972) and the reduction of property expenses (Fawcett & Chadwick, 2007; Fischer & Vischer, 1997; Oldham & Brass, 1979; Voordt, 2004). This interest for communication seems to be linked to changes in the skills required by organisations at the time. According to Kollmeyer (2009), during deindustrialisation, highly skilled employment knew an important growth, which was explained by the development of the tertiary sector and the fact that low-skilled jobs were displaced to low-wages countries. Consequently, it can be assumed that communication was a part of the new "soft skills" required in the services industry. Although deindustrialisation first appeared during the "thirty glorious" period, it is important not to forget the oil crisis that occurred in 1973, which imposed substantial cost pressure on firms. The cost pressure precipitated the necessity to reduce property expenses. Thus, the open-space was the suitable choice to reduce real estate costs. Second, the open-space, because of the flexibility it permits, was adapted to the flexibility requirement that has affected the employment since the deindustrialisation (Atkinson, 1984).

2.2.2. *The clean-desk*

The clean-desk is an office policy applied to what looks like an open-space. Also called “non-territorial office” or “hot desking”, the clean-desk is an open-space “where employees are not assigned dedicated desks but work from any that happen to be vacant” (Millward et al., 2007, p. 547). Since employees are not allowed to leave their belongings on desks, these offices are furnished with lockers, within which each worker is asked to place his/her belongings back at the end of the working day. As Allen and Gerstberger (1973) mention, this type of office often comes with other workspaces such as meeting rooms, concentration rooms, etc. Recently, the idea that workers move from one workspace to another depending on their activities has been captured by the term “activity-based workspaces” (or ABW) (Fröst, 2016; Vitasovich, Kiroff, Boon, & Surveyor, 2016). Because of the similarities between clean-desk and activity-based workspaces, I will refer to these appellations without distinction.

Illustration 2 - Illustration of a clean-desk (photo credit: https://media.glassdoor.com/l/91/52/70/67/hot-desk-area.jpg; available on the 20th of July 2018)

According to several authors, activity-based workspaces are driven by the increasing use of ICTs, a willingness to foster interactions, collaborations and creativity, but also a need to reduce facility costs (Fröst, 2016; Pillon, 2016; Vitasovich et al., 2016).

The clean-desk has emerged in the 1980s which is an epoch characterised by the rise of knowledge-based economy on a global scale (Godin, 2006; Graham, 2014; Huws, 2014; Sum & Jessop, 2013). This economy is defined as “directly based on the production, distribution and use of knowledge and information” (1996, p. 7). According to Sum and Jessop (2013), with the emergence of this term, policy-makers have begun to promote the idea that knowledge is a core ingredient of economic success. More recently, with the increasing use of big data, economy is not only knowledge-based, it is also a digital economy (Degryse, 2016; Sundararajan, 2014). In this context where economic success relies on data, creativity, innovation and ideas, boundaries are likely to be considered as preventing individuals from collaborating and sharing ideas, and are more likely to be erased. As said by Degryse (2016): “[t]his data-led management necessitates erasure of silo-based organisation methods in favour of a horizontal and open form of organisation within which the flows of information will circulate." (2016, p. 13). In response to this economic context, organisations adapt their work organisation in order to boost the flow of information, knowledge sharing, etc. This is helped by collaborative platforms (Balmisse, 2015; McAfee, 2009) but also by workspaces reconfiguration (Pillon, 2016; Vischer, 2008). Indeed, according to Vischer (2008), "with the changes in the 21st Century world of work […] tools for work have radically changed, and advances in computers and tele-communications mean that people no longer need to be fixed in space and time to work together" (2008, p. 97).

2.2.3. *The home-based office*

The home-based office designates an office that is located inside a worker's home. Thus, this office is often given the appellation "teleworking" (or more precisely, "home-based teleworking"). Even though teleworking designates a practice and not an office, in order to properly cite the literature, I will refer to both terms, i.e. "teleworking" and "home-based teleworking."

When speaking about the broad appellation "teleworking", some authors (e.g. Felstead, 2012; Madsen, 2003) consider that there is no agreed definition for it, while others provide a precise definition (Bailey & Kurland, 2002; Baruch, 2000; Ebrahim, Ahmed, & Taha, 2009; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Kurland & Bailey, 1999; Taskin, 2012). Generally, "teleworking" can be defined by referring to Taskin's definition (2012, p. 73; *translated from French*): "exercise of a professional activity, totally or partly remotely […], and thanks to the use of ICT". This definition highlights that teleworking is characterised by two main elements: (i) the location of the workplace, and (ii) the use of ICT (Taskin, 2003). This definition is about teleworking broadly considered. However, as mentioned above, I focus here on the home-based office, that is, the office in the context of home-based teleworking.

Home-based teleworking is the practice of teleworking conducted exclusively from the teleworker's home. Taskin (2012) mentions that home-based teleworking might vary according to an arrangement frequency. Thus, he notes that home-based teleworking can be permanent (more than 90% of the working time executed from the home), alternate (between 20 and 90% of the working time executed from the home; the rest being executed from the organisation) or occasional (less than 20% of the working time executed from the home) (Taskin, 2012).

According to Taskin (2003, 2012), teleworking has known a considerable expansion since the end of the nineties. He explains this evolution as a result of economic, technologic, legal and sociocultural reasons. The *economic context* is characterised by a necessity for organisations to be more flexible. This exigence for flexibility is explained by digitalisation, globalisation and the requirement for organisations to adapt in shorter periods of time (Brady & Denniston, 2006; Degryse, 2016; Kollmeyer, 2009). The *technological context* has permitted the practice of teleworking. Indeed, since teleworking implies the use of ICT, their development and democratisation have allowed and encouraged the transition towards teleworking (Degryse, 2016; Felstead, 2012). Regarding the *legal environment*, teleworking is legally framed by the July 16th 2002 European Framework Agreement on Telework and, in Belgium, by the November 9th 2005 collective labour agreement no. 85. Finally, the *sociocultural context* has also contributed to teleworking development. It seems that this practice answers to contemporary issues related to wellbeing. For instance, teleworking supporters highlight benefits related to teleworking such as: less commuting time, better work-life balance, less pollution, etc.

Throughout this section, I focused on three types of offices which are the open-space, the clean-desk, and the home-based office. The choice of these specific offices is justified by their increasing presence in companies in western countries. I have also show that the socioeconomic context since the 1970s has influenced the emergence of these offices. This brief history of contemporary offices allows to contextualise my research object, but also to highlight that offices are also the product of a social and economic construction, which means that they also have to be studied as social constructs.

3. Organisational space: analysis framework around three perspectives

According to several authors, it is only recently that management and organisation studies have embraced the "spatial turn", that is the acknowledgement of the spatial dimension as a "key dynamic in understanding management and organization" (Taylor & Spicer, 2007, p. 341) (Dale & Burrell, 2008a; Halford, 2005; Marrewijk & Yanow, 2010; Panayiotou & Kafiris, 2011).

According to Marrewijk and Yanow (2010), before the 1970s space was considered as a background not worth of interest. Accordingly, space was considered simply as a physical structure, that is according to its appearance, size, furniture, equipment, etc. It is only from the 1970s and the 1980s that researchers have interested in the spatial dimension: firstly, in a behavioural approach and secondly, in a symbolic approach. In the behavioural approach of the spatial dimension, researchers have focused on space from a modernist perspective in order to measure how workspace conditions (e.g. temperature, size of the office, acoustic, etc.) affected workers (e.g. concentration, collaboration, productivity, etc.) (Edenius & Yakhlef, 2007; Hatch, 1997; Zhong & House, 2012). More recently, in the symbolic approach and drawing on sociology, others researchers have studied space according to a more symbolic approach (e.g. Dale & Burrell, 2008b; Halford, 2004; Taylor & Spicer, 2007; Tyler & Cohen, 2010). When applied to organisational space, the symbolic approach raises the question of physical structures as sources of symbols and channels for cultural expression. The symbolic approach sees "the physical structure of an organization as shaping and maintaining a system of meaning that helps organizational members to define who they are and what they are doing" (Hatch, 1997, p. 251).

In line with the spatial turn, I propose to study the organisational space – and more precisely the office – in three ways: (i) as a tangible and material feature, (ii) as a managerial intention, and (iii) as a symbol. This section will theoretically explain each of these dimensions thanks to which organisational space can be approached.

3.1. Space as a tangible and material feature

When addressing the issue of space, what first comes to mind is the materialistic component of space (i.e. what is visible). This is what Deleuze and Guattari (1988, quoted by Munro & Jordan, 2013) label "striated space". This can be described as an extensive understanding of the Euclidean space, where space is considered measurable. As Chanlat (2006) argues, organisational space can first be considered as *divided*. That is to say that each organisation is spatially divided. On the one hand, organisational space is externally divided since it appears as a distinct entity within the world. On the other hand, organisational space is also internally divided both horizontally (i.e. in departments, services, etc.) and vertically (i.e. in multiple floors). As Taylor and Spicer (2007) argue, numerous studies have used this physical approach of organisational space while questioning the office layout and its consequences for the organisation and the individual (Brennan et al., 2002; Fawcett & Chadwick, 2007; Hill, Ferris, & Märtinson, 2003; Ilozor, Love, & Treloar, 2002; Lee, 2010; Smith-Jackson & Klein, 2009; Voordt, 2004). In this conception, the distance is mobilised inside (i.e. implications of the workplace layout) and outside the organisation (i.e. networks with customers and competitors). Moreover, literature focusing on the physical aspect of the office also considers ergonomic characteristics such as lightning, temperature and cleanliness, and their effects on organisational behaviours (Zhong & House, 2012).

Although this approach to questioning space is both simple to understand and to apply (i.e. distance is measurable), it presents the disadvantage of remaining negligent towards the understanding of space appropriation and interpretation by actors, resistance practices and relations of power, all highlighted by other studies (Halford, 2004; Hirst, 2011; Minchella, 2015; Tyler & Cohen, 2010).

This research intends to study three specific types of offices: (i) the open-space, (ii) the clean-desk and (ii) the home-based office. Although these spaces will be presented and considered distinctively, it is necessary to consider the current office as a combination of all three offices. The office is no longer just one type. This is contiguous to what Halford (2004) called "hybrid workspace" which explains that, as with virtual practices, the office is "not simply relocated or dislocated, but multiply located" (p. 22).

3.2. Space as a managerial intention

As mentioned in the introduction of the present section, according to Hatch (1997), there are two approaches to physical structures in organisations. The first is the behavioural approach which focuses on the relationship between the physical form of an organisation and the behaviours individuals exercise in such an environment. In a broader extent, I refer to "space as a managerial intention" to highlight the managerial purposes underlying the implementation of a certain type of office. This is similar to what the sociologist Henri Lefebvre referred to as "representations of space" in his book "The Social Production of Space" (Lefebvre, 1974, 1991). He defines "representations of space" as the "conceived" space, which is the space of planners, designers, architects and engineers. In this conception, space is conceived to support relations of production, codes, etc. Lefebvre (1974, 1991), while speaking about "representations of space", sustained the idea that space is *conceived* with intentions and thus can be envisaged as a managerial intention. As Minchella (2015) argues, a conceived space is full of intentions in that "it is not only created to house the human activities of an organisation: it also supports the setting up of a working method and it aims a good coordination of everyone's tasks" (2015, p. 35; *translated from French*). Thus, organisational space is conceived and results from managerial intentions. According to the literature (e.g. Barnes, 2007; Dimitrova, 2003; Minchella, 2015; Vischer, 2008), three managerial purposes generally underlie organisational space and contemporary offices: (i) space as a productivity and satisfaction mean, (ii) space as a control mean, and (iii) space as an incentive for certain behaviours.

3.2.1. Space as an incentive to productivity and as a satisfaction mean

The environmental psychology of the workspace designates the study of environmental aspects of the workspace and their impact on outcomes such as satisfaction and productivity (Vischer, 2008). According to several authors (e.g. Hatch, 1997; Kampschroer & Heerwagen, 2005; Vischer, 2008) the origin of this field of research began with Elton Mayo's experiments in the 1920s at the Hawthorne Plant of the *Western Electric Company*. The aim of this study was to test the effect of lighting on workers' productivity. Recently, other studies have investigated research to test how space and its features, in terms of privacy, acoustic, lighting, temperature, etc., contribute to productivity and satisfaction (Brennan et al., 2002; Inamizu, 2013; Kampschroer & Heerwagen, 2005; Lee, 2010; Vischer, 2008). Other authors have also supported this functionalist conception of organisational space (Blanchet, 2015; Malleret, 2004). For instance, Malleret (2004) speaks about the "tool office". In this conception, an office is only considered as a means of production. Therefore, a performative office "permits to each employee to realise a certain number of tasks in a productive and efficient way" (Malleret, 2004, p. 33; *translated from French*). Chanlat (2006), referring to the evolution of the office from the Fordist sweatshop to virtual offices, affirms that organisational space has commonly been thought to be part of the productive system. Therefore, organisational space must be notably understood as a *productive space*.

3.2.2. Space as a control mean

According to Baldry (1999), one of the main purposes of the building is to facilitate "managerial control over the labor process, enabling both the co-ordination of production through the division of labor and the construction of systems of surveillance" (p. 536). Although the interest in controlling employees is not recent, managerial control continues to be subjected to a great deal of interest from researchers. This can be explained by the fact that now the *boundaryless organisation* (Ashkenas and colleagues, 1995, quoted by Taylor & Spicer, 2007) – made possible by ICT – challenges this managerial control. Many studies (e.g. Barnes, 2007; Dimitrova, 2003; Sewell, 1998; Taskin & Edwards, 2007) point out how this dimension of control is a challenge to organisations, and even more when these organisations invest in organisational spaces where the worker is less visible (i.e. teleworking, clean-desk, etc.). According to Chanlat (2006), there are three types of control: (i) visual, (ii) visual and distant, and (iii) electronic control. Visual control is the control one has in the presence of the workers. Visual and distant control is accomplished through visual support. For example, when a supermarket manager uses video to control cashiers while working. Lastly, electronic control is when "a manager remotely checks and controls the work of employees" (Chanlat, 2006, p. 18). These forms of control are mutually non-exclusive. While mentioning these control means, Chanlat (2006) suggests that the organisational space can be considered as *controlled* since, depending on its structure and the devices in place, it might allow and facilitate the managerial control.

3.2.3. Space as an incentive to communication and collaboration

Organisational space can also be designed in a way that encourages certain behaviours. According to Seiler (1984), buildings and organisational structures can be seen as networks whose purpose is to encourage or hinder patterns of communication. This means that a "neighbourly design" (Myerson & Ross, 2003; quoted by Hancock & Spicer, 2011) can invite impromptu interactions between workers who are usually not meant to meet. Space can also be designed to develop creativity, commitment and collaboration between employees (Gavroglou et al., 2001).

More recently, Hancock and Spicer (2011), and Minchella (2015) have investigated how architecture might lead to behaviours that are specific to the "new model worker". According to Minchella (2015), the "new model worker" is defined as "proactive, able to take the lead by transcending the formal framework of [his/her] position when it is necessary for the organisation […] creative and innovative… and beyond that [this entrepreneurial-minded employee needs to communicate more]" (p. 89; *translated from French*). Minchella (2015) has demonstrated that the organisational space is likely to encourage behaviours that produce this "new model worker". Hancock and Spicer (2011) have also observed how the building design of a university library might enable to promote these behaviours, for instance. In their research, they have observed that a university library attempted, through a design inspiring movement and fluidity, to encourage a “deinstitutionalised” space logic. As the authors suggest, space was designed to promote an *identityscape* (i.e. the contraction of “identity” and “landscape”), which “sought to interpellate students into the subject position of ‘new model workers’”(Hancock & Spicer, 2011, p. 92).

3.3. Space as a symbol

Hatch (1997) has also suggested that physical structure in organisations might be understood in another way. Indeed, physical structure can also be studied through a symbolic approach. According to this approach, “physical structures are a rich source of symbols and an important channel for cultural expression” (Hatch, 1997, p. 251). As Halford (2004) argues, this perspective is essential when studying organisational space. Halford (2004) claims that although authors on the labour process approaches – for instance, Baldry (1999) – added much to the organisational space theory, the only conceptualisation of space in such a perspective is “limited and limiting” (p. 1). In contrast, Halford (2004) and other researchers have demonstrated that using concepts from other fields (e.g. geography or sociology of space) contributes to emphasising results that support the fact that (organisational) space can – and should be – understood in a symbolic-interpretivist perspective as well (e.g. Herod, Rainnie, & McGrath-Champ, 2007; Munro & Jordan, 2013; Tyler & Cohen, 2010; Zhang & Spicer, 2014; Zhang, Spicer, & Hancock, 2008).

Chanlat (2006) also speaks about organisational space notably in terms of the *symbolic*. “Spatial forms, architecture, aesthetics and materials of the buildings, offices and plants are full of meaning [and] space is an emblem, an icon, which produces the organization, contributing to the universe of meanings that encode the organization” (Chanlat, 2006, p. 20). Malleret (2004) designates the symbolic perspective under the term “message office”. The building, in this sense, is a form of non-verbal communication and the symbols belonging to that space need to be decoded with the aim of influencing behaviours (Baldry, 1999; Elsbach, 2004; Halford, 2004). Thus, the “reception” of the social space requires a *signifying process*. Many studies confirm that organisational space is in fact subjected to multiple interpretations and appropriations and that these interpretations are socially and culturally related (de Vaujany & Vaast, 2014; Halford, 2004; Hirst, 2011; Yanow, 1998). This explanation is similar to Seiler's (1984) who suggest that buildings could be seen as transmitting messages. Nevertheless, willing to distinguish “buildings as messages” from “buildings as networks”, Seiler (1984) specifies that these messages are sent regardless of managers’ intentions and that management has no control over the interpretation of these messages by employees and stakeholders.

Finally, in his theory of organisational spaces, Chanlat (2006) also proposes that organisational space is *social*. Accordingly, he means that organisations are social milieus and that the space is a testament to the social relations and the "anthropology" of an organisation.

Drawing on the literature, it would appear that (organisational) space investigated in a symbolic-interpretivist perspective can be understood in three sub-themes: (i) power and hierarchy, (ii) gendered relations, and (iii) identity challenges and appropriation of space.

3.3.1. Power and hierarchy

As Taylor and Spicer (2007) demonstrate, space can be conceptualised as a place where power relations materialise. This approach focuses on how the building architecture and structure are meant to establish power relations. This conception of space echoes what Chanlat (2006) called organisation space as an *imposed and hierarchical space* since it insists on the incarnation of the hierarchical level through the size, structure, decoration, etc. of an office. This agrees with several authors who claim that "semi-fixed factors" (i.e. desks and chairs) (Rapoport, 1982; quoted by Baldry, 1999) provide information about power, hierarchy and status in an organisation (Davis, 1985; Martin & Siehl, 1983; Seiler, 1984). For instance, a high-level manager is more likely to have a sizeable office with luxurious equipment than a low-level employee.

Zhang and Spicer (2014) reveal that hierarchy can be articulated by the building layout in three ways. First, by the location of employees' offices. For instance, in their research, the authors have observed that employees perceived their position by the floor on which their office was located (e.g. lower floors for auxiliary workers, and top floors for managers and directors). Second, as suggested above, hierarchy can be symbolised in the equipment and decoration of the office. Third, organisational space incarnates positions through the facilities it possesses and the people who have access to such privileges (e.g. top position employees had access to a "priority button" for the lift giving them direct access to a chosen floor). Zhang and Spicer's (2014) research indicates that the material features are not perceived as neutral but are meaningful to individuals because they embody meanings about social positions, hierarchy and power. Zhang and Spicer's observations (2014) were confirmed by other studies (Hatch, 1997; Martin & Siehl, 1983; Minchella, 2015). Lately, Minchella (2015) has pointed out, through the notions of "valorisation" and "localisation", that organisational space is a materialisation of the hierarchy through, respectively, the equipment, and the localisation of the office (e.g. the closest to the general directorate, the highest in the hierarchy).

3.3.2. Gendered relations

Organisational space can also be a place where gendered relations materialise. In this respect, Tyler and Cohen (2010) propose that organisational space is gendered and that women specifically can feel space as a constraint and thus, express resignation towards it. Indeed, in their research, the authors have observed that women felt powerless in their own office when men were present. They expressed resignation in the sense that, even though they tried to emancipate by affirming their identity and their legitimacy as working women, they did so "in accordance with what they perceived would be recognized as viable gendered, organizational subjects" (Tyler & Cohen, 2010, p. 192). This need for legitimacy had an impact on the way they decorated their office. For instance, some women tried not to expose family pictures out of fear that it would confirm the stereotype of sensitive mother and irresponsible worker.

Prior to this research, Baldry (1999) has also argues that space was a locus for gendered power relations. As a matter of fact, he had previously observed that women had less office space and less control over their own territory than men. He has argued that space is as a part of symbolic power, that is "the power to impose one's own definitions and meanings, values and rules on a situation" (Baldry, 1999, p. 542). More recently, Wasserman and Frenkel (2015) have shown how offices might embody a gendered conception of professionalism by exacerbating that conceptualisation of the "ideal worker" was defined in terms associated with masculinity, and by showing that this vision was "then translated into an architectural design that was later experienced by workers as masculine […] segregated." (2015, p. 1501).

3.3.3. Identity challenges and appropriation of space

According to Martin and Siehl (1983), space and decor can be changed in order to symbolise a "declaration of independence" towards the managerial intentions underlying the current organisational space. Indeed, as Seiler (1984) notes, managerial intentions and the appropriation of these by employees are not necessarily convergent. That echoes another point of Lefebvre's theory (1974, 1991). According to Lefebvre (1974, 1991), besides the *conceived space* (i.e. the space designed by managers, architects, planners, etc.), there exists the concept of *representational spaces* or the space such as "lived" by users.

Much of the literature about the perceptions and appropriation of the "designed space" deals with research related to the identity challenges raised by space and how individuals respond to these challenges (Shortt, Betts, & Warren, 2013; Shortt & Warren, 2012; Shortt, 2015; Warren, 2006; Zhang et al., 2008).

As several authors mention (Dery & Hafermalz, 2016; Martin & Siehl, 1983; Wapshott & Mallett, 2012; Warren, 2006), organisational spacem might inspire feelings of invisibility or homelessness, even though these feelings are not intended by management. In such cases, the expression of one's individual identity seems compromised or, at least, not encouraged by the building. To a broader extent, several authors have observed that feelings of invisibility and homelessness might also be experienced by workers in virtual teams, remote-workers or multi-locational workers (Bourgeault, Sutherns, MacDonald, & Luce, 2012; Dery & Hafermalz, 2016; Fahy, Easterby-Smith, & Lervik, 2014; Hislop & Axtell, 2009). Therefore, feelings of homelessness and invisibility seem to be related to a broader feeling of not belonging, and not simply to the absence of personal space. This argument echoes Wasserman and Frenkel's (2015) findings which show that, even when they occupy an individual office, workers might experience feelings of invisibility when they are not allowed to appropriate the space, and make it their own. Since individuals are not only living inside a *designed* space, but also intervene in the production of the *lived* space, they develop techniques to appropriate the space and to make organisational space *their*s. Warren (2006) has suggested that appropriation and personalisation of space might have three meanings for individuals. First, the act of displaying personal objects can express a desire to humanise the experience of work. Second, while management and work environment are not necessarily inclined to encourage expression of individual identities, the personalisation of the workspace can be a way to maintain a sense of self at work. Moreover, Warren (2006) notes that the act of *not* personalising the workspace can translate a part of self-identity. Third, while personalisation of the workspace can express individual identity, it can also help to maintain a sense of community and thus, a type of collective identity. For instance, Donis (2015) explains that, by *territorialising* the same space, managers are able to invoke a certain professional identity. Similarly, while studying the intervention of organisational space in the construction of hairdressers' identity, Shortt and Warren (2012) suggest that materiality intervenes in the identity construction, and that space is likely to serve as an "identity marker". More precisely, the authors have demonstrated that certain hidden spaces in the organisational space embodied a different meaning as the hairdresser evolves in his/her career and professional identity (Shortt & Warren, 2012). In a broader way, the personalisation and the intention to appropriate the space can be interpreted as an attempt to either affiliate or disaffiliate with the organisation, its values and the images it evokes for individuals (Shortt et al., 2013).

Recently, Shortt (2015) has focused on *liminal spaces*, those spaces that are "in-between" (i.e. stairs, cupboards, etc.). She observed that, whereas management denied them as "organisational spaces", these areas might be appropriated by employees in order to cope with the managerial intentions and the designed "dominant spaces". Thus, even though one could expect that such spaces are only transitional, these hidden spaces can, in fact, be the locus of emotional investment and serve as an identity marker when the "dominant space" does not allow the individual to express a sense of self. Shortt (2015) concludes that liminal spaces, by the appropriation they are subjected to, can be considered to some extent as *dwelling places*, or places that "form a vital part of the everyday experiences of lived space and are fundamental to the construction of identity" (Shortt, 2015, p. 636). As it has been proposed by Zhang and colleagues, through the *representational spaces* (in the sense of Lefebvre), i.e. the perceivable "everyday acts of movement, interaction, and dwelling within a given space" (Zhang et al., 2008, p. 894), the *designed* space becomes a *lived* space.

3.4. Organisational space: definition and theoretical triptych

As previously presented, organisational space encompasses much more than the "physical environment an organization provides for its employees to carry out their work activities" (Davis et al., 2011, p. 193). Taylor and Spicer (2007) demonstrate that "organisational space" is a term associated with a plurality of conceptions. It is not merely a physical factor to which individuals passively identify (Baldry, 1999; Hirst, 2011; Martin & Siehl, 1983; Shortt, 2015; Shortt et al., 2013; Shortt & Warren, 2012; Warren, 2006). Organisational space is "simultaneously divided, controlled, imposed and hierarchical, productive, personalized, symbolic, and social" (Chanlat, 2006, p. 18). By referring to the previously mentioned studies, one can conclude that (i) there is no unique interpretation and appropriation of organisational space, and (ii) individuals, even when they are not actively invested in the office design, are not passive recipients of managerial intentions.

Consequently, I maintain that organisational space should be envisaged as a triptych composed of three facets: (i) space as a tangible and material feature, (ii) space as a managerial intention, and (iii) space as symbol. It is important to bear in mind that these three conceptions of space must be considered jointly rather than independently. As in a triptych, the complete image of organisational space can only be *approached* if these three facets are brought together.

As argued by Wasserman and Frenkel (2015), Lefebvre's triad does not mean that there are three distinct dimensions of space that can be studied separately. Indeed, adopting this view is mistaken and is likely to lead one to seek potential emancipatory or resisting acts only through the lens of lived dimension. Zhang and colleagues (2008) agree that lived space and planned space must be considered jointly and that each planned space embodies possibilities of lived spaces. Indeed, "planned spaces […] harbour the existence of their potential un-doers – the peripheral, resistive lived space and its associated spatial practices" (Zhang et al., 2008, p. 904). Warren (2006), and Hancock and Spicer (2011) also support that what I designate "space as a symbol" can be considered in response to "space as a managerial intention" and that, consequently, these considerations of space are merely different pictures of the same reality. Recently, Petani and Mengis (2016) have developed the idea that designers and architects' work of conceived space is not a cold planning and that, because they conceive new spaces by remembering other spaces, this conceived space is in fact tightly entangled with experienced space and lived space (Kociatkiewicz & Kostera, 2015; Petani & Mengis, 2016). This echoes Zhang and colleagues (2008) who postulate that lived space is in fact the end state of the planned space and that planned space cannot exist *per se*. The idea of a triptych exactly echoes this intention to consider the three facets as three lens to see the same whole picture which is organisational space.

Figure 2 represents the organisational space triptych by summarising the ideas aforementioned.

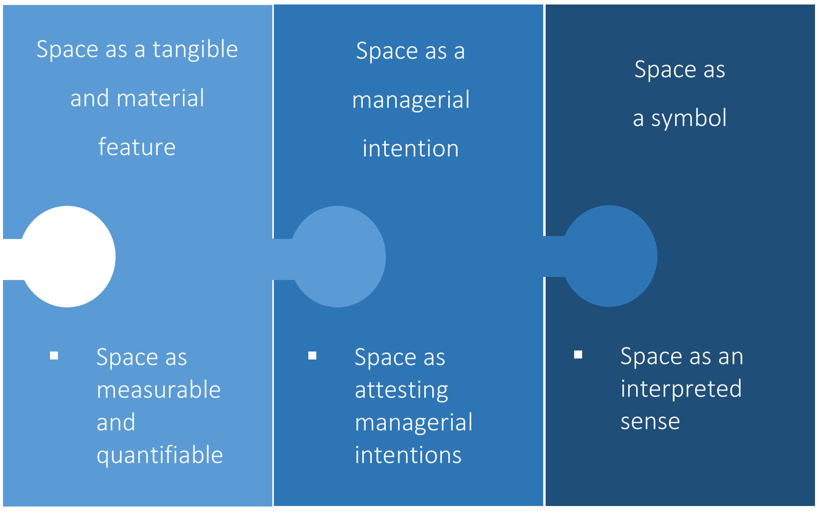

Figure 2 - Organisational space triptych

4. Understanding contemporary offices according to the spatial triptych

The following section reviews the literature on the effects of organisational space and office layouts at the individual and collective levels. I narrow my focus to the effects of three types of office: (i) open-space, (ii) clean-desk, and (iii) home-based office. After a brief definition of each of these organisational spaces, I present their individual and collective implications by sorting them out according to the organisational space triptych presented above. Since the first facet of our triptych is a description of the space, there will not be extensive implications at that level.

4.1. Open-space

4.1.1. Open-space as tangible and material feature

While there are several configurations of the open-space, I refer here to the open-space defined by Davis and colleagues (2011) as an area "characterized by a lack of interior walls, [that] tend[s] to be larger and contain greater numbers of workers, with individual workstations arranged within the office in groups" (2011, p. 193). Therefore, the tangible and material dimension of the open-space is likely to present the following features: a more or less wide-open area with blocks of desks, organised into departments or teams, that are delimited by panels, plants or shelving.

4.1.2. *Open-space as a managerial intention*

Two main reasons organisations decide to replace individual offices with open-space are: (i) costs reduction, and (ii) communication improvement. While the first motivation appears evident and hardly questionable (Fawcett & Chadwick, 2007; Newsham, 2000; Vischer, 2008), the second is more prone to debate. While some pieces of research support that working in an open-space contributes to improved communication between workers and supervisors, as well as group sociability (Allen & Gerstberger, 1973; Newsham, 2000; Rashid, Wineman, & Zimring, 2009; Sundstrom, Burt, & Kamp, 1980; Vischer, 2008), other studies suggest that, when workers move from a traditional office to an open-space, social relations tend to become dissatisfying (Brennan et al., 2002; Hirst, 2011; Morrison & Macky, 2017; Oldham & Brass, 1979). Brennan and colleagues (2002) have observed that dissatisfaction worsened with time, indicating that there is no real adjustment to this type of environment. Regarding the social effect of this type of office, Oldham and Brass (1979) explain that research has to be classified into two approaches: (i) the social relations approach, and (ii) the sociotechnical approach. While studies from the first approach demonstrate that the open-space is correlated with positive social interactions, the second approach suggests the contrary. The authors note that both approaches are supported by diverse studies.

Research focusing on effects other than the social ones affirms, through observation, the many negative effects of open-space on diverse outcomes. Many studies agree that the open-space has the tendency to result in increased noise and number of interruptions which leads to less concentration (Balazova, Clausen, Rindel, Poulsen, & Wyon, 2008; Baldry & Barnes, 2012; Hills & Levy, 2014; Oldham & Brass, 1979; Smith-Jackson & Klein, 2009; Sundstrom et al., 1980; Vischer, 2008), less interpersonal and work satisfaction (Danielsson & Bodin, 2008; Maher & von Hippel, 2005; Oldham & Brass, 1979; Sundstrom et al., 1980), less visual and speech privacy (Baldry & Barnes, 2012; Brennan et al., 2002; Oldham & Brass, 1979; Rasila & Rothe, 2012; Sundstrom et al., 1980), and less motivation (Oldham & Brass, 1979).

Several studies have found evidence that open-space is related to decreased job performance (Maher & von Hippel, 2005; Smith-Jackson & Klein, 2009). This main organisational disadvantage might be explicated by the individual negative effects mentioned above.

4.1.3. Open-space as a symbol

As explained previously, Oldham and Brass (1979) suggest that individual responses to open-space can be sorted according to a social relations perspective as well as a sociotechnical perspective. Taking this theory into consideration, Zalesny and Farace (1987) add the *symbolic meaning* perspective. Applied to space, this perspective is similar to what I label “space as a symbol” that is, space that is understood in a symbolic-interpretivist perspective. This perspective is based on the hypothesis that “individuals with high status […] may perceive a symbolic loss of status with a change to an open-plan office and may react negatively [while …] individuals with less status should react positively to acquiring previously unattainable perquisites as the result of a change to an open-plan office" (Zalesny & Farace, 1987, p. 243). Studying state government workers in an open-space setting from this perspective, Zalesny and Farace (1987) supported their theory. According to their position (clerical, professionals or managers), workers' satisfaction was differently affected by the transition from closed offices to open-space offices. Professionals and managers reported fewer positive reactions to the open-space than clerical workers. Their perception of privacy varied according to professional status. In particular, professionals and managers perceived that they experienced less personal privacy than clerical (as they are more likely used to working in a closed office with luxurious equipment). According to Zalesny and Farace (1987), "these individuals may have perceived the actual loss of their private offices, traditional symbols of organizational status, as a symbolic loss of status and the accompanying right to greater privacy" (1987, p. 253).

While Zalesny and Farace (1987) came to the conclusion that a transition to an open-space might be interpreted as a way of avoiding status and hierarchical distinctions through materialistic components, Baldry and Barnes (2012) came to the opposite conclusion. They argue that "the introduction of academic [open-plan office] is often, paradoxically, hierarchical" (p. 237). They came to this conclusion by noting that the transition to an open-space might only be applied to certain workers (in this case, junior staff and associate lecturers). Therefore, targeting distinct employees to be affected by this office transition is interpreted as a form of favouritism of some employees. For their part, Hills and Levy (2014) have also observed that open-space – even though it might be applied to all employees independently of their status – is likely to represent hierarchical positions. For example, they noted that in an open-space where all individuals had the same type and size of workspace, "more senior management tended to sit near the windows and were afforded the best views in recognition of their status within the organisation" (p. 424).

Also, since Baldry and Barnes (2012) have studied the introduction of open-space in the context of academic professionals, they have observed that this office might embody symbolic significations for all employees, independently of their status. Generally, they have observed that, for academics, the open-space might damage workers' professional status and identity. Indeed, respondents thought that with an open-space, the office could no longer embody the activity of teaching and researching, since it was difficult to place books, papers and representations of the daily work in the office. Thus for academic professionals, the open-space "was seen not only as a degradation of physical working conditions but also as an erosion of core research and teaching functions and an attack on the professional status of academic work" (p. 240).

4.2. Clean-desk

4.2.1. Clean-desk as tangible and material feature

Clean-desk is an office policy applied to a type of open-space. According to this policy, “employees are not assigned dedicated desks but work from any that happen to be vacant” (Millward et al., 2007, p. 547). In such organisational space, this vast area is accompanied by other spaces such as meeting rooms, concentration rooms, etc. (Allen & Gerstberger, 1973). Employees have access to lockers, within which they can put their belongings when they leave the office.

4.2.2. Clean-desk as a managerial intention

Similarly to the open-space, the main benefit of the clean-desk is the reduction of costs (Fawcett & Chadwick, 2007). Insofar as clean-desk is often accompanied by the practice of teleworking (Halford, 2005), it is then possible for the organisation to rent a reduced space with, for example, a ratio of 1.5 workers per seat. However, other managerial intentions might also drive the shift to clean-desk. First, whereas the open-space was partially criticised for resulting privacy issues (Baldry & Barnes, 2012; Oldham & Brass, 1979; Rasila & Rothe, 2012; Sundstrom et al., 1980), Inamizu (2013) suggests that the clean-desk can be an answer to the lack of concentration and privacy, i.e. ”a circumstance that allows one to concentrate on his/her work, rather than indicating a leak of information” (Altman, 1975, cited by Inamizu, 2013, p. 114). Indeed, contrary to the open-space, in an office with free seating, the worker is theoretically able to regulate his/her interaction with others and manage the privacy they require to complete activities. Contrarily to Inamizu’s research, De Been and Beijer (2014) have measured that workers report an inferior level of privacy in clean-desk than in open-space and individual offices.

A second motivation to set up a clean-desk is the social effect and the communication improvement. That being said, as in the case of an open-space, there is no consistent evidence regarding this effect. Some studies (Allen & Gerstberger, 1973; Inalhan, 2009; Millward et al., 2007) suggest that the clean-desk allows people to interact on a regular basis and to improve networking while others (Halford, 2004; Hirst, 2011; Oldham & Brass, 1979), on the contrary, observe an increased sense of isolation and a diminution of interactions leading to a “desocialising” effect (Hirst, 2011, p. 781). Millward and colleagues (2007), comparing open-space, clean-desk and traditional office, have observed that team and organisational identification were influenced by the process of assigning a desk or not. Thus, while team commitment and identification are higher in an open-space, in the clean-desk case, individuals tend to identify and commit more to the organisation as a whole than to a specific team. In a similar research comparing cellular office, open-space, and clean-desk, Morrison and Macky (2017) have measured that workers in shared offices (i.e. open-space and clean-desk), in comparison to workers in closed office, reported higher levels of uncooperative behaviours with co-workers, higher level of distrust between employees, higher negative relationships with colleagues, and lower co-workers friendships.

Studies are scarce for what concerns the performance outcomes related to the clean-desk but, according to the literature review, it appears that while the abundant use of electronic devices makes communication more efficient (Millward et al., 2007), the necessity of looking for a desk and moving files on an almost daily basis constitutes a loss of time and efficiency (Halford, 2004; Hills & Levy, 2014; Hirst, 2011). Moreover, Halford (2004) observes that clean-desk, similarly to open-space, increases the amount of noises and interruptions, leading to less concentration. In conclusion, Allen and Gerstberger (1973) point out that clean-desk might be more suitable for people typically on-the-move and not to permanent on-site workers.

4.2.3. Clean-desk as a symbol

The clean-desk policy is subjected to numerous interpretations by workers. According to Baldry (1999), *fixed factors* (i.e. space and territory) impact the sense of attachment in individuals. This is to say that organisational space is the locus of a certain affective investment (Davenport & Bruce, 2002; Hirst, 2011; Inalhan, 2009; Marcoux, 2010). Organisational space is personalised (Chanlat, 2006) since individuals affectively invest in it. Clean-desk challenges this need for attachment. As several authors have demonstrated, since the clean-desk prevents employees from possessing their desk, workers are likely to experience feelings of invisibility or homelessness (Donis, 2015; Hirst, 2011; Martin & Siehl, 1983; Shortt et al., 2013).

Moreover, several authors have observed that the transition to a clean-desk might be lived as identity threatening (Elsbach, 2003; Halford, 2004; Hirst, 2011). As noted, the clean-desk can challenge both the individual and the collective identity. Since this type of office hinders individuals from personalising their office and feeling as they belong to it, individuals are unable to express their sense of self through their desk. Or, at least, this is not encouraged in such an environment. In this way, the individual identity is susceptible to be threatened and individuals are likely to search for alternative identity markers, such as investing in *liminal* spaces (Shortt, 2015; Shortt & Warren, 2012). In the same vein, Hislop and Axtel (2009), while studying multi-locational workers, have shown that these workers had to undertake some "spatial work", that is to invest time and effort in order to create a space to work in.

Second, the clean-desk is also likely to challenge team or organisational attachment. For instance, Hatch (1997), Warren (2006) and Donis (2015) note that the personalisation of the workspace contributes to maintaining a sense of community, notably in departments and professional teams (e.g. the managers team). Therefore, the refusal to personalise the office might damage the sense of community. Regarding the organisation, Hirst (2011) observes that clean-desk leads to less organisational commitment. She explains this phenomenon by the fact that the individual in a clean-desk might feel like a vagrant, a nuisance to other colleagues and to the organisation.

4.3. Home-based office

4.3.1. Home-based office as a tangible and material feature

Home-based office designates the use of the home as an office, in the context of home-based teleworking. This form of working remotely is made possible through the use of ICT. Because of the frequency and the extent of isolation, this form of work is subjected to different degrees of despatialisation (Taskin, 2010).

4.3.2. Home-based office as a managerial intention

Based on the literature review, it appears that managerial intentions underlying teleworking are saving time to commute, work-life balance, and improvement in concentration and productivity.

Several studies suggest that one of the benefits of a home-based office is the commuting time spared by the teleworker (Baruch, 2000; Hill et al., 2003; Kurland & Bailey, 1999). Indeed, when working from home, the teleworker might save hours usually lost in traffic. This spared time, many researchers observe, does not necessarily benefit to the employee's private life, but might benefit to their professional life as well (Green, 2001, cited by Harris, 2003; Kelliher & Anderson, 2010). It is frequent that home-based teleworking is accompanied by extensive effort, that is longer hours spent working.

Home-based office raises questions regarding the impact of such a practice on work-life balance. Some authors (Baruch, 2000; Hill et al., 2003) affirm that working from home increases the work-life balance, enabling individuals to be more present in their families, to enjoy more spared time, etc. This is an argument often highlighted by employers. However, other studies (Harris, 2003; Taylor & Spicer, 2007) observe that a home-based office tends to create a *boundaryless organisation* and a continuous presence of work at home. Consequently, Harris (2003) notes that while work-related stress tends to decrease when teleworking from home, employees experience an increased family-related stress.

Regarding concentration, productivity and organisational issues, research suggests that some of the benefits of a home-based office are less distractions and interruptions (Harris, 2003; Kurland & Bailey, 1999), increased job motivation, satisfaction, worker retention (Baruch, 2000; Timothy D. Golden, 2006; Hill et al., 2003; Kurland & Bailey, 1999) and higher performance (Baruch, 2000; Hill et al., 2003). However, many studies (Baruch, 2000; Harris, 2003; Kurland & Bailey, 1999) note that the effect on distractions and interruptions depends on the working space at home and the presence of young family members. Indeed, Harris (2003) observed that those mentioning benefits in terms of concentration were free of family commitment. In spite of these advantages, a home-based office has its disadvantages as well, such as increasing professional isolation (Harris, 2003; Kurland & Bailey, 1999; Sewell & Taskin, 2015) and diminishing managerial contacts, feedback (Golden, 2006) and career aspiration (Baruch, 2000).

Due to an increase in working hours (Green, 2001, cited by Harris, 2003; Kelliher & Anderson, 2010) and concentration (Harris, 2003; Kurland & Bailey, 1999), it appears that a home-based office has a favourable effect on productivity (Baruch, 2000; Hill et al., 2003; Kurland & Bailey, 1999). However, the distance from the office and colleagues implied by the home-based working arrangement raises several questions regarding managerial contact (Golden & Fromen, 2011) and the ability to maintain a homogeneous organisational culture (Kurland & Bailey, 1999). Other studies suggest that the effect of working from home on organisational commitment remains equivocal and highly dependent on the context of the practice (Golden, 2006; Harris, 2003).

4.3.3. Home-based office as a symbol

Studies suggest that teleworkers' perceptions of the home-based office are both positive and negative. According to Baruch (2000), the practice of working remotely from home is perceived as a sign of confidence from the employer. The individual might then interpret this privilege as a grant, as a valorisation since (s)he assumes it signifies the employer trusts in his/her abilities without the need for supervision.

Contradictorily, according to Fleming and Spicer (2004), it is possible that teleworkers interpret the teleworking practice as an intrusion of the organisation in the private sphere. Teleworkers might feel a form of enslavement towards their employer. Similarly, Wapshott and Mallett (2012) have observed that the practice of home-based teleworking could imply the importation of labour rules and behaviours into the familial sphere. These can weigh on individuals other than the teleworker, such as family members. This being said, practices of resistance and (re-)appropriation towards the "external capitalist power" (Wapshott & Mallett, 2012, p. 12) can be experienced.

5. Conclusion of the chapter

This first chapter aimed at defining and understanding the organisational space and the office. In order to do so, I first approached the office from a historical perspective, from the industrial era to present time. That historical perspective illustrated that the office is not a neutral feature of the organisation. Rather, the office, since the industrial era, is the outcome of contextual transformations that have affected the society, the economy and the professional context.

In the following section, in order to support the idea that the office is not neutral, I proposed that the organisational space should be approached according to three facets: (i) the space as a tangible and material feature, (ii) the space as managerial intentions, and (iii) the space as a symbol. These three facets compose, what I label, the organisational space triptych.

Finally, I considered contemporary offices according to the triptych I proposed. These contemporary offices are the open-space, the clean-desk and the home-based office. Approaching each of these offices with the organisational space triptych allowed me to demonstrate that each of these offices is not only the locus of managerial intentions (i.e. the office is conceived), but also of symbols (i.e. the office is lived). While contemporary offices are *a priori* considered according to the material and tangible facet, considering the other facets allows to reveal the managerial intentions and the experience that is made by workers. In particular, this more complete understanding of the contemporary offices permited to reveal how offices were challenging the perceptions workers might have about their organisation and their work. In the present thesis, I suggest that contemporary offices and workers' perceptions about these offices might be related to the organisational identity. Therefore, in the following chapter, I will define the concept of organisational identity in order to suggest the potential connections it has with the office.

Sum and substance

- In this research, **contemporary offices** designate:
  - the open-space
  - the clean-desk
  - the home-based office
- Contemporary offices are the result of a **historical evolution** that has affected the socioeconomic context and the labour relationships.
- The **organisational space triptych** highlights that organisational space is:
  - a tangible and material feature
  - a managerial intention
  - a symbol
- Observing contemporary offices through the organisational space triptych allows one to understand that contemporary offices:
  - are not a neutral organisational element
  - underlie managerial intentions such as stimulating productivity and encouraging new behaviours (e.g. communication, collaboration, etc.)
  - embody issues that are related to hierarchy, gender relations, and identity.

Chapter 2. Organisational identity

1. Introduction

The aim of this second chapter is twofold. First, it defines the concept of organisational identity. Second, it highlights the managerial and power issues that underlie organisational identity in a symbolic-interpretivist perspective.

In a first section, in order to situate the concept of organisational identity in a larger framework, I briefly define the concepts of identity and work identity.

In a second section, I present the original definition of organisational identity and then, distinguish that concept from related concepts (namely corporate identity, construed external image, organisational reputation, and organisational culture).

In the third section, organisational identity is approached according to an epistemological standpoint. Then, organisational identity is defined in line with the epistemological posture of the present thesis.

Finally, I raise that organisations are likely to have multiple identities. Therefore, the multiplicity of organisational identities raises issues about managerialism and resistance practices.

2. The concept of identity: a general introduction

Before focusing on the concept of organisational identity, it appears relevant to situate it among the broader concept of "identity". Therefore, I briefly introduce the concept of individual identity and the concept of work identity which is more central in the field of organisational studies.

2.1. The individual identity

According to some authors, literature on identity can be split in two main branches (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2006; Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003). The first branch assumes a fairly stable consideration of identity over time. The second branch considers that identity is an ongoing process "around creating a sense of self and providing temporary answers to the question 'who am I' […] and what do I […] stand for?" (Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003, p. 1164). It appears that the second branch is well shared in the literature on identity. Indeed, according to Brown (2015) "there is an emergent consensus that identity refers to the meanings that individuals attach reflexively to themselves, and developed and sustained through processes of social interaction as they seek to address the question 'who am I?'" (2015, p. 23). The work of Giddens (1991) falls within this second branch. According to this author, self-identity is "the self as reflexively understood by the individual in terms of his or her biography" (Giddens, 1991, p. 53). Thus, self-identity is a form of continuity as reflexively interpreted by the individual. Similarly (i.e.

considering identity as an ongoing process), Jenkins (1996) argues that identity is fundamentally social. Respectively, he refers to "social identity" and "identity" as synonyms.

Considering identity as fundamentally social is central in the social identity theory, developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979). According to this theory, each individual identifies with specific social groups and dis-identifies with others, which are labelled respectively *in-group* and *out-group*. Identification results from the differences an individual perceives between the group (s)he belongs to and other groups. Tajfel and Turner (1979) explain that an individual identifies with an in-group because (s)he underestimates the differences between him/her and the in-group features. Conversely, individuals dis-identify with an out-group by emphasising the differences between them and the out-group. Following Tajfel and Turner's theory (1979), and in order to study the *self* (and not the intergroup relations), Turner developed the self-categorisation theory. According to that theory, the self-concept is composed of a personal and a social identity (Turner & Reynolds, 2011). The saliency of these different selves depends on the context. In practice, this means that when an individual belongs to a certain group, (s)he assesses the stereotypical behaviours related to this group and adjusts his/her own behaviours in order to fit with the stereotypical model. Since belonging to social groups is related to self-esteem, the self-categorisation theory suggests that individuals identify with groups that provide a positive distinctiveness (Hogg, Turner, Nascimento-Schulze, & Spriggs, 1986). Jenkins (1996) also assumes that identity construction is an ongoing process. For him, identity is about meanings which "are always the outcome of agreement or disagreement, always a matter of convention and innovation, always to some extent shared, always to some extent negotiable" (Jenkins, 1996, p. 4). Contrarily to an essentialist approach, identity can be thought as a *process* of becoming (Jenkins, 1996). Identity is never a settled matter.

2.2. The work identity

The concept of identity has been studied in the professional and organisational context. Some authors refer to it as "professional identity" or as "work identity" without differentiating both appellations from one another. For the sake of clarity, I refer here to the appellation "work identity". Walsh and Gordon (2008) define individual work identity as "a work-based self-concept, constituted of a combination of organizational, occupational, and other identities, that shapes the roles individuals adopt and the corresponding ways they behave when performing their work in the context of their jobs and/or careers" (2008, p. 47). This definition relies upon the social identity and the self-categorisation theories.

As several studies point out, work keeps being a significant factor in the identity construction process to the extent that "individuals construct, in various ways, a part of their identity on the basis of their work" (El Akremi, Sassi, & Bouzidi, 2009, p. 664; *translated from French*) (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002;

Davoine & Méda, 2009; El Akremi et al., 2009; Garner, Méda, & Sénik, 2006; Gini, 1998; Hogg & Terry, 2000). Because work is a central locus of identity and socialisation (Davoine & Méda, 2009; Garner et al., 2006; Gill, 1999; Méda, 2010; Michaelson, Pratt, Grant, & Dunn, 2014), identity at work has been extensively studied in sociology. In this respect, I rely on Sainsaulieu's and Dubar's works to understand the role taken by work in the identity construction.

According to Sainsaulieu (1977), work is a locus of identity construction because of the interpersonal relationships and recognition work enables. Drawing on Sainsaulieu, Alter and Laville (2004) explain that work identity depends on "the conditions of access to power in the working interactions" (2004, p. 1; *translated from French*). Sainsaulieu (1977) distinguishes four types of identity processes: (i) fusion, (ii) withdrawal, (iii) negotiation, and (iv) affinity:

- The *fusion* model is characterised by a high level of sociability with the collective (which counterbalances a low level of power), and conflictual relationships with the hierarchy and thus, a low access to power.
- The *withdrawal* model is defined by a low integration in the collective and a low investment in the work sphere. Individuals belonging to this model construct their identity by relying on sources external to the organisation.
- The *negotiation* model is composed of blue- and white-collar workers with a high level of qualification. Their skills are a source of power and they mobilise this expertise in order to negotiate with hierarchy.
- The *affinity* model is characterised by a low level of solidarity with the collective. In that case, the worker is focused on upward mobility, internal or external to the organisation (s)he currently works for. In this model, the relationships are only tied if they allow a career advancement.

Sainsaulieu's theory explains the construction of work identity by focusing on elements that are external to the individual, such as recognition and power resulting from social relationships. In a different way, Dubar (1992, 2010) proposes that there are different work-related identity paths which result from a double transaction: on the one hand, a biographical transaction, and on the other hand, a relational transaction. The *biographical transaction* consists in "planning possible futures in continuity or in separation with a reconstituted past" (Dubar, 1992, pp. 520–521; *translated from French*). The *relational transaction* aims at "making institutional partners acknowledging the legitimacy of [the individual's] ambitions, given the objectives and resources of the institution" (Dubar, 1992, p. 521; *translated from French*). By combining the continuity/rupture and the recognition/non-recognition axes, Dubar (1992,

2010) distinguishes four identity forms: *enterprise* identity, *category* identity, *network* identity, and *non-working* identity.

- The *enterprise* identity is characterised by a continuity in the biographical transaction and recognition in the relational transaction. In this case, the individual identifies as a member of the organisation and adheres to human resources management practices.
- The *category* identity is characterised by a continuity in the biographical transaction but a non-recognition in the relational transaction. In this case, the individual identifies as a member of a specific community (e.g. the occupation).
- The *network* identity is characterised by a series of ruptures in the biographical transaction and recognition in the relational transaction. This means that the individual bases his/her career beginning or advancement on the acquisition of certificates.
- The *non-work* identity is characterised by a series of ruptures in the biographical transaction and non-recognition in the relational transaction. This means that the individual has no certificate to increase his/her profile value.

As one observes, the concept of work identity aims at understanding individuals' identity within an organisation. Sainsaulieu and Dubar's sociological approaches explain the different work identities on the basis of professional relationships and the experience of power and recognition work enables.

Interestingly, while Walsh and Gordon's (2008) definition of work identity (cited above) mentions organisational identity, the approaches presented above focus on the individual, regardless of organisational identity. Despite the recognition of organisational identity importance, it appears that this concept is conspicuously absent from research on work identity. The following section introduces this concept.

3. Organisational identity: related concepts and epistemological approach

In this section, I present the original definition of organisational identity. Then, this concept is distinguished from related concepts, such as (i) corporate identity, (ii) construed external image, (iii) organisational reputation, and (iv) organisational culture. Finally, I propose a paradigmatic approach to the concept of organisational identity. This leads to the clarification of the epistemological paradigm within which organisational identity falls in the present research.

3.1. Organisational identity: original definition

Organisational identity was originally defined by Albert and Whetten (1985). According to them, an organisation's identity is a statement characterising an organisation, and that should meet three criteria: (i) centrality, (ii) distinctiveness, and (iii) continuity. First, the *central* character is defined as “features that are somehow seen as the essence of the organization ”(Albert & Whetten, 1985, p. 90). Second, the criterion of *distinctiveness* is a set of “features that distinguish the organisation from others with which it may be compared”(Albert & Whetten, 1985, p. 90). Third, the *continuity* criterion is defined as “features that exhibit some degree of sameness or continuity over time” (Albert & Whetten, 1985, p. 90).

Although this definition is often referred to in research on organisation’s identity, it remains prone to debate and interpretation. One of the causes of this debate lies in the conceptual proximity between organisational identity and other concepts.

3.2. Related concepts of organisational identity

Organisational identity is often mistaken with other concepts, namely (i) corporate identity, (ii) construed external image, (iii) organisational reputation, and (iv) organisational culture. In order to avoid any confusion with organisational identity, I present these concepts.

3.2.1. Corporate identity

Corporate identity is related to the ways an organisation presents itself and communicates about itself inside and outside the organisation. According to several authors, corporate identity was first studied in marketing- and communication-related fields (Balmer, 2001; Gioia et al., 2000; Haslam, Cornelissen, & Balmer, 2007; Hatch & Schultz, 1997). In these fields, corporate identity narrows to “graphic designs and management through official corporate symbols which focus attention on the strategic, visual aspects of corporate identity”(Hatch & Schultz, 1997, pp. 357–358). However, corporate identity also encompasses other approaches. Van Riel and Balmer (1997) propose three paradigms under which corporate identity has been studied and considered. In the *graphic design paradigm*, which is the most common conceptualisation, corporate identity is seen through “organizational nomenclature, logos, company housestyle and visual identification” (van Riel & Balmer, 1997, p. 340). Second, the *integrated communication paradigm* merely considers formal communication produced by an organisation. Third, the *interdisciplinary paradigm* mentions three elements that are related to corporate identity: (i) behaviours, (ii) communications, and (iii) symbolism. In the interdisciplinary paradigm, studying and managing corporate identity requires a multidisciplinary approach which articulates fields such as marketing, “business strategy, philosophy of key executives, corporate culture, behaviour and corporate design” (Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006, p. 848).

Considering these theoretical definitions of corporate identity, one might observe striking similarities with what other authors (Brown, Dacin, Pratt, & Whetten, 2006; Gioia et al., 2000) have labelled the “intended image” or “projected image”, which is defined as a “set of organizational attributes that [managers] want the members of the stakeholder group to view as most salient" (Brown et al., 2006, p. 103). Projected identity is not necessarily similar to what is really perceived by stakeholders. Indeed, Gioia and Thomas (1996) have demonstrated that the projected image could designate a projection of a *future* image, a purpose to follow.

3.2.2. Construed external image

The concept of construed external image was first labelled "organisational image" and defined by Dutton and Dukerich as "the way [organisation members] believe others see the organization" (1991, p. 520). In 1994, Dutton, Dukerich & Harquail relabelled "organisational image" in "construed external image". This designation allowed to distinguish two kinds of image: on the one hand, the *perceived organisational identity* (i.e. "what the member believes is distinctive, central, and enduring about the organization" (Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994, p. 239)), and on the other hand, the *construed external image*. As one might observe, the definition of perceived organisational identity is similar to Albert and Whetten's (1985) definition of organisational identity. The difference between the (perceived) organisational identity and the construed external image is that the former strictly resides *inside* an organisation (i.e. "what we think about ourselves") while the latter takes *outsiders* into account (i.e. "what we think others think of us"). Although these concepts are different, they depend on each other. Indeed, as Gioia, Schultz and Corley (2000) highlighted, organisation's members belong to many social groups in the same time. They are insiders as well as outsiders of an organisation. Consequently, organisation's members are not impervious to what is externally said about the organisation they belong to. Since each individual is simultaneously part of several groups, (s)he is likely to compare his/her thoughts about his/her organisation (i.e. organisational identity) to the thoughts (s)he thinks others have regarding the organisation (i.e. construed external image). As it has been demonstrated by social identity theorists (Tajfel & Turner, 1985, cited by Ashforth & Mael, 1989), individuals construct their self-esteem – amongst other things – on the basis of the esteem attributed to the groups they belong to. Therefore, when organisation's members observe an unacceptable discrepancy between organisational identity and construed external image, they are strongly motivated and committed to take actions in order to restore construed external image (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Gioia et al., 2000; Ravasi & Schultz, 2006). The link between organisational identity and construed external image is all the more strong, given that organisational identity is influenced by construed external image (Brown et al., 2006; Dutton et al., 1994).

Gioia et al. (2000) went a step further and noted that management faces two options when an unacceptable discrepancy occurs: (i) changing something about the image, or (ii) changing something about the identity. While considering the second option, one might legitimately wonder if organisational identity does genuinely exist. Indeed, if it is possible to reduce a discrepancy between organisational identity and construed external image by changing the identity, then it appears legitimate to consider that identity does not really exist and is simply an "image without identity" (Perniola, 1982, p. 59, quoted by Gioia et al., 2000, p. 72). As Gioia et al. (2000) explain, this argument (i.e. considering that management can unilaterally and totally change the organisational identity) is irrelevant because "organizations cannot construct just any arbitrarily chosen identity" (2000, p. 73). Consequently, Gioia and colleagues (2000) posit that organisational identity is "a negotiated, interactive, reflexive concept that, as its essence, amounts to an organizational work-in-progress" (2000, p. 76) regarding what an organisation stands for, but also what it intends to become.

As the definition suggests, construed external image resides in organisation members' minds. It reflects what they *assume* outsiders think about the organisation, not what outsiders actually think. This other concept is grasped by *organisational reputation*.

3.2.3. Organisational reputation

Reputation is the reciprocal concept of corporate identity, in other words the "feedback from others concerning the credibility of an organization's self-definition" (Whetten & Mackey, 2002, p. 400). According to several authors, it appears that there is no ambiguity regarding organisational reputation (Brown et al., 2006; Dutton et al., 1994; Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Gioia et al., 2000; Whetten & Mackey, 2002). Whetten and Mackey (2002) explain the difference between organisational reputation and corporate identity by comparing corporate identity (although they label it "corporate image") to *autobiographical* claims and reputation to *biographical* claims. In conclusion, corporate identity refers to the way an organisation presents itself, while reputation indicates what outsiders think about an organisation.

3.2.4. Organisational culture

Organisational culture has received a lot of attention from several authors who have attempted to define it. To the best of my knowledge, there has been no consensus regarding its definition so far and its difference with the concept of organisational identity. According to Alvesson (2012), "in most recent publications authors seem to 'solve' the problem by simply omitting or disregarding the less fashionable terminology, many favouring identity" (2012, p. 38).

According to Hofstede, Neuijen, Ohayv and Sanders (1990), organisational culture is based on six characteristics. It is (i) holistic, (ii) historically determined, (iii) related to anthropological concepts, (iv) socially constructed, (v) soft, and (vi) difficult to change. More completely, Edgar Schein (1990) defines organisational culture as "(a) a pattern of basic assumptions, (b) invented, discovered, or developed by a given group, (c) as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration,

(d) that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore (e) is to be taught to new members as the (f) correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems" (1990, p. 113). Moreover, Schein (1990) distinguishes three levels of culture which are observable artefacts, values, and basic underlying assumptions.

Hatch and Schultz (2002) base their approach of organisational culture on Mead who explain organisational identity and its dynamics in the light of the *personal* identity concept. According to Mead (1937, cited by Hatch & Schultz, 2002), identity (the "self") is a social process that has two parts: "I" and "me". "The 'I' is the response of the organism to the attitudes of the others; the 'me' is the organised set of the attitudes of others which one himself assumes. The attitudes of the others constitute the organised 'me', and the one reacts toward that as an 'I'" (Mead, 1934, p. 175, cited by Hatch & Schultz, 2002). Transposing that process to organisational level, Hatch and Schultz (2002) propose that the "self", the "I" and the "me" correspond respectively to the "organisational identity", the "organisational culture" and the "organisational image". It is interesting to note that their definition of organisational image is a mix of reputation and construed external image. In order to transpose the "I" to the organisation, Hatch and Schultz (2002) define "organisational culture" as "the tacit organizational understandings (e.g. assumptions, beliefs and values) that contextualize efforts to make meaning, including internal self-definition" (2002, p. 996). Since organisational culture and organisational identity are difficult to distinguish, Hatch and Schultz precise that organisational culture is, in comparison to organisational identity, "more easily placed in the conceptual domains of the contextual, tacit and emergent" (2002, p. 997), while identity is "more textual, explicit and instrumental" (2002, p. 997).

Hatch and Schultz (2002) consider organisational identity as constituted by four processes that connect organisational culture and organisational image in a dynamic way. These processes are (i) mirroring, (ii) reflecting, (iii) expressing, and (iv) impressing. These processes and their dynamics are represented in the figure 3 below.

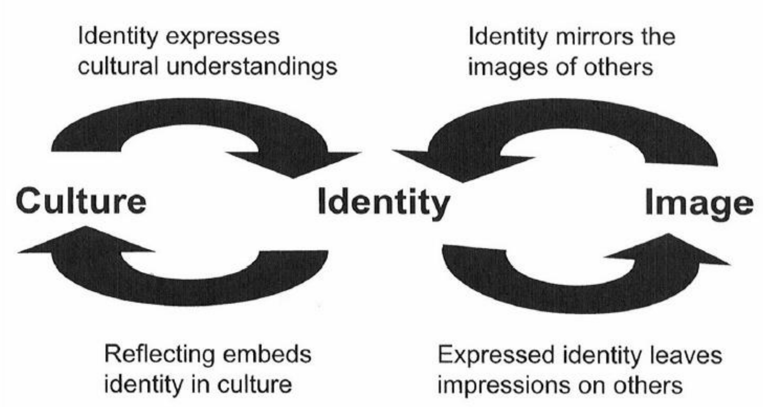

Figure 3 - "The Organizational Identity Dynamics Model" (Source: Hatch and Schultz, 2002, p. 991)

Through *mirroring*, thoughts that are held and shared by organisational stakeholders – whether it is reputation or construed external image – affect organisational identity. Indeed, as demonstrated by other authors (e.g. Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Gioia et al., 2000), organisation's members compare their perception of the organisation with outsiders' perception (or with how they *think* outsiders see it). *Reflecting* designates "the process by which identity is embedded in cultural understandings" (Hatch & Schultz, 2002, p. 991). This means that organisational members' opinions about the organisation are embedded in tacit cultural understandings which are "basic values and assumptions" (Hatch & Schultz, 2002, p. 1000). *Expressing* is the process through which organisational identity conveys cultural understandings. *Impressing* means that the way an organisation communicates about itself – intentionally or not – provides information about its identity. Through this model, Hatch and Schultz (2002) propose an approach of organisational culture that differs from organisational identity. Moreover, this model brings an interesting point of view for the present research since it highlights that organisational identity is continuously formed by four processes which articulate organisational identity, organisational culture and organisational image.

Succinctly, Bouchikhi and colleagues (1998) define organisational culture has a system of rules that governs meanings in organisations. In accordance with Hatch and Schultz (1997), they consider that organisational identity "defines who we are in relation to the larger social system to which we belong" (1998, p. 56).

Following these different definitions, it appears that, while organisational culture refers to the system of rules and values of an organisation, organisational identity designates the contextual understanding of this system of rules and values *in relation to a larger social system*.

Concept	Definitions	Main authors
Corporate identity	"The visible outward presentation of a company" (Cornelissen, Haslam, & Balmer, 2007, pp. 6–7)	Balmer & Gray, 1999; Balmer & Greyser, 2006; Balmer, 2001; Hatch & Schultz, 1997; van Riel & Balmer, 1997
Construed external image	"The way [organization members] believe others see the organization" (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991, p. 520)	Dutton et al., 1994; Gioia et al., 2000
Reputation	"Feedback from others concerning the credibility of an organization's self-definition"	Fombrun & Shanley, 1990;

	(Whetten & Mackey, 2002, p. 400)	Whetten & Mackey, 2002
Organisational culture	"The tacit organizational understandings (e.g. assumptions, beliefs and values) that contextualize efforts to make meaning" (Hatch & Schultz, 2002, p. 996)	Bouchikhi et al., 1998; Hatch & Schultz, 1997, 2002; Hofstede et al., 1990; Schein, 1990

Table 1 - Organisational identity related concepts

Table 1 above summarises different concepts similar to organisational identity. It allows to define and distinguish the following concepts: corporate identity, construed external image, reputation, and organisational culture. As previously stated, organisational identity is a complicated concept because of the conceptual confusion it is subjected to. Another obstacle with this concept is that it is prone to epistemological debates. The following section discusses organisational identity from different epistemological standpoints.

3.3. Epistemological approach to the concept of organisational identity

Drawing on the epistemological postures presented by Mary-Jo Hatch (1997), organisational identity can be understood according to the following epistemologies: modernism, symbolic-interpretivism, and postmodernism. Organisational identity is presented and defined according to these three epistemologies.

3.3.1. The modernist posture

The modernist posture studies identity in an essentialist perspective. Accordingly, identities are commonly composed of "essential, objective, and often tangible features" (He & Brown, 2013, p. 6). As Kenny and colleagues (2012) explain, modernist researchers influenced by the original definition of organisational identity tend to focus on the *"*enduring characteristics" of organisational identity. Researchers studying organisational identity according to a modernist posture consider that "organizations, like individuals, decide who they are by employing some classification scheme and then locating themselves within that scheme." (Gioia, 1998, p. 21). The modernist conception of organisational identity assumes that an organisation can be studied as a social actor in its own right (Whetten & Mackey, 2002). According to a modernist tradition, an organisation manifests its identity through univocal features which are central, distinctive and enduring. As several authors point out, these features are related to the concept of corporate image which designates an organisation capacity to communicate about itself through leaders' discourses and organisation's artefacts such as logos, official uniforms, etc. (e.g. Balmer & Gray, 1999; Balmer & Greyser, 2006; Hatch & Schultz, 2008).

The modernist posture of organisational identity refers to what Alvesson, Ashcraft and Thomas (2008) label functionalist research which "aims at developing knowledge of cause-and-effect relations through which control over natural and social conditions can be achieved" (Alvesson et al., 2008, p. 8). Accordingly, identity is considered as a variable that can be shaped in order to be presented to internal and external stakeholders (Whetten & Godfrey, 1998). This way of studying organisational identity is fundamentally performative. This posture is characterised by its methodological hallmarks, such as "hypothesis testing, concerns with reliability, validity, and generalizability; the search for relationships and regularities in the representation of identity; and, perhaps especially, the attempt to establish causal relationships among identity-related constructs and variables" (Whetten & Godfrey, 1998, p. 26).

As previously stated, the modernist posture considers that organisations can be studied like social actors. In this respect, organisational identity manifests itself autonomously. Following this approach, Gagne (2013) studied *Air France* and *Transavia*'s (i.e. the low-cost branch of *Air France*) organisational identity by analysing the business model of these companies. Drawing on Albert and Whetten's (1985) definition, Gagne argues that centrality, distinctiveness and endurance reside in features such as the short- and middle-term strategy, the services that distinguish an organisation from its competitors, etc. Michel (2015) follows the same research tradition and argues that an organisation can build its legitimacy by changing its identity. For instance, Michel (2015) observed that the identity transformation might come from an organisation's shift towards the label of "wholesaler leader".

Another angle by which organisational identity has been investigated in the modernist posture is the performative angle. This approach considers organisational identity as a means (i) to drive stakeholders' attraction and retention, and (ii) to shape organisational members' behaviours and commitment. According to several authors, organisational identity is strongly related to the construed external image (see 3.2.2.). Therefore, it appears crucial to manage organisational identity and image. Gioia, Schultz and Corley (2000) explain that organisational identity and organisational image are interdependent concepts, and the authors suggest that there should be no discrepancy between these concepts. Therefore, these authors suggest that, if a discrepancy is observed, it is necessary to change organisational identity or organisational image. According to these authors, an organisation is able to change its identity by adjusting its future desired image, which is what it *wants* to become. This "adaptive instability" would allow an organisation to adapt to the environment demands. Scott and Lane (2000) follow this idea and go a step further by suggesting that the perception of an organisation's identity is manageable through three main tactics. First, Scott and Lane (2000) argue that organisational image and identity attractiveness can be driven by organisational communications. According to these authors, organisational communications "serve to remind stakeholders of their existing affiliation and to generate continued cognitive consideration of their organizational social identity" (Scott & Lane, 2000, p. 51). A second mechanism is to emphasise and advertise the affiliation between an organisation and its stakeholders. Finally, the authors propose that an organisational identity can be promoted by increasing interactions with stakeholders. According to Scott and Lane (2000), "through embeddedness in [the] organizational community, people instantiate its values, outsiders are transformed to insiders, social entanglements and commitments are formed, and in-group members reinforce each other's beliefs and participation" (2000, p. 52).

Several authors have argued that organisational identity contributes to reinforcing entanglement, commitment and participation (e.g. Chédotel, 2004; Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994; Dutton & Dukerich, 1991). Among them, Pratt (2000) claims that organisational leaders are able to stimulate several behaviours (resulting from organisational identification) by shaping organisational identity in order to fill individuals' identity needs. Indeed, Pratt (2000) proposes a double process which consists in sensebreaking and then, sensegiving. Through *sensebreaking*, Pratt (2000) invites leaders to break down meaning referents in order to "disrupt an individual's sense of self to create a meaning void that must be filled" (2000, p. 464). Once the sensebreaking phase is reached, leaders can process to *sensegiving* which consists in "attempting to influence the sensemaking process […] toward a preferred redefinition of organizational reality" (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991, p. 442). Therefore, Pratt (2000) argues that leaders are able to shape members' behaviours by (i) modifying a part of their identity needs and (ii) constructing an organisation's identity in a certain way.

Several authors have claimed that the modernist posture of organisational identity put emphasis on managerial role while denying the autonomy of organisational members. However, these individuals contribute to organisational identity construction (e.g. Alvesson & Empson, 2008; Brown & Humphreys, 2006; Elsbach & Kramer, 1996). That argument is supported by the symbolic-interpretivist posture of organisational identity.

3.3.2. The symbolic-interpretivist posture

The symbolic-interpretivist posture tends to stress that organisational identity resides in "what members believe" it is (Kenny et al., 2012; David Whetten & Godfrey, 1998). Therefore, according to this perspective, organisational identity is seen as *socially constructed* by individuals, and not merely by executives in a performative manner. Accordingly, organisational identity is defined as "collective understandings of the features presumed to be central and relatively permanent, and that distinguish the organization from other configurations" (Gioia, Schultz, & Corley, 2000, p. 64). The main features of organisational identity (i.e. centrality, endurance and distinctiveness) remain but are understood in a subjective manner.

This posture is related to the practical-hermeneutic approach (Alvesson et al., 2008; Whetten & Godfrey, 1998). This approach of organisational identity is characterised methodologically by its "analysis of sensemaking processes whereby meanings are constructed in context-contingent ways by different actors" (Kenny et al., 2012, p. 129). This interpretivist approach focuses on insiders' views (Whetten & Godfrey, 1998).

Authors approaching organisational identity from a symbolic-interpretivist posture highlight that organisations are likely to be multifaceted, and that there might be as many identities as there are individuals. For instance, Glynn (2000) has observed two opposite rationales in a symphony orchestra: artistry and utility. She has noticed that both these sides of the orchestra identity were appealed to by different categories of organisation's members. Indeed, while artistry was invoked by musicians and artists, the utilitarian side was highlighted by administrators. Such a hybrid organisational identity is likely to raise issues about strategic choices, resources allocation, etc. As Glynn (2000) points out, none of these sides is more relevant than the other and they should be considered as two sides of the same coin. As it has been observed by several authors, a multifaceted organisational identity is more likely to challenge the organisational *statu quo* when an organisation is facing a substantial change (e.g. Elsbach & Kramer, 1996; Gombault, 2002, 2003; Gomes Da Silva, 2010; Souza, Carrieri, & Faria, 2008). In this respect, Gombault (2002, 2003) interested in the organisational identity change of *Louvre* museum towards the "Grand Louvre" project. This change has provoked what the author labels an *identity crisis*. This crisis resulted from organisational members thinking that the museum's main characteristics were denied, and that the Louvre was mimicking features of any common business (e.g. financial management, communication, new public management practices, etc.). Gombault (2002, 2003) argues that this interpretation led to *Louvre*'s workers de-identification. This de-identification involves that workers do not adhere to a specific organisational identity change.

Others authors have attempted to understand the relation between individual and organisational identity. Indeed, as previously mentioned and in numerous studies, individuals are not indifferent about the way an organisation they belong to defines itself (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Elsbach & Kramer, 1996; Empson, 2004; Gombault, 2002, 2003; Pratt & Rafaeli, 1997). Organisation's members are able to actively disagree with organisational identity such as claimed by leaders. Organisational identity and individual identity influence each other. Therefore, the influence organisational identity has on an individual's identity might explain individuals' involvement towards organisation's identity construction (Gomes Da Silva, 2010; Kreiner et al., 2006). In this respect, Gomes Da Silva (2010) has noticed that organisational changes were a source of strong mobilisation from organisational members because of the relation existing between an organisation and its members (i.e. the identification process). Thus, organisation's and individuals' identity mutually co-construct through several processes. On the one hand, the author has observed that the effect of organisational change on individuals' identity construction might depend on three factors: (i) the level of congruence between identities, (ii) the level security, and (iii) the feeling of a professional legitimacy. On the other hand, the impact of individuals' need for identity reconstruction on organisational identity appears to rely on four factors: (i) the need to have control over the organisation's and one's own fate, (ii) the eventuality of being recognised by the organisation, (iii) the search for an affiliation need, and (iv) a self-preservation effort (Gomes Da Silva, 2010).

To the best of my knowledge, while most of symbolic-interpretivist research on organisational identity has based its analysis by taking cognitive representations into account, Harquail and King (2010) have gone a step further, and proposed that this cognition might be *embodied*. In other words, the authors assume that "cognitive representations and operations are fundamentally grounded in their physical context" (Harquail & King, 2010, p. 1623), according to four modes of cognitive capacities: (i) bodily-kinaesthetic, (ii) visual-spatial, (iii) temporal-aural, and (iv) emotional. For instance, the visual-spatial capacities involve sensitivity to colour, depth, volume, aesthetics and physical layout in general. In this respect, Harquail and King (2010) suggest that "an individual may employ a full range of embodied capacities to assess, experience, feel attracted to, and express an organization's identity" (2010, p. 1632). By arguing that organisational identity might be construed through an embodied cognition, these authors invite to acknowledge that organisational identity is fundamentally constructed and that this construction results from interpretations about organisational changes and leaders' discourses, as well as from the bodily experience an organisation enables.

3.3.3. The postmodernist posture

Postmodernism challenges the concept of identity in itself. That is to say that, following the postmodernist paradigm, the existence of a rational and coherent identity is arguable. Indeed, as explained by Whetten and Godfrey (1998), according to postmodernists, "because of [its] very construction, identity becomes a myth or […] and 'illusion'" (1998, p. 28). In this respect, organisations and organisational identity are considered as discursive and continuously constructed through a narrative process, drawing on language dynamics that are unstable and diverse by nature.

Accordingly, Brown, Humphreys and Gurney (2005) consider that an organisation is "a spatial metaphor that implicates a shared discursive space in which meanings are ascribed to, and understandings produced of, actors, events, actions, and contexts" (2005, p. 3). In the same vein, organisational identity is described as a metaphor, a story-telling through which individuals try to make sense of their reality (Boje, 1991). Some authors have applied storytelling and metaphors to research on organisational identity (e.g. Boje, Haley, & Saylors, 2015; Brown & Humphreys, 2002; Félix & Pajon, 2005). Among them, Harrison (2000) has observed that there were as many identity narratives as there were individuals. She agrees that identity is a metaphor about which no consensus might be reachable. Additionally, Félix and Pajon (2005) consider that, when an organisation is relatively new, it is possible to elaborate a collective story to construct the organisation's identity. More critically, Alvesson (1990) argues that organisations have no longer an identity since leaders exhibit an image in an instrumental manner.

However, it would be inaccurate to assume that leaders are the only actors using storytelling in order to give voice to an organisation. As Gagné (2010) explains, organisational identity narratives are a ventriloquism exercise. By ventriloquism, the author designates an incarnation process which gives existence and voice to an entity. Thus, narratives about an organisation's identity are used in order to reify an organisation, and to give it intentions, values, etc. Although any organisational member is capable to express organisational identity through narratives, Brown (2006) highlights that these narratives must be consistent with organisational activities. Moreover, all organisational members are not equal in terms of authorship and legitimacy (Brown, 2006; Gagné, 2010). Although anyone might try to narrate an organisational identity, it is more than likely that some narratives will dominate more than others, depending on who expresses them.

In conclusion, organisational identity *stricto sensu* refers to features that are central, distinctive and enduring (Albert & Whetten, 1985). But such a conceptual simplicity is merely apparent. Indeed, as shown in Table 2 below, conceptions of organisational identity and organisation differ according to three epistemological postures.

	Modernism	Symbolic-interpretivism	Postmodernism
Conception of organisational identity	Essential features conveyed by leaders and likely to be managed	Shared understanding of central and essential organisational features	Narrative constructed as a metaphor in which there is not one prevailing discourse
Conception of the organisation	Actor in its own right	Social construction	Discursive construct

Table 2 - Paradigms in relation to organisational identity (Adapted from Gonzales-Miranda, Gentilin, & Ocampo-Salazar, 2014, p. 140)

Drawing on this epistemological approach of organisational identity, the following section specifies the epistemological posture of the present research, as well as the definition of organisational identity that stems from it.

3.3.4. Epistemological posture and definition of organisational identity

Drawing on a symbolic-interpretivist posture, this thesis aims to understand the role of the office in constructing organisational identity. Thus, organisational identity is considered as organisational members' shared understandings about "who" an organisation is. Therefore, organisational identity is defined as: "the whole of organisational members' shared interpretations about the characteristics which compose their organisation and distinguish it in its social context" (Gomes Da Silva, 2010, p. 200; *translated from French*).

By referring to this definition, organisational identity is understood as a social construct to which all organisational members contribute.

In the following section, I argue that, in a symbolic-interpretivist perspective, organisational identity is considered as potentially plural. I assume that such a plurality is subjected to managerial practices. This leads to observe that organisational identity underlies power issues.

4. Organisational identities: at the intersection of managerialism and resistance practices

In line with a symbolic-interpretivist epistemology, several authors have argued that multiple interpretations of an organisation's identity might coexist. Agreeing with this idea, some of these authors have proposed managerial practices to deal with these diverse – and potentially conflicting – identities. Although this managerial approach of organisational identity plurality is in line with a positivist approach, it is still worth considering. Indeed, although the present research falls within a symbolic-interpretivist epistemology, one cannot ignore the managerial regulation practices that are directed towards organisational identity. The following section demonstrates that taking into account organisational identities plurality, and the managerial practices organisational identities are subjected to, reveals issues of power underlying the concept of organisational identity.

4.1. Hybridity and multiplicity of organisational identity

Organisations can be considered as presenting one or several identities. Organisational identity can be studied as a *monolithic* object (Golden-Biddle & Rao, 1997). In this respect, an organisation is said having a single, univocal and coherent identity. However, it seems that organisational identity is often studied as hybrid and plural, regardless of a specific epistemological posture.

In the original conceptualisation of organisational identity, Albert and Whetten (1985) already mentioned that organisations might be hybrid. Assuming this hybridity, the authors distinguished two forms of identities which they labelled (i) the holographic form, and (ii) the ideographic form. In the *holographic* form, identities are exhibited within *each unit* of an organisation. In the *ideographic* form, each unit exhibits only one identity. In this form, to capture the multiple identities, it is necessary to observe each unit. As an instance of ideographic form, Pratt and Rafaeli (1997) have studied the professional dress symbolism in the context of hospital professionals. The authors have suggested that organisational identity might be perceived differently depending on the professional position. For instance, they have observed that, within an organisation, some nurses defined the organisation as a rehabilitation service while others considered it strictly as a medical service.

Interestingly, Alvesson and Empson (2008) have found out that organisational members might define their organisation as possessing *no identity*. Indeed, within *Hill* (one of the investigated consultancy firms), individuals "defined themselves as people who did not need to belong to an organization in the conventional sense, but who derived their personal satisfaction and material for (individual) identity construction through tangible measures of success" (Alvesson & Empson, 2008, p. 13). As the authors suggest, hostility towards a common identity constitutes *Hill*'s identity cornerstone. Therefore, Alvesson and Empson (2008) explain that organisational identity might be an anti-identity.

Soenen and Moingeon (2002) propose to approach organisational identity through five facets:

i. "The *professed* identity refers to what a group or an organization professes about itself. It is the answer, the statement(s) or the claim(s) that organizational members use to define their (collective) identity.

ii. The *projected* identity refers to the elements an organization uses, in more or less controlled ways, to present itself to specific audiences. It notably consists of communications, behaviors, and symbols. They key distinction between the *professed* and the *projected* identity is that the latter is mediated.
iii. The *experienced* identity refers to what organizational members *experience*, more or less consciously, with regard to their organization. It consists of a collective representation held by members.
iv. The *manifested* identity refers to a specific set of more or less tightly coupled elements that have characterized the organization over a period of time. It may be conceived as an organization's "historical" identity.
v. The *attributed* identity refers to the attributes that are ascribed to the organization by its various audiences. It differs from the experienced identity which is self-attributed" (p. 17).

Through this model, Soenen and Moingeon (2002) drew parallels between organisational identity and related concepts reviewed earlier in this chapter (see 3.2.). One might consider that (i) *professed* and *projected*, (ii) *experienced* and (iii) *attributed* identities are respectively similar to (i) corporate identity, (ii) organisational identity and (iii) reputation. The authors add the *manifested* identity. This facet allows to approach an organisation's identity as falling within an historical perspective. Several studies have supported the necessity to consider an organisation's historical background when interesting in an organisation's identity (e.g. Félix & Pajon, 2005; Gagne, 2013; Oliver & Roos, 2006; Whetten, 2006). As a case in point, Oliver and Roos (2006) have found that, when defining an organisation's identity, individuals refer to historical elements having constituted an organisation. Other authors have highlighted the interest of historical key elements when considering organisation identity. Those researchers argue that, when confronted with an organisational change, organisational members interpret this change, and reconstruct organisational identity relatively to the consistency they perceive between what they think an organisation is/was and what it tends to become (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Gagné, 2010; Gombault, 2002).

Acknowledging that several organisational identities might coexist in the same time, some authors are concerned about the presence of potential conflicting identities within one organisation. Therefore, some of them have suggested to manage these identities.

4.2. Managerial responses to multiple organisational identities

According to Chédotel (2004), most of the researchers acknowledge the existence of hybrid identities in organisations. However, rare are those who propose managerial practices to face the potential conflicts that might result from different organisational identities. Pratt and Foreman's model (2000) figures as an exception. These authors argue that, in order to avoid conflicts related to organisational identities, managers and leaders *have to intervene* in the process of organisational identities production. According to Pratt and Foreman (2000), the multiplicity of organisational identities can be managed in two ways: (i) by managing identity plurality, and/or (ii) by managing identity synergy (see Figure 4). On the one hand, managing identity plurality entails that leaders can *choose* either to decrease, increase, or maintain the number of organisational identities. On the other hand, managing identity synergy means that leaders "must not only assess the feasibility of linking two or more organizational identities but must also assess whether attempts to link or connect identities will ultimately benefit or harm the organization and its members" (Pratt & Foreman, 2000, p. 25). Pratt and Foreman (2000) propose four managerial techniques to face organisational identities multiplicity:

- *Compartmentalisation* through which multiples identities are separately maintained. This practice relies to the ideographic form of organisational identity (Albert & Whetten, 1985).
- *Deletion* which means that leaders choose to reduce the number of organisational identities. For instance, in the ideographic form, this could be accomplished "via the organization divesting itself of the business unit or division associated with the "offending" identity"(Pratt & Foreman, 2000, p. 29).
- *Integration* through which managers attempt to fuse multiple identities into a distinct single whole. For instance, integration is likely to happen via a merger or acquisition resulting in a new organisational identity.
- *Aggregation* which happens when an organisation attempts to conserve the multiplicity of organisational identities while building bridges between them.

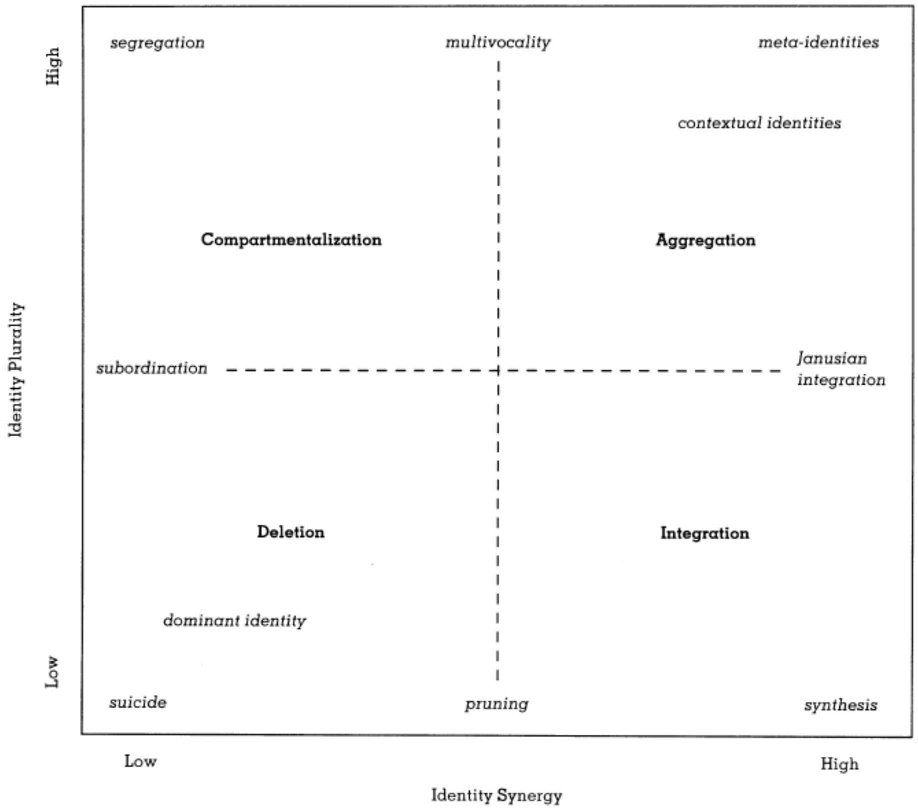

Figure 4 - "A Classification Scheme for Multiple Organizational Identity Management Responses" (Source: Pratt and Foreman, 2000, p. 27)

These practices reflect what Alvesson and Willmott (2002) label identity regulation practices. It designates "discursive practices concerned with identity definition that condition processes of identity formation and transformation" (2002, p. 627). Alvesson and Willmott (2002) have shown that managers might deploy several techniques in order to regulate an individual's work identity towards a desired one. These techniques include: (i) defining a person directly, (ii) defining a person by defining others, (iii) providing a specific vocabulary of motives, (iv) explicating morals and values, (v) defining knowledge and skills, (vi) defining social groups and affiliation, (vii) establishing hierarchical distinctions, and (viii) establishing and clarifying a distinct set of rules (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). According to Empson (2004), some of these techniques apply similarly to organisational identity regulation.

As explained earlier, managerial techniques to face organisational identities and to shape individuals' representations are particularly emphasised in the modernist posture on organisational identity. This echoes the *sensegiving* practice which designates "the process of attempting to influence the sensemaking and meaning construction of others toward a preferred redefinition of organizational reality" (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991, p. 441). However, as several authors argue, these practices (from sensegiving to Pratt and Foreman's model) deny individuals' autonomy in the production of organisational identity, and postulate that workers are easily influenced by managers and leaders (e.g. Brown, 2006; Corley, 2004; Empson, 2004). Although this research is not based on the modernist paradigm on organisational identity, this literature is worth considering. It reveals that organisational identity – even in a symbolic-interpretivist approach – is at the intersection of managerial and resistance practices. Therefore, I assume that organisational identity might embody power issues.

4.3. Power and resistance issues revealed by organisational identities

As previously shown, organisational identity is likely to be subjected to managerialism. Even when research and management acknowledge that several organisational identities within one organisation co-exist, organisational identity is often approached as an object which can be shaped. As a case in point, Hatch and Schultz (2008) claim that organisational identity, culture and image *have to* be managed in order to be aligned and to promote an organisation's brand.

Because of the performative aspect of organisational identity (previously mentioned in this chapter), organisations keep trying to regulate its definition and construction. By doing so, they recognise that organisational identity is a social construct and not a stable object. However, aware that organisational identity influences external and internal stakeholders (respectively, in terms of image and behaviours), organisational leaders might intervene to attempt to regulate its construction (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002).

Nevertheless, I argue that leaders do not apply these regulative practices on passive, non-resistant individuals. Indeed, as pointed out by several researchers, organisational members actively involve in constructing organisational identity (e.g. Alvesson & Empson, 2008; Gagné, 2010; Gombault, 2002; Humphreys & Brown, 2002). In this respect, Empson (2004) suggests that "attempts to regulate organizational identity will only prove effective if organizational members identify fully with the organization" (2004, p. 763). Moreover, Humphreys and Brown (2002) claim that organisational leaders, through the narratives they mobilise, try to reify an hegemonic identity of an organisation. Such an hegemony refers to "an ideology, most often articulated as 'common sense' or 'natural', that constitutes a form of cleverly masked, taken-for-granted domination" (2002, p. 423). However, as stated by Humphreys and Brown (2002), identity regulation tactics might fail, and individuals might resist and create their own interpretation of "who the organisation is". One can explain resistance by the fact that "identity-constitutive stories told about organizations also directly impinge on the social identities of their participants" (Humphreys & Brown, 2002, p. 439). In other words, since one's individual identity is related to the organisation one belongs to, workers will not let themselves be pushed around, and are likely to actively involve in the construction of organisational identity.

Therefore, should one consider that organisational members are capable of inverting managerial hegemonic narratives? Nothing is less certain. Just as there is no guarantee of hegemonic dominance, there is no guarantee that individuals are fully reflexive about their own organisation. Indeed, as Brown (2006) underlines, there is "no organisation 'essence' to which participants have privileged access and […] participants are reflexive *within the discursive quasi-constraints* imposed on them by language in general, and in particular by the narratives on which they draw, and to which they are subject." (2006, p. 738; *emphasis added*). Moreover, it would be naïve to consider that leaders are the only actors willing to shape organisational identity understandings in order to promote specific interests. Non-leaders have interests in that process as well. As several authors have shown, supervising narratives of organisational identity might contribute to defending interests in terms of resources allocation, legitimacy recognition, etc. (Elsbach & Kramer, 1996; Gagné, 2010; Glynn, 2000).

In a more critical approach, Kenny, Whittle and Willmott (2016), basing on Foucault and Lukes' works, argue that organisational identity construction raises domination and power issues in insidious and invisible ways. Indeed, regulative strategies might no longer operate over individuals but *through* them. This means that, while organisations and research are more interested in understanding organisational identity as socially constructed by all individuals (Gonzales-Miranda et al., 2014), such a polyphony might be an illusion and a means of domination. As rightly said by Kenny and colleagues (2016), power is most effective when "taking a positive form, power is not recognised as such: when its subjects believe that they are self-determining and that they have actively 'chosen' to constitute and discipline themselves according to the values and priorities provided by the [organisational identity]" (Kenny et al., 2016, p. 148).

5. Conclusion of the chapter

Throughout this chapter, the concept of organisational identity has been broadly defined. Although the original definition is fairly simplistic, once this construct is studied through the lens of the different epistemological postures, it opens to numerous questions about its definition, its understanding and the issues it raises.

Drawing on a symbolic-interpretivist perspective, this thesis consists in understanding the collective interpretations organisational members share about their organisation's characteristics. Since these interpretations depend on individuals belonging to an organisation, organisational identities might be plural. This plurality raises managerial issues.

While several authors propose techniques in order to manage the construction of organisational identity, I assume that individuals are autonomous and contribute to constructing organisational identity. Indeed, contrarily to what identity regulation models suggest, workers are not passive regarding the construction of organisational identity. They take part in its formulation and might manifest their discontentment regarding leaders' discourses. This is in line with the symbolic-interpretivist approach of organisational identity.

Nevertheless, although this resistance ability is underlined, it is fundamental to bear in mind that organisations and leaders are capable to deploy insidious managerial practices to shape the construction of organisational identity. Therefore, rather than considering that organisational identity construction involves all stakeholders equally, it is essential to note that these stakeholders attempt to construct an organisational identity interpretation on the basis of the information they *think* they possess. Thus, the construction of the organisational identity does not solely rely on workers' autonomy but might be influenced by management, co-workers or even customers. Consequently, accessing to an organisation's identity is inherently limited, for workers as well as for leaders and for researchers.

Sum and substance
▪ In this research, **organisational identity** is defined as "the whole of organisational members' shared interpretations about the characteristics which compose their organisation and distinguish it in its social context" (Gomes Da Silva, 2010, p. 200; *translated from French*). ▪ Organisational identity is different from **related concepts**, namely (i) corporate identity, (ii) construed external image, (iii) organisational reputation, and (iv) organisational culture. ▪ According to a symbolic-interpretivist posture, organisation's members might consider their organisation's specificity in different ways. Therefore, an organisation might have **several organisational identities**. ▪ The potential plurality of organisational identity implies that organisational might be the locus of **managerial regulation practices** but also of **resistance** practices. Therefore, although organisational identity is a shared understanding, it is likely to raise **power issues**.

CHAPTER 3. ORGANISATIONAL SPACE AND ORGANISATIONAL IDENTITY

1. Introduction

The aim of the third chapter is twofold. First, it explores the literature focussing on the relationships between organisational space and organisational identity. This chapter is a cornerstone to the theoretical development of the present piece of research as it brings together its two main concepts: the organisational space and the organisational identity. Second, drawing on that literature, this chapter aims to formulate and justify the research question structuring this thesis.

In the first section, I draw on the literature bridging organisational space and identity. Whether that research focused on the individual, work or organisational identity, I show that it raises interesting elements suggesting that the identity is constructed through the workspace an individual occupies. On that basis, I argue that the link between organisational space and organisational identity is still underinvestigated and worth studying.

In the second section, drawing on the literature mentioned above and the elements pointed throughout the first section, I develop the argument leading to my research statement. In the third section, I develop the theoretical framework of the present research, that is, the French theory of conventions.

Finally, I clarify the research statement and intentions.

2. Organisational space and identity

This first section aims to highlight the research that has already been conducted and that contributes to demonstrating that organisational space articulates different aspects including identity at individual, work and "societal" levels. These elements suggest that organisational space might influence identity at the organisational level.

2.1. Questioning the individual, work and organisational identity through the organisational space

In this first sub-section, I present the literature that has questioned the relationship between organisational space and identity at the individual level. With respect to the second chapter, identity at the individual level refers to individual identity and work identity. Research shows that individual identity is socially produced and that space plays a role in that process. Therefore, that literature allows one to consider that organisational space might also play a key role in the construction of organisational identity.

2.1.1. The individual identity manifests through (organisational) space

As presented in the second chapter, the literature on identity is split in two branches. While a branch of the literature considers identity as an individual's fairly stable component, Brown (2015) argues that "there is an emergent consensus that *identity* refers to the meanings that individuals attach reflexively to themselves, and developed and sustained through processes of social interaction as they seek to address the question 'who am I?'" (Brown, 2015, p. 23). The present research follows the consideration according to which identity is an ongoing process.

Several authors, considering identity as fluid, dynamic and socially constructed, have proposed that the spatial context might intervene in the construction and affirmation of the individual's identity (Elsbach, 2003; Petriglieri & Petriglieri, 2010). In the organisational context, that idea is covered by the concept of "workplace identity" which refers to "the distinctiveness and status self-categorizations used by an individual to signal his or her identity in a specific workplace" (Elsbach, 2003, p. 623). According to Elsbach (2003), the control that a worker exerts in his/her working environment is a decisive element of his/her ability to express his/her identity, distinctiveness and uniqueness among other individuals. In the same vein, drawing on research fields such as geography and sociology, several authors have explained how individuals develop appropriation and territoriality behaviours in order to control the space in which they live and work (e.g. Brown, Lawrence, & Robinson, 2005; Byron & Laurence, 2015; Donis, 2015; Inalhan, 2009; Pierce, Kostova, & Dirks, 2001). As Brown and his colleagues (2005) argue, it is likely that these territorialisation behaviours manifest in the organisational context through identity markers, that is, "territorial behaviors of organizational members that construct and communicate to others at work the members' proprietary attachment to particular organisational objects." (Brown et al., 2005, p. 580).

As the mentioned literature asserts, individual identity is tightly tied to organisational space, to the extent that, through the workspace (s)he works in, the worker is likely to manifest his/her identity.

2.1.2. Contemporary offices challenging the work identity

Among the studies that have dealt with the relationship between organisational space and the worker's identity, a considerable number has studied how specific workspace arrangements (e.g. the home-based office, the open-space and the clean-desk) affect workers and the work-related aspects of their identity (e.g. Baldry & Barnes, 2012; Donis, 2015; Fleming & Spicer, 2004; Larson & Pearson, 2012; Rooney et al., 2010; Wapshott & Mallett, 2012; Warren, 2006). Several studies have demonstrated that contemporary offices affect the work identity, that is, "a work-based self-concept, constituted of a combination of organizational, occupational, and other identities, that shapes the roles individuals adopt and the corresponding ways they behave when performing their work in the context of their jobs and/or careers" (Walsh & Gordon, 2008, p. 47).

As a case in point, Baldry and Barnes (2012) have examined how the introduction of an open-space was perceived by academic workers (i.e. university teachers and researchers) who commonly work in individual closed offices. This research led to the observation that open-space in that case "was seen not only as a degradation of physical working conditions but also as *an erosion of core research and teaching functions and an attack on the professional status of academic work*" (Baldry & Barnes, 2012, p. 240*; emphasis added*). In this research, workers saw the open-space as devaluating the specificity of their occupation and make them "feel like factory fodder" (Baldry & Barnes, 2012, p. 241). In a similar context, Anderson (2006) has shown that academic workers resorted to the home-based office in order to preserve their research activities and thus, their identity as a professional (i.e. the aspects of their professional identity was related to both teaching and researching).

Other studies contribute to demonstrating that organisational space – and contemporary offices in particular – plays an active role in the definition of a worker's identity. For instance, Wapshott and Mallett (2012), while studying home-based teleworking practice, have observed that teleworkers might express difficulties in setting boundaries between aspects of their identity related to their professional life and aspects of their identity related to their private life. In their study, they raise that the home-based teleworking practice introduces a spatial domination of work into the domestic area. Therefore, because of the displacement of the working activity from the organisation's offices to the worker's home, worker's domestic identity might vanish in favour of aspects of identity that are work-related. Tietze and Musson (2010) have brought out similar but more qualified results. Indeed, as they have concluded in their article, "both occupational as well as private identities are "at stake" when organizations burst their boundaries and meet more directly with the domestic sphere" (2010, p. 153). Although the practice of home-based teleworking challenges the ways an individual balances work-related and private-related aspects of his/her identity, Tietze and Musson (2010) have shown that the home-based teleworking practice might help individuals to restore and confirm their identity as a parent or to locate successfully in both work and domestic environments without needing to give up on one aspect of their identity.

To a broader extent, recent research has observed how distance between workers, with the organisation, and with co-workers was likely to challenge professional identity. For instance, Dery and Hafermalz (2016), while studying virtual teams, have shown that remote workers relied on online communication tools, such as an enterprise social network, in order to affirm their existence in the organisation and to stay visible. Therefore, these workers had to actively involve in an identity work and had to manage social network in order to perform their professional identity online. Research mentioned above leads to the conclusion that organisational space and offices, such as the open-space and the home-based office, contribute to constructing the work identity, either by threating or by reinforcing some aspects of it.

While previously mentioned studies underline organisational space effects on individual and work identity, the following section shows that others studies have revealed that space might be used in order to promote a sort of societal identity, which is the production of a worker who would fit the requirements of the post-industrial economy.

2.1.3. Contemporary offices and the attempt to produce the "new model worker"

Recently, researchers have highlighted how management intervenes, through space, design and architecture, in order to mould the individual's identity so that it fits the "new model worker" (Minchella, 2015) or the "post-bureaucratic model worker" (Hancock & Spicer, 2011). For instance, Hancock and Spicer (2011) have studied the new architecture of a British university library. They have argued that, through architectural and aesthetical features, the building operate as an *identityscape*, that is, "a spatially bounded site oriented towards the production of economically viable modes of identity conducive to the demands of a post-industrial economy" (Hancock & Spicer, 2011, p. 91). Minchella (2015) has also observed how organisational space was used in order to produce a "new model worker" whose identity would fit specific organisational needs. These studies suggest that the relationship between an individual and organisational space does not solely affect work- or domestic-related aspects of one's identity, but that organisational space might be used in order to attempt to shape a worker in a way that (s)he fits the Western economic context.

The interest in moulding the worker is not new. Indeed, several authors have already pointed out the identity regulation practices employed by management in order to attempt to produce a worker who would fit specific requirements in terms of skills, behaviours, etc. (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Empson, 2004). However, although management might deploy pervasive ways to win workers' hearts and minds, it would be reductive to consider that a certain type of office shapes the worker as if (s)he was a passive entity totally determined by external forces (Collinson, 2003). Indeed, although organisational space might be used in a coercive way in order to produce a certain type of identity, several authors have highlighted the creative practices through which a worker might resist this process of identity production (e.g. Courpasson, Dany, & Delbridge, 2016; Shortt, 2015; Wasserman & Frenkel, 2011). Section 2.2.2. elaborates more on that argument.

2.1.4. Organisational space questioning the identity at micro and macro level: contributions and limits

As shown in the previous section, recent studies have demonstrated that organisational space and, especially, contemporary offices affect the construction of individual identity and work identity. However, these studies do not fully grasp the concept of organisational identity. Indeed, either research has strictly focused on identity at the individual level, or it questions a sort of societal identity. Yet, as a reminder, organisational identity is "the whole of organisational members' shared interpretations about the *characteristics which compose their organisation and distinguish it* in its social context" (Gomes Da Silva, 2010, p. 200; *translated from French; emphasis added*). Drawing on this definition, one can observe that the already existing research does not understand the part taken by organisational space in the construction of organisational identity.

As shown in the previous section, organisational space and contemporary offices play a key role in the construction of an individual's identity. Accordingly, it appears legitimate to think that organisational space is implied in the organisational identity construction. In order to address that question, the following section focuses on the literature on organisational identity and its relationships to organisational space.

2.2. Organisational space and organisational identity

In this section, I present that research has studied organisational space and its effects on organisational identity. First, I will show that several studies have considered that link according to a modernist perspective, that is, the idea that organisational space conveys an organisational identity which is in accordance with managerial intentions. This echoes what I labelled "space as managerial tool" in the first chapter. The second sub-section presents studies that have suggested that organisational space is a lived dimension and thus, that workers contribute to constructing organisational identity. Especially, in the end of this section, the concept of aesthetics is introduced in order to grasp the connection between organisational space and organisational identity.

2.2.1. Organisational architecture as promoting organisational identity: a functionalist approach

As presented in the first chapter of this thesis, organisational space is the locus of managerial intentions. In this respect, several authors have shown that buildings, offices and visual elements of an organisation are shaped in order to convey a certain, often desirable, image of the organisation (Connellan, 2013; Daskalaki, Stara, & Imas, 2008; Meyer, Höllerer, Jancsary, & van Leeuwen, 2013; Mobach, 2007; Schultz & Hatch, 2009; Seiler, 1984; van Marrewijk, 2009). As Schultz and Hatch (2009) explain "organizations are increasingly using their physical space to express their cultural core values and remind occupants what the organization stands for" (2009, p. 381).

These studies are worth considering but they only take into account organisational space as conceived by management. However, as explained throughout this thesis first and second chapters, this research draws on a symbolic-interpretivist perspective. Accordingly, this research considers that organisational identity is not given but is constructed. Therefore, the following section reviews studies that have argued that workers take part in the organisational identity construction, regardless of what is intended by management through the spatial component.

2.2.2. Resistance and counter-identity practices

As Lefebvre (1974, 1991) argues, space is not only conceived, but it is also lived and perceived. Space is a social construction to which every individual participates. The same is also true for organisational identity. Therefore, contrarily to what suggest the studies mentioned in the previous sub-section, organisational identity does not exist *a priori* and cannot be transmitted to workers by organisational leaders. In this respect, some authors have demonstrated that workers are not passive when they face a transformation in their organisational space, and the managerial intentions about a "new" organisational identity this transformation underlies.

For example, Wasserman and Frenkel (2011) have observed the relocation of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the desired organisational identity this relocation underlid. Interestingly, they have highlighted that workers were conscious of the identity transformations intended by management. More than being conscious of the desired organisational identity, organisational members took actively part in constructing the effective organisational identity (in opposition to the desired organisational identity). On the one hand, some aspects of the identity change were well perceived and accepted by workers. For instance, workers considered that the new value of professionalism was useful and desirable and would enhance their personal and professional status. On the other hand, other aspects were rejected. For instance, the imposition of a Westernness value was interpreted as inauthentic and as denying their original Israeli identity as individuals, but also as a Ministry. As this research demonstrates, focusing on the *lived* space permits to highlight workers' ability "to identify […] the image of the ideal worker that the organization [seeks] to create" (Wasserman & Frenkel, 2011, p. 514). In the same vein, several studies have shown that workers might develop acts of resistance towards organisational space and the messages it embodies (e.g. the desirable behaviours, attitudes, etc.). Vandalising, personalising the organisational space, distorting the use of organisational space, manifesting cynicism towards official discourses, etc. are examples of these acts of resistance (Collinson, 2003; Daskalaki et al., 2008; Donis, 2015; Elsbach, 2003; Wasserman, 2011; Wasserman & Frenkel, 2011).

By highlighting resistance practices, previously mentioned studies argue that organisational identity is not shaped in a unidirectional way by management and organisational space. However, by doing so, these studies fail to approach organisational identity as a *co*-construction and to explain what really happens at the heart of the relationship between organisational space and organisational identity, taken as a collective and shared construct.

In the following section, I draw on the literature on aesthetics to show that organisational space might embody, through the sensual experience it conveys, the organisational identity considered as a collectively shared understanding.

2.2.3. Aesthetics and the sensual experience of the organisational identity

The work of Strati (1996, 2010) and Gagliardi (1990, 1996) allows to consider that the relationship between organisational identity and organisational space might be approached through the literature on aesthetics. As summarised by Strati (2010), "the aesthetic understanding of work and organizational life emphasizes the materiality of everyday work in organizations" (2010, p. 883). This aesthetic approach rests upon the sensual experience of organisational palpable (i.e. the architecture) and non-palpable elements (i.e. the atmosphere) in order "to gain understanding on how work in communities of practices is constantly defined and redefined […], and how this interacts with *the meaning attributed to the organization*" (Strati, 2010, p. 886; *emphasis added*).

In organisation studies, this interest for aesthetics is not new. Indeed, contemporary organisations increasingly invest in the aesthetic dimension of their organisation, their brand, their products, and even their workers (Chugh & Hancock, 2009; Hancock, 2003; Harding, 2003; Warhurst & Nickson, 2007; Witz, Warhurst, & Nickson, 2003). This process of "aestheticization" is defined as "the embellishment and sensualization of everyday objects, environments and experiences" (Hancock, 2003, p. 176). Because it is related to corporate image and market distinctiveness, Schmitt, Simonson and Marcus (1995) have proposed the Corporate Aesthetics Management (CAM) which is "a strategic framework for managing a company's full range of visual (and otherwise aesthetic) output" (Schmitt et al., 1995, p. 82). As this framework suggests, these authors consider that aesthetics and the felt experience aroused in and by an organisation can be managed through logos, trade names, buildings and a series of artefacts. In contrast to this functionalist approach of organisational aesthetics, several researchers have proposed to bring a more qualified look on the idea of aesthetics (Carr & Hancock, 2003; Chugh & Hancock, 2009; Warren, 2002; Witz et al., 2003). These researchers suggest that the organisation *is* aesthetics. Accordingly, aesthetics and organisations are not two separate entities and organisational artefacts convey a sensual experience of the organisation and its identity: "[i]n things reside the traces and memories of our past, the witness to our present experiences, our desires and our dreams for the future. Things tell us constantly *who we are, what it is that differentiates us from others* and what is that we have in common with others" (Gagliardi, 1996, p. 708; *emphasis added*).

Interestingly, Chugh and Hancock (2009) have proposed that an organisation's architectural and spatial design are an organisation's aesthetic dimension that acts "as a media of meaning construction for both employees and clients" (2009, p. 464). Since workers experience and inhabit the organisational space, their interpret their work environment in a way that might be different from what was meant by management (i.e. the conceived space) (Daskalaki et al., 2008; Lefebvre, 1974, 1991; Wasserman & Frenkel, 2011). Indeed, as Gagliardi claims, "[o]ffice landscaping is […] [a] contested terrain, the form and meaning of which are subject to divergent claims and controversial, paradoxical and contradictory interpretations by diverse actors" (1996, p. 715). This echoes the conceptualisation of organisational identity seen as a social construct, and shared by all organisational members. As a reminder, in the second chapter, organisational identity was defined as the "whole of organisational members' shared interpretations about the characteristics which compose their organisation and distinguish it in its social context" (Gomes Da Silva, 2010, p. 200; *translated from French*).

Drawing on organisational identity definition and on aesthetics literature, it appears legitimate to consider that organisational identity is a sensual experience of the organisational space, its artefacts and the bodily experiences that organisational space enables. Indeed, as Wasserman and Frenkel (2011) have observed, an organisation's aesthetics is likely to lead organisation's members to "sense *what the organisation is* all about, what *its main values* are, and *who the organisation sees as the ideal worker*" (Wasserman & Frenkel, 2011, p. 503*; emphases added*). That idea is also supported by Harquail and King (2010) who suggest that "an individual may employ a full range of embodied capacities to assess, experience, feel attracted to, and express an organization's identity" (2010, p. 1632).

By considering that organisational space and its inhabitants embody a certain atmosphere which is specifically related to an organisation, the aesthetics literature allows to think that organisational space leads to experience organisational identity, taken as a collectively shared understanding. Indeed, it is likely that the sensual experience of the organisation is more or less common to organisational members.

Drawing on the previous elements, the following section develops the arguments that lead to the formulation and justification of the research statement.

3. Understanding the role organisational space plays in the construction of organisational identity

This section aims to develop the research argument which is, that organisational space plays a role in the construction of organisational identity.

As emphasised in the first chapter of this thesis, organisational space is a conceived dimension of the organisational landscape. Therefore, it is likely for organisational space and its (re)configurations to go along with the promotion of certain behaviours, skills, values, attitudes, etc. For instance, several studies have highlighted that an organisation's physical aspect (i.e. its architecture, its offices, its decor, etc.) might be designed in order to convey the idea of robustness, "Westernness", entrepreneurialism, professionalism (e.g. Dale & Burrell, 2008b; Daskalaki et al., 2008; Gombault, 2003; Schultz & Hatch, 2009; Wasserman & Frenkel, 2011). In the case of the office design, Connellan (2013) has observed how the dominant use of the colour white in architecture and design might aim at imposing a sense of normativity, order and what she names an "identity-less space", stopping anyone from marking the space by his/her presence (Connellan, 2013, p. 15). In particular, organisational space conveys information about what an organisation expects from workers (Hancock & Spicer, 2011; Harding, 2003; Minchella, 2015; Wapshott & Mallett, 2012; Wasserman & Frenkel, 2011; Witz et al., 2003). This idea that organisational space and contemporary offices underlie specific behaviours, ways of being, values, etc. is directly related to organisational identity.

As a reminder, organisational identity is defined as "whole of organisational members' shared interpretations about the characteristics which compose their organisation and distinguish it in its social context" (Gomes Da Silva, 2010, p. 200; *translated from French*). These characteristics that are specific to an organisation are likely to be found in the behaviours, values, attitudes, etc. shared by organisational members. Following that argument, one can consider that, because organisational space and new contemporary offices influence an organisation's specific characteristics, they also influence the construction of an organisation's identity.

As previously developed, several studies have already investigated the relation between organisational space and the identity construction. However, these studies either took a very narrow (i.e. the individual's identity) or a very broad approach (i.e. a "societal" identity). Therefore, they did not understand the role played by organisational space and, in particular, contemporary offices in the construction of organisational identity. This thesis explores this unsolved research question and aims to understand the influence of the office in the construction of organisational identity.

I propose to draw on the literature on aesthetics to investigate this research question. The aesthetics literature considers that an organisation, and notably organisational space, is the locus of a sensual experience. I argue that this sensual experience might be related to organisational identity. Indeed, the concept of aesthetics allows one to consider that organisational space conveys a certain atmosphere that is *specific* to an organisation and that is shared among workers who inhabit the same organisational space.

Therefore, one might consider that aesthetics is a specific experience of an organisation that is shared by members and thus, that it is related to an organisation's identity. For instance, I propose that, even though certain types of offices (e.g. the clean-desk) might be perceived as identity-less (Connellan, 2013), organisational identity will always be likely to be "felt" because of the inexorable workers' presence who, through their inhabitation of organisational space, embody and experience the organisation's atmosphere which is directly connected to a certain organisational identity.

In conclusion, in the previous sections, I have highlighted several studies on the basis of which I argue that organisational space might contribute to the emergence of new shared norms in terms of behaviours, attitudes, values, etc. that are specific to an organisation. Therefore, I suggest that organisational identity might be understood as a shared belief and experience of what is normal to expect from workers in a specific organisation. In management, this is what one calls a "convention".

4. The role of the office in the construction of organisational identity: a conventionalist approach

This section aims to argue that the theory of conventions in management is worth considering in order to approach our research question. First, I briefly introduce the theory of conventions in the field of management. Second, I develop the argument according to which organisational identity might be thought as a convention.

4.1. The French theory of conventions in management

The theory of conventions has been considered in several fields of research, such as economics and sociology (see e.g. Boltanski & Thévenot, 1991; Favereau, 1989a, 1989b; Orléan, 2004). In accordance with the field of management sciences, I draw on the seminal work of Gomez in order to approach the theory of conventions. First, I briefly present the morphology of the convention and define the convention. Second, I present the dynamics of conventions.

4.1.1. Convention: morphology and definition

Based on a concept of bounded rationality, the French theory of conventions argues that situations of uncertainty cannot be coped with an objective rational process. Therefore, in order to face the uncertainty, through a process of justification an individual takes action by "rationalising" his/her decision (Gomez & Jones, 2000). This process of justification rests upon the belief of rational voids, in other words systems of unjustified beliefs. These rational voids are "surrounded by a screen of information which both provides individuals with signals that they share the same assumptions, and also distracts their attention from questioning it" (Gomez & Jones, 2000, p. 699). Depending on the information it rests upon, a convention is more or less complex. This means that the more the statement is rich, the more it is complex and thus, the less it leaves for interpretation. Gomez (1994) distinguishes two extreme types of conventions, depending on the complexity level. Either the complexity is maximal, and the convention is said "monocentric"; or the complexity is minimal, and the convention is said "polycentric".

As Gomez (1995) explains "[a] convention cannot simply be a belief that fits into the psyche. It musts materialise in the reality […] for the individual to adopt it" (1995, p. 152; *translated from French*). A convention is an information system whose morphology is composed of (i) a statement, and (ii) a material apparatus (Gomez, 1996). Each of these components is subdivided into three elements.

The statement aims to convey a message about the behaviours that are compatible with the convention and the behaviours that are not. It is composed of three sub-levels: (i) a first principle, (ii) a distinction between adopters, and (iii) a sanction. The (i) first principle "indicates the ultimate justification criteria that allows individuals to feel "in the conventional norm"" (Gomez, 1996, p. 193; *translated from French*). The (ii) distinction between adopters "informs about the role of the different adopters categories, their hierarchies and their relative duties" (Gomez, 1996, p. 193; *translated from French*). The (iii) sanction describes the necessary conditions to stay in the convention or to be excluded from it. The different elements of the statement are synthesised in the Table 3 below.

Question	Statement component	Content
Why is it desirable to adopt the convention?	First principle	Presents the values shared by the adopters.
Who are the adopters?	Distinction	Presents the adopters hierarchy.
How does one become an adopter or is one excluded?	Sanction	Describes the limit between individuals *inside* and *outside* the convention.

Table 3 - Synthesis of the statement components (adapted from Gomez (1994, p. 111, 1996))

The material apparatus is the statement materialisation. It is composed of (i) the relations between contacts, (ii) the type and level of technologies, and (iii) the level of interpretation regarding the convention. The (i) relations between contacts provide information about the connections between individuals within the same convention. The (ii) type and level of technologies permits to know how the information is communicated between individuals supposed to act similarly within the same convention. The (iii) level of interpretation indicates "the flexibility of the convention, the capacity let to individuals to locally question the convention rules" (Gomez, 1994, p. 195; *translated from French*). The different elements of the statement are synthesised in the Table 4 below.

Question	Material apparatus	Content
How do the adopters recognise each other?	Contacts	Permits to repeat the convention.
How do the adopters communicate their adhesion?	Technology	Communicates and homogenises the expression of the convention adoption.
What is the possibility of negotiation regarding the convention?	Level of interpretation	Defines the possibility of local arrangements regarding the convention.

Table 4 - Synthesis of the material apparatus components (adapted from Gomez (1994, p. 114, 1996))

Despite its apparent solid structure, a convention is not static and is subjected to evolution. A conventionalist crisis is likely to occur, in particular if the principle of coherence is not respected (i.e. the different components of the convention must be coherent between them) (Gomez, 1995). Indeed, if a convention is not sufficiently consistent, the risk is that another convention (what Gomez (1994, 1995) labels the "suspicion of convention") comes to dominate. As Gomez explains, "[b]ecause a convention is only the product of its adoption by individuals, it is likely to evolve, to be modified and to disappear" (Gomez, 2011, p. 53; *translated from French*). Thus, conventions are at the centre of a dynamic process.

In conclusion, a convention is defined as "a behaviours coordination structure offering a recurrent problem-solving process by delivering more or less complex information on mimetic behaviours so that the interpretation of this information by the adopters do not question the collective procedure" (Gomez, 1994, p. 194; *translated from French*).

4.1.2. The dynamics of conventions

In times of change, conventions might compete with one another. In the case of a conventionalist crisis, this might lead to three types of outcomes (Gomez, 1994). When the coherence principle is not sufficiently respected, the convention might (i) *collapse*, in favour of the suspicion. The convention might also (ii) *adjust*. Third, (iii) *resistance* might manifest with regard to the suspicion. In that case, the first convention stays in place but adopters are likely to split between promotors of the first convention, and promotors of the suspicion. The interest of the theory of conventions is not about the conventions content, but resides specifically in the process through which rational voids appear, stay and evolve (Gomez, 1999).

In order to distinguish the convention from other concepts (e.g. the law), it is essential to keep in mind that a convention is a shared conviction that is organisationally grounded (Gomez, 1996).

In the following section, I explain why the organisational identity should be considered as a convention.

4.2. Relevance of the theory of conventions for the research question

The present section aims to justify the pertinence of the theory of conventions to address the research question. In order to do so, I first consider why the organisational identity should be understood as a convention. Second, drawing on a few pieces of research, I argue that the office is likely to play a role in the convention.

4.2.1. Thinking organisational identity as a convention

As a reminder, organisational identity is a shared understanding about essential and distinctive characteristics (Gomes Da Silva, 2010). Since these characteristics contribute to an organisation's distinctiveness and specificity, one can say that they are related to an organisation's common "way of being" and "way of doing". Therefore, these characteristics are based on (i) the work and activities (whether they are related to the core business or not) that are conducted in an organisation and (ii) the way these activities are carried out.

In conclusion, organisational identity is a shared understanding of what is specifically required in an organisation in terms of behaviours, attitudes, values, etc. Similarly to a convention, it is (i) a shared social construction that (ii) relies on available information (iii) in order to inform about the mimetic behaviours to adopt in order to be "in the convention".

4.2.2. The office role in the convention

The present research aims to understand the role played by the office in the construction of organisational identity (which is a convention, as argued above). To the best of my knowledge, no research has investigated the present research question in a conventionalist approach yet. However, there are a few studies that allow me to suggest that studying an office change (e.g. the transition to a new workspace setting) according to the theory of conventions is worth considering.

Several authors show that the spatial dimension conveys information about norms, rules, and what constitutes a desirable behaviour. In their research about consultants working in multi-locations, Hislop and Axtel (2009) have highlighted that the relationship between a worker and its workspace is affected by a "social norms" dimension. This dimension refers to "the informal norms that evolve to shape what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in particular locations and which are typically regulated and enacted by the people who share and use such spaces." (Hislop & Axtell, 2009, p. 63). Even though these authors do not base their research on theory of conventions, they define "social norms" as Gomez (1994) define a convention. Others researchers have highlighted that space embodies social norms, either because it is conceived in such a way that designers inscribe desirable and undesirable behaviours in space (Kingma, 2008; Morrison & Macky, 2017; Wasserman & Frenkel, 2015), or because, since it is occupied by other individuals, space are arranged in such a way that there are conventional and unconventional ways of using space (Bourgeault et al., 2012). By drawing on aesthetics literature, Berthoin Antal and Friedman (2017) argue that norms and rules are also conveyed through bodily practices. That being said, these authors underline that space does not impose bodily practices in a deterministic way, but that it is "through the agency of people who interact with the physical space and among themselves" (Berthoin Antal & Friedman, 2017, p. 245) that space provides cues for behaviours. As one might see, other researchers have demonstrated that space, through its inhabitants, their spatial experience and their bodily practices, is one dimension that allows workers to know and communicate (also by their own agency, e.g. their bodily practices) what constitutes an ideal behaviour.

Drawing on these studies, I argue that it is relevant to study how office configurations lead workers to interpret the conventional way to behave in a specific organisation. For instance, Taskin and Gomez (2015) have studied a teleworking practice implementation in two Belgian ministries and have analysed it through the theory of conventions. In their research, the theory of conventions has allowed them to understand why, when implementing teleworking practice, one ministry met success while the other was confronted with failure. For example, in the failure case, Taskin and Gomez (2015) explain that the teleworking practice introduced new rules of control that were in contradiction with the existing convention. Therefore, because of the existing convention coherence, the convention in place resisted and led to the disappearance of the suspicion and, ultimately, of the teleworking project. As that research demonstrates, considering the introduction of new contemporary offices according to a conventionalist approach is likely to reveal that a new office might generate a conventionalist crisis and, through the dynamics of conventions, influence the future of the current convention. This approach appears particularly relevant for studying cases in which the transition to new offices is challenged by workers or meets failure. For instance, while open-space is often introduced in order to encourage collaboration, creativity, sociability and less formalism, Thanem, Varlander and Cummings (2011) have observed that, in a bureaucratic environment, it does not necessarily succeed in encouraging these behaviours, attitudes and values. As the authors explain: "Rather than leading to more social interaction and to the disruption of norms of behaviour, interaction and performance, as might have been an expected effect of the pro-creative open office designs, employees therefore responded to the open office spaces with tactics to avoid and regulate socialization" (Thanem et al., 2011, p. 29). The observations of Thanem and colleagues (2011) suggest that an open-space might introduce new expectations in terms of behaviours, attitudes, values, etc. and that these new expectations might be realised or not. Therefore, I suggest that, in that case, the open-space introduces a conventionalist crisis. In the same vain, a clean-desk is also susceptible to introduce a conventionalist crisis. Warren (2006), for instance, has observed that, in an organisation, some departments comply with the clean-desk policy while other departments do not. I propose that this observation might reveal a conventionalist crisis which, in some departments, leads to the collapse of an existing convention in favour of its suspicion, and in other departments leads to resistance towards a suspicion and to the maintenance of an existing convention.

In conclusion to the present section, I propose that organisational identity is a convention because it is a shared understanding of what is specifically normal to expect from workers of an organisation in terms of behaviours, attitudes, values, etc. Since the transition from one type of office to another is likely to introduce changes in what is expected from workers, I suggest that the transition to a new type of office might involve a conventionalist crisis, that is, a doubt about what is specifically normal to expect from organisation's workers, in other terms a doubt about the organisation's identity. Therefore, the theory of conventions allows to understand organisational identity and its production process when an organisation faces a change in the offices spatial configuration.

In the following section, I clarify the research statement and intentions.

4.3. Research statement and intentions

The aim of this research is to understand the role the office plays in the social production of an organisation's identity. Drawing on the scientific literature, I argue that the office might take part in organisational identity construction because the office embodies two essential elements that contribute to an organisation's specificity and thus, to its identity. On the one hand, the office is the locus of specific expectations that are conceived and lived by organisational members. These expectations designate desirable behaviours, ways of doing and ways of being in a specific organisation. On the other hand, the office contributes to the construction of an organisation's identity through the sensual experience it provokes to workers and to which these workers contribute. Moreover, these two components might be related since what is required from workers is likely to be communicated by official discourses and co-workers' behaviours, but also by the atmosphere experienced by the workers in an organisation.

The present research statement aims to understand "the role of the office in the construction of organisational identity". In accordance with the arguments previously developed, it is possible to decompose that question in sub-questions such as: *How does a certain type of office contribute to influencing the shared perception of "what is normal to expect from the workers of an organisation"? To what extent does the office's shared atmosphere convey information about what is required from workers?*

As previously argued, I intend to understand the office role in the construction of organisational identity by drawing on the French theory of conventions. Accordingly, I propose that organisational identity is a convention because it is a shared understanding of what is specifically normal to expect from workers of an organisation, whether these expectations are about values, behaviours or attitudes. Moreover, I suggest that the transition to a new office might introduce a suspicion to an existing convention. Therefore, I consider that a new office is likely to modify the convention in place, that is, the organisational identity.

5. Conclusion of the chapter

The objective of this third chapter was twofold. First, this chapter is a corner stone of the theoretical research. Indeed, it aimed at linking up the two first chapters and the two main concepts of this doctoral research, that is to say, (i) the organisational space and the office, and (ii) the organisational identity. Second, it presented and justified the theoretical framework. In this conclusion, I come back to central elements of this chapter.

In the first section of this chapter, I have argued that a few pieces of research have already investigated the connection between organisational space and offices, and identity. Until this chapter, identity had been merely considered at the organisation level. However, I have highlighted that it was worth considering the literature about the effects of organisational space on identity *lato sensu*. Indeed, some studies have demonstrated that organisational space challenges individual and work identity, that is, identity at the level of the individual. Moreover, organisational space also affects identity at a more collective level (i.e. a societal identity). These elements are important because they suggest that the effect of organisational space and offices might be also found at the intersection of these two levels, that is, at the organisation level. Yet, as discussed later in that section, research that has focused on organisational identity and organisational space is either scarce, or has often adopted a modernist perspective. This means that it considers that organisation's identity is shaped by management, or resisted by workers. Therefore, these studies did not approach organisational identity as a belief that is *constructed and shared by all* workers. However, my definition of organisational identity is based on the idea that organisational identity is about interpretations and beliefs that are *shared* among workers of the same organisation. Literature on aesthetics contributes to considering that organisational space might be the locus of a sensual experience that is shared by organisation's workers. Therefore, drawing on the aesthetics literature, I have considered that organisational space embodies an organisational identity that is commonly experienced by workers.

These elements of scientific literature allow to formulate the following research question: "What is the role of the office in the construction of an organisation's identity?".

The second purpose of this chapter was to propose the theoretical framework through which the research statement is investigated. Drawing on the theory of conventions, I have argued (i) that organisational identity should be thought as a convention, and (ii) that a new type of office was likely to introduce a suspicion to a convention in place in an organisation. In conclusion, I suggest that a new type of office is likely to alter the shared understanding of what is normal to expect from workers of a specific organisation, in other words the organisational identity. Therefore, the present doctoral thesis aims to understand the role the office plays in the construction of an organisation's identity.

Sum and substance
▪ Contemporary offices are likely to take part in an organisation's identity construction because they influence an organisation's specific characteristics (i.e. values, norms, attitudes, behaviours, etc.). ▪ According to the **French theory of conventions**, a convention is "a behaviours coordination structure offering a recurrent problem-solving process by delivering more or less complex information on mimetic behaviours so that the interpretation of this information by the adopters do not question the collective procedure" (Gomez, 1994, p. 194; *translated from French*). ▪ Since the transition from one type of office to another is likely to introduce changes in what is specifically normal to expect from workers, (i.e. the organisation's identity), I suggest that an office change influences the dynamic process leading to the convention production.

SECTION II
EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Section II: Empirical research	
Chapter 4. Epistemological posture and methodological design.	Chapter 5. *ORES*: presentation of the company, and of *ORES WaPi*.

Epistemological posture, methodological design, and description of the studied organisation

Structure of the upcoming section

CHAPTER 4. EPISTEMOLOGICAL POSTURE AND METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

1. Introduction

The aim of this fourth chapter is to clarify the epistemological posture underlying this research, and to explain the methodology designed in order to answer the research question.

First, I explain why this doctoral research rests upon an interpretivist epistemology, and what the assumptions of this epistemology are.

Second, the methodological design is described. I clarify why this research draws on a qualitative methodology and why I conducted a single-case study. Then, I present the three data collection methods used in this research: (i) semi-structured interviews, (ii) participant observation, and (iii) documentary analysis.

Finally, I explain the two methods that I used in order to analyse the data: (i) the thematic analysis, and (ii) the analysis by conceptualising categories.

2. Ontological and epistemological positioning

According to David (2012), in the field of management, reality is "a permanent process of construction and transformation. Reality is not a world given and moved by laws that are independent from us" (2012, p. 132; *translated from French*). Therefore, David (2012) clearly posits the field of management studies in a non-essentialist ontology. While there are probably several researchers in management who could disagree with this point of view, I agree with David (2012) and position my research according to a non-essentialist ontology.

This conception of reality is related to a certain conception of knowledge, in other words to a certain epistemology. As Allard-Poesi and Perret (2014) explain, in accordance with a non-essentialist ontology, knowledge is considered as resulting from individuals' experiences, feelings and interactions and, therefore, knowledge is necessarily relative to contexts. Therefore, knowledge is considered as constructed, unstable and versatile.

Drawing on that interpretivist perspective, I consider that social reality is composed by actions, meanings, artefacts, social practices, etc. and that actors continuously interpret this social reality and the meanings they assign to it (Allard-Poesi & Perret, 2014; Myers, 2013). In accordance with this epistemology, the researcher adopting an interpretivist posture aims to understand how actors perceive their reality, and what significations they attribute to it (Myers, 2013). Contrarily to research assuming an essentialist ontology, interpretivist research does not aim to explain a phenomenon but "to grasp how meaning constructs in and through social interactions, practices and discourses" (Allard-Poesi & Perret, 2014, p. 17; *translated from French*).

This epistemological posture is coherent with the present research question for two main reasons. First, interpretivism takes into consideration the role played by artefacts and symbols in the social construction of reality. Yet, this research focuses on the office and argues that this artefact is likely to contribute to constructing organisational identity. This assumption is in line with the work of several authors such as Lefebvre (1991), Halford (2004) and Taylor and Spicer (2007) who already argued, theoretically and/or empirically, that space broadly taken is not a neutral dimension. Indeed, offices are an organisation's physical feature that underlies managerial intentions, and that embodies symbols. These symbols are interpreted by individuals who attribute meanings to them, and who take part, by their acts, to the meanings associated with these symbols and the global environment they work in. Interpretivism is also in line with the second object of this research which is organisational identity. As developed in the second chapter of this thesis, according to an interpretivist perspective, organisational identity is considered as the interpretations organisational members share about their organisation and its features (Gomes Da Silva, 2010). Considering the objects of this research (i.e. office and organisational identity), it seems consistent to adopt an interpretivist perspective. Indeed, these objects are both considered constructed and interpreted by and during social relations.

Second, an interpretivist perspective is consistent with the objectives of this research. Indeed, this research intends to understand how the office influences the construction of organisational identity. There is no intention to explain a phenomenon, but rather to explore and understand it. This comprehensive approach allows to consider and understand why and how organisational members experience their work environment, interpret it, attribute to it a specific meaning and *in fine* produce a representation (shared by groups of actors) of their organisation's identity.

3. Research design

3.1. A qualitative research

As previously explained, this doctoral thesis aims at understanding how the reconfiguration of offices might affect the construction of an organisation's identity. In line with this research question, I adopt an exploratory approach. The methodology results from this approach. As explained by Baumard and Ibert (2014), a research can aim at testing or constructing. While a quantitative methodology suits better a hypothetico-deductive reasoning and the purpose to test hypotheses, a qualitative methodology is more adapted to explore and understand an unknown phenomenon.

Even though a theoretical framework precedes the fieldwork and permits to start the data collection with a certain theoretical knowledge in mind, there are no real strong hypotheses that precede the data collection. The fieldwork is precisely the locus to explore the research question and develop knowledge about the phenomenon of organisational identity construction, and the role supposedly played by the office in this phenomenon. Considering this, a qualitative research is ideal because, as explained by Gombault (2006), “the general orientation of qualitative research is the search of meaning: it is about identifying formal systems underlying human actions and social facts” (2006, p. 38; *translated from French*). Moreover, this type of research is particularly interesting when the researcher needs to invest a phenomenon in-depth, by taking into consideration its context in order to understand social, cultural, political aspects of an organisation, but also actors’ actions, beliefs, thoughts, etc. (Giordano, 2003; Myers, 2013). Yet, in this research, the context is particularly interesting since it is directly related to the research question. Indeed, since the research aims at understanding the role the office plays in the construction of organisational identity, I focus on the context of an office reconfiguration. Moreover, the present research is about understanding a phenomenon which cannot be easily observed, that is an organisation’s identity and its construction and alterations. Therefore, an in-depth immersion in an organisation seems more suitable to access to workers’ experience of new offices, collective understanding of what the organisation is about and, *in fine*, to organisational identity.

This research does not follow a hypothetico-deductive reasoning. However, I cannot really qualify this research as inductive. As Hlady-Rispal (2015) explains, even in research based on case studies, an empirico-inductive approach is highly scarce. In this research, the exploration and the fieldwork takes place after a review of the literature which already seeks to tie connections between the two objects of research which are contemporary offices and organisational identity. Therefore, the approach of this research corresponds to what several authors named an abductive approach (Charreire Petit & Durieux, 2014; David, 2012; Dumez, 2012). This approach “assigns primacy to the empirical world, but in the service of theorizing” (van Maanen, Sørensen, & Mitchell, 2007, p. 1149). By doing so, it leads to the production of “hypothetico-inductions” which confirm or disconfirm the understanding under construction (Hlady-Rispal, 2015).

I consider that an abductive approach is ideal for the present research because it does not impose a rigid theoretical framework and it aims not at formulating rules based on facts. Rather, abductive approach consists in understanding a phenomenon and in *trying* to formulate a rule that must be tested, in following research, in order to be validated (Charreire Petit & Durieux, 2014; Dumez, 2012). In conclusion, abduction allows a back and forth process between theory and fieldwork in order to gradually readjust the theory and improve the knowledge of the phenomenon being studied according to what happens during the fieldwork. This approach is particularly relevant for the study of organisational identity construction because, as pointed out by Ravasi and Canato (2013), the concept of organisational identity is not clearly defined yet, and there is still a lot to learn about the phenomenon of organisational identity construction. Therefore, I hope that the back and forth process allowed by an abductive approach will help to enrich the definition of organisational identity, and to deepen the understanding of its construction.

3.2. A single-case study

As explained by Yin (2014), the choice among the various research methods should depend on the type of question being asked. In line with this, several authors consider that questions asking "how" or "why" and attempting to understand the process and dynamics underlying a phenomenon in a specific environment indicate an exploratory research and are likely to favour the use of case studies (Gombault, 2006; Myers, 2013; Yin, 2014). A case study is defined as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident." (Yin, 2014, p. 16).

Beyond the nature of the question, several reasons justify the use of case studies. Case studies allow to contextualise a research question, and thus to take the whole environment into consideration in order to apprehend the mechanisms underlying a precise situation (Wacheux, 2006). In line with this, it helps to situate a phenomenon in real temporal and social circumstances, and thus to make that phenomenon more concrete than in the theory (Gombault, 2006; Myers, 2013). Also, case studies give access to the everyday life of actors, allow the understanding of a social situation from the inside, and thus ease the production of knowledge about social situations that cannot be grasped by a researcher if they are not studied with an in-depth investigation (Myers, 2013).

This research addresses the following question: "What is the role of the office in the construction of an organisation's identity?". It aims at understanding invisible mechanisms underlying the meaning that organisational actors collectively attribute to an office re-arrangement and by extension to their organisation's identity. As previously explained, this research requires deep immersion in an organisation in order to observe the work environment, and to experience the whole organisational aesthetics. Indeed, I argue that the meaning organisational actors attribute to their organisation depends on the spatial experience. Therefore, since I question this experience, it is important that I have access to it by myself. Indeed, as explained by Wacheux (2006), "it is necessary to exchange with [organisational members] and to share their daily life in order to be able, perhaps, to accede to the meanings of situations. […]. To understand a phenomenon, the researcher must socially and objectively fit in an organisational context, by means of his/her mastery of theory" (2006, p. 16; *translated from French*). Considering the fact that this research is interested in understanding a complex social phenomenon and that this phenomenon is related to the organisational context, a case study appears as an ideal research method.

While it is possible to conduct several case studies, I conducted a single-case study. According to Yin (2014), there are five rationales justifying that a researcher opts for a single-case study; these reasons are "having a *critical, unusual, common, revelatory,* or *longitudinal* case" (2014, p. 51). On the basis of these five rationales, I justify the choice of a single case because the organisation chosen in this research can be considered as a "common case". As Yin (2014) explains, in a common case "the objective is to capture the circumstances and conditions of an everyday situation […] because of the lessons it might provide about the social processes related to some theoretical interests" (2014, p. 52). Yet, as this research aims at observing the effects of an offices reconfiguration – which is now a rather common organisational phenomenon –, one might agree with the common case rationale, and the justification of the single-case study. Moreover, in accordance with Dyer and Wilkins (1991), I also justify the use of a single case by the fact that this research necessitates an in-depth immersion in an organisation in order to understand organisational features. Finally, regarding the choice of the investigated organisation, I decided to conduct my research in an organisation which had recently changed its offices (e.g. in a period not exceeding 24 months). This seemed to be an adequate timing that would prevent me from interviewing actors who would already be used to their new work environment (if the data collection is too late), or would still be in the adaptation process (if the data collection is too soon).

In this type of research, one might wonder how the analysis resulting from a single-case study can be generalised. It is important to address this question by clarifying the type of generalisation aimed in this research, and thus the difference between statistical generalisation and analytic generalisation. While the concept of generalisation often underlies statistical generalisation (i.e. when "an inference is made about a population (or universe) on basis of empirical data collected from a sample of that universe" (Yin, 2014, p. 40)), this research based on a case study aims an analytical generalisation. This means that the case study allows "to put a theory or propositions to the test by extracting tracks of theoretical generalisation" (Giroux, 2003, p. 43; *translated from French*). As explained by Yin (2014), this type of generalisation may be based on either "(a) a corroborating, modifying, rejecting, or otherwise advancing theoretical concepts that you referenced in designing your case study or (b) new concepts that arose upon the completion of your case study" (2014, p. 41).

Finally, one might reproach to case studies that they are limited because based on the researcher who has a selective attention of the case and who focuses on respondents who are likely to produce biased answers. Yet, in accordance with the underlying interpretivist perspective in this research, this is not a problem. Indeed, as Demers (2003) argues, "[i]n an interpretivist perspective, respondents' "bias", that is their particular point of view about the studied phenomenon, are not a validity problem to solve, they are the very object of the research." (2003, p. 180; *translated from French*).

Also, while case studies might seem limited because based on the researcher's selective attention, it is important to specify that the richness of case study relies on the plurality and diversity of the sources mobilised in the research, and ensuring that the data triangulate (Myers, 2013; Wacheux, 2006; Yin, 2014).

4. Data collection methods and access to the fieldwork

In this section, I explain the three methods I used to collect my data. These data collection methods are (i) semi-structured interviews, (ii) participant observation, and (iii) documentary analysis. Before clarifying these methods, I present the concept of data triangulation.

After these theoretical justifications of the mobilised methodology, I describe how I identified and accessed the fieldwork.

4.1. Data triangulation

A case study consists in investigating a case in depth, ideally by the means of several data collection methods, or data triangulation. Several benefits related to data triangulation justify that one chooses to recourse to different data collection methods. First, as several authors argue, the use of several data collection methods is likely to depict a fuller and richer picture of the case being studied (Gombault, 2006; Myers, 2013; Yin, 2014). Moreover, according to Demers (2003), triangulation of data allows to overcome the limits of other qualitative methods taken solely, for instance interviews. Indeed, he explains that interviews are opened to several bias (e.g. memory bias, rationalisation, etc.) and that relying on diverse methods helps to partially avoid these limits by comparing data resulting from interviews with data resulting from other sources of evidence. Finally, the interest of using multiple sources of evidence is that it permits what Yin labels "the development of converging lines of inquiry" (2014, pp. 119–120). According to this idea, the convincing nature of a case depends on the fact that diverse sources of information are used, converge and, finally, strengthen the validity of the case study and the researcher's analysis.

In this research, I consider that data triangulation is essential, especially because I focus on a single case, and intend to propose a thick description of this one. In the following sub-sections, I explain the three data collection methods used in this research. Before doing so, I explain how I found and chose the organisation where I collected the data, and introduce this organisation.

4.2. Choice of the case

In order to identify an organisation that would be interesting to investigate to address the present research question, it was necessary to list selection criteria. I have chosen three criteria that should allow to select an appropriate organisation to study. These criteria are: (i) the existence of a substantial office change, (ii) the temporal timing of the change, (iii) practicability of the research investigation, and (iv) the opportunity.

The first criteria is related to the research question. Since the purpose of this research is to understand how the change of the work environment, and particularly the office, is likely to influence an organisation's identity, it was necessary that the case study deals with an organisation which introduces a substantial change in its work environment and the configuration of its offices. Even though I could have considered different types of office configurations, I decided to investigate an organisation that had reconfigured its offices in an activity-based workspace with a clean-desk policy.

The second criteria is about the timing of the change to be studied. For data collection to be effective, it seemed necessary to commence after the organisation had completely reconfigured its work environment. Moreover, as previously explained, in order to investigate the organisation's identity, it was decided that the office change occurred in a previous period not exceeding 24 months.

The third selection criteria is about the practical implications of the chosen case. For practical reasons, it was necessary for the organisation to be located in Belgium, that it employs a majority of French-speaking workers, that it accepts my presence for a period of three to six months in its offices, agrees that I conduct interviews with its workers, and that I take pictures of the work environment.

After clarifying these selection criteria, I looked for organisations which were invested in a project of office reconfiguration. This work was mainly conducted by looking on internet, companies' websites, online news, etc. This led to a first phone contact with four private companies. Two of these companies were rapidly excluded from further consideration because it appeared that they did not meet the criteria. One of them was considering the reconfiguration of its work environment, but had not made the effective changes yet. The second company did not follow up on my request. The two other companies fitted the criteria.

In December 2016, I met the human resources director of one of these two companies. During this meeting, I presented my research project, listened to the offices reconfiguration this company had recently put in place, and discussed about the opportunity to access to this company for a three to six months period. Despite the mutual interest, the human resources director of this company refused to take part to the research because of the required time investment.

Finally, the second company which fitted the criteria gave me the opportunity to visit their new site that had completely been reconfigured (i.e. a brand new building with an activity-based workspace). This company is *ORES* and the site was the site of *ORES Picardy Wallonia*, located in Leuze-en-Hainaut. This visit took place as part of a day during which a person in charge of the project presented this new building and the organisation's underlying motivations to fellow HR managers from other companies. This day was part of a sort of "think tank" between several companies. I was invited to take part to this day, and presented myself as a researcher. This visit and the presentation confirmed the information I had previously gathered about this project, and my interest for this organisation. This led me to ask for a meeting with the human resources director of the company. Similarly to the meeting with the previous company, I presented my research project, my interest for the company, and we discussed about a possible agreement. The second human resources director accepted to take part to the research, considering it would be an interesting asset for them. This company is *ORES*.

In accordance with the human resources director of *ORES*, it was decided that I would conduct my research in the site of *ORES Picardy Wallonia* which was a new building where workers had moved in in July 2015. A research agreement was signed between the human resources director of *ORES*, my thesis supervisor, and myself. This agreement specified the context and purpose of the research, its timing and the methodology. In terms of timing, we had planned that I would conduct my interviews from February to April 2017. This agreement also clarified the confidentiality issue related to the case. We agreed about the anonymity of the research participants, and of the company, except for scientific publications, such as this doctoral thesis. After this, my person of contact for the following months was the director of the *ORES Picardy Wallonia* site.

In the chapter five, I explain in details the company *ORES*, and the site of *ORES Picardy Wallonia* where I collected the majority of my data.

4.3. Semi-structured interviews

The most central method for collecting data in this research are the semi-structured interviews. Between March and November 2017, I conducted 81 semi-structured interviews (see Appendix 1) with 74 employees, 5 top managers, the owner of the consulting agency that helped *ORES* in developing its new work environment, the human resources director and the chief executive officer of *ORES*. 79 of these interviews were collected between March and June 2017, that is the period during which I was in the building of *ORES Picardy Wallonia*. I also had interviews with the human resources director and the chief executive officer. The interview lasted between 30 and 120 minutes and, on average, 75 minutes. Among the 81 participants, 79 accepted the interview to be tape-recorded. All the participants were guaranteed total anonymity.

Regarding the profile of the persons I interviewed, among the 81 persons, there were 47 men and 34 women. I interviewed 53 *ORES* employees, 1 consultant from the IT department, 20 line managers, 6 executives (including the human resources director, the site director, and the CEO), and 1 external consultant in charge of implementing the project. Among the 53 *ORES* employees, there were 11 persons who were associated to a supervising role: 4 workers supervising the customer advisers and the employees in charge of verifying the indexes (the RVC service, as mentioned in the following chapter), and 11 sites supervisors. Sites supervisors are in charge of the relationships with the external entrepreneurs who are in charge of carrying external works (i.e. construction site supervising, paying the entrepreneurs, etc.). Considering the different types of functions in *ORES WaPi*, one might distinguish three types of workers' profiles: (i) administrative workers whose work almost exclusively consists in administrative tasks and work on computer, (ii) technicians who work outside and do exclusively manual and technical work, and (iii) administrative workers with a technical background, that is employees with a more hybrid profile since either their activities are a combination of technical and administrative tasks (e.g. the eleven sites supervisors), or their background is technical and they currently do an office job related to technical tasks other workers do outside. In this research, I interviewed employees from the first and the third categories. More precisely, among the 80 *ORES* members, there were approximatively 53 administrative employees, 17 administrative with a technical background, and 10 persons who do not belong to a specific category (e.g. the CEO, the HRD, executives, etc.). In this thesis, I refer to the employees as administrative workers and administrative with a technical background.

All the interviews were conducted in French with people whose mother tongue is the French, except from the owner of the consulting agency whose mother tongue is the Flemish. However, I was completely able to interview this person in French since she was perfectly fluent in French.

I conducted the interviews based on an interview guide presenting several opened questions. I had an interview guide specific for the administrative employees, and the employees with a technical background. That being said, even though I followed a similar set of questions with all my interviews, since the semi-structured interview allows having a conversation between the researcher and the respondent, the respondent's answers often led me to adapt my interview guide in order to address issues that I had not previously considered (Demers, 2003; Myers, 2013). Gradually, the first interview guide changed, and I revised it two times for the administrative employees, and one time for the employees with a technical background. The different versions of the interview guides are in appendices (see Appendices 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8).

In this research, semi-structured interviews were adequate for two main reasons. First, they helped me understand how workers faced and experienced the office reconfiguration, and how different groups of actors positioned towards such a radical change (Peretz, 2004). Second, these interviews allowed me to render past events (i.e. the office reconfiguration) that I was no longer able to observe (Demers, 2003; Peretz, 2004).

Finally, regarding the number of collected interviews, it is important to precise that this number was not defined *a priori*. Before starting the data collection, I planned to follow the advice of several authors which is to conclude the fieldwork when the saturation point is reached, that is when the new collected data does not lead to discovering any new insights about the case, and when what initially appeared as strange is now unsurprising (Myers, 2013; Romelaer, 2006). However, I faced a peculiar situation that I had not anticipate and that is specific to the way the interviews were planned. As previously explained, my person of contact was the director of the *ORES Picardy Wallonia* site. Since I had no direct access to the workers before March 2017, this person was in charge of planning all my interviews. Concretely, an email was sent to all the employees of *ORES Picardy Wallonia* who worked in the building. This email explained my presence in the building for the next three months, and invited interested employees to take part to the research. A large majority of employees accepted to take part to the research. Indeed, as I explain in the next chapter, there are 167 employees working on the site I investigated, and around half of these employees are working in the building; the other half is composed of technical agents working outside. Since employees were rather enthusiastic in taking part to the research, the interviews were planned in a very short time. But after around 60 interviews, I began to felt that I reached the saturation point. However, for two reasons, I decided to keep doing the interviews. First, after discussing this with the director of the *ORES Picardy Wallonia* site, he explained me that cancelling the interviews that were planned could ruffle some feathers – which I wanted to avoid. Second, since the last interviews were with profiles that I had not met yet, I thought that they could provide some missing information, or saying that would differ from their co-workers.

4.4. Participant observation

Junker (cited by Groleau, 2003; Peretz, 2004) distinguishes four types of observation, according to two criteria: (i) the level of participation, and (ii) the uncovering of the researcher's identity. During my case study, I integrated *ORES Picardy Wallonia* as an observer who participated. This means that organisational actors were informed of my presence, and knew about my activity of observation.

Observation was a very rich source of information in the present research for two reasons. First, since this research addresses the issue of the work environment and its relation with organisational identity, taking part to this spatial dimension, and experiencing it for three months helped me in understanding workers' explanations of this environment. This also allowed me to address the dynamics of appropriation and structuration of space (see chapter 7). This would have not been possible if I had not experimented this building by myself.

Another benefit of taking part to *ORES Picardy Wallonia* life for three months is that it allowed me to assist to informal situations and discussions that were great sources of information. Indeed, as Peretz (2004) explains, observation "is not limited to visible data and acts, it is not deaf to words expressed by individuals during their social actions. [Observation] gathers the words that observed individuals use to characterise persons, situations, and objects with which they interact." (2004, p. 22; *translated from French*).

In order to collect these pieces of information, I tape-recorded my field notes and, in particular, the anecdotes and remarks that workers made about their work environment but also the work organisation. I also took several pictures of the work environment in order to illustrate these elements in the chapter six.

4.5. Documentary analysis

Finally, I drew on several documents in order to grasp additional information. These were both internal and external documents. Regarding the internal documents, I accessed to a *PowerPoint* presentation of the DOMO project, that is the corporate cultural project in which the new work environment fits (see chapter 5). I also used several official reports and strategic plans that are available online.

Even though data provided by documents is not a primary source of information, Husser (2006) considers that documentary analysis provides two types of benefits: (i) it allows to look in the past actions to understand the organisational present, and (ii) it eases the understanding of current decisions, actions, and discourses.

Finally, another benefit of documentary analysis is in line with the objective of data triangulation. Indeed, documentary analysis helps to corroborate and augment reliability about data providing from other data collection methods (Yin, 2014). However, Yin (2014) advices to review each document in order to attempt to understand the underlying objectives intended by it, and thus to be critical in the interpretation of this content. This last benefit was particularly true regarding to internal documents. Indeed, internal documents about the DOMO project helped me to understand what was the official purpose of the project and of the new work environment. This was particularly interesting since it allowed me to compare the official messages, and workers' understanding of the new work environment.

5. Data analysis methods

Once I collected the data, I prepared them in order to proceed to data analysis. This is through this analysis that I sorted out participants' answers and my observations in order to produce meaning and answers to address the phenomenon investigated in this research. In order to rigorously analyse the data, I have had recourse to Paillé and Muchielli's (2012) analysis method and applied a double coding resulting in (i) a thematic analysis and (ii) an analysis by categories of concepts.

This double coding was assisted by *NVivo qualitative data analysis Software*.

5.1. Preparation of the data

Since 79 of the interviews were tape-recorded, I transcribed a majority of these interviews. 65 interviews fully transcribed. I did not fully transcribe 14 interviews for two reasons. First, because, as explained previously, I reached the saturation point for several workers profiles and I decided not to transcribe the last records of workers with a similar profile. Second, because of the time required to transcribe the records, to a certain point, starting the data analysis brought more benefits than the costs associated to the stop of the retranscriptions.

As previously explained, I conducted all the interviews in French. Thus, these interviews were transcribed in French, too. In this thesis, I translated into English all the quoted excerpts. This is the case for excerpts resulting from the interviews, and for citations coming from internal and external documents. The original excerpts are in appendixes (see Appendix 3). In order to guarantee the anonymity of the participants, all the first names were changed. However, because of their unique position in the organisation, it is possible that one might detect the identity of some persons based on the excerpts. This is the case, for instance, for the chief executive officer, the owner of the consulting agency, and the director of *ORES Picardy Wallonia* site.

5.2. Thematic analysis

Paillé and Muchielli (2012) define the thematic analysis as "the transposition of a given corpus in a certain amount of themes (and potential sub-themes) that are representative of the analysed content and this, done in relation to the research question" (Paillé & Mucchielli, 2012, p. 232; *translated from French*). In other words, a theme is a rather descriptive label. The purpose of the thematic analysis is twofold (Paillé & Mucchielli, 2012). First, it aims at identifying the whole of the relevant themes and regarding the research question. Second, it allows to document similarities, divergences and contradictions within and between the themes. The thematic analysis consists in producing a systematic synthesis of the data. Paillé and Muchielli's (2012) thematic analysis is close to the idea of first-order analysis (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013). Indeed, similarly to the method developed by Gioia and his colleagues, the identified themes and sub-themes, similarly to the first-order categories, "[try] to adhere faithfully to informant terms" (Gioia et al., 2013, p. 20).

Through the multiple readings of the data, I identified several themes. Since the apparition of each new theme was likely to disrupt the previously identified themes, this identification was not done in a linear manner but, instead, in a recursive way. The result of the thematic analysis consists in a thematic structure. When the themes were all well organised and consistent, they were all precisely defined.

Beyond the themes, I also determined several sections. Sections differ from themes by their level of generality. Sections are more abstract and do not describe or synthesise the nature of the data being quoted, they "refer to what is about in the excerpt being analysed but inform under no circumstances about what has been said" (Paillé & Mucchielli, 2012, p. 18; *translated from French*). Determining sections helped me sort the themes.

Table 5 illustrates an excerpt and shows the distinction between the section and the theme and sub-theme associated to the excerpt.

Section	Theme	Sub-theme	Excerpt
The office	Symbolic dimension	Surveillance	On the other hand, the negative [aspect] is that, since everything is opened, we have sometimes the impression that we are more monitored... [Chloé]

Table 5 - Coding grid example for the thematic analysis

Even though the thematic analysis is very fruitful to structure the content of the collected data, since it only produces a descriptive analysis, it does not necessarily allow to approach the corpus with concepts, and to produce an original theorisation. That is the reason why I operated a second analysis with conceptualising categories.

The list of the themes and their definition is in appendix (see Appendix 9).

5.3. Analysis by conceptualising categories

A conceptualising category is a label "allowing to name a phenomenon that is perceptible through a conceptual reading of the research corpus" (Paillé & Mucchielli, 2012, p. 316; *translated from French*). Unlike the thematic analysis, the label does no longer describe or synthesise the data. Rather, the conceptualising categories are produced by the researcher who analyse its corpus by mobilising a theoretical framework as well as known or emergent concepts. Thus, conceptualising categories echo the second-order categories developed in the method of Gioia and his colleagues (2013). Indeed, similarly to second-order categories, the conceptualising categories are based on the researcher-centric concepts and theories. While the theme addresses the question "What do the data *say*? What is the answer to the question being asked?", the conceptualising category answers the question "What does it *mean*? What is the phenomenon at work?".

Even though the qualitative analysis methods developed by Paillé and Mucchielli (2012) and Gioia and colleagues (2013) share similarities, they remain quite different. Indeed, themes and conceptualising categories, in the same manner as 1^{st}- and 2^{nd}- order categories, allow to reports both the voices of the informant and the researcher. However, while 2^{nd}-order themes correspond to the researcher's voice, and aggregate the 1^{st}-order themes, the themes and conceptualising categories in Paillé and Mucchielli's (2012) method are distinct analytical units, independent one from the other and providing two different types of analysis: one more concrete descriptive, and the other more abstract and conceptual.

During the thematic analysis, multiple readings of the data corpus were done. The transition from the thematic analysis to the analysis by conceptualising categories was a complicated task since this second analysis required to think about the data and the underlying phenomena more in depth. Scientific discussions and individual reflexions helped me in releasing the first thoughts leading to my first categories. Several times again, I re-read the corpus in order to find cues of phenomena to bring to light. This is once the identified categories completely allowed me to expose, and "tell the story" at the heart of the data that this second analysis ended. In order to structure the data, I also identify sections as I did in the thematic analysis.

Table 6 illustrates an excerpt and shows the distinction between the section, and the category associated to the excerpt.

Section	Category	Excerpt
Type of identity transformation	Identity mimetism	In my opinion, it's America that made them dream. [Céline]

Table 6 - Coding grid example for the analysis by conceptualising categories

The list of the conceptualising categories and their definition is in appendix (see Appendix 10).

Sum and substance

- This research rests upon an interpretivist epistemology.
- In order to answer the research question, I propose to conduct a single-case study within an organisation which has radically changed its work environment in the previous 24 months.
- The investigated organisation is *ORES* and, in particular, the site of *ORES Picardy Wallonia*.
- Data were collected during four months through 81 semi-structured interviews, participant observation and documentary analysis.
- Data were analysed by themes and by conceptualising categories.

CHAPTER 5. *ORES*: PRESENTATION OF THE COMPANY, AND OF *ORES WAPI*

1. Introduction

The aim of this fifth chapter is twofold. First, I will introduce *ORES*: the organisation, its structure, governance model, missions and historical background. Second, I will present *ORES WaPi* which is a sub-division of *ORES* and where I conducted the data collection. In this section, I will also describe the previous (i) work environment, (ii) and living and working conditions.

2. Presentation of *ORES*: activities, historical background and legal status

2.1. *ORES*: The Walloon distribution system operator for electricity and natural gas

ORES[1] is a DSO that is a distribution system operator for electricity and natural gas in Wallonia, one of the three regions of Belgium. As its name indicates, this company is in charge of the distribution of electricity (medium to low-voltage) and natural gas to residential and private customers (SMEs and public services, for instance). It is also responsible for public lighting in municipalities in Wallonia[2].

This company holds a quasi-monopoly since it provides electricity and gas to 75% of the Walloon municipalities, which represents 1.3 million of homes and companies, or 2.8 millions of citizens (ORES, 2017d). In Belgium, DSOs are *ORES*, *Tecteo* (Resa), *Régie de Wavre*, *AIESH* and *AIEG* (in the Walloon Region), *Sibelga* (in the Brussels-Capital Region), and *Eandis* and *Infrax* (in the Flemish Region) (Elia, n.d.).

Figures 5 and 6 illustrate all the municipalities that *ORES* provides for the distribution of electricity and gas.

As a distribution system operator for electricity and gas, *ORES* is in charge of several operational activities (ORES, 2017d): (i) the maintenance of the distribution grid, connection works, (ii) repairs, (iii) the meter readings and management of consumption data (in order to communicate this information to the energy providers in charge of the invoicing ; this activity is sometimes externalised), (iv) a public service obligation (i.e. *ORES* provides energy to socially protected customers, and installs budget meters for customers in default of payment), and (v) the management of the access register (i.e. keeping technical data up-to-date).

[1] An acronym for "Opérateur des RESeaux gaz & électricité".

[2] Wallonia is one of the three regions of Belgium (with the Brussels-Capital and the Flemish regions), located in the south part of the country and characterised by its primarily French-speaking population. It accounts for 55% of the territory of Belgium, and a third of its population.

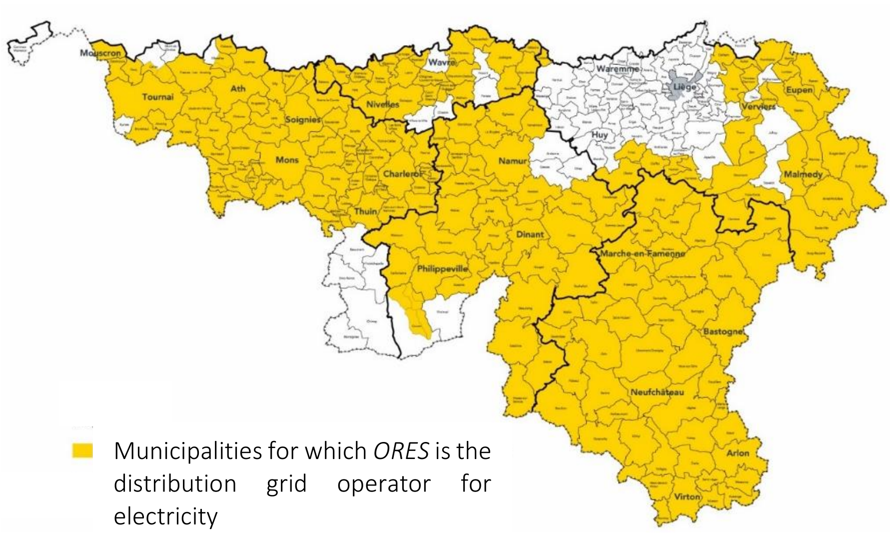

Figure 5 - Municipalities for which ORES distributes electricity (adapted from the strategic plan 2015-2020 report, p. 6)

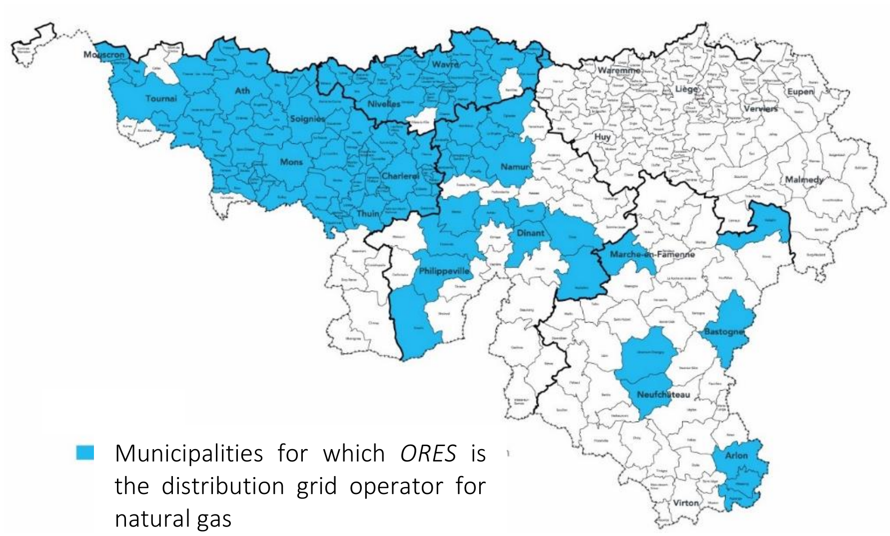

Figure 6 - Municipalities for which ORES distributes natural gas (adapted from the strategic plan 2015-2020 report, p. 7)

2.2. An inter-municipal association

In Belgium, municipalities are responsible for providing a range of services in diverse areas satisfying primary needs. The distribution of electricity and gas falls within the responsibilities of municipalities. Since municipalities are not necessarily equipped to provide these services, they have the possibility to form inter-municipal associations. An inter-municipal association is "an association of, at least, two municipalities which decide to conjointly manage a matter of municipal interest." (Portail des Pouvois locaux, 2015; *translated from French*). Depending on their composition, inter-municipal associations can be of two types: pure when they are composed of public partners exclusively (e.g. the Walloon Region), or mixed when they are also composed of private partners (e.g. a bank) (Portail des Pouvoirs locaux, 2015).

For the distribution of electricity, gas and public lighting in the Walloon Region, in 2013, 197 municipalities have decided to gather together and to form an inter-municipal association named *ORES Assets*. To be exact, *ORES Assets* results from the fusion of eight inter-municipal associations. Since 2017, *ORES Assets* is a pure inter-municipal association since its shareholding is composed of only public partners, that is 197 municipalities and 7 pure financing inter-municipal association funding public institutes (whose vocation is to manage the financial participations of municipalities in the energy sector) (ORES, 2017c). *ORES Assets* has been set up for a period expiring the 31st December 2025, but since June 2017 the period has been extended till the 31st December 2045 (Statuts coordonnés ORES Assets au 22 juin 2017, 2017).

While *ORES Assets* is the entity legally in charge of the distribution of electricity, gas and public lighting in these 197 Walloon municipalities, in practice it is a subsidiary of *ORES Assets* which manage the operational activities of distribution. This subsidiary is *ORES* (ORES, 2017b).

Since municipalities attribute the responsibility of the grid maintenance to one distribution system operator, the customer, whether (s)he is a residential customer or a private customer, cannot choose its distribution system operator. Because of this and its quasi-monopolistic situation, *ORES* evolves in a much regulated environment. In Belgium, four actors regulate the energy market: one federal regulator (*CREG*, i.e. the Commission for Electricity and Gas Regulation), and three regional regulators (for the Walloon Region: *CWaPE*, i.e. the Walloon commission for energy). These actors have several missions: guaranteeing transparency and competitiveness on the energy market; checking that the market operates in line with public interest and overall energy policy; defending consumers' interests; and advising public authorities on energy issues (Commission de Régulation de l'Electricité et du Gaz, 2016).

Since *ORES Assets* is an inter-municipal association and not a state-owned company, *ORES Assets* is not bound to the municipalities by a management contract. *ORES Assets* goals are proposed by the executive board, and voted by the associates during a deliberation of the general meeting. The strategic plan 2015-2020 summarises the corporate goals and strategy, but does not serve as a contract.

2.3. *ORES*: a recent company with a long historical background

ORES was officially created in the end of 2008 and began its activities in February 2009. Since then, *ORES* is the main distribution system operator for electricity and natural gas in Wallonia. Even though this company is officially very recent, it has an important historical background worth considering in this chapter. This brief historical background of *ORES* will be helpful for understanding the company evolution.

2.3.1. From Ebes*,* Intercom *and* Unerg *to* Electrabel

Historically, the distribution of electricity and gas in Belgium was insured by local inter-municipal associations. In the Walloon Region, it is worth mentioning three of them: *Ebes*, *Intercom* and *Unerg*. These companies were in activity for electricity distribution in the second half of the twentieth century. In July 1990, these companies merged which resulted in the creation of *Electrabel* (Engie Electrabel, n.d.; Vanden Driessche, 1990; Vanden Driessche, Lanckmans, & Delvaux, 1990).

Electrabel was the biggest and main actor in the energy market in Belgium: it produced most of the electricity, transported it, and distributed it to consumers through the distribution system operators which were conjointly hold by inter-municipal associations and *Electrabel*. For information, *Electrabel* was the major shareholder of the distribution system operators till 2008. In 2013, *Electrabel* was still a 25% shareholder in *ORES Assets* capital. In January 2017, *Electrabel* withdrew from *ORES Assets*, which is now completely hold by inter-municipal associations and funding public institutes. While *Electrabel* was the main actor for electricity, *Distrigaz* was the main actor for gas. This company insured the importation, transport and distribution of gas to consumers through distribution system operators possessed by inter-municipal associations.

2.3.2. The liberalisation of the energy market in European Union

In 1996 and 1998, through two European directives, i.e. 96/92/EG (for electricity) and 98/30/CE (for gas), the European Union decided that the European markets of gas and electricity had be opened to competition for the 1st July 2007 at the latest[3]. These directives were transposed into Belgian law at the federal (Law of 29 April 1999) and regional levels (Decrees of 12 April 2001 and 19 December 2002 for, respectively electricity and gas) (Belgian Federal Government, 2013a, 2013b; Commission wallonne pour l'Energie, 2014).

The purpose of these European directives and the following Laws and Decrees was to separate the distribution from the commercialisation of energies. This separation aimed at diminishing energy prices (thanks to the competition effect), and improving service quality for customers (thanks to the instauration of independent regulators). Consequently to the adoption of these directives, several actors appeared and the Belgian energy market changed radically. The commercial activity was insured by commercial suppliers (e.g. *Electrabel*, *Octa+*, *Lampiris*, etc.), and the distribution activity was

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[3] In the meantime, these directives were repealed by other directives.

attributed to distribution system operator (mostly inter-municipal associations). This separation implies that the customer can choose his/her energy provider, but cannot choose his/her distribution system operator.

ORES Assets and *ORES* (its subsidiary responsible for the operational activities) result from the liberalisation of the energy market, and from the separation of the supply and distribution activities.

Because of the radical evolution of the energy market this past decade and because of the apparition of new actors on this market, *ORES* does generally not appear as an actor whose mission is clear for the general public, as mentioned in the excerpt below.

> *We are still very little known. For many people, it's still* Electrabel*, they mix everything together between suppliers and DSO. [Simon]*

2.4. *ORES* corporate strategy: challenges and corporate values

As previously mentioned, *ORES* developed a strategic plan for the 2015 to 2020 period. Even if it is not a contract between *ORES* and municipalities, it presents *ORES* ambitions and projects in the long term.

This strategy presents six main goals (ORES, 2016a):

i. Assuring the future of distribution infrastructures, and developing smart system and metering;
ii. Improving customer orientation;
iii. Developing new tools and platforms enabling to make evolve processes, and to share information with energy retailers;
iv. Transforming organisational culture to make it "more agile, more audacious, oriented towards innovation, but in particular outwards and towards customer" (ORES, 2016a, p. 32);
v. Being a privileged representative and a partner for public authorities;
vi. Being a responsible and sustainable company.

In line with this strategy, the board identified three main challenges facing *ORES*. The first challenge is to change the organisational culture: "we have to change in our culture, our ways of doing, our ways of interacting without forgetting what makes our strength and our reputation" (ORES, 2016a, p. 18; *translated from French*). As explained in the strategic plan 2015-2020, it is wished to develop an organisational culture characterised by agility, supported by a management based on trust and audacity, and favoured by a work environment "proper to more creativity, conviviality and more balance between a private and family life, and a professional life" (ORES, 2016a, p. 18; *translated from French*). The second challenge for *ORES* is about the necessity to be more customer-focused which means that "the notion of service must take priority over the process" (ORES, 2016a, p. 19; *translated from French*). Finally, the third identified challenge is related to the energy transition which implies the development of renewable energies, the decentralisation of energy production, the apparition of gas operated cars, etc. These changes represent opportunities but also threats for *ORES*.

In 2013, *ORES* identified five corporate values coherent with its missions of public utility service, and its strategy. These values are: customer orientation, audacity, professionalism, respect, and conviviality.

2.5. Organisational context: a surprising uncertainty

As previously explained, *ORES* is the most important inter-municipal association acting in the sector of gas and electricity distribution in Wallonia. Despite the liberalisation of the market, because of its sector of activity, its legal status and its historical background, *ORES* benefits from a certain status which prevents it from specific risks that threaten most private companies (e.g. the effects of globalisation, the competition with other companies, etc.).

However, in spite of what one could consider being an almost unfailing security, during my interviews, many workers expressed concern about the company and its future. This is particularly well illustrated by the excerpts below of two employees who have worked for *Electrabel* before the liberalisation:

> *As I told you, I have known Electrabel and it was the only actor on the market, there were the means, there were everything. Everything was going very well. Today, all that has been split so ORES must prove its credentials to the external environment... Yes, there are changes… We feel that we are much more controlled and that we have to justify ourselves in relation to the investments, breakdowns or anything … [Loïc]*

> *At the time of* Electrabel*, we said to ourselves: "Yeah, we are* Electrabel*, we will intervene when we want". That era is over. We have to have a dynamic approach, to see what we can do to get things done. We cannot stay in [our] chair, wait for it to happen. No, it's too late. If we do it like that, if we have a vision like that, I think that in ten years, there's no more* ORES*. We have to be on the front of the stage, it's something we have to do. [Samuel]*

When asked about the sources of this feeling of uncertainty, workers mentioned three main elements. The first one of these threats concerns the technological evolutions. As explained by the worker below, the main source of competition is not about other companies but about technologies that enable any customer to unplug from the distribution grid.

> *It's not only competitive, it's technological too. [...] At the electricity level, there is a whole new technology of* TESLA *batteries where everyone can have his battery tomorrow that can recharge with his own solar panels. So what is the need for an interconnected system? So the system that is there, we have it, we will still maintain it with institutions, hospitals, nursing homes and all that which will always need the existing systems. Now, in terms of the development of new systems, there may be a horizon here that is a little grayer than in the past. [Mathieu]*

This means that, thanks to the technological development, customers themselves can become a competitor of *ORES*. This threat that the customer might unplug from the distribution grid makes that it is urgent and vital for *ORES* longevity to take care of its customers. As explained by the person in the following excerpt, at the time previous to the liberalisation, customers were surnamed "captive customers" because they had no choice and were customers by default. But this is no longer the case with these technological evolutions.

> *The customers, we called them "captive customers" because they had not choice… It's still true now but we no longer speak about "captive customers". […] Thus, I think that the old mentality was to think that, in any case, customers had not the choice, they were with us, there was no alternative. I believe that now, more and more, we consider them as they could change of distribution system operator… [Anthony]*

As illustrated by the excerpt below, it is likely that customers have understood – or that they will understand in a near future – the importance of their role in *ORES* longevity: they become more exigent and, with social networks, they can now have an impact on *ORES* reputation. This customer pressure is the second threat.

> *We are permanently under pressure because the customers are more and more exigent. There are also the social networks which make that, as soon as someone is aware of something, all his* Facebook *[network] is aware. Thus, the customer base becoming more and more exigent, it gives us a pressure that did not exist a few years ago. We really have to be innovative towards the customers to satisfy them while, previously, we waited that they react and then, we worked. We have totally reversed the role. It is now us who have to be proactive towards them. [Jean]*

The third source of uncertainty is about the political contingency. Indeed, because of its status of inter-municipal association, *ORES* existence, ability to develop, and longevity largely depend on political decisions that are regularly negotiated. This means that, depending on the political situation, these decisions can completely change *ORES*, as explained by the worker below:

> *But finally, even if we have a natural monopoly, I believe that we are not immune to political changes which could completely change the world in which we work. And* DOMO*, it's also a way to apprehend these changes, and to show to people that the society evolves in a modern way as the system will have to evolve in a modern way. So we count on them to adapt and take part to the change. [Olivia]*

In the excerpt above, the worker argues that, because of this source of uncertainty – but the two others, too – it is necessary for employees to evolve. And, according to her, the DOMO project is all about this vital necessity.

2.6. *ORES* organisational structure

ORES employs around 2300 persons with diversified profiles: engineers, administrative agents, technicians, etc. (ORES, 2016b).

The board of directors is composed of nine directors, three invited members and is chaired by the managing director, Fernand Grifnée (ORES, 2017a). Among the diverse directions, there is the infrastructures department which is the direction in charge of the operational regions. The Walloon Region is divided into seven areas of operations. Figure 7 illustrates the Walloon Region and the seven areas of operations. This repartition means that support services are gathered in the head office (presently situated in Louvain-la-Neuve) but each area has, at least, one head office and is in charge of the operational management of the area.

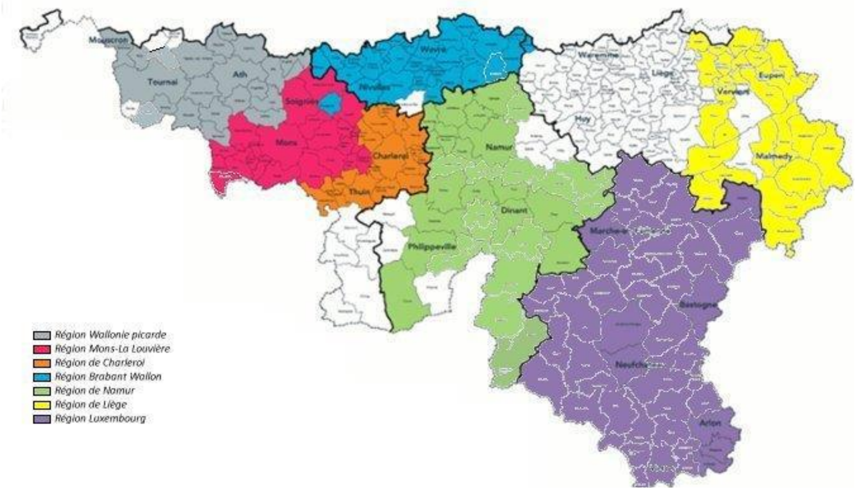

Figure 7 - The Walloon Region and the seven areas of operations

The case study I conducted was in the head office of one of the seven areas of operations: the "Picardy Wallonia" area (coloured in grey in Figure 7). For the sake of simplicity, I will use the name *ORES WaPi* to refer to this area.

3. *ORES WaPi*: structure and specificities

The area of operations where I collected my data is the head office in charge of the Picardy Wallonia area, or more commonly called "ORES *WaPi*" by employees. In this section, I will describe this head office in terms of area of operations, organisational structure and members.

3.1. *ORES WaPi*: organisational structure and hierarchical line

3.1.1. Organisation chart

This area of operations is structured in several services. This organisation chart is illustrated in Figure 8.

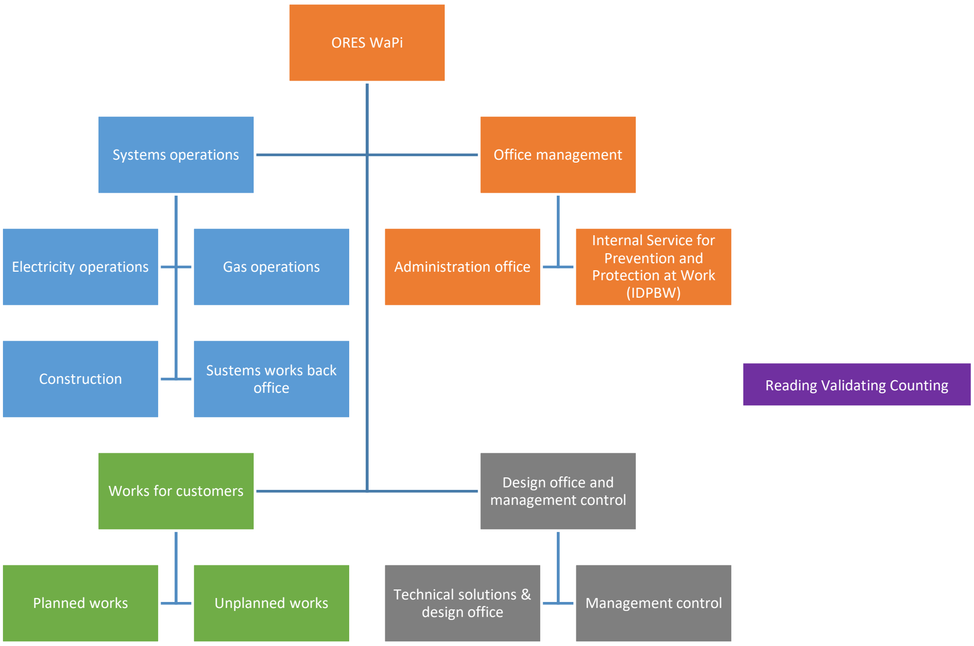

Figure 8 - Organisation chart for ORES WaPi

As illustrated in Figure 8 above, *ORES WaPi* is separated in four main services, plus an external service:

i. Works for customers which englobes two cells:
   a. Planned works which is an administrative service in charge of the planning of all the works, i.e. new connections, modification of the system, etc. Workers in this service are mainly customer advisers;
   b. Unplanned works which is in charge of the emergency repairing. This service is almost exclusively composed of technical workers.

ii. Design office and management control which is divided into two cells:

a. Technical solutions and design office which is in charge of analysing customers' requests and designing adequate solutions, and designing technical solutions for improving and reinforcing the system;
b. Management control which consists in analysing the budget, and monthly controlling the expenses evolution.

iii. Systems operations which is in charge of the technical operations, i.e. repairs, putting cables into service, extending cables, etc. This service is separated into four sub-services:
a. Electricity operations, ensuring the technical operations for the electrical system;
b. Gas operations, ensuring the technical operations for the electrical system;
c. Construction, in charge of the construction of the system;
d. Systems works back office, which is an administrative service which gathers the administrative staff (called "back-office") of the three other cells (i.e. technical and gas operations, and construction). This implies that this administrative staff belongs to two cells: the systems works back office, and another "technical cell".

iv. Office management which is the service in charge of the management of all the aspects related to the head office. This is divided into two cells:
a. An administrative office;
b. The Internal Service for Prevention and Protection at Work which is the committee elected by workers during the social elections. It is in charge of the respect of legal issues in terms of health, wellbeing and security at work.

v. Reading, Validating and Counting (commonly called "RVC") has a peculiar situation. This service is in charge of the reading of the energy meters, and the transmission of the meter index reading to the energy provider chosen by the customer. This permits the energy provider to invoice the customer for its energy consumption. In the past, the missions of reading, validating and transmitting energy indexes were performed by *Indexis*, an inter-municipal association created in June 2002 (La Libre Belgique, 2002). Since February 2009, *ORES* has incorporated these activities (and the concerned employees) (ORES, 2017e). This service is part of the customer service, one of the support services located in *ORES* headquarters. However, the RVC service is located in the offices of *ORES WaPi*[4].

[4] Historically, *Indexis* was located in Tournai, in the same building as *Electrabel*. With the move from Tournai to Leuze-en-Hainaut, the RVC service kept being part of *ORES WaPi* building.

3.1.2. Hierarchical line and people at ORES WaPi

The hierarchical line at *ORES WaPi* presents several grades. On the top of the structure, there is the area director who is responsible for the office management service and, broadly, for *ORES WaPi* office. All the area directors report to the infrastructures department director.

Below the area director, there are three main services which are supervised by an executive. Below the executives, each cell has a manager. Finally, within each cell, there might have administrative supervisors (exclusively supervising the administrative staff in the "planned works" cell) and building site supervisors (exclusively supervising technical activities).

ORES WaPi, including the RVC service, counts 197 workers (including 29 workers in the RVC service). To be exact, among these people, 164 workers are part of Leuze-en-Hainaut office and 33 workers are part of Mouscron office.

Leuze-en-Hainaut office counts 40 women and 124 men (154 permanent contracts and 10 fixed-term contracts; 137 full-time workers and 27 part-time workers; 4 executives (including the director), 22 managers and 140 employees (including team supervisors)). On average, workers are 42 years old and have 14 years of experience. This last indicator is a bit artificial since the years of experience of all the RVC employees have been reset in 2009 when *ORES* incorporated these activities. However, some of these workers have occupied the same position for more than 7 years[5].

3.2. *ORES WaPi*: geographic area and relocation

ORES WaPi is one of the seven areas of operations. It is responsible for the distribution of electricity (including public lighting) and gas in 22 cities and municipalities. These are located in the Picardy Wallonia, which is a Belgian area close to the French border.

ORES WaPi has two offices, one located in Mouscron and the other in Leuze-en-Hainaut. This last one is the main office for the area *ORES WaPi*. Till July 2015, the main office was located in Tournai. This office has been sold and *ORES WaPi* offices are now only situated in Mouscron and Leuze-en-Hainaut.

Figure 9 illustrates *ORES WaPi* area and the localisation of the offices.

[5] This information about employees was found in the employees listing provided by the area director in March 2017.

Figure 9 - ORES WaPi area and offices

This new building is a pilot project for the new headquarter of *ORES* (which is planned for 2019). As I explain in the following chapter, the new building is one of the four lines of the DOMO project: "This major project […] took advantage of the perspective of the new headquarter […] to integrate the 'new world of work'" (ORES, 2015, p. 27; *translated from French*). In other words, the new building in Leuze-en-Hainaut – as well as the future headquarter – is supposed to support the new organisational culture.

In this doctoral research, I collected data in the new building in Leuze-en-Hainaut (20 months after the move) in order to understand the new work environment and the numerous consequences it had in terms of work practices, management, individual effects and in terms of organisational identity. Before describing these aspects in the following chapters, I propose to explain the previous work environment and working and living conditions which were in place in Tournai.

3.3. *ORES WaPi* Tournai: work environment, and working and living conditions

Since I exclusively collected data in Leuze-en-Hainaut, I had not the opportunity to observe the previous building located in Tournai. However, drawing on workers' description, I collected several pieces of information about the previous work environment, and the working and living conditions.

3.3.1. Tournai: compartmentalisation and austerity

Building: geographic position and architectural design

Before moving to Leuze-en-Hainaut, employees worked in a building belonging to *ORES* and located in Tournai. In terms of geographic position, the city of Tournai is quite different from Leuze-en-Hainaut. Tournai is a city located around 20 kilometres west of Leuze-en-Hainaut. The surface area and population of Tournai are, respectively, three and five times the ones of Leuze-en-Hainaut.

Numerous workers mentioned the attractive position of the previous building since it was very close to shops, and a mall in particular:

> *In Tournai, we were well located because, as soon as the weather was good, we went to the* Bastions*. It was kind of nice. Everything was close, a lot of shops were close. [Camilla]*

Workers also commented a lot the previous building and, in particular its exterior appearance and interior architecture (see Illustration 3 below).

Illustration 3 - Previous building of ORES WaPi, in Tournai (source: Libert, 2016; permission granted by CopiePresse)

According to the majority of employees, the previous building was out of fashion and expressed a form of coldness and rigidity:

> ***The building in Tournai, it reflected another mentality?***
> *Yes, a little more rigid, older, colder. [Simon]*

> *It also resulted from the environment itself. It was an old building which were more than 30 years old. So it was a bit less beautiful. [Emma]*

Interior design and workspaces

In terms of interior design, the building was a traditional building on two floors with two main corridors. There was a single cafeteria on the second floor. Similarly to the exterior appearance, the interior design did not seem to inspire modernity to workers. Indeed, as the following excerpt shows, workers referred to the previous building as a "blockhaus":

> *When we saw the building in Tournai, it was a blockhaus with partitions, little offices, big offices. Some days, except the eight persons of our service, we saw no one else, unless we went to get a coffee or something. But there were some colleagues… I didn't even know their name in Tournai. [Gabriel]*

This excerpt also highlights the isolation due to the compartmentalisation of services. Indeed, in terms of spatial organisation, similarly to a traditional building, in the previous building workers from the same service were gathered together, close to their manager and the executive in charge of the service, as expressed here:

> *It's true that in Tournai, we were compartmentalised and thus, there were different floors. And then it was all compartmentalised offices, thus [just the service with itself]. It was well defined, thus first floor, this corridor, it was this service, etc. [Natacha]*

In Tournai, there were different types of offices, going from the individual office to the open-plan office. These offices were attributed depending on the position or, in other words the status, or depending on the service.

The open-plan office was occupied mainly by the customer advisers, that is the administrative staff in the "(un)planned works" service. Since this service occupies most of the administrative staff in *ORES WaPi*, around twenty persons worked in this open-plan office where desks were attributed. Supervisors of these employees were positioned in the centre of this open-plan office. Managers shared an office separated from the open-plan but close to it. The executive of this service occupied an individual office in front of the open-plan office.

> *In fact we really had a big plateau and I was with my colleague in the middle, thus in the middle of all the customer advisers. There was a corridor but opened I would say, and the middle managers were right in front with their door opened, thus we could go see them when needed. And the executive was in an individual office. His door was opened or closed but it was a glass door thus… [Lorraine]*

The hierarchical attribution of offices was also embodied in the floors since, as illustrated by the excerpt below, the main direction of the area was on the second floor:

> *In fact, the more we climbed the stairs, the more we came closer to the sun. Thus, it was like a point of reference. [Adam]*

In the previous building occupied by *ORES WaPi* employees, it is interesting to address the case of the R.V.C. workers. As a reminder, these workers form a service that, previously, was named *Indexis* and that was independent from *ORES* till 2009. Because it was part of *Electrabel* before becoming *Indexis*, this service was also located in the building in Tournai. However, since it was a legal body distinct from *ORES* from 2002 to 2009, this service was in a remote part of the building, apparently highly separated from the other services. This configuration stayed in place even after 2009:

> *In Tournai, we were really a separated service thus, as I said earlier, we are eight administrative workers who are only part of the customer department in a large mass of the infrastructure department. Thus at that time, we were really in a local near the exit, a bit isolated from the world. There were empty offices between our offices, we were really well away. [Gabriel]*

3.4. Living and working conditions in Tournai

Even though I did not get the chance to observe workers in Tournai, I had the opportunity to collect a few data about the working and living conditions in the previous building.

3.4.1. Services compartmentalisation and weak social connectedness

As previously explained, the building in Tournai had two floors and each service was located in a specific area of the building. Services line managers and executives had their offices near the service employees. Thus, the services were spatially compartmentalised, which resulted in a work organisation in silos:

> *I remember, 10 or 15 years ago, I was in charge of the technical solutions, there was one guy who took care of the gas, the other one of the electricity and everybody worked… There was not only partitions at the office level, there were also partitions at the work level. [Michaël]*

Beyond this spatial compartmentalisation, social relations were also much compartmentalised since it seems that workers did not mix with workers from other services. This resulted in social ties being rather weak, and workers avoiding common meeting places, such as the lunch room of that time, as illustrated by the excerpts below:

> *At the time in Tournai, the refectory was very cold, very unpleasant. I mean… it was not beautiful, and in addition we could eat at our office so that's what I did and that's what everyone did, we were all eating in front of our PC, we all squatted the PC, we all squatted internet, so we ate all alone, so it was pretty sad. [Ariane]*

> *Before, I arrived, I went up in my office, I said hello to my colleagues, it was limited to that, we met people after in the halls, we said "Hello" but everyone was [in his little place] and we crossed in corridors. But, during the day, I did not see everyone. [Charles]*

> *First in Tournai, we were all in our offices and no one was really moving. Besides, at noon, we had a refectory but there was what, 3-4 people who went to the refectory but that was all. We went to take a walk in the* Bastions *at lunchtime with the same people. So we did not really reach out to others. And if we had a question for a customer for example, we sent an email or we phoned but we did not necessarily see [the others]. [Lorraine]*

As the last excerpt shows, the weakness of the social relations had some consequences on the types of communication and information flow in Tournai.

3.4.2. Slow and distant information flow

Since workers were situated in an office shared with other colleagues from the same service, interactions with these colleagues were natural, and information could be shared in face-to-face:

> *And the communication was easy because we were three in the same office, we had something to say on a construction site or on... an advancement or... Samuel, who was just nearby, he turned and the communication flew quickly and very well. [Gérard]*

However, this was not the case for workers in other services. Indeed, since workers knew barely the workers from the other services, this impeded face-to-face interactions and fast information sharing. This means that, most of the time, information was shared by phone or email because passing through another service door was like "entering the jungle" as expressed by the worker here:

> *Before, you had to push the door, you had to dare to push it and say to yourself "I come in the jungle of this service" [Loïc]*

Something that was specific to Tournai and which testifies from this slow and distant information flow was the mail delivery system that was in place at that time. Indeed, in Tournai there were input and output trays for the internal correspondence, that is documents that went from one service in the building to another. Workers could drop their correspondence in the output tray when they left, and each morning a woman with a trolley walked around the building and each service in order to deliver mails. As explained by the worker below, this way to share information was probably not the most efficient one:

> *There was someone who pushed a cart and who carried the mail. Do you realise? If it went well, he brought the mail the next day but if he was not there, well it was the day after and so on. Conclusion: we received the files three to four days later. [Noah]*

3.4.3. Management style in Tournai

According to all the interviewees, there is no question about the fact that the structure in Tournai – and in the past, in general – was particularly hierarchised, as expressed by the worker in the excerpt below:

> *I was really surprised when I arrived in this company to see that, in some departments, there are really castes between the executives [and] the employees. We do not mix together, we give the orders and they execute. [Olivia]*

As expressed by the employee below, this pyramid structure was accompanied by a strong social distance between executives and employees:

> *If I can look historically, we had a very hierarchical direction. I [mean] when I started working, the director was "Mr. Director". I would never have come to call him Pierre. [Gaspard]*

However, in the same time, this social distance was balanced by a physical proximity since the executive worked in an office adjacent to his/her subordinates. Resulting from this geographical proximity, as the worker below explains, the executive had a direct view on the work of the employees in the service he was in charge of:

> *Before, our manager, he really saw what we were doing. He heard telephone conversations and so on. So at the time of the [assessments], if he saw my executive, he could say "Well no, I saw that he did that, he did that, he's busy working all the time even though his numbers are less important than equivalents, he does other things next to it ". [Félix]*

These few points are probably not sufficient to grasp the entire organisation of work in Tournai. However, there are still a few pieces of information on the basis of which one can picture how employees worked in the previous setting.

Sum and substance

- *ORES* is a Belgian company active in the sector of gas and electricity distribution in Wallonia. This company has a quasi-monopoly situation since it is in charge of gas and electricity distribution for 75% of the Walloon Region municipalities.
- *ORES* is a recent company that is born from the liberalisation of the sector of gas and electricity distribution imposed by the European Union in 1996 and 1998. However, this company has a long historical background since its activities were previously realised by the company *Electrabel* which is, historically, one of the most important companies in the Belgian economic landscape.
- This private society has peculiar status since it is an inter-municipal association. This means that it is commissioned by municipalities to manage a public service.
- *ORES WaPi* is the short name of the entity in charge of the operations in the Picardy Wallonia area.
- Employees *in* ORES WaPi are mainly technical and administrative staff.
- Since July 2015, *ORES WaPi* is located in Leuze-en-Hainaut in a new building inspired by the "new world of work". It is a pilot project for the new headquarter of *ORES* (which is planned for 2019).
- The previous building of *ORES WaPi*, located in Tournai, was a traditional building with closed individual or shared offices, and a high level of services compartmentalisation.
- The managerial style was characterised as hierarchical and distant.

SECTION III
ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Section III: Analysis and discussion

Chapter 6. The DOMO project.

Chapter 7. The living and working conditions in the DOMO project.

Chapter 8. *ORES* organisational identity, highlighted by the DOMO project.

Chapter 9. Understanding the office influence on organisational identity: a conventionalist perspective.

Chapter 10. Contributions and discussion.

Results, conventionalist analysis of the case, scientific and managerial contributions, and discussion

Structure of the upcoming section

CHAPTER 6. THE DOMO PROJECT

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I present the DOMO project. This chapter is structured in three sections. First, I explain the DOMO project, its purposes and different aspects. Second, I focus on one dimension of the project which is the new work environment (i.e. an activity-based workspace) and the underlying managerial intentions. Finally, after presenting the spatial dimension and what it aims, I describe employees' perceptions and appropriation of the project and, in particular, its material and spatial dimension.

2. Informed and uninformed goals of the DOMO project

2.1. DOMO: name of the organisational culture renewal

DOMO is the name of a corporate project aiming at implementing the "new world of work" as explained in the strategic plan for the period 2015 to 2020:

> *The DOMO program consists in implementing in* ORES *what is called […] the "New World of Work" which concerns several dimensions: teleworking and adapted work schedules, unified communication, adaptation of the equipment and workspaces for more relationships, conviviality, flexibility and mobility…*
> *Through the implementation of this new way of working, the DOMO program inspires* ***a new corporate culture of collaboration, innovation, agility, wellbeing at work****. It is* ***based on a trust-based management*** *that is* ***results-oriented, giving autonomy and aiming at the responsibility of everyone****, managers and collaborators.*
> *[Strategic plan 2015-2020. State of progress in December 2016, p. 23; my emphasis]*

Beyond the implementation of the "new world of work", this project is "a program of cultural change" as described in the strategic plan (ORES, 2016a, p. 32). As explained in the previous chapter, organisational culture in *ORES* is part of the three challenges identified by the board, and thus it constitutes one of the pillars of the strategic plan.

According to an internal *PowerPoint* (see appendix 2), the cultural change purpose is threefold: (i) supporting the strategic evolution of *ORES*, (ii) improving the brand image of *ORES*, and (iii) meeting the current society challenges. Moreover, this cultural change aims at improving wellbeing and motivation at work which should lead to more performance. The worker below explains how this project is related to the customer orientation and *ORES* reputation:

> *The chief executive officer, [X], who arrived in 2009 or 2010, really wanted to change this state of mind which is "We wait for the customer". He totally reversed the formula, he said to himself "We will go get the customer", "We will be really known". Because [when] he asked anyone to know who* ORES *was, everyone said "Huh?". And so he really wanted to reverse that, and to say that we have notoriety. And by doing that, he thought "We cannot do that without changing the values of the company, without changing the mindset of the agents". [Jean]*

Figure 10 below illustrates the pursued cultural change, in terms of management, and the attitudes expected from workers.

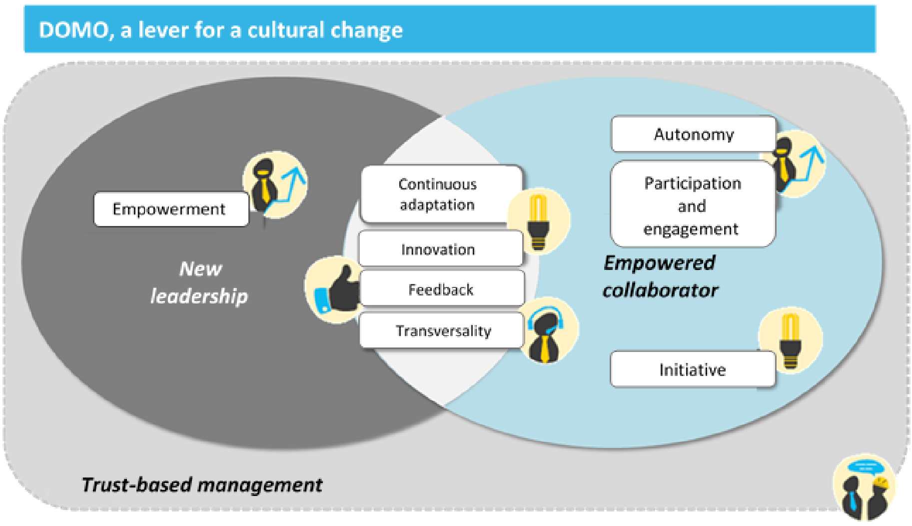

Figure 10 - Illustration of the DOMO project and its purpose (translated from an intern PowerPoint, see appendix 2)

In order to reach this cultural change, *ORES* developed four main working lines:

i. IT tools: "developing information and communication technologies in the company to enable collaboration and mobility" (ORES, 2016a, p. 23; *translated from French*)
ii. Document management: "the goal is to revise the company document management to easily access to documents from any place" (ORES, 2016a, p. 23; *translated from French*)
iii. Architecture/buildings: "arranging or modernising the buildings in order to provide workspaces adapted to the tasks and more favourable to interactions" (ORES, 2016a, p. 23; *translated from French*)
iv. Change: "changing behaviours, attitudes and habits in the company to fit the client's new expectations, and the company's values" (ORES, 2016a, p. 23; *translated from French*).

Beyond the cultural change, a person in charge of the project also clarifies that productivity remains the ultimate goal as illustrated by the excerpt below.

> *In the business case, I really wanted to separate. Overall, my business case was negative so I had more costs than tangible benefits in euros because the profit was a change of culture that I do not know how to convert into euros. But, well, the way I presented it is to say "Well, if you increase productivity by more than 0.5%, you win." Are we going to increase it by 0.5%, 2%, 10%? It's not me who is going to say it. There are studies that say that we are increasing by 10%. I say "We are winning from 0.5%". [...]*
>
> ***Does the DOMO project mainly aim a productivity goal?***
>
> *We are a private company. So behind everything we do, the goal is to improve customer service and be more productive. And in a classic society, the two are intimately linked because if I'm more productive, I will have a price that is more attractive to my clients. In our case, the price side is a little dissociated since the customer has no choice and we have a regulator who is there to squeeze us like a lemon. So the two elements are there but are not related in the same way as in another company. The company that says it does not do that to be more productive, it's lying. Every company wants to be more productive. [Mathias]*

I would like to underline that my point here is not to address a critique towards this orientation towards productivity. The point here is to highlight that, beyond the will to change and renew the culture, to make the work environment more comfortable, to encourage collaboration, etc., the goal of this project is to rise productivity. And even more, this project would probably not have happened if it was not profitable, as this is partly suggested by the employee below:

> *[The CEO], he doesn't care about buildings, he doesn't care if we have an integrated or not integrated telephony, he actually wants people who are autonomous, who take initiatives, that we trust. And if it was possible in small, closed offices, it would be done in small closed offices, but since it was said that this collaboration was more effective in an open building where people can move and where we sit where we are the best, and so some days in an open-space and some days in a closed office… It's a means for him. The purpose is the change of culture. [Mathias]*

2.2. The cultural project, an inconvenient truth?

On several occasions, I mentioned that the cultural change was at the very centre of the DOMO project. This was made crystal clear in the strategic plan, and during interviews with the persons in charge of the project, and even with some workers. In this change process, *ORES* was helped by a consulting agency and its owner. On its website, this consulting agency clearly explains its core business: developing and introducing "future ways of working in order to improve business by enabling flexibility, freedom, informal communication and interaction, sharing information and knowledge, collaboration, creativity and innovation" (Out of Office, n.d.). The dual role of this consulting agency is well explained by its owner:

> *[This company] is a company which is on the pillars. On the one hand, it's all that is related to change management, and organisational, and on the other hand, it's all that is related to design and architecture. Because we are convinced that people's behavior can be supported by the arrangement and the style of place in which a company is. Thus, our company creates ways to work, so really everything that is related to the spirit and a workplace which fits to the company strategy and values. So we make sure that the company culture and values are felt by the building and the design in which one enter. This is really important for us. When you come into a company… you [have] to feel who the company is, and you don't have to put up the values but [they have] to be felt. [Manon]*

This is very clear that this consulting agency is not just a firm of interior designers. One might expect that this should have been made clear to workers from the beginning of the project. However, even though *ORES* never hid its intentions to change its organisational culture, drawing on several excerpts below, it seems that all workers were not completely informed about the role of this consulting agency. More precisely, these excerpts suggest that the consultant was not completely transparent about her role.

> *For me, I saw [the consulting agency owner] really as an interior architect. And after well, when you go on her website, you realise that it's not really that in fact. Initially, she was an interior architect and then, she has evolved. She [implements] new ways of working. That's her goal. [Sandy]*

> *They have explained us the change that was going to happen. In fact, they have rather [insisted] on the move. We have talked about the building, the zero paper [policy] because we had to digitise, etc. But we have not really talked about the company change. In fact, they were afraid to announce [this to] us. The lady who came to help the company culture change, she's also an interior architect. And instead of telling us her two functions, they just told us she was an interior architect and that she was here for the building, for choosing the furniture, etc. And the day we discovered that she was here to change the company culture, some people wondered why they had lied to us, where the problem was, and what was behind [it]. [Jeanne]*

The excerpt below seems to suggest that this role of "organisational culture consultant" was partly hidden because of the fear of rejection and suspicion workers could have, because they are seen as "old resistant Gauls".

> *First, there is the interior designer who first came as an interior designer but afterwards, scratching a little and discussing a bit with her, we realised that she wanted to bring out a new way of working. And it was [X], I do not know if you heard about her. And so it was really a big thing to pass because well, one always says that we are a bit the old Belgians, we have been told for a while that we were really old Belgians, you see a little bit like in Asterix and Obelix, the Gauls are a bit refractory. We were told we were a little refractory. [Sandy]*

The previous pages help to understand the official goal underlying the DOMO project, and its positioning regarding *ORES* strategy. As explained on page 169, four lines compose the DOMO project. "Architecture and building" is one of these lines. Drawing on the strategic plan, it appears clear that *ORES* executives considered that space could be used as a tool to support the new culture, as illustrated by the lines below:

> *Convinced that the architecture supports the evolution of the corporate culture, we proceed in rearrangements in our existing sites, and build new buildings more opened, more prone to collaboration, by offering a variety of shared environments, adapted to the task, [and] encouraging to creativity in more conviviality. [Strategic plan 2015-2020, p. 32]*

In this thesis, I will mainly focus on this line and what I call the work environment. However, these four lines are connected and it is often difficult to consider one aspect solely and independently from the other aspects of the project. This explains why, in the next chapters, I will occasionally refer to the project rather than to the work environment.

3. At the heart of DOMO: a new workspace environment

As previously explained and as argued by *ORES* itself (2015, p. 27), the DOMO project is the name of the cultural challenge embraced by *ORES*. This is a global company project. In practice, this project is materially incarnated by the reconfiguration of offices it involves. The other changes (e.g. management, work behaviours, etc.) at the heart of the cultural project are expected to be supported by this physical change (see chapter 7).

Initially, the new headquarter (located in Gosselies and planned for 2019) was planned to be the first one to experiment the new work environment, and to embody this new culture. More precisely, it is interesting to note that the new headquarter has not been designed to incarnate the new world of work since the beginning. Instead, the first plan was to build a traditional building with closed offices. The idea to implement the "new world of work" was an innovation encouraged by the chief executive when he took office:

> *[The CEO] was in place for a month when we came with the consultant to make the presentation of this "New World of Work" and he really clicked on it, he said "We must do it". And then, we already had plans for Gosselies that were made with henhouses and offices like here [author's note: this interview was on the site of Louvain-la-Neuve]. And so we saw the architects, we were in the phase of choice of the architect so we still had four who were in the race, we made them completely review their plan saying "Here's what we want". [Mathias]*

Also, it has not been planned from the beginning that the building of Leuze-en-Hainaut would be a pilot. This resulted from the fact that Gosselies site ran behind schedule in comparison to the site of Leuze-en-Hainaut:

> *And Gosselies falling behind because we had license problems, Leuze went before. [Mathias]*

In the next sections I will extensively explain the new work environment that has been implemented in Leuze-en-Hainaut.

3.1. A spatially-driven transformation inside and outside the offices

In order to support the cultural change, the work environment has been re-thought on two main dimensions: (i) the implementation of teleworking (at home and on other *ORES* sites), and (ii) the transformation of the working environment on-site with the implementation of activity-based offices and a clean-desk policy.

Regarding the implementation of teleworking, it was put in practice from January 2017. Thus, employees in *ORES WaPi* began working from home a few months after the relocation. The implementation of teleworking consists in allowing to work (i) on another *ORES* site one day per week, and (ii) at home one day per week. Some categories of workers are not concerned by the teleworking policy, or with restrictions: part-time workers, and certain workers for reasons related to their job content.

For people working part-time, the rule is the following: they should be in their main site (i.e. Leuze-en-Hainaut) three days per week. This means that workers on a half-time are not allowed to worker either from home or from another site.

> *I'm only entitled to one day since it is two days out of five. We have to be 3 days a week in the office. [Ariane]*

Other categories of workers do not practice teleworking, essentially for two reasons. First, because they have not the essential IT tools to be mobile. This is the case of draughtsmen because they are using a heavy software that could only be installed on desktop computers.

> ***Are you concerned by the teleworking?***
> *Not at all since I have a fixed computer. [Sandy]*

A second category of workers not allowed to practice teleworking concerns workers of the systems operations services (except for back office workers who are administrative agents). Indeed these workers are the first persons of contact in case of emergency (e.g. gas pipe explosion), and also they are in charge of the daily work distribution to technical employees working on the system.

> *As I told you, when after the hours we do the night-care service to ensure continuity of the system… Well during the day… And since we must see the guys, I cannot imagine seeing them coming home to pick up material or plans, this is not possible. So at the time I'm talking to you, we cannot do it. [Loïc]*

Despite this difficulty for this category of workers, I observed that teleworking was sometimes unofficially authorised by the executive of these workers:

> *We are non-eligible. So, it can be heard without any problem, by mutual agreement with my hierarchy […], by mutual agreement with my agents, if they wish one day to telework, no problem. A phone call, you tell me that you telework, no problem. Or if they want to plan it, they tell me: "Listen, next Wednesday I'm teleworking, I have to recover, I have a lot of work late.", that's, ok. But we do it internally. [Gaspard]*

According to the 2016 activities report and several internal documents (e.g. *PowerPoint*, presentations of the project, etc.), it seems that the implementation of the teleworking policy aims at improving work/life balance. This is also the purpose workers attribute to this policy, even though they also seem to consider that teleworking is used as a performative tool:

> *I think it's to have a better balance of family and work but it's clear that it's also to have more performance of the workers. It's not just to please us. The fact of being able to telework and to be able to go on another site, it's sure that it brings us a certain comfort but beside that, it's also necessary that we are more performative to continue doing this type of work. [Agathe]*

It is interesting to note that, at the time I finished my data collection (i.e. in May 2017, that is to say 4 months after the home-based teleworking policy had been implemented), some workers had still not had the opportunity to work from home because the implementation of the teleworking policy relied a lot on the line manager's initiative:

> *For now, we have not really discussed it with our boss, but it's true that we would like to benefit from teleworking. [Laurianne]*

Even though the DOMO project has transformed the work environment outside the company building through the setting-up of a teleworking policy, in my data collection, I did not focus on this aspect but rather on the transformation of the internal work environment. In the next pages, I explain this change, the underlying managerial intentions, and employees' perceptions of it.

3.2. From Tournai to Leuze-en-Hainaut: material aspects of a cultural change

In this section, I describe in details the new workspace of *ORES WaPi* when relocating from Tournai to Leuze-en-Hainaut.

3.2.1. Leuze-en-Hainaut: activity-based and clean-desk policy

The move to Leuze-en-Hainaut has provoked an earthquake for the spatial organisation since, after that, the spatial landscape was in any way similar to the previous one in Tournai.

Building: geographic position and architectural design

Illustration 4 - New building of ORES WaPi, in Leuze-en-Hainaut (source: ORES; permission granted by ORES)

In terms of geographic position, according to workers, Leuze-en-Hainaut is less attractive than Tournai, particularly for its isolation. This isolation is particularly striking when one considers that the building is located in an industrial area and, in particular, in a street that was not officially indexed at the time of my data collection.

This isolation results in a lack of accessibility, highlighted by some workers as a disadvantage for workers but also for customers:

> *We moved a little away from the customer base. We isolated ourselves a little bit by coming here to Leuze. When we were at the Lys street, we were still accessible to customers. But here I don't know how customers do it. Now, everything is managed by computer, even for customers. [Jérémy]*

While the architectural design of the building is appreciated by a majority of employees, this geographic position seems to be seen most of the time as a disadvantage. The excerpt below illustrates how this positioning in a rural area can even lead to feelings of imprisonment:

> *And we were brought here into a deserted tundra where there is no life possible or anything. I have the impression that we are in prison in a building where it is impossible to open or ventilate. As soon as we go out, we are cut in half by the wind. With an additional 20 minutes drive compared to before. [Raphaël]*

Despite this geographic position perceived as something detrimental to workers' and sometimes, customers' comfort, some workers also underline the benefit gained from the position in terms of operations rapidity. Indeed, according to the persons in charge of the project, the move to Leuze-en-Hainaut was justified because this city is precisely in the centre of the *WaPi* area (contrarily to Tournai which is in the extreme west of the area). This recentring should improve the rapidity of intervention in all the communities of the *WaPi* area.

> *I think that the move was, as we were told, to recentralise us compared to the existing systems. Well the system is still going to Enghien so Tournai was off-center compared to the whole area. [Audrey]*

> *Here we are really in the middle of nowhere. So that's a small point ... but well, I guess we chose here to be operational, which makes sense. [...] More in the middle of the region, then for the agents it's much easier. There are many main roads around here. [Simon]*

Interior design and workspaces

While the previous building in Tournai presented a traditional spatial organisation with individual and shared closed offices (and attributed desk), the new building in Leuze-en-Hainaut has disrupted this spatial organisation: the working area is completely opened, there is no longer attributed desks, and workers can choose their desk among different types of workspaces (e.g. individual closed office, library, meeting rooms, etc.).

As shown in the illustration 5, the building is on two floors (ground floor included) with an opened atrium that connects the ground floor and the second floor with a stairwell.

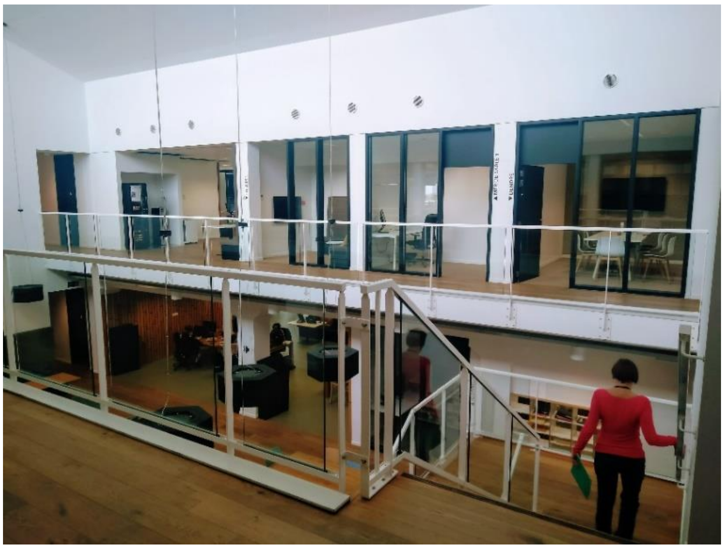

Illustration 5 - Picture of the stairway and the atrium taken from the second floor (source: author's own picture)

The majority of the surface area on the ground floor and the second floor is occupied by opened working spaces with single-worker, but also four- to six-workers desks and tables positioned in the middle of the working areas or along the windows (see illustration 6).

Even though this new building aims at encouraging a paperless policy, there are several pieces of furniture where files are stored by the services. There are also two print shops, one on each floor, where workers can print documents, use shared tools (e.g. stapler and hole punch), and freely take office material (e.g. notebooks, pens, etc.) (See illustration 7).

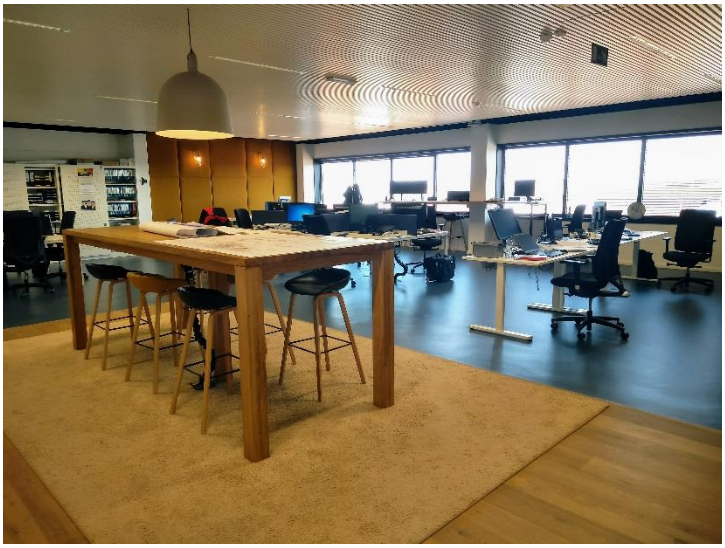

Illustration 6 - A common working space on the second floor (source: author's own picture)

Illustration 7 - Picture of the print shop on the second floor (source: author's own picture)

Besides the opened working area, there are other closed working areas. There are very tiny closed office with one desk. They are equipped with a screen and a phone. It is designed to host a single worker (see illustration 8). There are less than ten of these types of offices in the building. There are also small meeting rooms that can host till six persons. These meeting rooms are equipped with a TV screen and a phone (see illustration 9).

Illustration 8 – An individual cellular office on the ground floor (source: author's own picture)

Illustration 9 - A common meeting room (source: ORES; permission granted by ORES)

There is also a crisis room that can host around fourteen persons, and is intended to take decision in emergency situations. For this purpose, the plans of the gas and electricity systems are pined to the wall in this room. Nearby this crisis room, there is an operations room dedicated to employees who are in contact with technicians working outside. This is through the radio and computers installed in this room that employees are informed of crisis situations, for instance. Finally, there is a library on the ground floor (see illustration 10). This room is equipped with computer screens but no phone because it is conceived to be a silent room.

Illustration 10 - The library (source: author's own picture)

Since there is a clean-desk policy in place in this building, there are also several lockers where workers put their belonging in the end of the day (each worker has his/her own locker).

There are also two main common areas: the theatre and the lunch room. The theatre is an opened area – with removable panels to close it – representing a theatre where workers gather for official presentations, for instance (see illustration 11). This room is equipped with a projection screen. When this space is not used, workers can sit and work, or eat during lunchtime.

Illustration 11 - The theatre (source: ORES; permission granted by ORES)

The lunch room – called "ORES'to" – is an opened area in the middle of the ground floor with many seats, kitchen tables and a high table with bar stools (see illustrations 12). In connection to this lunch room, there is a fully equipped kitchen at the disposal of workers. Each day workers can have a free bowl of fresh soup, or can get the sandwich or salad they order at the reception in the morning (a local sandwich shop takes the orders, prepare and deliver them each day). This system of sandwiches delivery did not existed in Tournai, and has been put in place to counterbalance the lack of stores in the area. There are also two coffee machines and water fountains, both on each floor.

Illustration 12 - ORES'to, the lunch room (source: ORES; permission granted by ORES)

Each of these spaces is furnished and decorated with solid wood furniture (except for desks), design lamps and chairs, cosy cushions and trendy colours. Most of the floor is covered with parquet. The whole design and equipment of the building leaves the impression of a rather luxurious environment. There are no decorations on the wall but here and there, there are stickers recalling one of *ORES* leitmotivs: “All committed to facilitate the life of our customers” (see illustration 13).

Illustration 13 - Sticker on a meeting room, saying 'All committed to facilitate the life of our customers" (source: author's own picture)

Since the staff of *ORES WaPi* is also composed of technicians who do not primarily work in the building, there is an area dedicated to these workers: the workshop. The workshop is an area that is separated from the rest of the working area by a door. In this area, there are a few glass-fronted meeting rooms and changing rooms where workers put on their uniform before going outside. The reserve finds itself in the workshop. This is where technical supplies (e.g. tools and materials) are stored. The workshop gives a direct access to the exit. As shown in the illustration 14, this area is less luxuriously decorated than the rest of the building.

Illustration 4 - Pictures of the workshop (source: author's own picture)

3.2.2. Introduction of a code of conduct

Another innovation in line with the new workspaces is the introduction of a code of conduct, that is a list of rules that workers have to respect in this new space in order to "live together". These rules are listed in Table 7.

The 10 rules of the "living together" in ORES WaPi
1. I do the clean-desk
2. I respect the volume level that is expected in the area I occupy
3. I respect the work schedules
4. I respect the other people's work
5. I give direct feedback
6. I eat in the multifunctional area
7. I keep the workspace clean
8. I smoke in the space provided
9. I ensure consistency between my actions and my speech
10. I welcome visitors in the reception area

Table 7 - The ten rules of the "living together" in ORES WaPi (source: PowerPoint presentation of the DOMO Project in Leuze-en-Hainaut; translated from French)

In line with the second rule, in each of the working areas there are pictograms indicating the expected volume level. This volume level goes from a high, for instance in the lunch room, to a silent area, for instance in the library (see illustration 15).

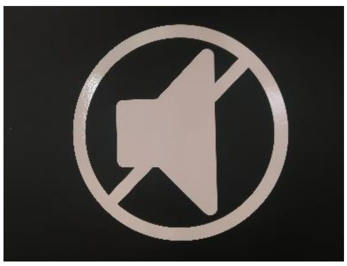

Illustration 15 - A pictogram indicating a silent area (source: author's own picture)

According to workers, the formulation of these rules was essential in order to teach to workers points of reference and behavioural guidelines in this new working environment.

> *People had to be aware that today's workplace could be my colleague's place tomorrow, and maybe even two hours later. Well it takes a certain respect not to leave his/her cup of coffee. It seems logical but it was still necessary to establish rules of life. Even the intonation of the voice. I will not start talking to a client on the phone very loudly because I have my colleague next door who is working. Do not disturb a colleague who is in a bubble because if he is in a bubble... Here it was necessary to establish the fact that the colleague who is in a bubble works and we cannot disturb him. [Natacha]*

In the same time, even though they are perceived as something necessary, these rules are also described as basic manners that should be part of everyone's education.

> *These famous rules of life for me, initially, it is already common sense. [Simon]*

> *Regarding the charter, there was nevertheless a relative consensus because this charter is still a lot of common sense. But it's even better when it's written so that's why we wrote it. And that reassures people. [Mathias]*

Regarding their apparition, these rules have been formulated by a working group. Indeed, during the months preceding the move to Leuze-en-Hainaut, workers were accompanied by several consultants in order to make them participate to this process. Therefore, one of the working groups had to suggest rules for the "living together".

4. Beyond managerial intentions: workers' discourse and practice of the new work environment

In this section, I describe workers' perceptions of their new spatial environment, and explain their appropriation of it. Before coming precisely to employees' perceptions of the spatial environment, I focus on the DOMO project broadly taken and describe the discourse of justification some workers have regarding the project.

4.1. Perceptions and embodied symbols of the DOMO project

4.1.1. "If we don't change, it's clear that we are going to be eaten by others": about the naturalisation of the project

Among the numerous workers that I have interviewed, I have observed that a fair amount of them were rather pleased by the fact that *ORES* does this project which constitutes for them a real occasion to modernise the organisation.

These workers who are positive regarding the DOMO project – mostly customer advisers and administrative agents – are also the ones who seem to trust and adhere to the discourse according to which *ORES* is threatened. It results that they are convinced that the organisation and its workers are subjected to the necessity to change their culture, their way of being, and way of working. In other words, partisans of the project adhere to the project in the name of a possible salvation for them and for the organisation.

Adhesion in the name of a corporate salvation

The need to change in order to preserve the organisation and remain legit in the Belgian landscape is not so surprising since it is stated in the strategic plan for 2015-2020:

> *Facing a world of energy that is changing faster and faster, ORES has chosen to adapt to not only ensure its durability, its legitimacy and its responsibilities as a distribution network operator and a company of public utility services, but also to meet the expectations legitimately placed in it by all its stakeholders. Our determination is clear: we want to make their energy easier, make their life easier. [Strategic plan 2015-2020, p. 4]*

Without even referring to this argument of *ORES* strategy, several workers spontaneously mention this vital need to adapt the organisation in order to preserve it from the threats which surround it.

In the excerpt below, a worker compares *ORES* as a dinosaur, and the DOMO project as a mean to rejuvenate and make the "dinosaur" live longer:

> *In addition we are in the DOMO so, to a certain extent, what is contemporary. So that will make* ORES *a society that looks younger. You see? [I] said that it was a dinosaur but it is a dinosaur that is refreshing because it must evolve if it wants to continue living. So this new way of working, they are trying to rejuvenate themselves... [Sandy]*

Other workers, at every hierarchical level, share this thought that renewing the work processes and workers' attitudes, in particular towards his/her job activities and the customer, is vital to save *ORES*, and that DOMO is central in this renewal, as the excerpts below illustrate:

> *We must be able to adapt, we must be able to evolve, we must be able to propose other things. And for that, we need a company that is flexible and that can evolve in a short time and not say "We will do the project in 10 years". Before, the projects were in 10 years. [...] We must go quickly otherwise we will be eaten. [Paul]*

> *We really need to have a much more open attitude, a lot more ready for change if we do not want to be just cables and connection installers tomorrow, if we really want to play an active role in the role of distribution. So it really requires a change of state of mind [...]. Tomorrow we need to call on staff who are much more open, who have autonomy, who can take their responsibilities and who, facing a client who does not ask exactly what we have planned in our procedures, can take at its level the right decision to satisfy the customer. And so it really requires a complete change of culture where, in our values… I don't know any more the values that we had 15 years ago, there was the professionalism, perhaps the sense of service as today, and today we added values like the conviviality, the audacity. [Mathias]*

Adhesion in the name of an individual salvation

In line with this need to preserve the organisation, and this adhesion to the project in the name of a corporate salvation, other workers also justify their adhesion to the project in the name of an individual salvation, in other words the preservation of their job.

This argument was particularly expressed by some employees of the customer service. Indeed, from what I have understood, this service is prone to many changes and innovations which take part to the diversification of the activities in relation with their position. According to several of them, the job of client advisor is nothing like what it used to be a few years ago. However, several of these client advisors are very inclined to accept new activities and new corporate projects, such as DOMO, without complaint because, for them, these new projects are so many ways to maintain workers' employment. This is very well illustrated by the excerpts below, taken from interviews I had with two client advisors:

> *I think you have to realise that you cannot have everything, the cake and eat it too. At some point, you have to understand that if you want to be able to keep your job, you have to let go of something. [Lise]*

> *[People who complain, I want to tell them:] "But stop complaining now, be happy to have a job." But here's what, there are always people, no matter what we propose... When I myself, I am happy to see that we evolve, maybe because it is necessary and I prefer that we do it immediately than when it's too late. [...] But we know that it is better to seduce people, to seduce the municipalities, to do a good job or they may leave. If one day the city of Tournai - which is still a lot of customers - gets stuck and goes to [another operator], if we start to lose customers like that, it may be a problem. So we are still obliged to do a little seduction operation and we are obliged to do everything. I'm happy and I cannot understand how some do not understand that we have to do all this. They still think that the customer cannot go elsewhere but it turns out that, from 2020, he will be able to. So here we have to be successful, the customer must be happy, it is necessary, there is nothing to do. [Jeanne]*

Even though I did not compare workers' sayings to their position, and with no intention to simplify the analysis, it seems to me that workers in the customer support service were generally more prone to have a favourable approach with the DOMO project and *ORES* changes. People who strongly rejected the project were rather rare in this department and among this type of job positions. I will come to this category of employees in the last chapter since I interpret their discourse of rejection as a testament of the organisational identity they claim.

4.1.2. Satisfactions and dissatisfactions of a new spatial environment

Since what workers thought about the physical design of Leuze-en-Hainaut building was rather uniform, for this section, I simply summarise what workers pointed as satisfactions and dissatisfactions regarding the new building interior. This is summarised in the Table 8 below.

Satisfactions	Dissatisfactions
- Enough room in the building - Bright environment - General aesthetics with high-quality materials - Comfortable rooms - Technological tools - Decompartmentalisation between services - Access to different colleagues	- Building might be too big with the practice of teleworking - Noisy environment - Too "urban" environment - Difficulty to find people - Wasted time by doing the clean-desk - Too comfortable environment perceived as less professional and work-related - Feeling of surveillance

Table 8 - Summary of workers' satisfactions and dissatisfactions regarding the new spatial environment

While most of these points speak for themselves, it seems necessary to me to detail one of the dissatisfaction points, the one mentioning a "too 'urban' environment".

4.1.3. *"That's just not how we are": expression of a misfit with ORES WaPi way of being*

During my interviews, I had the opportunity to hear about anecdotes and comments of workers suggesting the idea that the DOMO project, and in particular the work environment and its rules, did not fit what workers referred to as *ORES* mentality and, sometimes, most particularly, *ORES WaPi* mentality.

Through this idea mentioned in the excerpt below, a worker clearly explains that the new work environment does not fit the local culture shared by workers in Leuze-en-Hainaut. Indeed, he explains that these workers (himself included) have a "village mentality" that is different from the urban mentality conveyed by the new building. This idea of a misfit between the project, the environment and workers in Leuze-en-Hainaut was echoed by several other workers who seemed to share the idea that the work environment does not fit the mentality of *ORES* and *ORES WaPi*.

> *I think that they wanted to change the mentality of the collaborators by building them an open, rather urban office. Once again, we do not have the mentality... The person from Brussels who will come here, she will perhaps be more melt because it is working methods that, in the capital city, they already have that for a long time I think. It's not new to them. But here, we must not forget that we are far from everything.*
>
> ***This is the village idea you were talking about?***
>
> *It's the village idea. [Leuze, it] is neither more nor less than a very large village. Ath, it's the same thing. For me, it's too urban. I don't think people have been ready to work in a building like here. [Adam]*

Among the numerous little stories and funny anecdotes, one of them was quite frequently told by workers. This anecdote was related to the ten rules of the "living together". As previously explained, these rules were formulated by a working group. Workers in this working group, as in the others, were accompanied by the consulting agency owner who had to guide and help them in their reflections. Among the discussion points, workers talked about whether they should salute themselves in the morning and if so, if they should shake hands or kiss each other on cheeks. As illustrated by the excerpt below, the idea of a rule telling that it is not necessary to kiss each other in the morning was perceived as a complete nonsense by the majority of employees.

> *At first we said "Yes we don't kiss anymore". The Wallonia Picardy region is a very family-friendly region. Everyone in the company kisses each other. This is a principle that is with us. It is true now that people from outside, workers from other sites who come to us don't have the same principles maybe on their site. It's not always that easy. We were certainly not going to be dictated the way we say "Hello" to his colleague in the morning. We were told "There you go, you don't kiss, you shake hands", for us it was a nonsense. [Aurélie]*

For these workers, saluting colleagues with kisses is part of their way of being, particularly in the Walloon Picardy.

> *Finally, I think that the rules of life, there was a rule of life group. We had tried new ways of working. For example, saying hello. Do we say hello to everyone? These are other ways [of being]. Because, for example, we in Tournai, we said "Everybody is kissing everyone". And again here now, generally, we kiss each other when we see each other. Except when we eat unless we don't bother people. These are small things that have appeared. And if you go to Brussels for example, you don't kiss other people. Here we really were... It was our way of being. [Sandy]*

This cultural barrier related to the local culture was also underlined by the consulting agency owner who commented on the fact that *ORES WaPi* probably lack of a "pioneer spirit" comparatively to the north of Belgium:

> *In the depths of Wallonia, they are perhaps less avant-garde than in Norway. The more we go to northern Europe, the more there are pioneers in this kind of thing. The further we go to the South, the more hierarchical we are. In Italy, when the boss doesn't have his office, it's unimaginable. We see the movements of societies that change, also geographically. In Paris, there is much more hierarchy than in Brussels for example. [...] In Belgium, we see that the Flemish are more prominent than the Walloons. It's a cultural issue. Again, there is no good and bad to that, but is* ORES*, in its soul, a company that is already very international, traveling all the time...? No. It's another type of people too. [Manon]*

To sum up, the new workspaces inspire to workers an impression of urban space that is conflicting with their local – village-type – way of being.

One can see that, beyond the fact that employees distance themselves with ways of being they attribute to the ones you have in capital cities, one can observe that the spatial dimension is central in the determination of new rules and new ways of being. Indeed, it is because now they moved to a building with opened workspaces and where it is easier to disturb other people that they had to question the way they socially act with their colleagues. Thus, here it is a clear example of how the spatial dimension of the workspace is likely to influence social behaviours of workers. And because employees questioned – and rejected – the new rule of shaking hands, one can see that the spatial dimension influences ways of being but does not determine them. What is striking here also is that, the rejection is motivated by a cultural argument that can be summarised in "this is not how we do, it's not us".

4.1.4. *"Here, it is asepticised": towards an increasing sameness*

Throughout the interviews, I have been observing how the new work environment provoked feelings of depersonalisation. Surprisingly, this feeling did not seem really provoked by the clean-desk policy and the interdiction to "possess" a personal space. Indeed, when I asked about the absence of family pictures and personal belongings, most of the workers were not bothered at all, as illustrated by the excerpt below:

> *[Already in Tournai to get used to this] I had removed the frames of children pictures, I put them as my desktop wallpaper, [I already took] some small habits that have made that, when we arrived here, finally it's not a bad thing not to store papers in the office again and again. [Lorraine]*

However, workers expressed that the interior design, associated to the clean-desk policy, gave the impression of an environment lacking of realness, recalling an *IKEA* catalogue and leading to the perception of an asepticised space, as expressed here. This excerpt also illustrates that, through the clean-desk policy, it is as the reality of the daily work, embodied here by the notebook, was hidden.

> *Before, the notebook was there. And people arrived in the morning, the notebook was still there. Now we take it, we put it in the wardrobe, we close the cabinet: "Ah it's beautiful!". So before leaving we can take a photo and say "Oh what a nice office". That's a bit an* IKEA *office. In a kitchen, you have the picture, the kitchen is always beautiful. There's the table, there's even a vase with a flower. I mean me, when my wife is cooking, there is no flower in the kitchen. There's a pot, some flour, some milk. A kitchen that lives. No, but seriously: when you do... A kitchen... Here it is a bit* IKEA.
>
> ***Do you feel that they are trying to hide that something happens here?***
>
> *No, but we must leave and everything must be spotless. It should not have anything on the offices because tomorrow, there may be one that will come. Okay, so what? I understand because there is... You need a little bit... But here, it is asepticised.*
>
> ***And it bothers you this asepticised side?***
>
> *Well it doesn't look real. It doesn't look alive. [Etienne]*

These few excerpts, in addition with the previous section, lead me to think that the new workspace in Leuze-en-Hainaut, because it produces a feeling of urban area in complete opposition with what workers in Leuze-en-Hainaut are used to, produces a sort of anonymous place where workers cannot anchor. It also contributes to work dematerialisation, and prevents workers from marking the workspace with their daily job activities.

4.1.5. *"The technical part has completely been forgotten": on the extreme 'DOMOTISATION'*

Beyond the fact that the new work environment is inadequate to *ORES* – especially *ORES WaPi* – mentality, workers also mention that it is inadequate to *ORES* technical core business and its non-administrative workers:

> *DOMO, maybe that it suits the insurance [sector] but not for the job we do here. Because everyone has a different job thus you need a different working surface. When you see the high voltage [service], they have an operations room. Maybe that for the girls who do the [customer service], an office like this is enough, they don't open plans, they answer the phone. For purely administrative [work], then yes [it suits]. [Thomas]*

For several workers – and not only technical ones – DOMO and the new work environment is a "copy-and-paste" project, similar to what they have seen in other companies:

> *The DOMO project, if you do that in a bank or for insurance [offices] with only office people, without being mean, it's not the same than in a company with office people and worksite people. It's a different thought. I think that we have wanted to copy this from companies where it's only office people. Thus, I think that the philosophy could have been delved into a bit more from this point of view. [Etienne]*

In line with this, it is not only the DOMO project and its material concretisation that are considered as inadequate to *ORES*. It is the "new world of work" idea which does not fit *ORES* reality:

> *Well let's say that, most of the time, when one speak about the new world of work, etc. one think about* Google *or the banking world. Here, they are technicians, we work with big plans, well yes we always need paper, lots of things, and it's true that it's not always easy to live this on a daily basis. [Aurélie]*

This disagreement and unease with the intentions attributed to the DOMO project are not inconsequential. Indeed, as illustrated by the excerpts below, it has produced a phenomenon of standardisation of the workspaces – a DOMOTISATION – which contributes to producing a sidelining of technical workers.

> *Us, we have to manage the administrative and the technical [work]. Maybe that they have been a little too far in the "DOMOTISATION" of the building or the "DOMOTISATION" of Leuze in any case.*
>
> ***How that too far?***
>
> *When you only manage the administrative, it is not very complicated. People do almost all the same job, behind a PC. But we still have half of our agents who are external technical agents. When you look at the building, what is it for our external technical agents? What has been thought for them? Were they involved in the project? Not really. They are external. So we may have been a bit too far in making a copy-paste of what existed in a purely administrative team. If we take a bank, for example, it is only the administration. We, we also manage the technique. Nothing was planned to put up a plan, because these are things that came after. [Gaspard]*

> *It is understandable that there are people who appreciate, and for whom it is better. Each to his own job.* DOMO, *it was standardised: everyone has the same thing but since we have different jobs, they should have done differently and adapt to the job. For us, we don't find our place. [Thomas]*

We can see that, throughout these excerpts, employees express a disagreement with the whole new work environment and the rhetoric of the DOMO project. The new activity-based workspace does not provide the material resources that are necessary to the work activities of technical employees. This leads to a form of denial of what constitutes and is peculiar to technical professionals in *ORES*.

4.1.6. *The atrium: surveillance system*

As described in the beginning of this chapter (see Illustration 5), the building in Leuze-en-Hainaut presents an atrium in the middle of the main room. In the centre of this atrium, there is a staircase connecting the ground floor and the second floor. There is no window or wall in this atrium, which makes this area completely opened to the eyes and to the ears. On the ground floor, this atrium is directly in the middle of the lunch area, and gives direct access to the workshop. This means that this is a crossing point and any worker going to the coffee machine, the workshop, the reception desk or to the other floor is walking through this space, mostly exposed to all the other workers. This permanent visibility seems to arouse feelings of surveillance among workers:

> *Here it's true… I'm on the 1st floor too but when I pack, then I pass in front of all my colleagues then I put my stuff in my locker, I go down the stairs and all those who are down, in spite of everything, raise the head and look who's leaving... So there's certainly a little more surveillance, maybe it's a big word but we pay more attention to what others do, yes... And that's not always nice... [Chloé]*

This feeling of surveillance is reinforced by the fact that, according to several workers, executives occupy "strategic places" from where they have a panoramic view:

> *Now from a point of view [which is related to] all the managers, I would say that we feel much more monitored than before because there are still some strategic points in the building as the coffee machine, the refectory that are in sight of everything, there are places strategically - let's say that like that - to see what people do. Now [if it's] voluntary or not, it's up to everyone to decide but... [Audrey]*

> *So everyone controls each other indirectly. Moreover, we have already noticed that […] the executives, they are always in the same places. It's always the same places that are occupied. And it's true that when you sit in these places, you see everything that happens in the building. They are surveillance points. [Thibault]*

While this practice of surveillance seems rather disapproved by executives, as illustrated by the first excerpt below, some line managers describe practices of surveillance, as illustrated by the second and third excerpt below:

> *I think we do not have time to spy on people if we really work. So even the managers who spend their time spying, I think they have nothing to do in this company and in this new corporate culture. You have to trust your teams. [Olivia]*

> *Often, despite everything, I walk. So I look a little discreetly without going [closely] to see, to see a little bit if [they work]. [Paul]*

> *I may be seated as often as possible beside the girls' group because, necessarily, we must have an eye on them and I can't say that I will walk 10 km every day to do the whole building to know where they are. [Léa]*

4.1.7. *"The instructions booklet"*

Besides symbols embodied by the spatial environment, during my interviews several workers described their feelings about other aspects of the DOMO project. One of these aspect caught my attention: the "ten rules of the 'living together'" guide.

According to some workers, these rules are perceived as a more or less coercive tool, notably because it imposes behaviours that were not dictated in Tournai. Among these behaviours, workers particularly commented on the one forbidding to eat at the desk, and forcing to eat with the co-workers in the lunch area. The excerpt below intensely illustrates the feeling of imposition expressed by a worker who compares the guide to an "instructions booklet".

> *We don't even have the possibility, for example, to eat his sandwich on his table. We can't, in order to promote conviviality. Regarding the restriction of freedoms, frankly... I was talking about the Gulag just now, it's a chosen term. Gulag in the tundra. It's a bit a Stalinist operating mode. [Raphaël]*

While this worker insists particularly on this rule of the project, other workers more generally commented on the diverse injunctions coming from the DOMO project: imposition of the *open-space*, imposition of the new way of working, the new culture, the trust-based management, etc.

> *We've already been imposed the open space so it's another way to work, so it's another culture. Then you are asked to work with trust-based management. These are impositions that are made. [Thibault]*

To sum up this section, I want to underline a few elements. In this section, I have focused on the different perceptions workers attribute to the new workspaces. First, one can see that there are a few workers – mostly in the customer service – who support the DOMO project and, generally, the changes in *ORES*. When one analyses the discourse of justification of these workers, one can observe that they consider it as an urgent necessity to change in order to address the threats surrounding *ORES*.

Second, we can see that the way workers perceive the new work environment is closely related to how they perceive themselves. In particular, they regularly refer to their local culture which they characterise as “a village mentality”, and by saying so, they insist on the fact that the new building and its workspaces inspire an urban culture which is in complete opposition with theirs.

Third, and I think that this is related to the first point, is the observation that the new work environment is asepticised and prevents workers from identifying to the space. What is striking is that, in the discourse of the employees, this impression of anonymity conveyed by the workspaces is more related to the general aesthetics of the building that to the clean-desk rule. Indeed, workers underline the fact that the space looks like a lifeless *IKEA* store.

Fourth, beyond being in conflict with the local identity, several workers explain that the new work environment does not fit the professional identity of technical workers. Indeed, because it promotes digitalisation and mobility for instance, this type of workspace does not provide the material resources enabling technical workers to do their job, and the work environment gives workers the feeling that the technical side of *ORES* has been put aside.

Fifth, even though there is a general discourse of trust among collaborators, the atrium and the opened workspaces give to some employees a global feeling of surveillance either by their co-workers, or by their supervisors. I will come back on the managerial aspects in the next chapter.

Finally, and more in line with the DOMO project broadly taken, a few employees perceive the project as a coercive tool imposing a new culture and new rules. For instance, this is embodied by the “the ten rules of the living together” guide which is compared to an instructions booklet by a worker.

4.2. Adoption of the DOMO workspace

While in the previous section I have extensively addressed the impressions and thoughts workers communicate about the new workspace, in this section I will explain how workers have adopted these spaces, and reorganise them, and how they use it on a day-to-day basis in comparison to how the different workspaces are meant to be used.

4.2.1. *Organisation of the workspaces and (im)mobilism patterns*

Originally, the offices in Leuze-en-Hainaut were designed in such a way that services were decompartmentalised. The clean-desk policy goes with this project: since no worker possesses his/her own desk, and since workspaces are conceived to be “activity-based”, officially there should be no determined services area. In fact, quite the reverse is true. After a few weeks spent in this building, I was myself able to cite where every service was located, and which workers sat where most of the time.

The determining role of furniture, architecture and technical issues

Workers were very aware of this re-compartmentalisation in the building. They attribute this to two concrete reasons: the presence of cabinets, and the localisation of the operations room:

> *We still had cabinets with plans, with files about the [electric and gas] cabins, lots of things so the technical aspect. The cabinets [of the operations service] are there, the [cabinets] of the [technical solutions service] there, those of construction there, those of gas there. Without consulting each other, the [technical solutions service] agents came there, near their documents. So geographically, it was a little fixed. This is the first aspect. The second aspect is the operations room. As we manage the operations, we need to have access and to hear the telephone ringing from the operations room... [...] So we are always confined [in the same place] because of the operations room and the documents. [Gaspard]*

Even though the DOMO project targets a paperless organisation (and “cleaning days” have been organised in Tournai to this end), there is no real commitment to a complete digital organisation. This means that, depending on the service, there are still a few to many paper-format files and documents. I will come back on these aspects in the next chapter devoted to understand the changes in terms of organisation of work.

These cabinets have a very determining role in the organisation of the working space. In fact, previously to moving to the new building, it seems that workers had already planned to seat near these cabinets, as illustrated by the excerpt below:

> *That's annoying, because at one point, there was still a whole series of archives that had to be installed and therefore the cabinets... Of course, if you had to determine the locations of the cabinets, they would have to be determined in one place. So inevitably, if you determine the place of the cabinets, if my cabinet is here, I will not put myself at the end of the other building. [The architect / consultant] did not want to determine the location of the cabinets because it would determine the location of the seats. People were asked "Are you going to like the building? ", "Yes", "And where are you going to settle?", "Well, I don't know. Where they are going to put my wardrobe". [Samuel]*

As mentioned above, the different services do not all rely on paper in the same way. For instance, in the services with the customer advisers there has been an important evolution since they moved in Leuze-en-Hainaut, and now the service is completely digital. However and surprisingly, this did not change the organisation of space: from what I have observed, even though the cabinets are empty, their determining role in the organisation of space remained the same.

Another determining role of offices organisation consists in technical issues. These issues concern two types of workers: draughtsman and workers in charge of direct phone lines. In the first case, as previously explained in this chapter, draughtsman are the only workers with a desktop computer because the main software they use cannot run on a mobile computer. This means that these workers have more difficulty to move in the building, as illustrated by the excerpt below:

> *That is to say that there are several computers and it's true that I could take the place of my colleague in the morning if I wanted, which we don't do because well, when we have a profile on a computer we think it's much better to keep it. I always put myself in the same place but I could perhaps put myself in the place just beside because there are several computers but hey, we don't have much choice of change. [Sandy]*

The second category of workers who cannot be mobile in the building are the workers in charge of the direct phone lines, that is phone lines directly linked to the emergencies, the fire station, the mayor, etc.

> *[You have] to know that my job is a bit apart from jobs here in* ORES. *It's because we have hotlines, firefighters, burgomasters, emergency lines. And so these lines are fixed. And we, the schedulers, we were a little away from the project because precisely, we have no choice to have a fixed place in the building in Leuze. So we are the only ones who always stay in the same place in the building. We can't move or isolate ourselves in a bubble to work. [Natacha]*

The first observation is thus the following: furniture, technical issues and architectural organisation have a very determining effect on the organisation of working spaces. They are one of the sources that prevent workers from being completely mobile and mixed in the new work environment.

Social-based workspaces

Second, it is interesting to observe that, while this new building, through the activity-based and clean-desk policy, is supposed to promote collaboration, inter-services relations, transversality, etc., in fact the space and where workers sit is ruled by social preferences. So contrarily to what supporters of the activity-based workspace claim, workers in this space arrangement do not choose their place depending on an efficiency rule, but more depending on a sociability rule. The excerpts below illustrate this second observation:

> ***In general, you work rather in the same corner. What makes you work in this area?***
> *Because the people with whom I get along are here, so here I am, I like being with them. [Charlotte]*

> *Yes, that's also true that I don't change a lot of space because it's true that I prefer to regroup with people I appreciate more. [Audrey]*

> *No I stayed in the same place, with the [technical back-office] people actually because social relations... [Anna]*

> *Now, after a few days we are necessarily put with people with whom we have affinities, we get together and even if we can change places every day, in the end we often get back to the same place with the same people. [Agathe]*

Even though most of the workers stayed within the service they belong to, I observed that a group of three workers belonging to the same service escaped on purpose from the group and installed on the second floor while their co-workers and supervisors were all on the group floor:

> *Let's say we did it on purpose... The principle was to seat anywhere [we want] while our supervisors, finally, they didn't say it officially but they wanted the whole team to be pretty much on the same board. So we did it on purpose, since we could put ourselves anywhere, [we] put ourselves at the opposite of the team. And here we have kept... [Ludovic]*

When asked about this choice made on purpose, this worker explained to me that this was mainly a way to stay with workers who belonged to the same generation, and to put distance with the other younger co-workers. This illustrates that this distance is once again not justified by efficiency but by a will to be close to some workers, and far from others.

Stick to the group: fear of being "the black sheep", experiences of rejections and need to be accessible

That being said, from my observations, I can tell that it is rather unusual for a worker to move away from his/her service. I identified two main reasons that can help in explaining this. First, since the rule was more to remain with the group, moving away from the group implies the risk to be perceived as "the black sheep", as illustrated here:

> *Here it's the [draughtsmen], there it is the construction, there it is the repairing [service] and downstairs it is the [planned works service]. Everything is grouped. It becomes like in Tournai while, at the base, it was not that. So we, if we change places, well we are a little badly seen. There are places where you don't want to be. So it started from a good intention, but in the end, it fell through. [Edouard]*

In line with this avoidance of being "the black sheep", another reason explaining that workers stick to their service is that some of them have clearly been confronted with workers asking them to leave the space. This is a particular situation customer advisers regularly told me about. Indeed, since these workers are the first-line contact with customers, most of their job consists in receiving calls from customers and taking care of diverse situations. For this purpose, these workers are equipped with a headset. Several of these workers told me that they were asked by some other workers to stay in "their area" because they were too noisy when talking on the phone, in other words in doing their job.

> *And then we must also say that, in the beginning, the girls looked around a little, and there are people who complained because, necessarily, they are on the phone so they talk a lot and it disturbed some services, so [the girls] came downstairs because they have been told "You're boring, you're on the phone all the time, you talk all the time" and so that's it, that's why they went downstairs. [Lise]*

This is important to mention that these reproaches were said even when the customer advisers were working in areas where talks are authorised, as explained in the excerpt below:

> *We tested a little at first when we arrived, until the day we had the remark that we were too noisy. We had chosen an area where we could [be noisy]. I don't know if you saw with the volume signs... So we had been in an area where we could talk but it happened to the ears of the supervisors who told us that it might be nice to come back downstairs so we came back downstairs. [Camilla]*

This sense of obligation to stay close to the service co-workers was particularly expressed by line-managers and supervisors, especially when they are in charge of employees working outside (e.g. technical agents). The two excerpts below illustrate how these workers feel the need to locate in the same place in order to be easily visible to other workers, or to be easily in contact with them. By sitting in the same desk or, at least, area on a daily basis, these line-managers and supervisors attempt to re-create the proximity that has been lost.

> *I sat a little bit everywhere and then finally, one realises that, for a question of facility, not to have to move every time I had to ask a question or ask something, I [finally] always settle downstairs with the people in my service. [Lise]*

> *Now, I can say that I don't move much. I always stay in the same area. I tried to change from area. I had a lot of remarks from my [collaborators]. The worry is, since they are here only 40%, 30% of their time, if I'm not there to answer their questions when they come... So 40% of their time and me [with] my meetings on building sites, I have to stay at the same place. I am obliged at least to stay in the same area so that they have comfort, regarding their expectations. And so, it's very annoying for me, because I can never isolate myself. And I need it. [Nathan]*

Finally, another reason explaining this scarcity of workers' mobility is the following: since the majority of workers (and supervisors and line managers) stay within their service, information flow methods did not change. This means that moving away from the group implies a risk to move away from up-to-date information. This risk is well known by line managers, as mentioned in the excerpt below:

> *They designed the building without giving partitions, to say "There it will be the electricity service, there it will be the gas". Because, despite everything, I have a free spirit [in my service], it's a girl who doesn't want to bend [to the idea that] "Your cell, it's the electricity […], that's where you have to work ". No, we tried through the door, the window, the attic, the cellar, by all means, we cannot force the person because it's like that. She doesn't want to, she doesn't want to. It's embarrassing because she doesn't have the proximity with the supervisors, doesn't have the proximity with the information, if one needs information, one doesn't even know what she does, […]]in [her] corner. [Michaël]*

This means that the risk of information loss could impede some workers from benefitting from the activity-based workspace. Unless that it is the low level of workers' mobility in the workspaces that crystallises a form of shared norm consisting in sharing information verbally. I will be back on these elements in the chapter 7.

In conclusion, we can see that while the workspaces were conceived as areas where there is no longer fixed services, the organisation of space differs from this ideal conception. Indeed, we can observe that a strong re-positioning of services took place for two main reasons: because of the structural role of furniture, and because some workers are afraid of being inaccessible by their co-workers (mainly in the case of supervisors), or being judged if they are too mobile. Indeed, since mobility and activity-based workspace are more an exception than a rule, if a worker is regularly mobile, (s)he is not in the norm. Finally, it is also interesting to observe that groups of people tend to be quite homogeneous because workers make use of the workspaces according to a sociability principle: most of the employees move either to be close to people they appreciate, or distant from people they do not. In conclusion, while the work environment was designed according to an activity-based workspace principle, the work environment is rather organised in services and in groups of persons sharing good relationships.

4.2.2. *Appropriation of the workspaces in Leuze-en-Hainaut*

As explained in the previous section, workers have a rather low level of mobility in the new building of Leuze-en-Hainaut. Most of the time, they stay with their co-workers near their cabinets in an area that has become "their service". Benefitting from the different work areas seems to be more the exception than the rule. But still, it would be reductive to say that, because it is an exception, this mobility does not exist. In this section, I explain how workers make use of the different work areas at their disposal (e.g. single office, library, theatre, etc.).

Usages of the activity-based workspaces

Some workers – rare species – really try to choose their offices depending on their daily activities, as illustrated here:

> *No, I choose my places according to the days of work. For example, on Friday I have a large influx of agents so the agents come on Friday morning so mainly, I know that I have to put myself on the ground floor and I usually put myself in a bubble. Like that I know that if I have to receive the technical agents, it's not necessarily in front of everyone with the sound of the [technicians] that could disturb the people working in the open-space. So on Fridays, for example, I rather put myself in a bubble. The other days of the week, it's more upstairs even if generally it's in the same area but not necessarily with my service. [Gabriel]*

Among the different types of workspaces existing in the building, the one being used the most as intended is the individual cellular office, that is the closed individual office designed to host a single worker for a work requiring deep focus. Drawing on the collected data, one can consider that there are two types of reasons explaining the use of these individual cellular offices.

The first reason is about workers expressing a need for deep focus to achieve specific tasks requiring concentration, as expressed in the excerpts below:

> *For example, when I am in high voltage [service], it's once a month, it lasts about a week, it's in the end of the month, well I need to be more focused, to finish my work absolutely for the 6 of the month so, often I try to find a space, a bubble, a place where I am a little away from the conversations of one or the other to try to be the least distracted possible. [Felix]*

> *If now, indeed, there are times when with my colleagues we want to isolate ourselves, well we will isolate ourselves in a room, usually it's the library, when we really need calm and we feel that we have to give a good shot, we cut off the phone, we cut off everything and we go to the library. [Aurélie]*

These workers tend to consider that the individual cellular offices are interesting workspaces that have been conceived to benefit to employees work activities.

The second reason justifying the use of the individual cellular offices is about workers who express an urgent necessity to isolate themselves because they cannot stand the opened area and its characteristics: noise, moves, etc. Most of the time, these workers did not seem to appreciate the individual cellular offices, but they consider these spaces as a lesser evil, as expressed here:

> *I am told that I isolate myself a lot but I am obliged to isolate myself otherwise I don't know how to work. This is one of the reproaches that have been made since I am in the design office, it is that I isolate myself and it is true, if you look I am always in the small room downstairs. I do not know how to put myself with others, we hear this phone that keeps ringing, we don't make progress. [Lucas]*

> *I tend to isolate myself in a bubble. Maybe not with the door closed but to find a quiet place where I don't suffer all these distractions that are mainly related to noise, and all those people who chatter and laugh [in every corner]. It's not in my way of working, I appreciate being calm. Often it's for thinking tasks. I can't say that I... even for encoding you have to pay attention to what you are doing so there is always a good deal of thinking in there. [Gérard]*

Finally, it appears that, for the persons working from home once a week, it is less necessary to use the individual cellular office for deep focus. Indeed, these workers regularly expressed that working from home once a week allows them the isolation needed for activities requiring deep concentration:

> *I [have worked] in bubbles from time to time when I really need calm. And now that I work at home, once a week the complete calm is enough for me and it's at home in fact. Last year I went [in a bubble] from time to time, maybe once every 15 days to 3 weeks, I went in a bubble to say to [do a big amount of work], to be more concentrated and more calm but now I don't need it anymore since I have it once a week at home. [Ariane]*

> ***Does it happen that you work in a bubble?***
> *It happens, yes. Not often but it happens. If today I want to be a little more concentrated than other days...*
> ***But generally you prefer being with your colleagues?***
> *Yes that's it. Especially since I started teleworking because, of course there, I'm alone at home and one day a week, that's enough. And I don't necessarily want to be in a bubble the other days of the week. [Emma]*

The conquest of space, and the disappearance of the sound rule

As explained previously, even though there was no dedicated services area at their entrance in the new building, workers have reconstituted services in the building. This tends to reduce workers' mobility. Another reason of this lack of mobility can probably be found in the non-compliance regarding the sound rule. As explained by workers in the excerpt below, while some areas were previously designed to be silent, or to be noisy, this sound rule seems to have completely disappeared. This can be explained by the fact that workers completely took possession of the different spaces, and have redesigned services with their co-workers. Thus, the presence of the service seems to prevail over the sound rule.

> *There are areas where you should not make noise and it's not respected. Why? Because each service is put in one place but there are zones. For example, there, it's very quiet and there, it's very noisy. Whoever wants to talk should go there, but he doesn't. So the problem is that if I go to a quieter place, I don't do it because I know it's not going to be quiet. Because I know the service, so I know how they work. They work like that, ok. But then, they [should] put themselves in a noisier area. But they don't do it. It's their place, their offices if I can say, and that's all. [Edouard]*

> *In fact the areas are no longer respected and so it's difficult I think for someone who wants to be in a place where it's supposed to be quiet and silent because, as we want more to be with [people we have an affinity with] and as the tables don't make this possible, we cannot be with lots of people around the same table at the same time. Well we tried to find places where we are able to seat with a maximum of people, but it results that these places there... Look, me [for instance], I arrive in the morning but I don't look if I'm sitting in a place where I can make noise or not... [Anna]*

Mobility and activity-based workspaces: are they even useful?

When observing the low level of mobility, and the low use of the activity-based workspaces in Leuze-en-Hainaut, one might wonder if they are even useful, or required for *ORES WaPi* employees. Indeed, the implementation of this type of workspaces started from the assumption that workers are confronted to diversified tasks on a daily basis, and that this requires the need to change from an opened area to a meeting room, to an area where they can focus for a few hours before going back to another type of activity and workspace.

Among my interviews, a single worker addressed this issue. This person was rather strongly opposed to the DOMO project and the new work environment. As illustrated by the excerpt below, this worker considers that this project does not fit the reality of work of *ORES WaPi* workers whose tasks diversity is more the exception than the rule.

> *Always in the same place, like everyone else. Because the thing from [the Flemish one], she said something like "Every workspace for every job". Well, stupid bitch, didn't you understand that we always do the same thing in here? [Raphaël]*

In conclusion, even though the activity-based workspace is not a central principle in this building, some workers benefit from the possibility to use different types of workspaces. Among these, the closed individual offices are probably the most interesting types of offices. Employees work in these individual cellular offices to deeply focus, or to isolate from the opened area that they cannot stand. Regarding the other types of work areas, it is complicated for employees to use them according to the way they were conceived. Indeed, as explained in the previous section, services have re-located in specific areas of the building which led to the vanishing of the sound rule. Finally, in line with the scarce use of the activity-based workspaces, one worker points out the possible uselessness of this type of environment and principle in an organisation like *ORES* where, according to him, activities are the same on a daily basis.

5. Conclusion of the chapter

As I have shown, the DOMO project has been thought and designed with the idea to make *ORES WaPi* and its workers discover the “new world of work”. One of the tools in this transition consists in the radical change of the working environment. As illustrated by official reports and also explanations given by the persons in charge of the project, it was expected that employees would take advantage of this new work environment and would work according to the “activity-based workspace” principle, that is choosing the work environment depending on the work to be done.

Regarding workers’ appropriation, even though they use different types of workspaces, one cannot affirm that they are completely in adequacy with the idea of “activity-based workspace”. Indeed, mobility seems to be more the exception than the rule. Moreover, when they use the possibility to move, it seems that employees do it either to isolate from the opened area, or to isolate from specific workers and becoming closer to others. Contrarily to what had been thought, workers do no choose their desk according to the tasks to be done, but rather according to where their service re-located, or according to the co-workers they want to share the space with.

That being said, as described in the beginning of this chapter, the organisational culture change at the centre of the DOMO project cannot only be measured by the usages workers make of the spatial environment. In line with my research statement and the articulation proposed between the office and the construction of organisational identity, I propose to observe the possible changes that might have happened in terms of behaviours, skills, attitudes, etc. among workers.

The following chapter aims at investigating these changes.

Sum and substance
▪ The DOMO project designates the name of a project dedicated to change the organisational culture of *ORES*, which is one of the main challenges identified by the company executives. It materialises through the new building in *ORES WaPi*. ▪ The new building in *ORES WaPi* is designed according to the principle of activity-based workspaces. This means that there is no assigned desks and that workers are supposed to choose their working space depending on their daily activities. ▪ While desks were designed to support mobility, and should be chosen according to a principle of activity-based workspace, it appears that most of the time workers remain seated at the same workstation. Several reasons explain the low use of the activity-based workspace principle: the presence of cabinets and the persistence of paper-format documents, the fear of being the “black sheep”, and the respect of a social principle (i.e. being close or far from people they (dis)like). ▪ This lack of mobility does nothing but reinforcing workers’ inertia since workers and services have re-appropriated the working areas and re-instaured their rules at the expense of the previous rules (e.g. the sound rule).

CHAPTER 7. THE LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS IN THE DOMO PROJECT

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I present the changes that have affected the way employees live and work in *ORES WaPi*, in particular the changes resulting from the new work environment. These elements are essential in the understanding of the organisational identity. Indeed, as explained in the third chapter, deciphering an organisation's identity is made possible notably by understanding workers' attitudes, skills, behaviours, etc., that is their ways of being and ways of working. Therefore, in this chapter, I present how the new work environment has altered workers' ways of being and ways of working (regularly referred to as, respectively, "living conditions" and "working conditions").

In the chapter five, I have already described working and living conditions such as they used to be in the previous building located in Tournai. Now, I will extensively explain how daily life take place in Leuze-en-Hainaut, and detail the main changes which are about social relations, digitalisation, work transparency, rhythm acceleration and management.

2. Living and working conditions in Leuze-en-Hainaut

In this section, I detail how living and working conditions are in the new work environment. These main changes are about conviviality and its consequences for wellbeing and productivity, the transformation of social and professional relations, the increased digitalisation and computerisation of work, the transparency and acceleration of work processes, and the changes in terms of management.

2.1. Transformation of the social relationships

First, I propose to focus the evolution of the social relationships nature among workers in the new work environment.

2.1.1. "Here, I feel like all day we say hello": rise and fall of the conviviality

About the increase of conviviality and communication

As explained in the previous chapter, at the heart of the DOMO project there are several new values. One of these values is the conviviality among co-workers, regardless of their hierarchical position or the department they work in. Several initiatives in the architecture of the new building in Leuze-en-Hainaut are in line with this wish to encourage conviviality: the decompartmentalisation of services and people within these services, and the instauration of a lunch and coffee room where workers must have their daily lunch, for instance. In line with this will to encourage conviviality, there is also an intention to promote a nicer work atmosphere for workers.

Numerous workers consider that, indeed, the new building in Leuze-en-Hainaut promotes conviviality and wellbeing, more than what could be felt in Tournai. The decompartmentalisation seems to be a tool enabling conviviality and communication between employees since they meet co-workers they did not meet in the previous building, for instance. This allows them to diversify their relationships, as expressed below:

> *The wellbeing has greatly improved. And as I said earlier, better communication with other people. That's mostly what I remember. And here and at the job, it allows to change a bit [of place], to make a better motivation. [Emma]*

> *Yes frankly, for me the new building has brought a certain wellbeing. People talk to each other a lot more, and I think there are really interactions between services that did not exist at all before. [Noah]*

Several workers explain also that the fact that there is no attributed desk gives them the freedom to choose where they seat but, even better, next to whom they seat. While Tournai did not leave that choice, in Leuze-en-Hainaut workers can choose to maintain and reinforce relations with certain persons, and to avoid others:

> *And inevitably, I feel better. The time we were in Tournai where places were imposed, where I was not necessarily sitting next to someone with whom I had affinities, I personally felt a little less well in the function in fact. And I have really experienced a glaring difference since I've been here, since I can settle down with my friends [Ariane]*

> *In the old days, there were tensions. And for [some people], the fact that they not necessarily have to seat beside the person they don't like, it gave a lot of motivation to these people. [Karl]*

However, the benefits in terms of conviviality and communication do not come without some detrimental effects.

About the hidden costs of conviviality

While numerous workers seem to appreciate the conviviality at the centre of the DOMO project, when digging deeper it appears that this conviviality and the new work environment are detrimental at several levels: performance and wellbeing.

In terms of wellbeing, as other studies already showed, there are several workers who cannot bear the permanent noise to the point where it negatively affects their wellbeing:

> *It's a lot more tiring. I am more tired. And I am more [tired] because you have to do much more concentration efforts. [...] When we are present, [the collaborators] come because they also know that they will have the answer quickly. We are databases and the server gives, gives, gives. And that's very tiring. [Gaspard]*

This detrimental effect on wellbeing is often coped with by isolating in an individual cellular office:

> *What I see a lot is people who are worse than before. There are some [of them]. So people who have a tendency to live very badly the fact that there is a permanent noise. There are many people who use bubbles regularly. We could almost say that they have their own. [Victor]*

However, this solution does not really restore workers' wellbeing, but it is often the last resort solution workers can find. Indeed, as expressed by the excerpts below, workers who have no choice than working in an individual cellular office to escape from the noise do not express appreciating working in these spaces:

> *What is not suitable at all [for me], it is the open-spaces. For me, it's a real disaster. I can't work in this work environment. So me personally, I isolate myself in a bubble in which I don't feel particularly good, or I block a fictitious meeting in the meeting rooms because I need to spread my folders and I need calm and space.*
> *The goal is wellbeing at work, it is efficiency. Honestly, I wonder if on these two points we are not in failure. [Martin]*

Beyond the consequences in terms of wellbeing, several workers underline that this culture of conviviality and continual interactions negatively impacts their performance:

> *We manage to move mountains but I still feel that in terms of productivity, it's -30% and in terms of load, stress, it's rather +30% easily. [Arnaud]*

> *Here I have the feeling that all day we say hello to each other because we meet people as we go, we say "Hello, how has been your weekend?", so everyone is talking to each other a little bit, 5-10 minutes to each person and so we waste a lot of time during the day... [Anna]*

Stress, nuisances and drop of performance are not the only negative consequences resulting from the new work environment and the ideal of conviviality it underlies. Indeed, another more subtle cost in this work environment consists in a form of injunction to conviviality, as expressed by the employee below:

> *In practice yes there is a lot of conviviality but, at the same time, to work it's not always obvious either... [...] We are immersed in a work and every time we are interrupted and it's normal, we're not going to say "I'm busy, let me work" so we chatter a little more and, regarding the job sometimes [you can feel the difference]... I've already been reproached "You're too focused, you must be able to lift the head". I say yes but sometimes we are in a work and if we don't do it, that's how we make mistakes so sometimes, I like to finish what I do and after stopping and talking. And to please everyone is not always easy either. [Chloé]*

This form of injunction to be social and convivial with co-workers is confirmed by the worker in the excerpt below. Indeed, he explains that his isolation in an individual cellular office provokes questions and negative remarks from colleagues, even if he justifies his isolation by a will to be productive.

> *I am told that I isolate myself a lot but I am obliged to isolate myself otherwise I don't know how to work. This is one of the reproaches that have been made since I am in the design office, it is that I isolate myself and it is true, if you look I am always in the small room downstairs. I do not know how to put myself with others, we hear this phone that keeps ringing, we don't make progress.*
>
> ***In what kind of workspace do you work?***
>
> *In the bubbles, all the time. Here downstairs, I'm always there. By the bye, [they] always come to see me there because [they] know that I'm here. [Lucas]*

In conclusion, workers' feelings about working in an opened area echoes what several authors already argued: this type of work environment is likely to enable interactions between worker who were previously not used to meet, but this comes with a series of negative effects in terms of noise, concentration and, eventually, performance (e.g. Myerson & Ross, 2003; quoted by Hancock & Spicer, 2011; Hills & Levy, 2014; Oldham & Brass, 1979; Smith-Jackson & Klein, 2009). But what is particularly striking here lies in the sense of obligation a few workers express regarding the need to be convivial with co-workers. This implies that working in the opened work environment implies to continuously juggling between working efficiently and staying convivial and friendly with co-workers. In the same time, when an employee isolates in an individual cellular office for the sake of productivity, one cannot exclude that other employees reproach this worker his/her social withdrawal.

"Here, it's like in certain immigrants neighbourhood": about the ghettoisation of the company

In this section, I would like to focus more on this idea of conviviality which is central in the DOMO project since it is a purpose of the project proponents, and to reveal a few clues leading to wonder if this project is not serving a superficial sense of conviviality rather than a genuine conviviality among workers. Even though I have no pretention to define what constitutes “genuine conviviality”, I propose to address more critically the conviviality value at the heart of this new organisation of work.

While there is this intention to provide an environment that supports relationships and conviviality – and it works to a certain extent –, several workers point out that the possibility to seat wherever they want is in opposition with this purpose. Paradoxically, for some workers, this freedom to choose the workplace leads to more compartmentalisation, as expressed in this excerpt:

> *There was the opportunity to get along with people with whom we get on well. So, contrary to what one might think, it has compartmentalised people. [Samuel]*

More radically, as illustrated by the worker in the excerpt below, this ease to choose the person sitting next to you prevents individuals from discovering potential affinities since workers will tend to stick to their first impression about the people they met, whether this impression is positive or not. Since they are no longer constrained to sit somewhere, it is no longer necessary to “make an effort” and to overcome prejudices.

> *Before we had assigned places so automatically, even if it was a person we didn’t like or with whom we had less affinities, we had to do with so we made the effort to talk with these people and work with them. While here, as we can sit a little where we want, we don’t make the effort to talk with some people. People with whom we have less affinity, necessarily we see them much less. [Agathe]*

This produces a sort of ghettoisation in the company, characterised by the fact that several cliques appear and they do not mix with each other:

> *When you are three in the same office, you put some water in your wine. Now, if there is something you don’t like, you avoid people but it's not necessarily a good solution because when you share someone's office, in the long run, you talk about his children, his weekends and you say "This person is not that bad.". There are still links and you are getting to know people a bit more deeply. Now, if things go wrong, you change place but you don’t try to make an effort. The message is "You can put yourself where you want" but it is also "You can avoid who you want". Here, [we are like] in some immigrant neighborhoods while you could mix people and everything would be very good. [Eliot]*

In the second section, I show that, even though there is a sort of increase in the relationships among colleagues, this is not uniform since several employees suggest that the relationships between colleagues from separate services is, to a certain extent, at the expense of the relations between colleagues from the same service.

2.1.2. Rise of the corporate sense of belonging, and weakening of the working collectives

Several workers mentioned that, in coming in Leuze-en-Hainaut, they met co-workers they did not know in the past. While this might be a normal situation in several big companies, I want to recall that *ORES WaPi* is a small structure with less than 200 employees, and less than 150 employees working in the offices. For several employees, these new professional relations became friendships, which was less the case in Tournai:

> *Humanly, it's a lot better than in Tournai because it's true that I, in Tournai, I met people... in Tournai I saw who they were, we said "Hello", "Goodbye", we met in the hallway but that was all. While here, it's true that by being able to change places and working with other people, there are really a lot of colleagues with whom I have many more contacts and we even see ourselves outside of work. So we got to know each other really well thanks to Leuze. I suppose that if I had stayed in Tournai... Unless if you change service and arrive in this service, well it's true that at the contact level it was rather limited. [Marine]*

Beyond developing social connections between workers from different services (which can provide private but also professional related benefits), the new work arrangement in Leuze-en-Hainaut also enabled to develop connections among workers from different hierarchical positions, as explained by this worker:

> *It's true that now I feel more part of a whole, to be part of WaPi as it's called, whereas before I felt more compartmentalised in my cell. [Christopher]*

> *Even if I am going to say that there are always determined hierarchies, we feel closer, there is a dialogue that is easier. I will take the case of Bastien. He sat next to a customer advisor when he arrived, looked at how she worked, asked for explanations, and so on. Well now, it allows a dialogue. Even if he is the executive, if the person has a question to ask him, she will not be afraid to go find him because she has already had a special relationship with him since she gave him information, he was interested in the work that she did and so it creates links even if there is always respect for the hierarchy. [Lise]*

Finally, it seems that establishing new – private and professional – ties has contributed to creating a sense of belonging which did not exist in the past. This is particularly relevant for workers from the RVC service who were physically put aside in Tournai in a separate area because of their historical connections with Electrabel, as explained in the chapter 5. This increased sense of belonging is well illustrated in the excerpt below:

> *I'm much more integrated and that's an advantage compared to the other [site] where, on the other side, we were really considered the so-called "reds" because before* Indexis *was in red, and the blue was* Electrabel management*. [Paul]*

The other side of the coin of this decompartmentalisation and increase of inter-services social relations is the diminishment of intra-service social relations. Even though workers often agree with the fact that they feel more connected to a wider community, in the same time they express being less part of their original core, that is their service:

> *On the other hand, in our team, in RVC, I think that the team is not like before. It means we see each other a lot less. Me, my boss for example, he's always down but he always puts himself in the same place and he never goes upstairs. [Felix]*

Among other things, it seems that this weakening of the social ties within the services is related to the disappearance of celebrations and gatherings. Regularly, workers explain that they no longer go eating outside with their team, nor do they celebrate birthdays, for instance. Yet, these things were done in Tournai.

> *I would say it's a lot of relationships and social, I think it has changed a lot while before I think we had more moments in a service where we could meet and say "Well, we all eat together at noon, we order pizzas, we do this, here and there". And here, no one else does it any more ... [Anna]*

When digging deeper to understand reasons leading to the decline of these team informal meetings, I found out that what prevented workers from connecting with their team colleagues was the non-desire to connect with co-workers from other services. As the excerpts below illustrate, workers often justify the disappearance of birthday celebrations, for instance, with the argument that if they celebrate, "you have to invite everyone" or some people "invite themselves".

> *It's true that before we did more small things in our service while now we are a bit [limited] because if we do something, there is everyone who shows up. [Clémence]*

> *There is still something that has been lost, and it is true that the client advisors are asking for it. It's because before, it happened to us to make meals between us. Maybe even for birthdays while, every time there was a birthday, there was someone who brought a cake and we managed to save half an hour and really make a moment of conviviality. And I think that, in spite of everything, it is lost a lot because, since everything is opened, everyone can come and it is perhaps more embarrassing that we are in the sight of everyone while before, we were locked in our little office I would say. And maybe that afterwards, there are others who [will] invite themselves and so suddenly there are pieces of pie that go to other people and we don't want to hurt anyone either, but well, it's true that if you take for the whole building, it's not feasible either. [Lorraine]*

Contrarily to what one might think, this lack of desire to meet workers and to get out of the comfortable service zone does not testify from workers' associability. At the heart of workers' sayings, I found a real preoccupation for preserving the "inter-self", or almost a form of communitarianism characterised by the fact that workers want – and need – to remain with their peers and preserve the special bond between them, otherwise they risk to feel like foreigners within their company, as illustrated below:

> *I have an [external collaborator] who stopped me last week and said "It feels like I'm working on my own". I told him, but I felt he was not very good and I said, "What do you mean by that?". And he said "It's stupid, but it's also important on Monday that I tell me that, when I will see my colleagues, I'll talk about everything and nothing. It's part of the working life to tell a little bit of everything. And here everyone runs, we don't have time, you come [in the middle of something]". And he said to me, "I feel like I'm no longer integrated, no longer having a colleague". He said, "We would like to try to get together but we cannot anymore. We would like to try but we cannot anymore". It's quite complicated. [Nathan]*

In conclusion, regarding the social relations that take place in the new work environment, even though the opened work environment seems to promote conviviality and to increase the social relations, it does not fully succeed in this project. Indeed, for the sake of productivity and because the conviviality at all-time provokes a certain pressure on workers, some of them prefer to isolate in bubbles. In the same time, while the relations between workers from different services improved compared to the previous work environment, because this work environment no longer allows service co-workers to share moments of intimacy, relations within the services are weaker than previously. This leaves workers with weaker relations within their service, and relations with other colleagues that are only quite superficial.

2.2. Labour digitalisation and computerisation

2.2.1. "People have the impression that they have a much smarter, more interesting, more professional work": do they?

As explained in the chapter six, there are four main lines in the DOMO project. One of these lines consists in the development of new technologies (e.g. Wi-Fi everywhere, portable computers, introduction of an instant-messaging client). It supports another line of the project which is the digitalisation of paper-format documents. These aspects are not exactly about the physical work environment but, as argued previously, when it comes to working practices, the effects of the new work environment cannot be completely isolated from the other introduced changes.

> *In all that is* DOMO*, there is also the IT. We forget to talk about it but everyone has his laptop, put anywhere, his headset to call, all facilities. We would have been told that three years ago, no one would have believed it. It feels good, people have the impression of having a much smarter, more interesting, more professional work. Finally it's the impression that leaves. You don't come in the morning with your little notebook "What am I going to do this morning?" and do your routine. No, it's really enthralling. [Jean]*

According to this worker, these changes give to workers the impression that their job is smarter, more interesting, and more professional. This worker explains this feeling by the fact that workers are no longer using their "little notebook" and doing their "daily routine". Reading between the lines, it might be understood here that the previous work practices (e.g. use of paper, less IT tools, etc.) were old-fashioned, less professional, less smart, etc. Drawing on this excerpt, one might expect that digitalisation and computerisation have radically changed the way work activities are done. However, other workers' sayings show that the changes provoked by these new tools do exist but are less spectacular than what was expected.

Drawing on the collected data, I observed that workers identified two main changes in their work organisation: digitalisation of numerous paper-format documents, and use of *Microsoft Lync*.

Towards the digitalisation of work

The first change is about the diminution of paper-format documents. It is important to precise that the goal is to reduce paper but not to completely suppress paper. Indeed, as explained below, a paper-less organisation is not conceivable for several reasons. For several workers, the main reason is the lack of computer performance, as expressed by the excerpts below:

> *We wanted to go to the* DOMO *and the paperless and, on the other hand, we had the IT and a little protectionism of the process-owner saying: "Well wait, we cannot change everything, we still need signatures, here and there...". So there was a gap, it did not follow. Otherwise, it would have been really nice. There, we would not need any cabinet or drawer. But that did not follow. [Samuel]*

> *You always need a minimum of paper supports. Explaining a job to a technician without a plan, to tell him: "You go from there to there", it is not possible. We can try to imagine a system of tablets, yes. But technically, we're not there yet and our IT department is certainly not there. If there was an Achilles' heel here, in* ORES*, it's the IT department. [Gaspard]*

Another reason that limits the transition to a total paper-less organisation consists in the labour activities themselves, and in particular the activities in specific services which still need to use paper.

> *No. It is not possible. I need architect plans, official documents. To manage all that is [related to] cabins. To propose a schedule to the entrepreneur, I have to [print this]. In all the tasks entrusted to me, in eighty percent of the cases, I need a paper. [Gérard]*

Moreover, since the core business of *ORES* is about gas and electricity, the company has to respect legal obligations such as archiving documents that might be necessary in case of emergency, for instance:

> ***Is the paperless difficult for your function?***
> *I cannot, I have legal documents regarding law that are defined by the royal lands, for the evidence etc. So no paper, no. […]*
> *Downstairs, we have cabinets with all our plans for the watch job because it's mandatory, once again regarding the legislation, to have paper documents in case of a computer bug. If we have an intervention, we cannot afford to let a gas leak for three days until the program recovers. [Karl]*

Beyond specific legal obligations, several workers argue that the paper keeps being essential in their daily activities. This is particularly the case among employees who work with plans, as illustrated in these excerpts:

> *In some departments they still have great plans like the tables here and they still have things that they are still obliged to do with the paper. So they have no choice, there are still things they have to do with paper. [Jeanne]*

> *Zero paper, okay but when you have to pay an entrepreneur, you have to print a paper on which you write everything you have to pay to the entrepreneur, you put it back here, it is scanned once, it is sent to Strépy, it is scanned a second time. There are things to improve. If we want paperless, it's possible but one must give us the opportunity to encode our files on an* Excel *file with the references of the file, we send and it's good. While here, we are told "It must be done on paper" so it's paradoxical. [Jérémy]*

As expressed by these workers, unlike the idea explained in the beginning of this section by another worker, paper is far from being an old-fashioned material and the paper format is precisely what gives them the opportunity to be effective and professional in their work.

Of course, other workers and services have more easily embraced the digitalisation and computerisation of their work. This is particularly the case for employees who work in the customer service, or are mainly in charge of encoding data in a computer program, as it is the case in the RVC service:

> *Basically we are just [handling] the program. We must not start taking sheets and encode. [Edouard, RVC]*

> *It is true that my function is quite repetitive, I do the same thing every day and I have no paper, I do everything with my laptop, it is on a software online so I don't really have any constraints or advantages in the* DOMO *project precisely for all that is practical, printers etc. because I do not use them... [Anna, customer service]*

For these workers, the transition to Leuze-en-Hainaut has mainly strengthened the digitalisation and computerisation which were already put in practice in Tournai. But drawing on workers' explanations, it seems like this reinforcement of digital work did not consequently change their work routine. Indeed, when asked about how these changes have affected their work, employees regularly answered, with a bit of surprise, that everything was pretty much the same:

> *The big difference is that since we are in Leuze, it is zero paper so indeed, everything is digitised but except that, it's the same way of working. [Maxime]*

> *Before, we had our paper files. But it really came naturally, actually. Regarding the work, there is really no difference. We scan and we throw [the paper] but after we work the file in the same way as if it were on paper. [Camilla]*

If the digitalisation of work did not deeply move workers' habits, maybe that these changes – assumed to give worker "the impression that their job is smarter, more interesting, and more professional" – concern the implementation of *Microsoft Lync*.

Microsoft Lync: cure for the activity-based workspace disease?

When asked about the changes in their organisation of work and their daily activities, numerous employees spontaneously referred to *Microsoft Lync* as a main change. *Microsoft Lync*, also called *Skype Enterprise*, is an instant-messaging client. It offers several services, such as instant messaging, telephony and video conferencing. In Leuze-en-Hainaut, several workers explained to me the changes resulting from this software. Surprisingly, these changes did not affect that much their work organisation since this tool seems to mainly serve two purposes.

First, most of the time, *Microsoft Lync* is used for short and private written discussions. It allows workers to maintain a form of proximity with their supervisor and colleagues since they are no longer next to them as it was the case in Tournai. This means that through the use of *Microsoft Lync*, workers try to restore a part of the proximity that has been lost with the activity-based workspace, and the practice of teleworking, as illustrated by the excerpts below:

> *Here, we must use more tools like* Lync *and emails to communicate with his boss because he is not necessarily next. [Emma]*

> *For example, the* Lync *tool, finally I use it most often when my manager or the supervisor is in Mouscron or teleworking. [Christopher]*

Microsoft Lync is also used a lot for small informal talks that colleagues cannot have in the opened area:

> *But when it's for [a little thing], I like sending it by* Lync*, it's faster. And [also], for all that is a little more private conversation. If my colleague is on the other side of the office, we also communicate with Lync. [Jeanne]*

> *Otherwise* Lync *is also for small discussions. [Clémence]*

Second, workers frequently explained to me that *Microsoft Lync* was useful to locate people in the building, and avoid losing time searching for someone that might be working from home, for instance:

> *Here, we have this* Lync *system that allows us to know if the person is present or not so we do not get bored looking two hours after him. [Benjamin]*

> *There are people who change a lot of place, so in this case I prefer to send a* Lync *to locate him before walking around. [Charlotte]*

This software is also spontaneously used by workers who log in to give others their position in the building, as illustrated by the worker below:

> *I use it first to know a bit... The advantage is that in the building, it is important to see each other I find. When I connect, I try to see if the Lync has captured the room in which I am. So that's great so people can find me easily. When you have a little instant message, well, I send a little thing. [Samuel]*

However, since this software indicates when workers are online or offline, it is sometimes *perceive*d as a surveillance device that can be used by line managers at any time, as explained by this worker:

> *With* Lync*, we automatically know we're being watched anyway, whether we're here or at home, whatever. Even here because I know my boss has a pop-up and when we connect, he has a pop-up and he knows we're connected. And if we are inactive, he receives a pop-up saying we are inactive. [Agathe]*

In conclusion, as in the case of the digitalisation, it does not seem that *Microsoft Lync* has revolutionised the way work is done by workers. Considering the two main usages of this software in Leuze-en-Hainaut, it is rather ironic to observe that *Microsoft Lync* is in fact mainly used to fix problems (e.g. the loss of proximity, and the difficulty to locate people) that did not exist in Tournai, and that result from the new spatial design and its rules (i.e. the activity-based workspace).

Before closing this section, I consider relevant to focus on the way communication and information sharing takes place in Leuze-en-Hainaut. Indeed, it partly informs about the culture and rules followed by worker. Without many surprise, in Leuze-en-Hainaut the communication media are the following: oral communication, written email communication, and *Microsoft Lync*. Since communication and collaboration are central in the DOMO project – and this is supposedly supported by the new IT tools, the mobility in the office, and the trust-based management – I tried to understand what type of medium was privileged in what type of situation. I have just explained the use of *Microsoft Lync* so here I will focus on written and verbal communications.

Regarding the verbal communication, it seems that it was more common in Tournai than it is in Leuze-en-Hainaut. Indeed, as expressed by the two excerpts below, face-to-face interactions (except informal encounters) and phone calls between colleagues seems to have diminished in favour of written communication.

> *People prefer to do a little thing and answer "Yes", "No", "Okay" than to come. I find in the space where we are, where we can communicate a maximum, the communication... And that's a shame. I prefer to speak, I think it's more pleasant. Unless it's really important and we want to keep track of what we said, then we do the mail. [Lise]*

> *Before, they were compartmentalised services. In Tournai, on the same site, we called each other. Here, landline phones are hardly used. We forget to log his number. I do it because external people can reach me. But we never call each other, we'll see each other, it's a decompartmentalisation and it allows to have more contacts. [Gaspard]*

Workers explain this need to use written information by the fact that colleagues are dispersed and that, contrarily to in the previous building, it is no longer possible to communicate an information orally in the office:

> *We must be more attentive to what we do. Because, for example, before, when we were in the same office, when there was information to be passed on, we did it orally and we knew that people would hear it. Here, we must use more tools like* Lync *and emails to communicate with his boss because he is not necessarily next. So the communication tools have changed.*
>
> ***Before, it was a communication…***
>
> *More oral.*
>
> ***And now, it's…***
>
> *More written, so* Lync *and emailing. [Emma]*

Another reason to write things down – and that was expressed by numerous workers – is the necessity to keep a written record. While all workers did not express a need to hedge against accusations or reproaches, some workers expressed it very clearly, as illustrated below:

> *Because there are so many suspicions here and there, we do everything by email so we cannot be accused of not having done [something]. It's a bit like preschool. So by mail, we keep track. [Thomas]*

> *E-mail, I also use it a lot because when we ask for information, etc., we still need a written support to prove that we made the request. In here, it's much monitored so it takes evidence for [almost] everything. So emails are important. All we receive, we append. All that we send, we append. So the email is important. [Clémence]*

All these excerpts testify that, despite the DOMO project ambitions, *ORES WaPi* and its workers foster a culture of self-protection and suspicion. Also, contrarily to what could be expected, these workers do not really make the most of the IT tools at their disposal. This contributes to explaining why the spectacular changes that one could have expected did not occur.

To sum up, the idea that the work would be much smarter and more interesting thanks to the implementation of new digital tools and software does not seem confirmed by the employees' sayings. Indeed, for a majority of them, the "smart" side of their job is still based on the use of paper-format documents. I think particularly about technical employees for whom it is more efficient to use a paper plan than a digital plan. Moreover, regarding the digital communication tools, most of the time, it seems that they just come to compensate for the bad consequences of the activity-based workspace. Finally, the changes resulting from the digitalisation and computerisation do not seem to alter concrete work activities and the way the work is done in *ORES WaPi*.

2.3. Transparency and acceleration of the work processes

In the beginning of this chapter, I explained how the culture of conviviality had affected workers and, among other things, had engendered negative consequences in terms of wellbeing and productivity. However, I did not focus on the consequences proximity and opened workspaces had really in terms of work activities. This is the purpose of this section.

2.3.1. About the acceleration of the work processes

As previously explained, the decompartmentalisation of services and workers enabled employees to have a direct access to every colleague, regardless of his/her hierarchical position or occupation. Despite the contrasted effects this decompartmentalisation has on conviviality, in this case workers are unequivocal: the access to others is made extremely easy, as illustrated by this excerpt:

> *The fact that it's open, we see everyone and we go more easily to others while, before, having to leave his office, crossing several corridors, opening one or two doors to access the intervention of another person to meet her. Here, it's open. You get up, you walk a few meters and you meet the service nearby. I think it's great. We go much more easily to others. I think it's really something positive. Something that was not done or less previously. That's really a huge evolution. And everyone, the people I work with, feel it too. We go more easily to others. The openness, we see everyone, I find it very interesting. [Michaël]*

Of course, as previously detailed, this access to anyone at any time has negative side-effects, particularly in terms of concentration. But numerous workers also seem to consider that by being close to colleagues, they can be more effective in their work. As the worker below explains, in this spatial organisation it is much easier to gather colleagues and information and thus to solve customer cases, for instance.

> *I think we react, finally me personally for me, we react better and perhaps faster to emergencies by having a direct contact. While before, well, here it was, the file went into that office, then it went to that office, then it went there. Here we are, we exchange information faster, it can quickly be settled, finally I find. [Charles]*

Without needing to refer to it, many workers underlined how this organisation of work enabled them to be more customer-oriented, which is a key value of *ORES* that is central in the DOMO project. The employee below clearly illustrates how the decompartmentalisation helps to achieve the customer orientation:

> *Finally, the advantage also in an open building is that we hear our colleagues talking on the phone with a client or with a colleague. And as generally some records go around several services, we can say "Oh well, this client asked me..." or "I did it in the folder" or "I have treated such request". I think that when we were partitioned, we did not have that information either so it's really that, it's really all the corporate culture that changes. And I think it's really to go to the customer a lot. [Natacha]*

2.3.2. About work transparency and processes understanding

Beyond enabling direct access to colleagues and acceleration of work processes, the decompartmentalisation seems to have given to workers the opportunity to have a better visibility of the work done in the organisation by the different services and employees. This results in a better understanding of the whole processes involved in *ORES WaPi* core business, as illustrated by the excerpts below:

> *Before, there was some frustration from me in the sense that I didn't know too much about the operation, the infrastructure, the exploitation, the planned works service, and the technical solutions. I'm not saying that now I juggle all that, but I'm starting to get a bit of a vision of how it's internally organised. It's still important somewhere when you see the files going from service to service. If you want to follow, it's good to know. Before, it was too compartmentalised and here now, we can more easily be interested, realise how it works. I think that being able to work beside some people from other services, to hear and sometimes to discuss it between us, yes [that allows that]. [Gabriel]*

Even though there is no direct relation, one might expect that this improved understanding of the way work is done in *ORES WaPi* goes together with the acceleration of work and the feeling of effectiveness in the customer support service that is reported by several workers.

2.4. Is it trust- or conviviality-based management?

Since the DOMO project consists, among other things, to make the management evolve towards trust-based management, I have interested in workers' experiences regarding their hierarchical line and the type of management in place. This section aims at revealing to what extent the DOMO project and the move to Leuze-en-Hainaut has affected management style and practices.

2.4.1. The nebulous notion of trust-based management

Since *ORES* clearly explains in its project the intention to change management and make it "trust-based", during my interviews I questioned workers about this aspect of the DOMO project, what it meant, and how it materialised. To my great surprise, I have been confronted with diverse answers regarding this purpose, leading me to the conclusion that there were no consensus regarding what "trust-based management" means.

From what I have understood, it seems that trust-based management aims at trusting employees in his/her ability to reach his/her objectives, and to let this person the necessary autonomy to attain these goals without applying a top-down control in the meantime. In other words, as the line-manager below explains, trust-based management is similar to management by objectives.

> *The goal is to say that today we must give missions to people and that, very clearly, it is not because two people have the same job that they will apprehend it the same way. So the goal is an obligation of result, it's not the obligation on the method. We're not here to check "Hey, he did this step after this step after that step", that's not the point. It's to say to oneself "Here today one has a goal which is that one, I gave you the means to reach it, after you [get it done]". [We are] not there to come check, to make sure you're still in the nails. That's not the goal. It is an obligation of results. [Victor]*

However, while this seems crystal clear to the worker above, one cannot say as much from workers who seem to be confused about this project, as illustrated by the worker below:

> *The trust-based management, I don't really know what it means in real life, I don't know what it means, if we are more or less monitored, watched from afar. I don't feel... Again, compared to that, at least to the management, I feel no difference compared to before. For me I would not say it's good or bad, because I don't see any difference in fact. [Ariane]*

The least that can be said is that the discourse about trust-based management is rather confused. But drawing on the interviews and *ORES* reports, this management should bring changes related to working practices since it seems to promote workers' autonomy and empowerment, as briefly illustrated in the 2015 activities report, for instance:

> *As a reminder, the DOMO project aims to inject a new culture by implementing a new way of working, which encourages trust-based management, accountability, autonomy and facilitates the mobility of employees, strengthens their collaboration and increases their wellbeing at work. [2015 activities report, p.59]*

2.4.2. Diminishment of the social distance… with what work-related effects?

When questioned about the changes in terms of managerial style, interviewees almost systematically underlined the fact that the interactions between subordinates and managers became much more based on a relationship of equals. As the employee below explains, line managers are closer than before:

> *But what has changed a lot is in relation to the hierarchy, they have become closer, closer to us and that's good: there is more transparency, maybe not enough, but there has been a big step that has been made in transparency and in relation to the hierarchy that is closer, whether it's with us or our client advisors. [Léa]*

Numerous workers mention this improvement in the peer-to-peer interactions. For them, this conviviality is intrinsically related to the building and the new workspace design which has contributed to decompartmentalising hierarchies, as I have previously explained in this chapter. Indeed, the physical proximity with all workers seems to have helped in flattening the pyramid structure, at least at the social level. As the employee below explains, the fear of the manager seems to have diminished:

> *I think that, with these buildings here, there is some fear of the superior that has disappeared. Before, when the offices were closed, if you had to go upstairs to the director's office or the office that was supposed to be in the foreman's office, I think there was some fear. He was up the hill and did not know what was going on. Now he is sitting next to you. If there is anything to say, it is done naturally in the discussion and it makes the fearful aspect disappear. [Karl]*

Of course, one can be glad about the fact that the opened work environment has led all employees to informal relations based on equal consideration, disregarding of their hierarchical position. However, since the trust-based management is primarily supposed to promote workers' autonomy and empowerment, I have also asked workers about the consequences of trust-based management on their work routine.

Unfortunately, drawing on workers' explanations, it appears that expectations in terms of autonomy and empowerment have not been met yet. Indeed, several workers have explained that when they take initiatives, they were often stopped by their direct line managers, as illustrated by the diverse excerpts below:

> *Simply, we feel that we can take initiatives and when we take one, it's not right. That's why I'm having trouble with this trust-based management idea because in a sense she says she trusts us, yes but we don't really feel it. [Laurianne]*

> *For us, [our supervisor] controls absolutely everything we do. We can't take any initiative. We must absolutely not think because she doesn't like that. [...] She has to check everything. She must know everything, put in her two cents everywhere. You must especially not think. [Marine]*

Moreover, beyond the fact that the attempt to promote autonomy and empowerment is partly stopped by line managers' persistent control, this is also made difficult by the fact that employees do not feel comfortable with addressing requests to workers who are not from their service without passing by the executive in charge of the concerned service. This means that, despite the social decompartmentalisation at all levels, there is still a fear to bypass the formal authority. This causes that, even for trivial situations, employees are not really autonomous to solve their own situation, as illustrated by the worker below:

> *Maybe sometimes we make too much noise but why not coming tell us directly instead of going to see the boss that has to come to say... I don't know. The person is beside, she can get up and say "Excuse me, I cannot concentrate, you make too much noise". But it doesn't work that way (laughs). It's always necessary to go through the N + 1 who will go to repeat to the [concerned] person... [Anna]*

One can conclude that the effects of the well-said "trust-based management" concern more the informal – that is the life and relations in *ORES WaPi* – than the formal aspects of work. This means that the trust-based management project has rather failed since it was supposed to address work and not sociability, as stated in the official *ORES* 2015 activities report.

2.4.3. "Trust": embodied by the home-based working, and discredited by surveillance

Finally, beyond the changes and non-changes in terms of management, the most striking observation was about workers' perception of the terms "trust-based management".

As the employee below – who is a line-manager – explains, it makes no doubt that managers trust their subordinates. The proof is that they agree with employees working from home, or from another site:

> *Trust-based management... We could not telework or work on another site if there was no [trust-based management]. But here, the work at home, the person leaves with his work, the next day he arrives, it's done. Can we check everything? No. Did he really start working at 7:45 am from Monday to Thursday? And if he teleworked on Friday, did he really work for seven hours? I don't know how to see that. [Michaël]*

However, except this manager, a majority of employees consider that the word "trust-based management" is a farce when considering the surveillance they are subjected to. For instance, in the excerpt below, an employee explains that when she works from home – which is however the ultimate proof of trust – she has to calculate to the minute her working schedule:

> ***In the DOMO project, there is all the trust-based management…***
> *For that, zero. We telework, too. I have a supervisor who is great at the efficiency level, really very very very good, really effective and listening. But, when we are teleworking, we must do 7 hours and 45 minutes but it is at the point that, when we start at 7:35, we must note it in the agenda. When we finish at noon to take a break, we must note it in the agenda. When we take a break of 15 minutes, we must note it in the agenda. So no trust-based management, nothing. Me, it doesn't bother me, I do it but it makes me laugh the term "trust-based management" in such a case. [Marion]*

This excerpt is not an isolated case since several employees, including line managers, explained all the surveillance tools used to control workers. For instance, the line manager below explains how she thinks "you need to trust" and, in the same time, admits "watching workers' data".

> *I pick randomly, I don't spend my time spying because otherwise it really becomes espionage. I think we have to trust and from time to time I look, I will see in their [data]. [Lise]*

Or this other line manager who says "I trust", but still analyses and compares workers' productivity, based on statistics, when working from home and when working from the office:

> *As I say, we work based on KPI, so on numbers. I was very clear when we started teleworking, I said "As we work in the trust-based management, it still requires [indicators]. I trust, I don't worry, I don't have to control every time, it's not my goal. Me, being in front of a screen and seeing that "Ah it's green"... And again, it does not mean anything. For me what counts is knowing what we do as numbers per day. You do it the way you want, but you have to reach a minimum. So what's going on? Statistics are extracted, the statistics of work on site and the statistics of work on another site. And regarding that, I see. If the work is done correctly, that is to say in the [indicators] which are absolutely suitable for me, I don't see why I would not trust, it's that the work is done. [Paul]*

Drawing on these excerpts, it appears that trust is more than often associated with surveillance and control. This whole paradox is rather well explained by the worker in the excerpt below:

> *Pff ... I think that's a big big joke. I don't think anyone at the subordinate level believes in it, and I don't believe it any more than everybody else, because... In fact, there is no change from everything that has always been done. If an employee is willing to show that he has goodwill in his work, [he will necessarily have the trust from his manager]. And that's what's happening now, it's the talk that's being made. In fact, supposedly, the hierarchy must show, must leave some freedom regarding his subordinates when in reality, if we read between the lines, it is first, showing that you do what you must and then you will be shown a certain freedom. That's how I understand it. [They are making you] believe that it is the opposite, that they will first give you a certain freedom and that it is up to you not to abuse it, but in reality it is the opposite. Show your goodwill first and then you will have some freedom. [Christopher]*

As this employee explains, nothing has changed with trust-based management except giving an illusion of change. Unfortunately, I did not meet many workers who believed in this notion of trust-based management, except managers themselves.

In conclusion, the managerial style has changed to the extent that the decompartmentalisation of offices led to a decompartmentalisation of relations, vertically and horizontally. However, it seems that the idea of *trust*-based management is not achieved yet. Drawing on the numerous and diversified reactions regarding the nature of management, it appears that in *ORES WaPi*, control and autonomy are two sides of the same coin, and that control precedes autonomy. Indeed, several employees describe themselves as autonomous (illustrated by e.g. the practice of home-based teleworking) but, in the same time, they know that they are controlled in their work activities – even remotely (e.g. through KPI). Thus, one can conclude that workers are autonomous and, to a certain extent, independent; but this is made possible by the constant control systems put in place. Regarding trust, it is not part of this equation.

3. Conclusion of the chapter

In this chapter, I have described how the work and life in *ORES WaPi* have been affected by the new work environment and the whole DOMO project. Indeed, even though employees have not taken full advantage of the activity-based environment (as described in the chapter 6), one can expect that this inertia had not completely prevented employees from experiencing changes in terms of ways of being and ways of working.

However, we have seen that, even if these changes occurred, they do not seem to meet the expectations of the DOMO project and the new organisational culture that is targeted. Indeed, while the conviviality is the leitmotiv of the new work environment and philosophy, it seems that this conviviality comes with numerous side-effects (i.e. intra-service relations, employees' performance, wellbeing, etc.). Moreover, even though it is obvious that the new opened environment has knocked down pre-existent boundaries, the reality is that other boundaries have emerged and have resulted in the creation of cliques, and a feeling of ghettoisation in the work environment. While all the conditions are present to make workers closer to each other, it is like they had never been more really distanced because now this distance is no longer imposed, it is rather chosen.

With regards to the way work is done, the DOMO project has allowed workers to be equipped with new work tools and routines. *ORES* is more digitalised and computerised than in the past. However, because of the core business of *ORES*, the digitalisation is not complete and this semi-digitalisation disrupts the expected changes. In terms of managerial philosophy, the project of trust-based management is also sabotaged by controlling practices that only but provoke workers' increased distrust.

In almost every aspect of the DOMO project, the success is very limited and changes appear where they were not expected. The gap between expectations and reality could not be more complete. It is as if this project had been fully conceived, but regardless of workers' working habits and ways of being.

Sum and substance
▪ In terms of working and living conditions, several changes have appeared in the new environment in terms of conviviality, wellbeing, performance, social relations, labour digitalisation and computerisation, work processes and managerial philosophy. ▪ While conviviality is at the centre of *ORES* values and is supposed to be promoted by the opened work environment, the increased conviviality is rather superficial and has detrimental effects (e.g. performance and wellbeing). Even though the new building has enabled social and hierarchical decompartmentalisation, new boundaries have been drawn, resulting in a sort of ghettoisation. ▪ Attempts to promote digital work have been made but are limited by the core business of *ORES* and the necessary presence of paper-format documents. Regarding the computerisation of communication, it seems to be either at the service of social relations, or to be used to solve problems engendered by the activity-based workspace. ▪ Even though decompartmentalisation seems to have negatively affected productivity, workers consider that they are most efficient in their customer orientation than in the previous work setting. ▪ While the discourse on the managerial philosophy has changed and promotes trust-based management, the practices of management did not change accordingly. Workers are still facing controlling systems and lack of trust which impede them from developing the audacity and empowerment they are required to demonstrate.

CHAPTER 8. *ORES* ORGANISATIONAL IDENTITY, HIGHLIGHTED BY THE DOMO PROJECT FAILURE

1. Introduction

In the previous chapters, I have presented, in very wide and descriptive terms, the purposes and the content of the DOMO project and, in particular, the new work environment; workers' perceptions and appropriation of it; and the numerous (non-)changes in terms of living and working conditions. These chapters echoed mainly the descriptive themes produced in analysing the collected data.

In this chapter, I focus on elements that emerged during the analysis by categories of concepts and which reveal how the new work environment challenged *ORES* in its organisational identity. Drawing on the perceptions of a technical workers, I show that the new work environment and the work organisation it promotes provokes a denial of their professional identity, and of the identity they attribute to *ORES*. By confronting different excerpts underlying the inadequacy of the new work environment, I argue that this new work environment is testament to an identity mimicry which explains why *ORES* cannot fully reach its desired organisational identity.

2. Mistrust and concealment of *ORES* technical workers

In the chapter six, I already explained that numerous employees in the customer service were in favour of the DOMO project. Conversely, I have observed that criticisms towards the project, and in particular the spatial dimension, came more regularly from technical employees, that is people working in three sub-services of the systems operations department: electricity operations, gas operations and construction. I propose to interpret this discourse of rejection as related to the technicians' professional identity, and to some extent to the identity they attribute to *ORES*.

2.1. Technical employees: "They really work the old-fashioned way"

A first reason explaining the fact that technical employees reject the DOMO project is that, because of the messages of modernity and customer orientation it conveys, this project seems to affirm the idea that technical employees are not sufficiently modern and customer-oriented. Yet, technical employees strongly disagree with this idea, and this project which crystallises the fact that there is a lack of recognition of who technical employees are, what they value and how they work.

To many regards, the DOMO project, in all its facets (i.e. the spatial reconfiguration, the development of IT tools, the attitudes it inscribed towards workers, etc.), may be considered tied to a certain idea of modernity. DOMO is the name of the project that aims at enabling employees to have the attitudes and the tools, with a renewed type of management, necessary to meet western contemporary requirements. Regarding the attitudes, it is required from workers to be collaborative, professional and, particularly, customer-oriented; and from managers to have a trust-based management style.

During my interviews, I have regularly observed how technical employees were depicted as not fitting this ideal worker portrait. For instance, in the excerpt below, a worker explains how technical employees differ from customer advisors by their focus on technical issues, and their lack of interest for the customer:

> *For example, we have the exploitation, which may still have the mindset of "We handle the network and not the client", and we try to change them a bit and to make all the training we do and that they also do to help them change a bit because it's not just the network and not just incidents that happen, there's also the customer behind. [Lorraine]*

These workers were criticised for their supposedly non-customer orientation, but also for the lack of modernity in their work practices. For instance, in the excerpt below, a worker explained to me, with a certain degree of mockery, the fact that, in the systems operations service, employees were still using a paper agenda to plan interventions; were not comfortable with IT; and lacked of flexibility with the customers' requests. This worker summarises this analysis in a sentence: "They really work the old-fashioned way".

> *You must have heard about the black notebook. In fact, at the exploitation, instead of working with the mails, they note everything in a notebook and if it is written with the pen and that there is an erasure, it is a catastrophe so they note in pencil and if it's not on the agenda, it's that it's not planned. So if they lose their agenda, they are screwed. There is nothing on the computer. And still, since we are here, someone manages the mailbox but before, if we sent them an email, it's like we do not send anything. They really work the old-fashioned way. And everything that disturbs them, they come and they make a scandal for nothing. There is a client who changes his appointment, it's a drama. It's not okay, it is essential that the customer does not change his appointment. But what can we do there? The customer changes, he changes. "But no, everything was planned", I understand that it's annoying but we cannot tell the client that he cannot change his appointment. [Jeanne]*

In conclusion, one can see that technical employees are subjected to a discourse denunciating their supposed inadequacy with the new work environment and what it promotes in terms of ways of being, attitudes at work, etc. This means that there is an ideal of modernity at the centre of the DOMO project which implies what is now expected from workers, and that customer advisors seem to meet more these expectations that technicians.

2.2. About the ignorance of the technical "modernity"

On some occasions during my interviews with technical employees, some of them spontaneously brought their bad reputation in the conversation. They did not really speak about their supposed objection to use IT. But among their answers, I have observed how the topics of the customer orientation, and the trust-based management were subjected to interesting comments from them.

2.2.1. Technical employees: pioneer in the trust-based management

As explained in the chapters six and seven, one of the facets of the DOMO project is the transition to trust-based management. This type of management is supposed to be both a means enabling workers to benefit from the offices reconfiguration (i.e. working from home, or at a distance from one's manager), and a result of the desired cultural change (i.e. trust-based management is perceived as an up-to-date way to manage employees). Thus, this trust-based management participates to the modernity ideal.

When asked about this style of management, technical services employees' answers greatly differ from other services employee's answers. While in other services trust-based management was often perceived as something new, in the technical services it was considered as something rather usual.

Indeed, as the line manager below explains, since he supervises people who mostly work outside, he has no choice but trusting them, and he seems to say he is used to this type of management:

> *Us, we are a service a bit special. Me, I always had a little trust-based management. I was [working outside] too, so you know how people work. I told them: "Listen, anyway, I trust you and in quotation marks, between us, I do not have much choice. Yes, I see him here an hour and a half a day. Now he gets into his van and leaves: where is he going? Or I want to follow him, to spy on him, take my car and hide to see if he is doing his job. And I'll be seen and he'll say "You're spying on me". And then, you will obviously lose the trust of your agents, they will say: "Why do you spy on me?". [Samuel]*

The idea that trust-based management is inherent to technical employees is confirmed by the worker below who used to be a construction worker:

> *At the beginning I did not really ask myself a question about that, coming from the construction industry where I already had the trust-based management because they gave me in the morning the van, I was given a job, I left with 2-3 men, the supervisor was not necessarily there, the boss either, so it's already a little trust-based management where I get to work, I'll do what there was to do and then that's it. [Charles]*

To sum up, while technical employees are regularly criticised for their lack of modernity, one can observe that they are rather close to what is expected in the new work environment and *ORES* philosophy, at least in terms of management. Unfortunately, this intrinsic characteristic is not acknowledged by their co-workers.

2.2.2. "For me, since the 9 February 1981, customers have been at the centre of my concerns"

While technical employees have a poor reputation regarding their level of customer orientation, they completely disagree with this reputation, and affirm that customers have always been the centre of their preoccupations, regardless of whether it was one of the company's leitmotiv or not, as expressed by the excerpts below:

> *I come, I do my job as best as possible but after... Everything else after... Sorry! I'm not against them, but it's blathering. And it's a pendulum. A few years ago: "Nice, we do not have customers anymore. We will only take care of the network. The customer base, it is no longer us! ". Now the customer is our concern. For me, since February 9, 1981, the customers, so the consumers and the people who pay, have been in the center of my concerns. [Etienne]*

> *Now, we come back to "customer first". We, the seniors, we always knew that so it does not change much, it's our philosophy. Especially in the meantime, we were always customer oriented, we do not change the things that work. [Thibault]*

Beyond affirming this intrinsic customer orientation, the worker in the excerpt below even argues that technical employees are way more deeply at customers' service than the administrative employees who, according to him, are less crucial for customers' satisfaction:

> *An administrative worker... I had a discussion with people, the papers are the papers but we, the technicians, it's the client, it's the network... So when we have our vision really outside, we see the production. An administrative worker, it's his documents... but if there are no customers or kilowatts, for me we don't need administrative workers (laughs), you understand... [Loïc]*

In conclusion, when one confronts the criticisms that customer advisors and technicians address to each other, one can observe that there is a clear fragmentation between these two categories of professionals, and a complete ignorance about what constitutes each of these work categories in terms of organisation of work and managerial practices.

2.3. The dirty boots anecdote

A second reason explaining technical employees' propensity to reject the new work environment is about the sidelining of the technical side of *ORES* in its corporate evolution and renewal. This was echoed by numerous workers through what one could name "the dirty boots anecdote". As I have explained in the chapter six, during the preparations preceding the move to Leuze-en-Hainaut, some workers had the occasion to participate in the elaboration of "the ten rules of the living together". In the following excerpt, an employee explains the anecdote about the boots that is related to these rules of the living together:

> *Well yes, I remember a rule that had been mentioned before we arrived and which caused a stir. And I must say that, myself, I was shocked a little bit. It was said that the [technical] agents must no longer come in with their boots in order not to dirty the building. Finally it did not change. That's something that was mentioned. I wonder if it's still not in the living rules, that we must not bring mud into the building and that we need clean our shoes. [Ariane]*

Even though this suggestion has finally been removed from the rules, it remains any less enlightening when one considers the evolution of *ORES* and the role of the DOMO project and the spatial dimension. Indeed, drawing on this excerpt and also the other data previously presented, one can interpret this anecdote as showing the desire, for executives and administrative staff, to portray *ORES* as an organisation where the core business is no longer solely technical. It can be understood as if the technicians who compose the core business of the company were too muddy to come in the new trendy and modern work environment. However, as the worker below expresses, these “dirty boots” are – and have to remain – part of the technical core business of the company. The insistence of some technicians to keep wearing their boots in the building is a form of resistance towards the attempts to dissimulate the technical side of the company.

> *I understand it's a new building but we are a technical [company], we need it, it's like that and it must stay that way. But when you see pictures with a little soil, that says it's shameful, you have to stop. The technical aspect, it is there and it must be left. It's downright splitting us and saying "[External workers], stay out." I didn’t find very nice to do that. [Lucas]*

Without even mentioning these anecdotes, other workers agreed with this feeling that technical workers had been excluded from the DOMO project, and the new *ORES WaPi* building. As the employee below explains, this sidelining even materialises in the building architecture since now, technical workers have meeting rooms and a workshop that are in an area separated from the main workspace:

> *And then, it was a little bit not to let them in and leave us working in peace and quiet. That's why there are also work rooms downstairs, so there are two rooms: one for electricity and one for gas. And early in the morning, it's the supervisor that goes downstairs to give the work while, in Tournai, the [technical agents] had their office next to ours and they were a little bit with us in fact. Now they are apart. That was badly taken at first; it was very badly perceived. And our former executive, we really felt he didn’t want to see them here anymore because, for him, the job of the system people was on the system and no longer in the offices. [Camille]*

This feeling of sidelining of technical workers, both by the spatial and discursive aspects (i.e. rules and involvement) of the DOMO project, is confirmed by the employee below who echoes these workers’ impression of exclusion:

> *Our agents said: "Because we have a blue cloth, we are in overalls, we won’t be allowed to come in”. It's true that the work is done in adjoining rooms with the store section, so that agents don’t come in the offices. It's true that when you come back with dirty boots, [you’ll put mud] everywhere. When they are [working] on the system, they have their soles [full of mud], you find [soil] in every corner. Technically, the system agents were not involved, there was no work with them. [Gaspard]*

In conclusion, the new work environment in Leuze-en-Hainaut contributes to excluding technicians from the other employees and services. Indeed, the building has been designed in such a way that technicians could satisfy themselves with their workshop and the few meeting rooms that have been put in this separated area of the building. However, they did not satisfy from this spatial arrangement since they reclaim their right to enter in the opened area where the administrative staff is working. Unfortunately, as the dirty boots anecdote illustrates, there have been more discursive attempts to slow technicians' presence in the building. This suggest that the material dimension and the discursive practices produce together this phenomenon of rejection addressed towards technicians.

3. Collateral effects of the DOMO project: identity mimicry, and professional and organisational identity denial

In this section, I would like to focus on the unexpected effects the DOMO project has produced. While I have already shown how workers perceived and to what extent they appropriated the project in all its aspects, whether it fits the expectations or not, I will now reveal how this project can be perceived as embodying a corporate identity mimicry, and has produced a denial of both professional and organisational identities.

3.1. About the resignation of *ORES WaPi* workers

In the sixth chapter dedicated to the perceptions of the DOMO project, I have already initiated the following observation: several workers perceive the DOMO project as being in disagreement with *ORES WaPi* culture. As a reminder, this was particularly relevant in the reactions triggered by the proposed rule to shake hands instead of kissing co-workers on cheeks. This observation of a sort of cultural misfit was recognised by employees themselves, and the consulting agency's owner (who was the interior architect, and person in charge of implementing the "new world of work").

> *And often we hear: "Yes, here it is possible because we are in Brussels, yes it is possible because it is Flemish". So maybe [they are] less used to being forward thinking too. To say that [they] want to be the first to say that one stops the hierarchy. [Manon]*

What is surprising beyond this thought that the DOMO project is not suited to *ORES WaPi* culture is the reactions of workers when they evoke this misfit. While one could expect that these workers make the most of this project, and adjust it to make it their own, the most frequent reaction was a form of resignation. Indeed, as a worker explains in the excerpt below, it seems like it is almost obvious that this project cannot fit with *ORES WaPi* culture because people profiles are so different from the ones in Brussels, for instance:

> *The building we went visiting was in Brussels, where the majority of people were executives, where the majority had higher education, at least long [education]. It's not the same mentality. Brussels, first... [Nathan]*

By saying that, this worker above assumes that it is normal that this type of project, work and management philosophy and workspace design succeeds in companies located in Brussels, but that it cannot be successful far from urban areas, in part because people are too different.

This type of thought was shared by other workers who seem to disqualify themselves, and not considering themselves as able as other employees. As illustrated by the worker below, it is like they were convinced, not without being sorry and embarrassed, that they do not possess the required mentality and way of being:

> *I think that they wanted to change the mentality of the collaborators by building them an open, rather urban office. Once again, we do not have the mentality... The person from Brussels who will come here, she will perhaps blend more because it is working methods that in capital city, they already have for a long time I think. It's not new to them. But here, we must not forget that we are far from everything. [Adam]*

This raises the following question: is the new world of work reserved for specific workers' profiles? Or is it, as it seems to claim it is, a philosophy of work towards which almost every company should goal to?

3.2. "We, we also manage technical issues. Nothing has been planned to put a plan up": about the core business denial

Beyond the fact that this project did not fit *ORES WaPi* employees, numerous workers indicated that this project was also inadequate regarding *ORES* core business, that is gas and electricity distribution.

Indeed, for several workers, the "new world of work", its spatial materialisation and the labour organisation it underlies are more common in IT, insurance or banking industry, or more generally in administrative companies than in *ORES* industry, as explained by the worker below:

> *Well, most of the time, when one talk about the new world of work, etc., one imagine* Google *or the banking world. Here, they are technicians, we work with big plans, well we always need to have room, to have paper, to have lots of things and it is true that it is not always easy to live this everyday. [Aurélie]*

This incompatibility of work environment for the core business of *ORES* gives to workers the impression that it is just a copy and paste of all other "new way of work" buildings that one can see in all other companies adopting this trend. As expressed by two workers in the excerpt below, contrarily to what is pretended, this new building has not been thought and designed for *ORES*, its workers and their specificities.

> *When you only manage administrative [work], it is not very complicated. People do almost all the same job, behind a PC. But we still have half of our agents who are external technical agents. When you look at the building, what is it for our external technical agents? What did we think for them? Were they involved in the project? Not really. They are externs. So we may have been a bit too far copying / pasting what existed in a purely administrative team. If we take a bank for example, it is only the administration. Us, we also manage the technique. Nothing was planned to put up a plan, because these are things that came after. [Gaspard]*

> *It's an ordinary building we'll say, for everyone. This is not a building specific to* ORES*, for me. Any company could settle here. [...] Anyway, the one who made the decoration and all that, she did exactly... She showed us videos, we saw a building, it was exactly the same building that here almost, and inside it was the same thing. In fact, she took the same... she makes copy-pasted [projects]. [Edouard]*

Drawing on all these workers' remarks, one could wonder how this project – said to be adapted to *ORES* – differs from what is done elsewhere, and by going a step further what remains of the technical core business of *ORES*, or in other words who *ORES* is?

3.3. "We play the game": about lukewarm resistance

As I have explained in the previous pages, several workers strongly disagree with the new work environment, mainly because it is not suitable for their working practices and the core business of *ORES*. Thus, one might wonder the following question: "Do workers manifest their disagreement? And if so, how?". Throughout my interviews and observations, I have tried to detect clues of workers' resistance. I have to conclude that they were rather scarce.

The most obvious example of resistance was a form of work-to-rule, as explained by the two excerpts below. In the first case, there is this worker who explains that he has followed the clean-desk procedure to the letter, to the point where he threw away all his documents even the ones he knew would still be useful (e.g. plans, etc.):

> *Now, I have been told that we must not have any more documents, and now I work-to-rule. I took everything, and I threw everything in the container, the files, the documents, the plans, all that I had thrown away. I was told you have to clean the desk. And now, when you ask me [a paper], I take pleasure in saying that I did clean-desk as I was told. [Thomas]*

In the second case, a worker explains that he respected the wish to keep a working area silent by closing the door of the technical room which resulted in his inability to hear the phone calls from technical workers (these phone calls come from a fixed radio station):

> *An executive asked us to close the doors. We played the game and everyone went to work on his computer. And the guys, on the radio, they call us, the phone rings and... Ah well we are not aware huh! If we are imposed something then we play the game. We explained [the executive] the reasons, he doesn't understand so we closed everything. [Etienne]*

Through these two examples it is as if these workers tried to show the stupidity of rules which are put in place to the cost of workers' efficacy. That being said, these two examples of manifest resistance are the only one I have heard about. A second, softer, manner to show disagreement or rather incompatibility of the project with *ORES* was illustrated by a simple anecdote said by one of the senior executives during an informal discussion (for which I have no record). He explained that he had recently decided to install boards on the walls in the area where there are workers using large paper-format documents such as plans. He justified this by telling "We are still a company of technicians". This anecdote illustrates a complying adaptation of the working space rather than a real manifestation of resistance. However, through this re-appropriation of the working space, it is as if he meant "This is how we do, this who we are", and as if this act was a manifestation of who *ORES* is to this worker: a company of technicians.

However, even though resistance is not inexistent in *ORES WaPi*, it is too scarce to consider that employees are actively resisting. Indeed, as the excerpt below illustrates, in spite of their dissatisfaction, it seems that most of the employees keep "playing the game" and complying with a project they do not fully support, as if there was nothing to do than satisfying to the demands of the project:

> *I think that, at some point, I said to myself "Here is DOMO, we have no choice, we must be there, we will play the game" and we will play and we do it correctly. [Laurianne]*

It is interesting to note that, regularly, workers referred to the DOMO project, and essentially the activity-based workspaces, as a game that has to be played. By saying so, it is like this type of project, this type of incitation to move and adapt your workspace to your activity to increase productivity and tasks performance is something that is not part of their organisational habits. By saying "we have to play the game", it is like they were saying "we have to do 'as if'". This "playing the game" idea seems to reflect the idea that this project is not part of who they are, but they try to mimic other companies "habitus".

While many workers used this expression "playing the game" without necessarily considering it as problematic, in the case of the worker below, the attitude to adopt goes way further than just politely complying. As he says, it is now question to shut the mouth and say "Amen" to all that the company asks for.

> *So you must make no waves, not create a stir, close your mouth, say yes amen and try to have good numbers and good performance. And this culture induces the fact that now no one would dare to say "No there, we do a stupidity, it's an absurdity" because he would be demolished. So the fingers on the seam of the pants, it's the position to adopt. We are silent, we say "Yes, amen". It is a culture that, of course, is applied from the top to the down to all levels. So there is no more initiative. We were talking about audacity but who would dare? [Raphaël]*

As this employee above underlines, this attitude, that is to some extent adopted by many workers, is in complete contradiction with the value of audacity that is at the centre of *ORES* and the DOMO project. Indeed, one cannot stop oneself from observing that, through their resignation and the attitude of compliance, employees seem to confirm that they are not the ones *ORES* would like them to be: employees with the audacity needed to express their dissatisfaction.

3.4. *ORES* evolution: towards financialisation and administration?

In line with this dissimulation of *ORES* core business in the DOMO project, several workers express a certain concern about the direction of the company, that is an uncertainty and preoccupation about the goals *ORES* pursues. In theoretical words, one could call this its desired organisational identity.

In particular, some employees seem to suggest that *ORES* tends to become less a technical company and more an administrative company, as the excerpts below illustrates:

> *We have the impression that we are going more towards the administrative than the technical which is the basis of our work. We really have this impression because [it's the only thing that matters] and the technique has no more value. [Antoine]*

Also, employees highlight the financial orientation taken by the organisation. As the employees below tells: “we speak about curves everywhere. We never speak about the work itself”:

> *Now we become more a financial company than a works company. It's my vision of things but I have to move with the times and think that we are more financial than work. [...] The least words now that we have are the curves. We only hear about that. [...] I see that there, in the design office, we talk about curves, there too we talk about curves, we talk about curves everywhere. We never talk about the work itself. Generally, I found that all meetings with us, it should be more technical than curves but that’s not the case. You have to spend, you have to slow down, you have to accelerate, it's always like that. [Lucas]*

This observation that *ORES* becomes a company mainly concerned with administrative and financial issues is not unconnected with the DOMO project which materialises these preoccupations. Indeed, as the two workers express below, this project embodies the fact that *ORES* worries more about its external image, its corporate branding than about concrete technical issues that should be invested in priority:

> *But sincerely, I think that the [core business] has been dropped to deal with communication, to talk about bullshit. And the [core business], we don’t care about it anymore because it is no longer interesting, what matters is the shareholder, the financial [aspect]. But the technique is still our job. We let it down. [Sofia]*

> *The priorities have changed... We are more in the flashiness today compared to what was much more technical before... Now we talk about the company... We put an image... I think that the customer, we have a bit forgotten him in all that... and it is... for me the most important is the customer... [Loïc]*

Throughout these excerpts, not only do workers discredit the DOMO project but also they express a strong preoccupation with *ORES* identity and its future, arguing that the followed direction does not honour *ORES* core business.

3.5. “We are condemned to never be loved”: *ORES* inescapable destiny

In the previous chapters, I have attempted to reveal the strengths and weaknesses of the DOMO project, the diverse controversial feelings it arouses, whether it is about the spatial dimension or all the other aspects of the project. In this last chapter, I have focused on revealing unexpected reasons explaining workers’ support or rejection towards the project and I have tried to show what these motives underlid regarding *ORES* organisational identity.

As I have insisted on in these last pages, the changes the DOMO project has produced in terms of organisational identity go far beyond what I had expected on the basis of the review of the literature. Indeed, even though several changes appeared in the living and working conditions in Leuze-en-Hainaut, these lasts pages brought me to consider that the main changes in terms of organisational identity is about the symbolic effects the DOMO project has on employees' perceptions of the organisation, what it stands for and towards what it moves.

The DOMO project embodies a desire that is fatally doomed to failure. This desire is the one of being something else, of adopting the codes of other companies whose realities are far from *ORES* reality. This explains the impression of mimicry echoed by some workers and characterised by the idea that *ORES* tries to be "like *Google*". By saying that, I do not want to mean that an organisation should avoid evolving, and that a company like *ORES* – which benefits from a certain security related to its status – should stop itself from having corporate ambitions. But in the case of *ORES*, it does not seem that this ambition is fuelled by the aspiration to improve what it is, but by a wish to run away from what it is. This is slightly echoed by the excerpt below that comes from an interview with one of the employees in charge of the DOMO project:

> *We really need to have a much more open attitude, a lot more ready for change if we do not want to be just cables and connection installers tomorrow, if we really want to play an active role in the role of distribution. [Mathias]*

This excerpt above raises the following question: what is wrong with being *ORES*, with being just "cables installer"? Would have the so-called "new way of work" given to all companies the desire to be *Microsoft*? These questions will probably remain unanswered. However, as a partial response, I propose to comment the excerpt on the following page, which is from the interview I had with an executive of *ORES*. As he expresses in this excerpt, *ORES* is intrinsically destined to not being loved by its customers due to the nature of the services provided by this company which does not create enthusiasm unlike, as he mentioned, companies like *Google*, *Apple*, or even in Belgium *Proximus*. This can explain the wish to be, or at least to act, like these companies.

> *When you're in a company, you want that [people talk about it nicely]. My ambition, when I leave here, is that the Walloons speak of ORES better than when I arrived. That's all. That, in the end, they say to themselves... We will never be loved by people. I am not Google. I am not iPhone. That, you're in pampering in front. We love it. TV, all that, it's fun, it's entertainment, it's glitter. I'd be Netflix, I'd be Canal +, even Proximus, I would like to be loved. I would like customers to love me and say "Thanks to them, we had a great time on Saturday. Thanks to them, we had a nice time". I don't bring pleasure, let's be very clear.*
>
> *It's still a vital need.*
>
> *Do you have fun with your electric plug?*
>
> *I still prefer when there is electricity.*
>
> *But no, you're not happy, you're not happy, no. You are unhappy when you don't have [electricity], you are not happy when you have it, it's just normal. You're never going to have an evening with your girlfriends "Cool, we're going to have a natural gas evening". One is going to have a series evening, one is going to have a video game evening, a lot of things. But not us. You cannot be loved. You can even have a Jupiler evening or a Beaujolais Nouveau evening. In short, there are products that create a moment when we say "We had good" to say it in Walloon. While us, not. We are not even Electrabel that brings electricity and gas. We are just the guys who put the pipes. It's only hassle, it's opening the sidewalk, it's not being on time, it's only hassle. So we are condemned to not being loved. So objectively, it changes the situation. I went to work at Electrabel, I was the boss of communication in Electrabel and we were advertising. I dreamed about these brands that had the chance to offer something that people liked. When I saw a campaign for Duvel, when I saw a Proximus campaign for Belgacom TV, I thought "How lucky they are. When they make an event, everyone returns with his Duvel". Me, I won't return home with a kilowatt. What can I materialise? I can't create love around my thing, I don't know how to create pleasure around my thing. We are doomed not to be loved. We must not expect that, we just have to make sure that, when we speak about us, it is to say, not "They are great" but "They are effective, they are pros, they do things well". Well, that's already very satisfying. [Arthur]*

4. Conclusion of the chapter

In this final chapter, I have addressed several points which echoed other aspects already briefly presented in the previous chapters and enable me to address more directly the question of the organisational identity.

I have particularly focused on the category of technical workers in this chapter. As I have underlined, the new work environment in *ORES WaPi* – and the project it takes part in – embodies a change that technical workers cannot follow. Indeed, in many aspects, the new work environment and the labour organisation it requires (e.g. increase digitalisation) have been conceived in such a way that it does not provide to technicians the necessary resources for doing their job. Even in its simple architectural dimension, the new work environment contributes to excluding technicians from other workers and the changes they try to put in place. For instance, this materialises through the fact that technicians have a specific workshop and meeting rooms in a separate area of the building. This is also embodied by some discursive practices providing cues that these workers no longer need to be in the building, or should not leave traces of their passage.

Because this new work environment is not adapted to all the categories of workers in *ORES*, and because it does not give them a real right to exist – with their own specificities – this environment, and more generally the project itself, gives the impression that *ORES* try to imitate other companies active in the banking or IT sectors. More precisely, this results in an impression that *ORES* denies its own organisational identity, and it leads employees to wonder who is *ORES* and what it aims.

Finally, throughout the preceding chapters and this one, we have seen that in all its successes and failures, the DOMO project reveals the impossibility for *ORES* to be what it would like to be. Indeed, this desire to be more than "just cable installers" is by essence doomed to failure. It is true that this project, and the new world of work, have certainly brought changes (e.g. semi-digitalisation, decompartmentalisation, increased customer-orientation, etc.). However, the necessary changes – managerial ones, in particular – to lead to a cultural revolution characterised by audacity and empowerment did not occur.

While one could have expect that *ORES*, especially *ORES WaPi*, organisational identity would have been revealed by the changes resulting from the DOMO project, it is the reverse that occurs. Indeed, workers' resignation, lukewarm resistance, and submissiveness, managers' persistent controlling practices, etc. demonstrate that the targeted culture of audacity, empowerment, and trust cannot occur in this environment. Thus, despite the radical changes in the work environment, it is through the non-changes that *ORES* reveals its inevitable organisational identity: a company, with a strong technical core business, which would like to be like those trendy companies, but is inevitably destined to wear its dirty boots.

Sum and substance
▪ The proponents of the DOMO project seem to adhere to the project by need of individual and corporate salvation. ▪ The opponents of the DOMO project seem to suggest that the project produces a denial of their technical professional identity. ▪ For several workers, the DOMO project underlies an attempt of *ORES* to mimick other companies engaged in the “new world of work” philosophy and active in the IT or banking sectors. ▪ All these elements lead to the impression that *ORES* denies its own organisational identity, that is being a technical company. ▪ The DOMO project embodies the wish for *ORES* to be something else, but the results produced by this project materialise the impossibility for the company to reach the desired identity, and the inevitable fate to remain a technical company.

CHAPTER 9. UNDERSTANDING THE OFFICE INFLUENCE ON ORGANISATIONAL IDENTITY: A CONVENTIONALIST APPROACH

1. Introduction

While the second section of this thesis aimed at describing the case study conducted in *ORES WaPi*, the workspace re-arrangement and its influences on the working and living conditions, in this chapter I address more directly the research question: "What is the role of the office in the construction of an organisation's identity?".

In order to do so, this chapter presents two sections. First, I propose to come back on the results described in the case study in order to synthesise an answer to the research question. Second, I analyse the changes occurring in the case study in the light of the French theory of conventions,

2. Effects of a workspace re-arrangement on an organisation's identity: synthesis of the processes in action

In order to understand how the workspace re-arrangement in *ORES WaPi* has affected *ORES WaPi* organisational identity, I propose to address the changes in three categories: behavioural changes, work changes, and workers' perceptions changes.

2.1. Behavioural consequences of the new work environment

First, drawing on my data analysis, I consider that one of the reasons explaining the effect of a workspace re-arrangement on the organisational identity is the behavioural consequences the new work environment provokes.

As we have seen, the new building of *ORES WaPi* is one of the four lines of the DOMO project which is a corporate project aiming at changing the organisational culture. As explained in the strategic plan and in internal documents explaining the project, by renewing the work environment and embracing the ideal of the "new world of work", it is expected that employees will be more collaborative, innovative, agile, autonomous, results-oriented, and that they will embrace *ORES* corporate values which are conviviality, audacity, professionalism, respect and customer orientation. Since the official purpose of the new work environment is to change workers' values and behaviours, one might expect that this happened. Moreover, as explained in the theoretical section of this thesis, one might expect to access to an organisation's identity by attempting to understand what are the specific behaviours, attitudes and skills required from the workers. Thus, focusing on the behavioural consequences resulting from the new work environment constitutes a first means to understand how the new work environment in *ORES WaPi* has influenced *ORES* organisational identity.

In the case of *ORES WaPi*, it is interesting to observe that the organisational identity does not necessarily materialise through the new behaviours adopted by workers but rather by the reactions these behavioural injunctions arouse. Indeed, as we have seen, there were mainly two social attitudes that were expected from workers and, partly, affected by the new work environment: sociability and conviviality. Behavioural injunctions that are related to work are observed in the following section.

When I refer to sociability, I mean the way individuals in *ORES WaPi* interact with each other without these interactions being necessarily oriented towards work. As explained in the data analysis, before moving to their new work environment, several employees took part to the elaboration of rules that should ease the collective live in the new work environment. In line with these rules, it was suggested that, in the new work environment, it was no longer necessary to kiss colleagues on the cheeks every morning, but that shaking hands occasionally could be enough. This is a clear illustration of the fact that changes in the work environment might directly influence social behaviours. Surprisingly, workers reacted to this suggestion with a massive reject of this rule. This rejection was motivated by the idea that, in *ORES WaPi* and, generally in *Picardy Wallonia*, shaking hands was not the way to manifest sociability. As a reminder, employees considered that their region was a rather familial region where it is customary that people greet each other every morning by kissing. For them, shaking hands or not greeting their colleagues were ways of being that were more common in capital cities and urban environments.

This first illustration shows that, despite what could have been expected, *ORES WaPi* organisational identity was not changed by the new behaviours addressed to workers, but rather manifested and reinforced by the way these workers reacted to behavioural injunctions: workers highlighted a facet of their organisational identity by rejecting behavioural expectations that did not fit this identity.

Second, as explained in internal documents, the purpose of the new work environment was to promote conviviality among workers, which is one of *ORES* values. Drawing on the data analysis, we can conclude that the new work environment did not succeed in meeting this behavioural expectation. There are two effects resulting from this conviviality formal injunction, and the contradictory nature of these two effects explain the failure in meeting conviviality among employees. On the one hand, we have seen that the work environment was conceived in order to promote conviviality: there is no more attributed offices, services are no longer fixed, the work environment is completely opened, employees are obliged to eat together in the refectory, etc. Despite the fact that everything was planned to promote conviviality, as explained by several workers this conviviality is only superficial. Drawing on my analysis, I propose to explain this failure by the fact that the conviviality injunction represents an additional expectation which, for workers, is easier to give up than to meet. Indeed, as explained by an employee, working in the new work environment implies that workers have consistently to jungle between their duty of work productivity, and their duty of conviviality.

On the other hand, while the work environment does not necessarily lead to conviviality because of the injunction this conviviality represents, to a certain extent this work environment prevents workers from the sociability they would like to put in place. Indeed, as we have seen several workers explained that it was no longer possible to celebrate conviviality with the co-workers of their service (e.g. birthday celebrations) because rejecting other workers would be considered impolite.

This means that, contrarily to what was expected, even though it was designed to promote conviviality, the work environment does not allow workers to develop their conviviality towards other workers because this injunction represents an additional pressure some workers prefer flee. But beyond the fact this the work environment does not promote sociability, it thins the existent work communities down. In other words, in the name of a global conviviality ideal, workers give up on maintaining the local – intra-service – conviviality.

In conclusion, contrarily to what this section seemed to foreshadow, the work environment did not lead to real new behaviours that workers developed, and that contributed to changing *ORES WaPi* organisational identity, for two reasons. First, because employees refuse to incorporate behaviours that do not fit with their local identity. This is illustrated by the sociability rule. This means that, if *ORES WaPi* organisational identity is not challenged by this rule, it is rather underlined by workers' rejects. Second, regarding conviviality, it is not possible for workers to adopt behaviours in line with this value because, in the same time, the work environment promotes and discourages workers to conviviality.

2.2. Work consequences of the new work environment

Second, I propose to address the effect of the work environment on the organisational identity by focusing on the changes in terms of work.

As I have extensively explained in chapter seven, the new work environment in *ORES WaPi* came with new rules about the way the work should be done, and new tools. These changes are globally the digitalisation of most of the paper-format documents and the use of ICTs to allow working remotely. As I have explained, all the categories of workers did not perceive and experience this incitation to use less paper-format documents in the same way. Indeed, while this was easily put in practice – and favoured – by most of the administrative staff, most of the technical workers expressed difficulties in using digital documents such as works plans, for instance. This exacerbated to the point where an employee said that nothing was planned for technical workers, and that this resulted in a feeling of sidelining of this category of workers. Drawing on this, one can see that the new work environment, because it does not provide the resources that are necessary to technical workers, contributes to sidelining this category of employees. This produces a professional identity denial that is experienced by these workers, since what is peculiar to their professional expertise is not acknowledged by the new work environment and the work organisation it promotes (i.e. a digital work organisation). It gives an impression that, in its new design, *ORES* no longer value the technical expertise and what it requires. Moreover, while the digitalisation is described by proponents of the project as something that gives to workers the impression that their job is much smarter and interesting, technical workers explain that relying on paper-format documents helps them in achieving their objectives in a more effective way. This means that, in the heart of the digitalisation ideal, there is a real ignorance of the real work of technical workers, their daily activities and what makes their work "smart".

Beyond denying the professional identity of technical workers, this work environment contributes to what one could call an organisational identity denial. Indeed, as several workers like recalling, the technical aspect is central in *ORES* and constitutes its core business. Yet, by not providing the resources necessary to the technical workers, by denying the specificities of the technical work, it is as if *ORES* denied what is central for it, that is its technical core business. Moreover, this organisational identity denial is reinforced by what I called the identity mimicry, that is the idea – expressed by several workers – that the new work environment and the work organisation it promotes are inspired from companies active in the IT or banking sectors, that is companies which greatly differ from *ORES* core business and work reality.

Beyond the fact that the new work environment does not provide the resources for technical employees, it also prevents administrative staff from adopting the new work behaviours that are expected from them. Indeed, among the administrative staff, several workers underline that the digitalisation is not completely achieved (partly because of legal obligations, for instance). This means that there are still paper-format files and cabinets. Thus, even though there is an intention to promote digital work, because of the necessity to keep the paper format, the administrative staff cannot successfully embrace the digital mode that is encouraged.

In conclusion, the work environment – and especially the digitalisation it attempts to support – provides material resources that are either inadequate to technical workers, or not sufficiently digitalised for administrative workers. This explains the impression that nothing has changed in the work organisation of *ORES WaPi* workers: the new work environment and the new tools do not meet the needs of these workers. The worst is that they make the work more difficult or, at best, when it comes to IT tools, come to counterbalance the detrimental effects of the work environment (e.g. workers relying on *Lync* to have the chatter and intimacy they can no longer openly have with their colleagues).

Finally, because of the DOMO project and the work environment, it was expected that the management style would evolve and be based on trust. This is more related to the DOMO project than to the work environment since the trust-based management had to support the culture of innovation, autonomy and empowerment; and this culture had to materialise in the work environment where workers can choose their seating, go meeting other colleagues in order to achieve their goals, etc. Trust-based management should have been the cornerstone enabling workers to take full benefits from the work environment in order to meet the ideal of innovation, autonomy and empowerment. Unfortunately, this change did not occur and the trust-based management is only a mirage. Indeed, despite the decompartmentalisation and the freedom offered to workers in choosing their desk, the work environment did not affect the type of management. This failure can be explained by the fact that the work organisation maintains principles that are opposed to the ideal of trust: persistence of KPI, surveillance of workers' connection on *Lync* when they work from home, rigorous encoding – and monitoring – of the working schedule, etc. This means that, even though the trust-based management and the work environment were hoped to support each other, this does not materialise.

In conclusion, for several reasons the work environment does not bring the expected changes in terms of work organisation and management. In the rules and the new technologies that have been developed, the new work environment attempts to make coexist two types of radically different expertise: technicians and administrative staff. Because of the difficult cohabitation of these two categories of workers in a "new world of work" environment, none of these categories of workers is provided with the material resources necessary to achieving its job: technical workers regret the digitalisation, and administrative workers criticise the lack of completion of this digitalisation. In terms of organisational identity, a part of the workers – the technicians – express a denial of what constitutes their professional identity and *ORES* organisational identity, while the other workers – administrative staff – seem to be impeded in their desire to fully embrace the ways of working of what seems to be the desired organisational identity of *ORES*. Because this desired organisational identity cannot be achieved without denying what constitutes the core business of *ORES*, it leaves *ORES* and its workers with no choice that being stuck in a situation of identity mimicry.

2.3. The perception of *ORES* and the DOMO project

Third, I propose that a means through which the work environment in *ORES WaPi* contributes to changing *ORES* organisational identity is because of the perception workers have of their organisation further to this workspace re-arrangement. This point echoes several aspects previously mentioned.

As I have explained, for many – mainly technical – workers, the new work environment is perceived as a project that has been copied and pasted from other organisations such as *Google* or companies active in the IT or banking sectors. An employee even considers that “it’s America that made [the project leaders/*ORES*] dream”. On several occasions, workers express a feeling of distance between their ways of working, their core business, their history and what this new work environment inspires. This leads workers to attempt to reproduce ways of working that are not suitable for them, and to act “as if” it was made for them. This is what I propose to call an identity mimicry.

Beyond the organisational identity mimicry, what is specific to the case of *ORES WaPi* is that many employees express a feeling that this new work environment, the rules of sociability that it suggests (and that are rejected), etc. participate to a denial of their local identity. Indeed, to illustrate this, I want to recall this sentence from a worker: “The person from Brussels who will come here, she will perhaps blend more because it is working methods that in capital city, they already have for a long time I think. It's not new to them. But here, we must not forget that we are far from everything”. This illustrates that workers express an emotional distance between their working methods and the ones suggested in the new work environment: these methods are not theirs. Moreover, what is central in this explanation is that this emotional distance is related to a geographical distance: workers explain that they are far from these working methods which are the ones that are common in companies located in capital cities, but not in the small city of Leuze-en-Hainaut. Thus, beyond a denial of the global organisational identity of *ORES*, the new work environment participates to a denial of the local identity of *ORES WaPi*.

Finally, the new work environment and the whole DOMO project lead some workers to wonder towards what *ORES* is evolving. This creates a suspicion among workers who think that *ORES* will gradually become less a technical company, and more an administrative company.

In conclusion, it is not that much that the new work environment transcends the organisational identity of *ORES*, but it reveals a sort of desired organisational identity. This hypothesis is rather well supported and illustrated by an executive of *ORES* who explains: “I dreamed about these brands that had the chance to offer something that people liked. […] I can’t create love around my thing, I don’t know how to create pleasure around my thing. We are doomed not to be loved”. Unfortunately, despite the best efforts, *ORES* cannot achieve this desired identity, and it results that the company and its workers are stuck in a denial of their own organisational identity and, for *ORES WaPi*, a denial of their local identity.

2.4. Work environment: structuring but not determining

In this last section, I want to look at the role of the work environment on the organisational identity in *ORES WaPi* from a broader perspective.

As I have previously shown, we can see that the work environment in *ORES WaPi* has been drastically re-designed and that the physical dimension of the work provoked a real sidelining of the technical workers. On the one hand, this sidelining is suggested by the new ways of working that support digitalisation at the expense of technical workers' necessary resources. On the other hand, there is a more radical relation between the work environment and this sidelining since, even in its architecture, the building was conceived with meeting rooms for technical agents in a side way of the building and not in the central space with the other co-workers. This architectural sidelining of the technical agents was reinforced by discursive practices suggesting that these workers should not disturb and leave traces of their passage in the building (cf. the boots anecdote).

The work environment has certainly a structuring role on some aspects in *ORES WaPi* but this role is far from being determining, and this explains why the new work environment was not enough to change work practices, and workers' behaviours.

Indeed, as previously explained, even though the attempts to re-appropriate space were rather shy, they deserve to be mentioned. This is, for instance, the case of one of the executives who decided to install boards on the walls for enabling technical workers to put up large paper-format documents on the wall. This illustrates that, even though the new work environment bears the intention to establish new working practices and tools, there remains a cohabitation with the previous tools. This cohabitation makes difficult the successful achievement of the ideal at the heart of the "new world of work".

Moreover, other cues of the non-determining effects of the work environment in *ORES WaPi* on the workers can be illustrated by the use they make of the different workspaces that greatly differ from what was expected. For instance, while the different workspaces were conceived in order to provide areas suitable for each working activity, and for promoting mobility at the service of collaboration and efficiency, we can see that the workspaces are more "social-based" than "activity-based" since employees are mobile as long as it benefits to the affinities they want to maintain. Work, collaboration and efficiency are rarely part of this choice, but are rather potential collateral effects.

In conclusion, in many ways the expectations of the new work environment in terms of work practices, behaviours, attitudes, etc. are not fully met. For the sake of their job and what it requires, a part of workers cannot adhere to them. This creates a dissent between workers who try to adhere to the new *ORES*, and workers who are not able to follow this new *ORES*. I propose to address this dissent by mobilising the French theory of conventions.

3. Conventionalist approach of the new work environment in *ORES WaPi*

In the chapter three, I have explained that the effects of a workspace re-arrangement on an origination's identity might be understood and analysed in the light of the French theory of conventions. Before applying this theory to the case of *ORES WaPi*, I remind a few elements about the French theory of conventions.

3.1. French theory of conventions: reminder of the key elements

A convention can be defined as a shared conviction that is organisationally grounded (Gomez, 1996). The convention rests upon a statement and a material apparatus.

The statement is composed of:

- the first principle (i.e. behaviours to adopt in order to be “in the convention”),
- the distinction (i.e. the adopters of the convention, and their duties),
- and the sanction (i.e. the limit between being included and excluded from the convention).

The material apparatus is the materialisation of the statement. It is composed of:

- the contacts (i.e. type, frequency and context of the relations between the adopters of the convention),
- the technology (i.e. means used to be in contact with the adopters),
- and the level of interpretation (i.e. possibility of local arrangements which do not disturb the convention).

As explained in the chapter three, a convention is subjected to evolve, and potentially to meet the point of conventionalist crisis. In that case, the convention is likely to (i) collapse, in favour of the suspicion – that is another convention –, (ii) adjust, or (iii) resist which results in the co-existence of two different conventions and two categories of adopters. Since a convention is a knowledge workers share, and that inform about the way to behave in a specific organisational context, I suggest that an organisation’s identity is a convention.

3.2. The previous convention in *ORES WaPi*

Drawing on the data analysis and on the summary above, I propose to consider that the new work environment in *ORES WaPi* has acted as an element that came and disturbed the previous convention, that is the work and social norms and behaviours workers respected in Tournai. The new work environment has acted as a suspicion, that is an element leading to disrupt the previous convention.

Even though I did not collect the data in Tournai, drawing on the few elements workers explained about the work environment, the type of management, the work organisation and the type of relations at that time, one can dress the portrait of the previous convention. It is summarised in the Table 9 below.

Statement			Material apparatus		
First principle	*Distinction*	*Sanction*	*Contacts*	*Technology*	*Level of interpretation*
Achieving the job and the tasks that must be done in its specific service.	Pyramid organisation. Responsibilities depend on the hierarchical status.	Being perceived as a non-professional worker.	Daily face-to-face interactions with the service co-workers. Occasional and short meetings with other co-workers.	Verbal communication with the service co-workers. Distant communication with the other co-workers (e.g. phone, email, etc.)	Specific to the service, but rather low.
Principle of coherence					
ORES WaPi in Tournai was characterised by the achievement of specific tasks required from distinct isolated services that were very hierarchically structured. Each service was organised on its own with a strong internal coherence, and a low necessity to go towards other services.					

Table 9 - Previous convention in Tournai

In the previous work organisation, the first principle was that each worker achieves the tasks that were precisely attributed to his/her service. The level of coordination and collaboration between services were rather low, or inexistent. All the workers in the service worked to achieve the objectives of the service, in respect of their hierarchical status. Since the employees shared the same workspace, interactions with the service co-workers took place on a daily basis, and interactions with other services were rare and distant.

Drawing on the different elements of the convention, one can see that there was a substantial coherence with the convention in place in Tournai: the hierarchy in place in each service was in charge of the work organisation in order to achieve tasks attributed to each service. Each service worked rather autonomously from the other services. The workspace, the tool, the hierarchy were aligned and coherent between them.

3.3. The new work environment: disruption of the previous convention

When moving to Leuze-en-Hainaut, workers faced a new work environment promoting other working practices, other tools, and other behaviours and attitudes (both work- and non-work-related). Drawing on the analysis previously summarised in this chapter, we have seen that the effects of this new work environment differed depending on the categories of workers. Administrative workers and technical workers experience this new work environment in different manner, and this differently affects their understanding of their organisation and its identity. Thus, the new work environment has played the role of suspicion regarding the previous convention. It results that the previous convention collapsed, leaving the place to two competing conventions: the administrative workers' convention, and the technical workers' convention. I present both of them below.

3.3.1. The administrative workers' convention

Regarding the administrative workers' convention (see Table 10 below), one can say that this convention is based on the following first principle: working efficiently in order to serve the customer, and to promote the external image of *ORES*. As we have seen in the chapter six, for administrative workers, this is necessary to preserve the organisation and maintain it in the long term. This first principle implies that, in order to be efficient, the administrative staff embraces the ideal of collaboration between the other services. Moreover, this is necessary for them since their work and the services they can provide to customers relies a lot on the other activities in *ORES* and mainly on the work of technical workers. Regarding the adopters of this convention, they are mainly other administrative workers and executives. The responsibilities are not very clearly defined since, despite the message of autonomy and empowerment, management remains controlling. Thus, the responsibilities are up to the manager.

Regarding the sanction, workers who do not follow this convention are perceived as old-fashioned or non-customer oriented. Regarding the contacts, in the new work environment, interactions are more widespread than in the previous building since workers no longer share the same office than their co-workers. This means that they have daily interactions with the workers from all the other services, but also that sometimes they can put in place voluntary distance with some co-workers, too. Regarding the technology, in order to be more efficient, administrative workers embrace the digital turn that occurs in *ORES*. They can work only with their computer and almost no longer need paper files. Technology is also at the service of communication: either they use it for informal communications, or they use emails for hedging against potential reproaches from their hierarchy.

However, as I have illustrated several times and as the different elements of the convention here shows, the administrative workers' convention is not completely coherent. Indeed, while the first principle promotes efficiency, collaboration, autonomy and empowerment in order to serve the customer, there remains a rather high culture of control and hierarchy. This means that workers are still used to ask their manager for permission, for instance. Their use of technology is an illustration of the persistent controlling management since workers frequently explain that they use emails and written communication in order to keep tracks of their demands in order to prove themselves if needed.

In conclusion, the new convention among the administrative staff is shaky for reasons that are external to the single work environment.

Statement			Material apparatus		
First principle	*Distinction*	*Sanction*	*Contacts*	*Technology*	*Level of interpretation*
Working efficiently in order to serve the customer, and to promote *ORES* corporate image.	Pyramid organisation. Responsibilities are not clearly defined; confused message between autonomy and control.	Being perceived as “old-fashioned”, or as “non-customer oriented”.	Daily face-to-face interactions with all the co-workers. Occasionally, voluntary distance with managers or co-workers.	Tools enabling digital working. Email for important information, in order to hedge against reproaches.	Specific to the manager, but rather low.
Principle of coherence					
Administrative workers in *ORES WaPi* in Leuze-en-Hainaut are characterised by a promotion of efficient, collaborative and autonomous work; and the use of digital tools enabling these goals. But in the same time, management remains rather controlling, and workers keep communication with a mind-set of “hedging against reproaches”. The coherence is not complete.					

Table 10 - Convention in Leuze-en-Hainaut among the administrative staff

3.3.2. The technical workers convention

Regarding the technical workers’ convention (see Table 11 below), one can say that it is based on the following first principle: achieving the job and the tasks that must be done in order to deliver high-quality work and to please the customer. High levels of expertise and professionalism are central in the technical workers’ convention. If they do not follow this principle, they fear to be perceived as non-expert. Since expertise is so central and respected, the adopters of the convention are responsible of tasks depending on their level of expertise. Regarding the contacts, technical workers frequently meet their co-workers in face-to-face, and meet other workers when this is required for the job. Interactions frequently occur in face-to-face. Regarding the technology, technical workers privilege paper format to digital format, because paper-format documents allow them to be more efficient.

In this convention, the different elements are rather coherent since the material apparatus and the statement are well aligned. However, what is not coherent is the existence of two different conventions within *ORES WaPi.*

Statement			Material apparatus		
First principle	*Distinction*	*Sanction*	*Contacts*	*Technology*	*Level of interpretation*
Achieving the job and the tasks that must be done in its specific service, in order to deliver the technical work and the customer.	Responsibilities depend on the individual expertise.	Being perceived as non-expert.	Frequent face-to-face interactions with the service co-workers. Occasional face-to-face interactions with other co-workers, depending on the need.	Mostly, paper documents. But external pressures for using digital tools. Occasionally, digital communication with other services.	Specific to the need, but rather low.
Principle of coherence Technical workers in *ORES WaPi* in Leuze-en-Hainaut are characterised by their orientation towards tasks achievement, and delivering the work in due time. They promote the contacts and tools that they consider the most effective to realise their work, and maintain their role of "expert". But in the same time, they endure an external pressure encouraging them to use more digital technologies.					

Table 11 - Convention in Leuze-en-Hainaut among the technical workers

3.4. *ORES WaPi* in Leuze-en-Hainaut: about the necessary cohabitation of two competing conventions

Drawing on the conventionalist approach of the new work environment in Leuze-en-Hainaut, we can observe that the new work environment has affected the previous convention which collapsed, and let place to two different conventions. These two different conventions echo the different experiences shared by administrative workers and technical workers about their new work environment.

A question remains: how does it happen that the two conventions exist in the same time, and that one does not dominate the other?

When one reminds the official purpose of the new work environment and the project it takes place in, one could consider that the convention that is the closest to this purpose is the convention of administrative workers. Indeed, they embrace the ideal of collaboration and autonomy in the service of the customer orientation, which is the ideal conveyed by the new work environment and the DOMO project. Thus, the administrative workers' convention is aligned with the desired organisational identity of *ORES.* Unfortunately, this convention is not able to become the new dominant convention for two main reasons. First, because as previously shown, the principle of coherence of this convention is not achieved. Indeed, mainly because of the managerial culture, it is not possible for administrative workers to fully embrace their convention. Second, the administrative workers' convention cannot dominate because of the existence of another convention which is the one of technical workers. Moreover, even though it does not align with the expectations of the new work environment, this second convention is difficult to eradicate since it follows the principle of coherence.

In conclusion, there are two competing conventions that coexist now in *ORES WaPi*. Both of these conventions correspond to two different types of workers and two different understandings of what *ORES* and *ORES WaPi* are, and how work should be done there. As long as these categories of workers will differ in their ways of working, their vision of the organisation's identity will differ, regardless of the work environment and the corporate executives' projects and vision for *ORES*. The convention of administrative workers, regardless of its shakiness, is the closest to the desired organisational identity underlay in the new work environment. And the convention of technical workers is far from what is expected and valued in the new desired organisational identity, but it has the merit to be coherent and thus, to provide to these workers a means to affirm their understanding of *ORES* organisational identity. This second convention and its coherence provide to technical workers a means to manifest their identity, and to oppose the organisational identity denial they express.

Chapter 10. Contributions and discussion

In this final chapter, I identify four main contributions of this research: (i) a theoretical contribution on the different levels of the identity concept, and their interrelations, (ii) a contribution on the materiality of the identity, (iii) a contribution on Lefebvre's spatial triad (1991), and (iv) a contribution on the methodological use of the French theory of conventions. After identifying these contributions, I discuss in a broader manner the resistance practices facing non-territorialised offices, and the issue of recognition at stake. Finally, I also extend the results of this research and identify managerial contributions, and recommendations for space designers.

1. On the different levels of the identity concept, and their interrelations

Since this thesis is mainly about organisational identity, in the second chapter I have explained this concept, and briefly distinguished it with the concepts of individual identity and work identity (also labelled occupational or professional identity). In this chapter, I made a clear distinction between individual, work, and organisational identity, by considering these as the micro, meso and macro levels of the general concept of identity. This distinction was partly based on the observation that authors dealing with one of these three concepts often do it without considering the other concepts, and on the distinct existing definitions of each concept. For instance, Albert (1998), co-author of the original definition of organisational identity, explains that "[t]he concept of identity has the advantage of being a concept, construct, or question that can be studied or posed at any level of analysis – individual, group, organization, or industry" (1998, p. 10). Considering the different levels of analysis that the identity concept underlies, Albert (1998) does not suggest that these levels are connected. Gioia (1998) operates the same conceptual distinction, without proposing a potential connection between what he perceives being different levels of identity.

Yet, the results of the present research show that the distinction between what one might consider the different sub-levels of identity is more blurred than what the different theoretical definitions suggest. This partly echoes the theoretical framework proposed by Kreiner, Hollensbe and Sheep (2006). Observing that researchers tended to address organisational and individual identity separately, these authors mobilised a boundary perspective in order to highlight the interface of identities. The results of this thesis, showing the articulation between one's professional identity and the identity attributed to the organisation, illustrates a form of *inter-identity boundary interface*, that is the locus "where boundaries *between* individual and organizational identities are negotiated" (Kreiner et al., 2006, p. 1321). In addition to illustrating the interest of a boundary approach of identity, the results of this thesis show that the boundary between organisational identity and one's individual identity might concern work-related aspects of one's identity (rather than non-work-related aspects, such as shown by Kreiner et al. (2006)) and thus, his/her work identity.Moreover, beyond the question of the fit between one's work identity and the organisation's identity, at the heart of the affirmation of a peculiar organisational identity there is also the issue of defending specific interests, a peculiar status, or a legitimacy. This defence of one's status was illustrated by the case of the employees with a technical background in *ORES WaPi* who perceived the new work environment as challenging the technical core business of *ORES WaPi* and their professional identity. This echoes Glynn's research (2000), studying the construction of a cultural institution's identity, that shows that one's perception of the organisation's identity is based on his/her work identity and belonging to a specific group of professionals. As she explains: "the process of identifying enables organizational members to reinforce their professional identity by advancing claims on the organization's identity elements that are congruent with their expertise and capabilities." (Glynn, 2000, p. 293). Therefore, there would be a form of interdependence between one's work identity and the organisation's identity. The present research adds to the few that have shown similar results indicating that the organisation's identity is a crucial issue for workers who can perceive it as satisfying or threatening their work identity (Glynn, 2000; Gomes Da Silva, 2010; Humphreys & Brown, 2002). This interdependence is likely to partly explain workers' resistance practices towards changes they perceive as threatening. Indeed, as Humphreys and Brown (2002) have shown in their article studying an institute identity redefinition, resistances might be explained by the fact that "identity-constitutive stories told about organizations also directly impinge on the social identity of their participants" (Humphreys & Brown, 2002, p. 439).

These results, adding to existing pieces of research, allow to re-consider the value of the theoretical conception we have of identity and what are considered as distinct identity levels. Moreover, this research encourages in conducting future research about identity, and in investigating the relations that might be tied between an individual's identity, his/her work identity, and the one (s)he attributes to his/her organisation.

Finally, these results also allow to discuss Walsh and Gordon's (2008) article about work identity and the well-known social identity theory. In this article, the authors, drawing on the social identity theory, argue that "individuals choose to identify with membership in social groups that positively reinforces themselves" (Walsh & Gordon, 2008, p. 50). However, the fact that workers resist towards an organisational identity change, and attempt to reconcile and make coexist their work identity with the organisation's identity, allows nuancing Walsh and Gordon's proposition that individuals rationally "choose" to what they identify. My results show that individuals do not rationally decide to adhere to the organisation, or their work depending on the positive support their adhesion to one or the other can provide to their individual identity. Rather than choosing to what they identify, it seems that workers are more likely to attempt to reconcile both the organisation's identity and their work identity. Indeed, since both of these concepts are connected, workers cannot expect having a positive work identity if the organisation's identity is not aligned to their work identity, and positively supports it.

2. On the materiality of the identity

A second contribution of this thesis is related to the support it brings to research on the materiality of the identity (Dale, 2005; Dale & Burrell, 2008a; Pezé, 2012). As explained by Alvesson, Ashcraft and Thomas (2008), the crafting of identities finds its sources in at least six elements: (i) embodied practices, (ii) material and institutional arrangements, (iii) discursive formations, (iv) story-telling performances, (v) groups and social relations, and (vi) anti-identities. In line with these six identity materials, they consider that these materials might combine to support the construction of identities, and they call for research investigating the materiality of identities.

Among the studies in management and organisation studies that have embraced a socio-material perspective, a few of them has already shown that the study of identity benefits from this approach (Conrad & Richter, 2013; Dale & Burrell, 2008a; Donis, 2015; Pezé, 2012). The present research adds to the research investigating the materiality of the identity, by focusing on the spatial dimension, in two ways.

Firstly, it supports previous research that has studied and shown the importance of the spatial aspect in the construction of individuals' identity (Baldry & Barnes, 2012; Donis, 2015; Elsbach, 2003; Hancock & Spicer, 2011; Zhang & Spicer, 2014). In particular, the results have shown how the new work environment might challenge workers' work identity. This relation between work identity and work environment was particularly highlighted by investigating the work practices and their spatiality. Indeed, workers regularly discussed their work environment in terms of the material resources it provides or does not provide, and the impact this spatial dimension has on daily work practices and routines. Since these work practices participate in defining one's work identity (workers evoking their peculiar expertise through their daily practices, and tools specific to their activities, for instance), this research contributes to showing that the work identity is not only influenced by the space, but that it is deeply spatially anchored.

Secondly, beyond showing the materiality of the work identity, this research also contributes in showing that organisational identity is also materially anchored. Thus, this leads to nuance the definitions suggesting that organisational identity is a "shared understanding" (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Gomes Da Silva, 2010). More than an abstract idea, organisational identity presents a concrete dimension. This partly echoes Harquail and King's (2010) theoretical assumption that organisational identity is an embodied cognition, that is a knowledge accessed and constructed through the human's bodily experience and, notably, the experience of the spatial environment. The authors argue that "[a] member experiences and participates in the visual-spatial features of their organization through their interaction with all elements of the organization's built environment (e.g. the organization's architecture and decor) as well as through organizational symbols and artefacts such as an organization chart" (Harquail & King, 2010, p. 1626). My research and the results provide empirical support to this theoretical assumption. Indeed, individuals' discourse about their work environment seem to reflect a mental cognition that finds its roots in their visual and spatial bodily experience. For instance, the sidelining expressed by some categories of workers, and the impact this feeling had on their perception of their organisation, its evolution and identity, found its origins in the bodily spatial experience of the space, and the meaning individuals attributed to it. Therefore, this research provides an additional contribution showing that an organisation's spatial dimension and, in particular, the work environment provide a peculiar experience of the organisation to its workers who are likely to construct their perception of their organisation's identity based on its materiality, that is the physical space but, more importantly, the significations and intentions they attribute to it, and the spatial work practices it makes possible. By studying organisational identity in line with a socio-material approach based on the focus on the spatial environment, this research partly contributes to Ravasi and Canato's (2013) call for "more research combining observations of discursive artefacts, structural properties and material practices in organizations" (2013, p. 198).

3. On the attempt to unveil Lefebvre's perceived space

This thesis also brings a modest empirical contribution in line with Lefebvre's (1991) spatial triad. In "The production of space", Lefebvre (1991) theorises space as a social production, and proposes a spatial triad allowing to consider space as conceived, perceived, and lived. These three panels are respectively characterised by representations of space, spatial practices, and representational spaces. Throughout the review of the literature, I have observed how numerous authors embracing the spatial turn naturally mobilised Lefebvre's seminal theory. Yet, despite their thorough explanation of the three dimensions, the appropriation of these dimensions appeared uneven, and this is particularly obvious for the perceived space dimension (or spatial practice) (e.g. Dale, 2005; Kingma, 2016; Shortt, 2015; Wapshott & Mallett, 2012).

Originally, Lefebvre defined spatial practice as the dimension "which embraces production and reproduction, and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristics of each social formation." (1991, p. 33). As commented by Beyes and Michels (2011), and as this definition illustrates, Lefebvre's writing style is rather prolix and vague, which might cause some difficulties to researchers desiring to mobilise his work. It results that, unsurprisingly, authors define by turns perceived space as "the routine user practices" (Kingma, 2016, p. 180), "the spaces that we know and experience on a day to day level" (Dale, 2005, p. 657), "spatial practices and how we move within space as part of daily routine" (Shortt, 2015, p. 635), or "that understanding of space gained through experience" (Wapshott & Mallett, 2012, p. 5). Facing this vagueness about perceived space and since I expected to confront management spatial intentions and employees' spatial experience, I proposed a triptych considering that space is (i) a physical dimension, (ii) underlying managerial intentions, (iii) and related to meanings (see chapter 1).

However, during my empirical research, I had the opportunity to observe that workers' relation to their spatial environment echoed managerial intentions, specific meanings attributed to the space, but also spatial practices enabled or stopped by the work environment. These spatial practices, that is the material resources provided by the space and necessary to the execution of daily activities, appeared as an additional dimension that was not included in my triptych.

Even though I cannot claim that my interpretation of Lefebvre's perceived dimension is conform to the author's original thought, my own empirical practice showed me that the understanding of Lefebvre might benefit from individuals' discourses about their experiences of their own spatial environment. Moreover, this encourages authors studying organisational socio-materiality in letting themselves be surprised by their fieldwork, and the new lenses the research participants might offer.

4. On the methodological use of the French theory of conventions in management

This thesis also brings a methodological contribution related to the use of the French theory of conventions (Gomez, 1994, 1996). The French theory of conventions was not used primarily as methodological tool, but was useful in two aspects: one theoretical, and one methodological.

On the first hand, I mobilised this theory and the definition of the "convention" in order to characterise organisational identity. Indeed, based on the review of the literature, I have shown that organisational identity is a concept prone to much debate. While subscribing to the interpretivist perspective of this concept, I then proposed to consider organisational identity as a convention. This peculiar lens was in line with the interpretivist perspective of organisational identity considering it as a shared understanding – similar to a convention – but was particularly helpful in order to theoretically apprehend the dynamic process allowing the organisation's identity to evolve and reconfigure itself when an organisation faces a change. The dynamics of the convention enables to consider organisational identity as a continuously *becoming* shared understanding, what the existing literature does not really consider. This is particularly relevant since, as explained in the second chapter, the recent literature on identity considers identity, no longer as a fixed attribute, but rather as an ongoing process

(Brown, 2015; Giddens, 1991; Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003). The idea of convention and its dynamics allow to add this notion of continuity to the concept of organisational identity.

On the second hand, the French theory of conventions was used as a methodological tool, mobilised *a posteriori* in the final analysis of the data in order to characterise the identity transformation that had occurred in *ORES Picardy Wallonia*. As Ravasi and Canato (2013) have noted, the concept of organisational identity is not an operational concept. Thus, in order to cope with the methodological void existing in order to investigate organisational identity and its changes, I have recalled to the French theory of conventions. Within this theory, the different elements composing the morphology of the convention (the statement, i.e. first principle, distinction and sanction; and the material apparatus, i.e. contacts, technology and level of interpretation) turned out to be really operational in order to characterise with much details the convention in place in the previous work setting, among the administrative workers, and among the technical workers. While, on the basis of the collected data, there were already some intuitions supporting the idea of a conventionalist crisis, and the existence of two competing conventions, the analysis in detail of the two conventions morphology enabled to understand the degree of coherence within each convention, and to point dissonances. This is only because of this detailed analysis of the components of the convention that I have understood the incoherence of administrative workers' convention, and was able to attempt an explanation of the existence of the two conventions in presence.

Therefore, in the absence of other operational tools, I propose that the French theory of conventions might be very relevant in order to address organisational identity and to characterise it in detail. This is probably explained by the analogy between the concepts of organisational identity and convention, at least in an interpretivist approach. Moreover, beyond the analytical framework it provides, the French theory of conventions enables to describe the rationalisation processes developed by the different actors, and their (in)coherence, which results in an ability to highlight the coexistence of different norms among actors. In the case of this thesis, the existence of these different norms manifested an identity conflict, that would have be more difficult to point out if not resorting on the French theory of conventions and the norms it reveals.

5. On the societal convention in place

Firstly, such as illustrated by workers' excerpts, the implementation of activity-based workspaces inspiring "modernity" and promoting "new ways of working" are not without reference to the pioneer of this new world of work, that is *Microsoft*, well-known company active in the IT sector. This is no surprise that workers themselves naturally describe their new work environment and practices as "*Google*-like". Even though activity-based workspaces are not dominant work environments (yet)

(Actineo & CSA, 2014, 2015), their introduction in diverse sectors of activities with diverse categories of workers invites to consider what seems to be a process of delegitimation of the previous structures and organisations of work. To this process take part the companies which have adopted these new structures and work organisations, the companies and consultants that provide support to companies wishing to adopt this change, media and business media which posit that “The one thing that is *non-negotiable* for the future of workspaces is innovation[,] and workplaces need to support that innovation” (Hall, 2018; *my emphasis*), and workers themselves who seem convinced by this ideal of “modernity”. In the same time, this “modernity” seems to never be defined, nor questioned, testifying of its obviousness, at least for the actors subscribing to this discourse. Therefore, all the elements and actors are reunited to produce and strengthen this idea that “the company of the future will be Google, or won’t be”.

Secondly, the existence of a form of societal convention pushing towards the adoption of these new work models is testified by the occurring discourses and behaviours of adhesion expressed by some workers. Indeed, as previously mentioned, it seems that workers’ discourse has completely integrated the necessity to change the organisation of work, and the idea that the new work environment is part of the equation in order to successfully change the organisation of work, and make the organisation and the work more durable. Even though the new work environment and what it promotes in terms of work behaviours, attitudes, etc. is not necessarily achieved, it remains that there is a naturalisation of the emergency to change, and to disrupt the previous model. This observation of naturalisation of the threat is both on the managers and on the workers side. A part of workers, adhering to the rhetoric of the *Google*-like company and convinced of the threat hanging over them if they do not change, come to accept the new rules of the game, imposing radically different behaviours, skills, and organisations of work. Beyond accepting these rules, we also observe that some workers tend to value them, since they give them the feeling of being part of this desired so-called “modernity”. This results in a naturalisation of this new model of organisation and this new model worker (Hancock & Spicer, 2011) which remain unquestioned and unchallenged by workers and practitioners who, if they do so, expose themselves to the risk to be perceived as “old-fashioned”, such as in the case of technical workers in *ORES WaPi*.

Finally, beyond illustrating the ideological background surrounding organisations, these results are also illustrative of the distance that exist between the managerial thought, management tools and practices that are developed, and the real work. By adhering to the necessity to adopt new rules, managers and executives come to blindly adopt new work practices and new tools, and even to delegate the necessary reflection of the transformation of the work organisation to external actors. This clearly illustrates a distance between what managers and executives think workers do and need, and what they actually do and need. My point is not about nostalgia towards previous work organisation and structure, and about freezing the ways of working and preventing any attempt of innovation. But, considering the distance between the work such as thought by managers and such as practiced by workers – and the effects of such distance, it seems relevant and wise to encourage managers in managing through the real work, maybe far from the success stories but closer to workers' preoccupations and daily experiences. In other words, the acknowledgement of this distance and of its deleterious effects prompts managers to put on their boots, and to propose management tools suitable for their real workers, and not for an ideal worker they do not manage.

6. On the recognition of work identities at the heart of workers' resistance practices

While this whole thesis aimed at understanding the relation between the office spatial changes and the organisational identity, in the same way it puts the emphasis on the work identity at the heart of the office spatial changes. As developed in the previous section, this focus on work identity contributes to understanding the organisational identity changes. Beyond this contribution, I propose here to deepen the reflection about the work identity dimension, and the challenges workers face to affirm and defend their work identity in new work environments.

The purpose of this research was not to focus on workers' appropriation of a new work environment. Appropriation practices were investigated as means to understand how the new work environment affected the way the work is done, the expectations in terms of skills, behaviours, etc. All these elements were considered interesting in understanding organisational identity changes. Therefore, I have observed behaviours of space appropriation, mainly characterised by workers' spatial inertia, and the reconstruction of defined cells within the building, regardless of the managerial intention promoting de-compartmentalisation and mobility. It is interesting to focus on these resistance behaviours in order to understand what they mean, and their significance in line with individuals' work identity.

As explained by Bernoux, "[t]he role of the appropriation rationale is also the will to define oneself as a group facing other groups and, in particular, facing the work universe on the one hand, and the society outside work on the other hand." (1979, p. 84; *translated from French*). Thus, while workers' inertia could be understood as unwillingness to adapt in accordance to the managerial project, what is at stake seems to be the recognition of the different workers categories, and their peculiarities. This is in line with the results of this research where I have shown that workers' discontentment with their new office echoed in fact a feeling of inadequate standardisation of the work environment, the work practices, the work tools, etc. Thus, while the activity-based workspace intends to provide spaces for each type of tasks, in the same time that it proposes spaces that "fit to all workers", it removes all the spatial markers on which are based the different work identities.

Beyond the recognition of an individual's work identity, what matters is also the recognition of categories of workers, that is employees who belong to a same group and constitute a community within the organisation. While the activity-based workspace, through the standardisation it imposes, attempts to gather all the employees in a single unified identity, the different communities at work seem to resist to this single unified identity. This echoes Di Méo's argument that "[p]roducing the collective identity often amounts to making a mobilising myth reinforcing the (fake?) image of the territorialised group as a unified totality, beyond its diversities and its real divisions" (2002, p. 178; *translated from French*). Thus, re-appropation practices and their rationale show that, despite the managerial attempts and the creation of a collective space, a corporate unified collective is no more than an illusion that cannot substitute the real different communities at work, with their characteristics, work practices and identities. Moreover, since work practices are spatially situated, the existence of these work communities also relies on the spatial dimension, because these collectives are in themselves locus where practical knowledge is constantly shared, improved and adapted by the peers and members of the community (Linhart, 1994). Thus, the space appears as a salutary element enabling the existence of work communities.

In spite of workers' inertia and resistances attempts towards non-territorialised offices that impoverish the work communities, the spatial dimension remains permanent and standardised. As previously argued, rather than unifying the corporate community, the activity-based workspace does not recognise the diversity of the working communities and the different work identities at stake. Moreover, this environment expropriates workers (Fischer, 1998; Fischer, 1978) leading notably to feelings of homelessness and vagrancy (Hirst, 2011). However, with the work identity concept in mind, one can argue that all workers are not equal facing this movement of expropriation, and the first victims in this movement appear to be professionals whose work practices remain spatially and materially anchored. As a result of this unequal expropriation, these communities of workers are likely to entrench themselves in liminal spaces (Shortt, 2015), such as a workshop in the case of *ORES WaPi* technical workers. Free of all personal belongings, the activity-based workspace is also cleansed of all the workers who do not fit the ideal worker, nor the unified corporate self. This is in line with Fischer's reflection: "This desire to flush out the work resembles an orthopraxical vision, that is to say [one] which sets a truth of the activity by defining a single way to operate, allowed and calculated as the only correct [one way]." (Fischer, 1998, p. 493; *translated from French*). Since expropriated workers take refuge in liminal spaces, this expropriation provokes a form of spatial ghettoisation or segregation (Costes, 2010): some categories of workers are made invisible, or regarded with a form of disdain because they do not conform to the ideal worker promoted by the organisation and embodied in the spatial environment. The standardisation of the work environment, and the subsequent ideal worker, provoke an unavoidable marginalisation of workers who do not conform. It results that this standardisation of the ideal worker, and the resulting expropriation of categories of workers who would not fit this ideal, can only lead to a crack in the organisation's identity, as highlighted in the previous chapter through the conventionalist lens. Indeed, non-compliant workers do not necessarily resign themselves, and keep materialising their existence in the work environment. Resistance practices towards non-territorialised offices, and the form of appropriation they take, embody a broader quest of existence, visibility and recognition. In line with this argument, Donis and Taskin (2017) explain that spatial re-appropriations are means through which workers claim a right to spatially exist in the company. I propose to discuss further this point in the following lines.

In his preface to Honneth's "La société du mépris. Vers une nouvelle Théorique critique", Voirol (2008) explains that social invisibility, which is a form of contempt, is opposed to recognition such as thought by Honneth. This means that recognising an individual's social value and existence comes with allowing him/her to physically exist, and to be visible in the social space. Bernoux (2011), also mobilising Honneth's theory of recognition, argues thus that a society which does not provide the means to support recognition is a society of disdain. In line with the upstream reflection, one can argue that the activity-based workspace, and more generally the trend of non-territorialised offices, which prevent some categories of workers to physically mark the workspace and to manifest their existence in the organisation, embody a form of disdain towards these same categories of workers. In his article where he leads a reflection about recognition and appropriation, Bernoux (2011) campaigns for considering recognition as a principle of social justice. He argues that individuals' attempts to appropriate their work, working tools, to take part in the decisions likely to affect their daily work routines, etc. embody a need for recognition but, more importantly, a quest for social justice. This reflection about appropriation and its meaning is not unconnected to the consideration one can have about the transformation of offices, and the expropriation movement they arouse. Indeed, Bernoux's (1979, 2011) input leads to think that spatial transformations, and the resistances they are subjected to, involve the necessity to lead a broader reflection about the issues of social justice at the heart of these transformations and resistances. This is aligned with the discussion conducted by Donis (2015) and in which, in the same manner as Lefebvre proposed a "right to the city", she develops the idea of a "right to the company which would involve incarnated resistance strategies in and through the organisational space enabling [inhabitants] to rediscover a freedom of action and autonomy, a form of emancipation and a form of participation to the organisational life [allowing to contribute to] the democratisation of the company" (Donis, 2015, p. 221; *translated from French*).

7. Managerial contributions

Even though this thesis was not *for* the management and the organisation, but *about* them, I wish that it holds more than contributions useful to researchers, but that it also brings interesting results for practitioners, in order to questions and challenges their practices, as well as the present, past and future managerial trends they might be tempted to adopt.

First, this research has shown that the standardisation of the work environment might be an issue for the diversity of professionals in an organisation. This is true in the case of the activity-based workspace and the clean-desk policy that comes with it, but this might be true for any project aiming at standardising the work environment. As we have seen, when an organisation includes a diversity of workers who exerts different activities, who use different tools (either IT tools, or material tools), the work environment must be adapted and provide the necessary resources to the execution of the daily activities, otherwise the work environment is no longer at the service of the worker's efficiency, but it compromises it. Adapting the work environment to categories of workers is not only about efficiency, but it is also an issue of acknowledging all the professionals in an organisation, and their singular identity as professionals.

Second and in line with the previous point, this research recalls the importance of involving all the workers in any organisational change, regardless of the impact the project might have on the workers. Indeed, this research reveals that even workers who do not seem to be concerned about an organisational change might be affected by it, because this project tells a lot about the organisation evolution, but also because the silence about one project towards a categories of workers is also likely to convey an important message of side-lining to these workers.

A third managerial contribution reflects the thought of Abrahamson's in "Management Fashion" (1996). Whether we like it or not, the current movement of organisations which decide to radically change their work environment and to adopt the activity-based workspace and the clean-desk policy is a trend on the basis of which consulting agencies developed a business. Even though these agencies and their consultants proclaim themselves experts in adapting the work environment to workers' needs, I believe that the only experts of an organisation, its workers and their needs are organisational members themselves, that is to say executives, managers, and employees. Therefore, despite the tempting promise consulting agencies make to create the ideal workplace, on the basis of this research I would like to encourage leaders and executives in taking up the issue of their work environment, the best way to make their workers evolve and better respond to contemporary needs, rather than outsourcing this crucial reflection and the resulting decisions to an external company. Moreover, as the previous discussion suggests, involving all the organisational members in this reflection might be a choice reflecting the social justice issue at stake.

A fourth managerial contribution concerns the management itself. As I have shown in the empirical results, the project of the new work environment (and the whole DOMO project) was expected to change management towards "trust-based management". Still, as illustrated in chapter seven, this "trust-based management" is still a work in progress and many workers have underlined how the desired results of the new work environment (e.g. collaboration, autonomy, audacity, etc.) could not be achieved because of the managerial practices, often described by workers as controlling. This contributes to encouraging organisations in paying more attention to managerial support, and to train management before any organisational change. Management is likely to be a key success factor in a corporate project, but this can only be true if management is well trained This means that it is essential to pay attention to the managerial line before the project, rather than considering that the project will act in its own way to change management in the desired manner.

Finally, this research would not have been possible if *ORES*, and in particular *ORES WaPi*, had not opened its doors. Therefore, another final managerial contribution of this research is that it encourages organisational leaders in welcoming researchers in organisations, and to accept to be questioned and challenged about their practices.

8. Recommendations to space designers

In line with the previous section addressed to managers and since organisational space reconfigurations seem inevitable, I humbly propose a few recommendations to space designers that might be involved in the re-design of offices.

Echoing the results of this thesis and the recommendation to managers to take the diversity of professionals into consideration when thinking about changing the work environment, the first recommendation to space designers is to avoid complete standardisation of the office. Indeed, office being a tool differently used according to the categories of workers, it seems essential that each category of workers finds in its work environment the tools necessary to his/her daily activities. Moreover, since the re-design of the office often goes with the introduction of new digital tools and new work practices (i.e. digitalisation of documents, WiFi implementation, etc.), the thinking of the work environment cannot be sequenced from the thinking of the new working tools, rules and practices. This is all the more important to take this into consideration since the introduction of new tools can sometimes occur after the move to a new work environment, which might impede workers from fully benefitting from their new office (e.g. in *ORES WaPi*, many workers criticised the IT tools that were not fully ready yet).

A second recommendation to space designers echoes again the diversity of workers. In line with this, the development of removable furniture that can be adapted depending on the need might be interesting to address workers' needs in terms of work environment. Indeed, since the office – depending on its design and the resources it provides – plays a role in the acknowledgement and the affirmation of the different categories of workers within an organisation, it seems essential to create work environments that can provide the necessary tools and resources to all categories of workers, depending on their needs, in order to preserve their legitimate existence in the organisation.

Finally and because the transformation of the work environment might result in a form of segregation of specific workers, a third recommendation would be to think about collective spaces in neutral areas, that is areas which do not belong to any particular category of workers, and which are not marked by any work activity.

Of course, these recommendations are not ideal, and odds on that workers will experience and use these ideas in their own way, which might be very far from the initial intentions that underlie these recommendations.

General conclusion

In this general conclusion, I want to shortly restate the main learnings from this doctoral thesis. I also identify the limits of this research, and then discuss the perspectives for future research stemming from the present study.

1. Thesis main learnings

This doctoral thesis aimed at investigating the following research question: "What is the role of the office in the construction of an organisation's identity?".

While the scientific literature about organisational identity tends to consider it as a concept difficult to access, mainly because of the cognitive dimension of the identity concept, this research has demonstrated the interest of conducting research about organisational identity through a spatial approach. Indeed, if individuals are rather reluctant to speak about their organisation's identity as such – reluctance partly explained by the vagueness of the identity concept –, they are more talkative when it comes to explaining their working practices, their daily routines, their relation to co-workers and supervisors, the way they perceive and live sociability in the organisation, etc. In particular, when confronted to a new type of offices radically different from what they are used to, this is with much ease that inhabitants of this space express their opinion about it, how they perceive it, how this space disturbs their daily social and working routines in the organisation, etc. Yet, all these elements are precious in the understanding of the organisation's identity. Indeed, by detailing and justifying the rationale of their contentment or discontentment towards the new office, workers evoke how they perceive their organisation, its essence, what it stands for and what it ideally should be, what is unique in it, in other words the organisation's identity. Thus this research has demonstrated the interest of a spatial approach in order to unveil an organisation's identity.

In line with the contributions previously developed, this research has also shown that beyond revealing the organisational identity, investigating the office and how workers experience it led to interesting observations about their work identity, and the collective to which they belong. While the activity-based workspace promotes a culture of conviviality across the groups, and attempts to decompartmentalise the services, the research has shown that the positions occupied by workers and the community of peers continue to be a strong belongingness lever within the organisation and despite the vanishing of the material boundaries. The research has also allowed to demonstrate that the identity concept, and particularly work and organisational identities, was worth considering in a global perspective in which different identity facets mix and influence each other.

Another keen learning of this doctoral research is that it provides strong support to the study of identity materiality. Indeed, it has shown that discourses revealing the identity, whether work or organisational identity, are profoundly spatial. Organisational space is a solid ground on which identity is anchored. On the one hand, this is through space that the work practices, constitutive of the work identity affirmation and construction, are enabled. And on the other hand, this is also through the organisation's architecture and the interior design and office arrangement that individuals understand their organisation, manifest their perception of their organisation's identity and how they perceive the future of their organisation looms. On the basis of this research, it seems that not investigating the organisational space and the spatial aspect of organisations and one's work amounts to deprive oneself from a strong source of knowledge allowing to understand identities in organisations.

Finally, this thesis also brings an empirical learning about the use of the French theory of conventions. This research has shown that the conventionalist approach provides a strong analytical framework in order to analyse, *a posteriori*, the conventionalist crisis, and the reasons of the conventionalist – and thus identity – crisis in place. Indeed, since the French theory of conventions argues that a convention is composed of a physical apparatus and a statement, this theory provides a "morphology" of the convention. Drawing on this analytical framework, I mobilised this theory to characterise the conventions in place in *ORES WaPi*. Since discourses referring to the perceptions workers have about their organisation refer to numerous anecdotes and metaphors, it is likely that the researcher studying organisational identity in a constructivist perspective faces the feeling of being overwhelmed by information that is difficult to sort out. Confronted with this amount of information, relying on the French theory of conventions and the features of the convention helped me sorting out the less relevant information, and preserving data that was essential in the understanding of the conventions in place, and thus the competing perceptions of the organisation's identity.

Moreover, the French theory of conventions also suggests that conventions are subjected to a dynamic process and thus, that they are not fixed. The dynamic process at the heart of the production of the convention(s) enabled me to understand the conventionalist crisis in place, resulting from the collapsing of the previous convention, and the resistance of the previous convention and the suspicion (i.e. the new emerging convention). The dynamics of the convention and the conventionalist crisis appear as strong analytical constructs to understand the changes in terms of organisational identity, and the potential competing discourses and views about the organisation's identity when workers face a reconfiguration of their office. Therefore, this theory seems relevant to study the role of the office in the construction and alteration of an organisation's identity.

2. Limits of the research

In this section, I want to clarify the limits of the present research. These limits are mainly related to the empirical approach.

The first limit of this thesis is that I have investigated only one configuration of work environment, that is the activity-based workspace. Yet, as many authors have already shown, workers are no longer affected to one kind of workspace, and they are rather likely to work in several types of offices: the office located in their organisation building, a home-based office, other sites of the organisation, etc. (Felstead, 2012; Halford, 2005). This was also the case in the organisation where I conducted the empirical research. In *ORES WaPi*, workers had the possibility to work from their main building in Leuze-en-Hainaut, from their home, and from another site of the organisation. Still, I focused only on their experience of the main building in Leuze-en-Hainaut, disregarding the other places from where they might be working on a weekly basis. On the one hand, regarding the empirical case, the consideration of only one type of work environment in *ORES WaPi*, regardless of the other work environments provided by the organisation, does not allow to understand the potential relations between these different environments, nor the possible use of them by the workers and the effect these plural environments might have on the identity workers attribute to their organisation. On the other hand, only focusing on one type of work environment means that all the other configurations of work environment are not considered in this research. Therefore, the answer brought to understanding the role of the office in the construction of the organisational identity is limited to the scope of the activity-based workspace.

The second limit concerns the timing of the empirical research that I have conducted, namely the fact that the data were collected *a posteriori* and not *a priori* nor during the change of work environment lived by the workers. Even though I attempted to prevent from participants' nostalgia and memory biases (coped by interviewing them a bit more than a year after the move), the comparison between the previous work environment and the current work environment, and the effects the new work environment had in terms of organisational identity could have been improved by conducting a longitudinal research.

A third limit is about the choice of the interviewed persons in *ORES WaPi*. Since I considered the office as the place where administrative work takes place, I did not think *a priori* that technical agents and employees working all the time outside might be concerned by this change, and thus might be worth of interest in this research. However, as the results show, the new work environment is not without effect on technical agents' experience of the building, nor their perception of the organisation. Indeed, several employees underlined that technical agents felt sidelined by the introduction of the new work environment, and in particular of its rules. But these experiences were highlighted by employees with a technical background and not by technical agents themselves. Thus, the access to these workers' experiences was indirect and very limited. By thinking that these workers were not worth of interest in this research, I consider that I have myself made the same mistake than persons in charge of the DOMO project in *ORES WaPi*: thinking that, because they do not work in the building, employees working outside are not legitimate to have an interesting experience of the new work environment. This limit leads me to underline that the researcher's reflexivity is difficult to develop in the first step of the research, and that going beyond the assumptions of any organisational change and projects requires much vigilance.

3. Perspectives for future research

Stemming from this research, the contributions it brings, and the identified limits, I propose a few perspectives for future research.

First, this research encourages in conducting similar future research in companies with a different profile than *ORES WaPi*. The specificities of the results of this thesis, and what they say about the relationship between the work environment and the organisation's identity are closely tied to the case of *ORES WaPi* and the profiles of its workers. Therefore, conducting similar research in organisations subjected to other constraints (i.e. external pressures, etc.), with a different core business, and different workers' profiles might lead to other results enriching our understanding of what a work environment transformation tells about an organisation's identity. In line with this, future research should also take into consideration different spatial configurations, especially since the work environment is not uniform and that we might expect that the organisational space will continue being the locus of other trends. More than taking into account new forms of work environment, it might be worth considering the plurality of the workspaces an organisation provides to its workers, the different meanings they assign to these spaces, and how it affects workers' perception of the organisation. Moreover, since the question of the geographical position of *ORES WaPi* was particularly mentioned by workers and led to consider that organisational identity might be related to a local identity, it might be worth studying work environment transformations in other "peripheral" areas, such as mentioned by Wasserman and Frenkel (2011). Also, in order to clarify if there is such thing as "local organisational identities", the ideal would be to conduct an empirical research in a multi-sites organisation where several sites are subjected to a work environment transformation. This would allow comparing organisational identity discourses differences according to sites, and the potential role played by the "local" dimension.

A second perspective consists in pursuing research about the local dimension of identity. The results of this thesis are supportive for taking this aspect into consideration. As developed in the limits of this research, future research in organisations that are multi-located in a country could focus on the local specifics of participants' discourses, and how they use the "local" dimension to speak about their organisation's identity. Future research might also consider the local dimension of identity broadly taken, thus not only organisational identity.

Third, in line with one of the empirical contributions, this thesis incites identity researchers in studying identity as a global concept, and not in focusing too narrowly on one dimension of the identity concept. Indeed, being too centred on the "individual identity" or "organisational identity" might prevent researchers in accessing to interesting cues revealing other identity markers. In line with this support to conduct future research on identity, investigating the construct of "work identity", in particular accessing to individuals' discourses about their work identity in relation to contemporary changes (e.g. the work environment, digitisation, etc.), might contribute to bring light on this concept, and to actualise theories about work identity.

Finally, this research highlights a phenomenon I called "organisation identity mimicry". It might be worth digging deeper on the basis of this idea, in particular in investigating organisations which embrace "management fashion", whether they are about organisational space or not. Considering organisations which follow managerial trends, the official reasons of the adoption of such trends, and the perceptions of the persons who undergo these changes might improve the construct of "identity mimicry".

4. Acknowledging the critical thinking

At last, I cannot conclude this research without acknowledging the school of thought that has influenced this research since its beginning, and thus, recognising the critical thinking underlying it. Throughout my doctoral training, I was immersed in the critical management studies. Whether by presenting in doctoral workshops and conferences[6], attending Lund University summer school in critical management studies, or being part of a collective of researchers influenced by and promoting the critical theory, in many occasions I had the opportunity to confront my research and reflections with critical scholars, and the critical thinking in general. These affiliations have provided a nurturing and benevolent environment, conductive to the development – and now affirmation – of my own critical reflexions and posture. In the following lines, I explain to what extent this research reflects a critical posture.

As mentioned in the chapter 10, even though I propose a few managerial contributions related to the results of this research, this thesis never aimed to be *for* management and organisations. The main

[6] I am referring particularly to the 5th and 7th CMS doctoral workshops (respectively in Lyon and Grenoble business schools), and the 10th International Critical Management Studies Conference (Liverpool).

purpose of this research, beyond addressing a precise research question, was to produce knowledge *about* management and organisations, and thus, to improve their understanding. This first point is related to the non-performative intent which is a first feature of critical management studies (Alvesson, Bridgman, & Willmott, 2009; Fournier & Grey, 2000; Taskin & Willmott, 2008). As explained by Fournier and Grey, while non-critical management study follows a "principle of performativity which serves to subordinate knowledge and truth to the production of efficiency" (2000, p. 180), critical research is not governed by this race to performativity and efficiency. However, even though this thesis was not conducted *for* management, I hope that it can still achieve a certain critical performativity as encouraged by Spicer, Alvesson and Kärreman (2009). Indeed, beyond addressing a critique towards organisations and their adoption of new types of work environment, I hope that this research can also contribute to questioning managerial practices and discourses, and possibly lead to create social change in organisations having adopted these new non-territorialised offices, or considering to do so.

A second feature of critical research is about its commitment to denaturalise and challenge what seems "taken-for-granted or naturalized and frequently legitimized by reference to nature and necessity" (Taskin & Willmott, 2008, p. 32). This is particularly relevant in this research in which I have adopted a posture considering space as a social construct, and which enabled me to reveal unexpected consequences of an organisational dimension that might still be perceived as harmless and neutral. Moreover, the results of the present research also contribute to denaturalising the idea that the "new ways of working", and in particular the adoption of the activity-based workspace, is a vital need contemporary organisations cannot refuse to meet if they want to ensure their survival. Beyond revealing that the miracle expected from the adoption to this new type of work environment and work organisation did not occur, this research also highlighted unexpected and deleterious effects of the adopted work environment.

In line with the previous point, I consider that this research also reflects a critical posture through the pursued attempt to reveal power issues at stake in the investigated organisation. In particular, I think that the results have contributed to highlighting regulatory effects of an office reconfiguration (through the spatial aspects, but also mainly through discourses and practices). In particular, I have shown how this regulation, embodied and produced by the office spatial arrangement, the intentions it underlies, the spatial practices it enables and stops, and the interpretations it is subject to, occurred at the identity level: the workers' identity, notably (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). But in the same time, notably by showing practices of spatial re-appropriations, I have shown employees' resistance and emancipatory behaviours and discourses, directed towards the managerial project, and the threats it embodies.

Finally, I hope that this research reflects the final feature of critical research, being reflexivity (Alvesson et al., 2009; Fournier & Grey, 2000; Taskin & Willmott, 2008). As explained in the chapter 4 in which I clarify my ontological and epistemological posture, this research does not claim to be objective, neutral nor producing universally observable results. I believe that the inherent subjectivity of this research has been greatly influenced by the cultural, social and intellectual conditions under which I have worked on this thesis, as well as by the engagement and convictions I have put in this work, which resonate with Alvesson and Willmott's words on the purpose of critical theory: "The intent of [critical theory] is not to indulge in the Utopian project of eliminating hierarchy, removing specialist divisions of labour or even abolishing the separation of management and other forms of work. Rather, its aspiration is to foster the development of organizations in which communications (and productive potential) are progressively less distorted by socially oppressive, asymmetrical relations of power." (1996, p. 18).

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APPENDICES

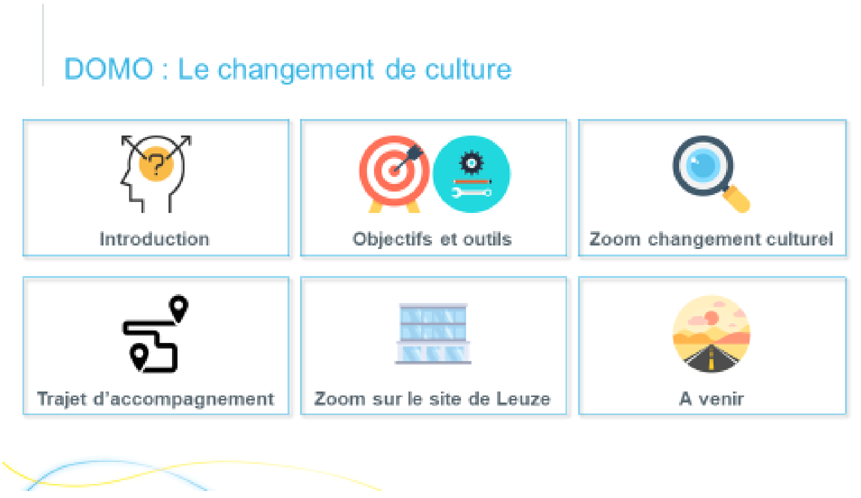
1. Appendix 1: Table of the conducted interviews

N°	Pseudonym	Date	Length
1	Adam	7 March 2017	95 minutes
2	Aurélie	7 March 2017	49 minutes
3	Anthony	7 March 2017	61 minutes
4	Charles	9 March 2017	57 minutes
5	Emma	9 March 2017	56 minutes
6	Gabrielle	9 March 2017	102 minutes
7	Édouard	9 March 2017	75 minutes
8	Natacha	13 March 2017	82 minutes
9	Sandy	13 March 2017	68 minutes
10	Marine	13 March 2017	84 minutes
11	Félix	13 March 2017	84 minutes
12	Isaac	14 March 2017	94 minutes
13	Loïc	14 March 2017	66 minutes
14	Chloé	14 March 2017	66 minutes
15	Laurianne	14 March 2017	79 minutes

16	Michaël	16 March 2017	102 minutes
17	Simon	16 March 2017	30 minutes
18	Victor	16 March 2017	62 minutes
19	Alex	16 March 2017	52 minutes
20	Céline	21 March 2017	78 minutes
21	Anna	21 March 2017	71 minutes
22	Antoine	21 March 2017	49 minutes
23	Christopher	21 March 2017	60 minutes
24	Daphnée	28 March 2017	107 minutes
25	Audrey	28 March 2017	75 minutes
26	Charlotte	28 March 2017	36 minutes
27	Gabriel	29 March 2017	65 minutes
28	Léa	29 March 2017	77 minutes
29	Ariane	29 March 2017	56 minutes
30	Victoria	29 March 2017	49 minutes
31	Justin	30 March 2017	80 minutes
32	Louis	30 March 2017	58 minutes
33	Camille	30 March 2017	71 minutes
34	Olivia	30 March 2017	81 minutes
35	Mathieu	11 April 2017	72 minutes
36	Sofia	11 April 2017	66 minutes
37	Philippe	11 April 2017	80 minutes
38	Nathan	11 April 2017	120 minutes
39	Thomas	13 April 2017	90 minutes
40	Vincent	13 April 2017	75 minutes
41	Alexandre	13 April 2017	101 minutes
42	Benjamin	13 April 2017	37 minutes
43	Guillaume	18 April 2017	73 minutes
44	Lucas	18 April 2017	60 minutes
45	Jérémy	18 April 2017	63 minutes
46	Lorraine	18 April 2017	48 minutes
47	Samuel	19 April 2017	102 minutes
48	Justine	19 April 2017	49 minutes
49	Camilla	19 April 2017	44 minutes
50	Marc	25 April 2017	93 minutes
51	Gérard	25 April 2017	78 minutes
52	Jeanne	25 April 2017	55 minutes
53	Noah	25 April 2017	56 minutes
54	Elizabeth	26 April 2017	38 minutes
55	Lise	26 April 2017	107 minutes
56	Clémence	26 April 2017	47 minutes
57	Raphaël	26 April 2017	74 minutes
58	Ninon	27 April 2017	87 minutes
59	Ludovic	27 April 2017	39 minutes
60	Maxime	27 April 2017	40 minutes
61	Paul	27 April 2017	83 minutes
62	Étienne	16 May 2017	90 minutes
63	Karl	16 May 2017	61 minutes
64	Arnaud	16 May 2017	87 minutes
65	Victoire	16 May 2017	54 minutes

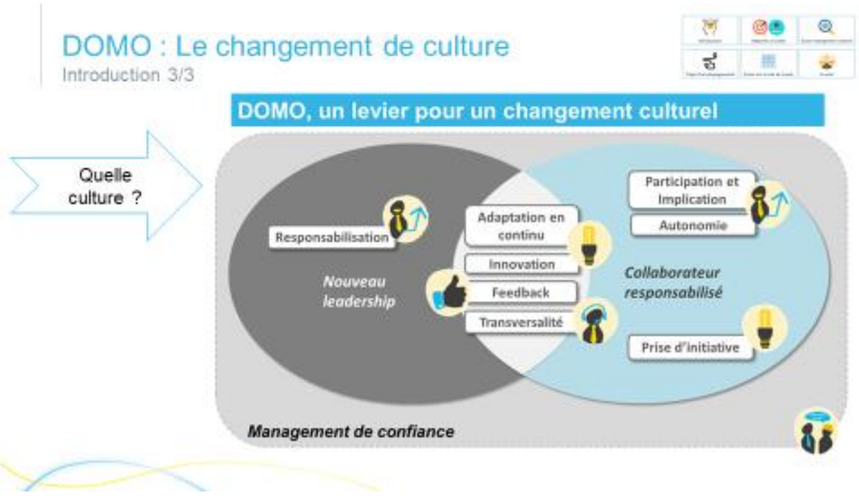
66	Agathe	17 May 2017	46 minutes
67	Bastien	17 May 2017	103 minutes
68	Gaspard	17 May 2017	76 minutes
69	Martin	17 May 2017	56 minutes
70	Robin	19 May 2017	107 minutes
71	Michel	19 May 2017	79 minutes
72	Marion	19 May 2017	48 minutes
73	Maud	19 May 2017	80 minutes
74	Jade	23 May 2017	97 minutes
75	Eliot	23 May 2017	93 minutes
76	Thibault	23 May 2017	94 minutes
77	Jean	23 May 2017	48 minutes
78	Mathias	9 June 2017	90 minutes
79	Manon	20 June 2017	47 minutes
80	Arthur	16 November 2017	76 minutes
81	Isabelle	16 November 2017	54 minutes

2. Appendix 2: Internal *PowerPoint* explaining the DOMO project to external companies


DOMO : Le changement de culture
Introduction
Objectifs et outils
Zoom changement culturel
Trajet d'accompagnement
Zoom sur le site de Leuze
A venir


DOMO : Le changement de culture
Introduction 1/3
Pourquoi ?
Soutenir l'évolution stratégique d'ORES
Améliorer l'image de marque d'ORES
Répondre aux défis de la société actuelle
Changements culturels DOMO
Bien-être au travail
Motivation au travail
Performance au travail

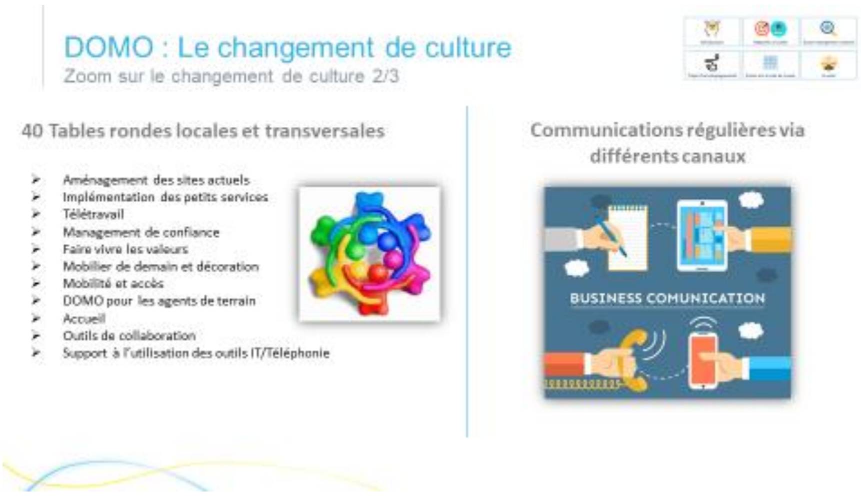

DOMO : Le changement de culture
Introduction 2/3
Quel changement ?
D'un environnement stable…
à un environnement en changement constant
Respect des procédures
Prise de risque limitée
Peu de remise en question
Agilité, flexibilité et capacité d'adaptation
Orientation résultats
Autonomie dans un cadre défini


DOMO : Le changement de culture
Introduction 3/3
DOMO, un levier pour un changement culturel
Quelle culture ?
Responsabilisation
Nouveau leadership
Adaptation en continu
Innovation
Feedback
Transversalité
Participation et Implication
Autonomie
Collaborateur responsabilisé
Prise d'initiative
Management de confiance

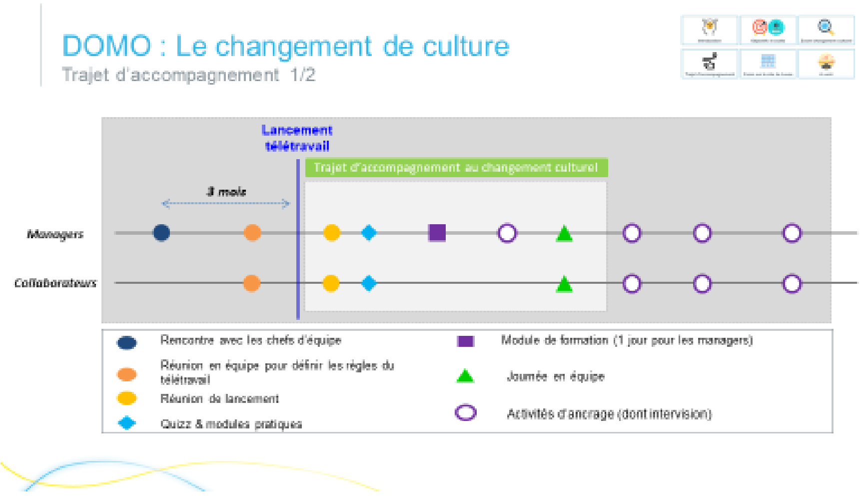

DOMO : Le changement de culture
Objectifs et outils 1/2
Nouveau leadership
Transversalité
Innovation et créativité
Attractivité
possible
Confiance Autonomie Développement de soi
Coopération autour d'un objectif commun à ORES
Ouverture d'esprit et solutions innovantes
Enthousiasme Entreprise où « il fait bon travailler »

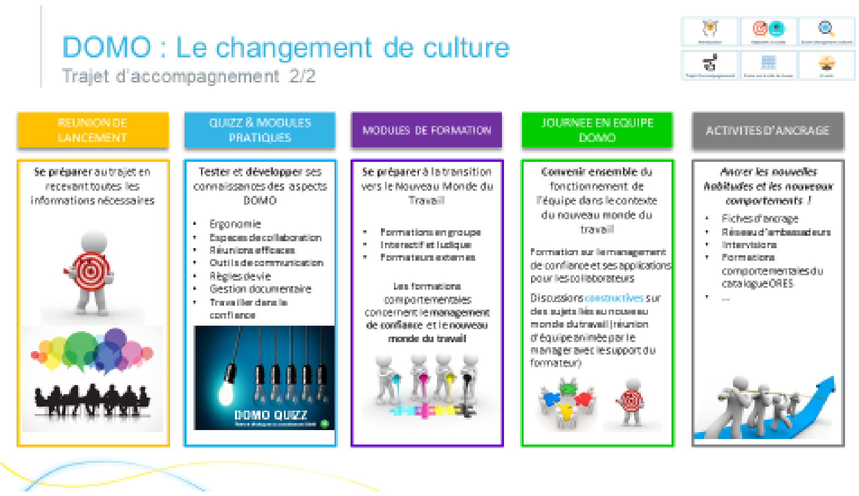

DOMO : Le changement de culture
Objectifs et outils 2/2
Flexibilité et bien-être au travail (DOMO VAL)
Réaménagement des bâtiments (DOMO BAT)
Gestion documentaire (DOMO DOC)
Outils technologiques (DOMO TIC)
- Mise en place du télétravail et du travail sur un autre site
- Mise en œuvre de petits services sur les sites
- Accompagnement du changement
- Bâtiment de Leuze – 2015
- Aménagement des sites
- Siège de Gosselies – 2019
- Meilleur classement/ archivage des documents Cleaning Days
- Moteur de recherche sur InfORES
- Réduction du papier → digitalisation des documents
- Mise à disposition de Lync
- Nouvelle téléphonie
- Espaces de collaboration
- Extension de la couverture WIFI
- Follow-me printing – 2018
DOMO


DOMO : Le changement de culture
Zoom sur le changement de culture 1/3
60 ambassadeurs DOMO représentant tous les services sur nos différents sites
Traduction des valeurs en comportements concrets
- Environ 200 comportements traduisant les 5 valeurs
- Format « chevalet », avec 2 ou 3 comportements par page
DOMO
Film DOMO


DOMO : Le changement de culture
Zoom sur le changement de culture 2/3
40 Tables rondes locales et transversales
Aménagement des sites actuels
Implémentation des petits services
Télétravail
Management de confiance
Faire vivre les valeurs
Mobilier de demain et décoration
Mobilité et accès
DOMO pour les agents de terrain
Accueil
Outils de collaboration
Support à l'utilisation des outils IT/Téléphonie
Communications régulières via différents canaux
BUSINESS COMUNICATION


DOMO : Le changement de culture
Zoom sur le changement de culture 3/3
Vers quelle culture ?
ORES
Sens des responsabilités
Professionnalisme
TOUS ENGAGÉS pour faciliter la vie de nos clients
Respect & Convivialité
Sens du service
Audace
Nos valeurs


DOMO : Le changement de culture
Trajet d'accompagnement 1/2
Lancement télétravail
Trajet d'accompagnement au changement culturel
3 mois
Managers
Collaborateurs
Rencontre avec les chefs d'équipe
Réunion en équipe pour définir les règles du télétravail
Réunion de lancement
Quizz & modules pratiques
Module de formation (1 jour pour les managers)
Journée en équipe
Activités d'ancrage (dont intervision)


DOMO : Le changement de culture
Trajet d'accompagnement 2/2
REUNION DE LANCEMENT
Se préparer au trajet en recevant toutes les informations nécessaires
QUIZZ & MODULES PRATIQUES
Tester et développer ses connaissances des aspects DOMO
Ergonomie
Espaces de collaboration
Réunions efficaces
Outils de communication
Règles de vie
Gestion documentaire
Travailler dans la confiance
DOMO QUIZZ
MODULES DE FORMATION
Se préparer à la transition vers le Nouveau Monde du Travail
Formations en groupe
Interactif et ludique
Formateurs externes
Les formations comportementales concernent le management de confiance et le nouveau monde du travail
JOURNEE EN EQUIPE DOMO
Convenir ensemble du fonctionnement de l'équipe dans le contexte du nouveau monde du travail
Formation sur le management de confiance et ses applications pour les collaborateurs
Discussions constructives sur des sujets liés au nouveau monde du travail (réunion d'équipe animée par le manager avec le support du formateur)
ACTIVITES D'ANCRAGE
Ancrer les nouvelles habitudes et les nouveaux comportements !
Fiches d'ancrage
Réseau d'ambassadeurs
Intervisions
Formations comportementales du catalogue ORES
…


DOMO : Le changement de culture
A venir
Réflexion sur les actions à mettre en place en 2018 pour poursuivre la culture en marche et ancrer les nouvelles habitudes de travail
Enquête de satisfaction
Lunch débat
Réseau de parrains
Formation piqûre de rappel
Réunions d'équipe accompagnées
…

3. Appendix 3: Original excerpts in French

3.1. Excerpts cited in the chapter 5

> *On est encore fort méconnus. Pour beaucoup de gens, c'est encore* Electrabel*, ils mélangent tout entre ce qui est fournisseurs et gestionnaires. [Simon]*

> *Ben comme je vous expliquais, j'ai connu* Electrabel *et il était tout seul sur le marché, il y avait les moyens, il y avait tout, tout se passait très bien. Aujourd'hui tout ça a été scindé donc* ORES *doit montrer pattes blanches par rapport à l'environnement extérieur… Oui il y a des changements… On sent bien qu'on est beaucoup plus contrôlés et qu'on doit beaucoup plus se justifier par rapport aux investissements, aux pannes ou quoi que ce soit… [Loïc]*

> *Du temps d'*Electrabel*, on se disait : « Mouais, nous c'est* Electrabel*, on interviendra quand on aura envie. » Cette époque-là, elle est révolue. On doit avoir une approche dynamique, de voir ce qu'on peut faire pour faire avancer les choses. On ne peut plus rester dans son fauteuil, attendre que ça arrive. Non, c'est trop tard. Si on le fait comme ça, si on a une vision comme ça, je pense que dans dix ans, y'a plus d'*ORES*. On doit être sur le devant de la scène, c'est quelque chose qu'il faut faire quoi. [Samuel]*

> *C'est pas uniquement concurrentiel, c'est technologique aussi. […] Au niveau de l'électricité, il y a toute une nouvelle technologie de piles de type* TESLA *où chacun pourra avoir demain sa pile qui pourra se recharger avec ses propres panneaux solaires donc quel est encore le besoin d'un réseau interconnecté ? Donc le réseau qui est là, on l'a, on*

va le maintenir avec encore des institutions, des hôpitaux, des homes et tout ça qui auront toujours besoin des réseaux existants. Maintenant, en termes de développement des nouveaux réseaux, il y a peut-être là un horizon qui est un petit peu plus gris que par le passé. [Mathieu]

*Avant les clients, on les appelait les "clients captifs" car ils n'avaient pas le choix… C'est encore le cas maintenant mais on ne parle plus de clients captifs. Mais un client d'*ORES *n'a pas le choix d'aller chercher quelqu'un d'autre donc je crois que l'ancienne mentalité c'était de se dire que, de toute façon, les clients n'avaient pas le choix il était chez nous, il n'y avait pas d'alternative. Je crois que maintenant, de plus en plus, on les considère comme s'ils pouvaient changer de gestionnaire de réseau donc… [Anthony]*

On est sous pression en permanence du fait que les clients sont de plus en plus exigeants, il y a aussi les réseaux sociaux qui font que, dès que quelqu'un est au courant, tout son Facebook est au courant. Et donc la clientèle devenant de plus en plus exigeante, ça nous laisse une pression qui n'existait pas il y a des années. On doit vraiment être innovants envers les clients pour les satisfaire alors qu'avant, on attendait qu'ils réagissent et on travaillait. On a vraiment inversé totalement le rôle, c'est maintenant nous qui devons être proactifs envers eux. [Jean]

Mais au final, même si on a un monopole naturel, je crois qu'on n'est pas à l'abri de changements politiques qui pourraient complètement changer le monde dans lequel on travaille. Et DOMO*, c'est une façon aussi d'appréhender ces changements et de montrer aux gens que la société elle évolue de manière moderne comme le réseau devra évoluer de manière moderne donc on compte sur eux pour s'adapter et participer au changement. [Olivia]*

À Tournai, on était bien situé parce que dès qu'il faisait beau, on allait aux Bastions. C'était quand même gai. On avait tout à proximité, pas mal de magasins à proximité. [Camilla]

<u>*Le bâtiment à Tournai, ça reflétait une autre mentalité ?*</u>
Oui, un peu plus rigide, plus vieux, plus froid. [Simon]

C'était aussi le fait aussi de l'environnement même, c'était un vieux bâtiment qui avait plus de 30 ans donc c'était un peu moins beau. [Emma]

Quand on voyait le bâtiment à Tournai, c'était un blockhaus avec des cloisons, des petits bureaux, des grands bureaux. Il y a des jours, à part les huit personnes de notre service, on ne voyait personne d'autre sauf si on allait chercher un café ou quelque chose. Mais il y avait des collègues, je ne connaissais même pas leur nom à Tournai. [Gabriel]

C'est vrai qu'à Tournai, on était cloisonné donc voilà il y avait des étages différents déjà. Et puis c'était tous des bureaux cloisonnés donc les services entre eux, c'était bien défini, donc premier étage, tel bâtiment, telle aile c'était tel service, etc. [Natacha]

En fait on avait vraiment un grand plateau et j'étais avec ma collègue au milieu donc au milieu de toutes les conseillères clientèles. Il y avait un couloir mais ouvert je dirais, et les maîtrises étaient juste en face porte ouverte donc on savait aussi aller les voir quand il fallait. Et le cadre était dans un bureau individuel. Sa porte était ouverte et fermée mais c'était vitré donc… [Lorraine]

En fait, au plus on montait dans les étages, au plus on se rapprochait du soleil, donc c'était comme un repère. [Adam]

> *À Tournai, on était vraiment un service à part donc, comme je disais tout à l'heure, on est huit administratifs qui font partie uniquement du département clientèle dans une grosse masse du département infrastructure. Donc à ce moment-là, on était vraiment dans un local près de la sortie, un peu isolé du monde. Il y avait des bureaux vides entre nos bureaux, on était vraiment bien écartés. [Gabriel]*

> *Moi je me souviens, il y a 10 ou 15 ans, je m'occupais des solutions techniques, il y avait un type qui s'occupait du gaz, l'autre de l'électricité et chacun travaillait malgré tout… il n'y avait pas que des cloisons au niveau des bureaux, il y avait aussi des cloisons au niveau du travail. [Michaël]*

> *À l'époque à Tournai, le réfectoire était très froid, très désagréable enfin je vais dire il était pas beau, et en plus on pouvait manger à notre bureau donc c'est ce que je faisais et c'est ce que tout le monde faisait, on mangeait tous devant notre PC, on squattait tous le PC, on squattait tous internet, donc on mangeait tous tout seul, donc c'était assez triste. [Ariane]*

> *Qu'avant, j'arrivais, je montais dans mon bureau, je disais bonjour à mes collègues, ça se limitait à ça, on croisait des gens après dans les couloirs, on se disait bonjour mais chacun était chez soi et on se croisait dans les couloirs. Mais voilà, sur une journée, je voyais pas tout le monde. [Charles]*

> *Déjà à Tournai, on était tous chacun dans nos bureaux et personne ne bougeait vraiment. D'ailleurs le midi, on avait un réfectoire mais il y avait quoi, 3-4 personnes qui se rendaient au réfectoire mais c'était tout. On allait plus faire un tour aux Bastions le midi avec les mêmes personnes. Donc on n'allait pas vraiment vers les autres. Et si on avait une question à poser pour un client par exemple, on envoyait un e-mail ou on téléphonait mais on n'allait pas forcément voir. [Lorraine]*

> *Et la communication c'était facile car on était à trois dans le même bureau, on avait quelque chose à dire sur un chantier ou sur...un avancement ou...Luc qui était à-côté et il se retournait, la communication passait vite et très bien. [Gérard]*

> *Avant une porte était poussée, il fallait oser la pousser et se dire "Je rentre un peu dans la jungle de ce service-là" [Loïc]*

> *Y'avait quelqu'un qui promenait une charrette, qui apportait le courrier. Vous vous rendez compte ? Il apportait le courrier le lendemain si tout allait bien, s'il n'était pas là, bah c'était le lendemain et ainsi de suite. Conclusion on recevait les dossiers trois / quatre jours plus tard. [Noah]*

> *J'étais vraiment très étonnée en arrivant dans cette boîte de voir que, dans certains domaines, il y a vraiment des castes entre les cadres, les barémisés, on ne se côtoie pas, on donne les ordres et ils exécutent. [Olivia]*

> *Si je peux regarder historiquement, on avait une direction très hiérarchisée. Je parle quand j'ai commencé à travailler. Le directeur c'était « Monsieur le directeur ». Il ne me serait jamais venu de l'appeler Pierre. [Gaspard]*

> *Avant, notre chef il voyait vraiment ce qu'on faisait. Il entendait les conversations téléphoniques etc. Donc, au moment des pactes, s'il voyait mon cadre, il savait dire : « Bah non, j'ai vu qu'il a fait ça, il a fait ça, il est tout le temps occupé à travailler même si ses chiffres sont moins importants que les équivalents, il fait d'autres choses à côté ». [Félix]*

3.2. Excerpts cited in the chapter 6

> *Le programme* DOMO *consiste à implémenter chez* ORES *ce que l'on nomme le nouveau monde du travail, inspiré du concept du « New World of Work », qui s'exprime dans plusieurs dimensions : télétravail et horaires adaptés, communication unifiée, adaptation des équipements et des espaces de travail pour plus d'échange, de convivialité, de flexibilité, de mobilité, … Via la mise en œuvre de cette nouvelle façon de travailler, le programme* DOMO *insuffle une nouvelle culture d'entreprise faite de collaboration, d'innovation, d'agilité et de bien-être au travail. Celle-ci repose sur un management de confiance, orienté résultats, donnant de l'autonomie et visant la responsabilisation de tous, managers et collaborateurs. [Plan stratégique 2015-2020. État d'avancement en décembre 2016, p. 23]*

> *L'administrateur délégué, [X], qui est arrivé en 2009 ou 2010, a vraiment voulu changer cet état d'esprit qui est « On attend le client ». Il a tout à fait inversé la formule, il s'est dit « on va aller chercher le client », « on va être vraiment connus ». Parce qu'il posait la question à n'importe qui de savoir c'est qui* ORES*, tout le monde disait « Hein ? ». Et donc il a vraiment voulu inverser ça et dire qu'on ait de la notoriété. Et en faisant ça, il s'est dit on ne peut pas faire ça sans changer les valeurs de la société, sans changer l'état d'esprit des agents. [Jean]*

> *Dans le business case, je voulais vraiment séparer. Globalement, mon business case était négatif donc j'avais plus de coûts que de bénéfices tangibles en euros parce que le bénéfice, c'était un changement de culture que je ne sais pas traduire en euros. Mais bon, la façon dont je le présentais, c'est de dire « Voilà, si on augmente la productivité de plus de 0,5 %, on est gagnant ». Est-ce qu'on va l'augmenter de 0,5 %, de 2 %, 10 % ? C'est pas moi qui vais le dire. Il y a des études qui disent qu'on augmente de 10 %. Moi je dis : « On est gagnant à partir de 0,5 % ». Je parle de mémoire. […]*
>
> ***Est-ce que ce projet Domo, ça vise surtout un but de productivité ?***
>
> *On est une entreprise privée. Donc derrière tout ce qu'on fait, le but quelque part c'est d'améliorer le service au client et d'être plus productif. Et dans une société classique, les deux sont intimement liés puisque si je suis plus productif, je vais avoir un prix qui est plus attractif pour mes clients. Nous, le côté prix est un petit peu dissocié puisque le client n'a pas le choix et on a un régulateur qui est là pour nous presser comme un citron. Donc les deux éléments sont là mais ne sont pas liés de la même façon que dans une autre entreprise. L'entreprise qui dit qu'elle ne fait pas ça pour être plus productive, elle ment. Toute entreprise cherche à être plus productive. [Mathias]*

> *[Le CEO], il s'en fout des bâtiments, il s'en fout qu'on ait une téléphonie intégrée ou pas intégrée, lui il veut effectivement des gens qui soient autonomes, qui prennent des initiatives, qu'on fasse confiance. Et si c'était possible dans des petits bureaux fermés, on le ferait dans des petits bureaux fermés mais puisqu'on a dit que cette collaboration était plus efficace dans un bâtiment ouvert où les gens peuvent bouger et où on s'installe où on est le mieux et donc certains jours dans un open-space et certain jour dans un bureau fermé, c'est un moyen pour lui. La finalité c'est le changement de culture. [Mathias]*

> *[Notre société] c'est une société qui est sur deux piliers. L'un, c'est tout ce qui est change management et vraiment tout ce qui est organisationnel et de l'autre côté c'est tout ce qui est design et architecture car on est convaincus que le comportement des gens peut être soutenu par l'aménagement et le style de lieu dans lequel une société se trouve. Donc notre société crée des façons de travailler, donc vraiment tout ce qui est mental et un lieu de travail qui correspond à la stratégie, et à la valeur de la société.*
>
> *Donc on fait vraiment en sorte que la culture et les valeurs de la société soient ressenties par le bâtiment et le design dans lequel on rentre. Donc ça, pour nous c'est vraiment très important. Quand on rentre dans une société… qu'on ressente qui est la société et qu'on n'a pas besoin d'afficher des valeurs mais que ça soit ressenti. [Manon]*

> *Pour moi, je la voyais vraiment comme une architecte d'intérieur. Et après bon, quand on va voir son site, on se rend compte que ce n'est pas vraiment ça en fait. Elle aussi à la base était architecte d'intérieur et puis elle a évolué. Elle fait passer de nouvelles façons de travailler. C'est ça son but. [Sandy]*

> *On nous a expliqué un peu le changement qui allait avoir lieu. En fait, ils ont plutôt joué sur le déménagement. On a parlé du bâtiment, parlé du zéro papier parce qu'il fallait informatiser, etc. Mais on n'a pas vraiment parlé du*

> *changement d'entreprise. En fait, ils ont eu peur de nous annoncer. La dame qui est venue pour aider au changement de culture d'entreprise, elle était aussi architecte d'intérieur. Et au lieu de nous dire ses deux fonctions, ils nous ont juste dit qu'elle était architecte d'intérieur et qu'elle était là pour le bâtiment, choisir le mobilier, etc. Et le jour où on a découvert qu'elle était là pour changer la culture de la société, il y en a certains qui se sont demandés pourquoi ils nous avaient menti, où était le problème, et ce qu'il y avait derrière. [Jeanne]*

> *Il y a déjà l'architecte d'intérieur qui s'était présentée d'abord en tant qu'architecte d'intérieur mais après, en grattant un peu et en discutant un avec elle, on s'est rendu compte qu'elle voulait faire émerger une nouvelle façon de travailler. Et c'était [X], je ne sais pas si vous en avez entendu parler. Et donc c'était vraiment une grosse chose à faire passer parce que bon, on dit toujours que nous sommes un peu les anciens belges, on avait dit pendant un moment qu'on était vraiment les anciens belges, vous voyez un petit peu dans Astérix et Obélix, les gaulois sont un peu réfractaires. On nous a dit qu'on était un peu réfractaires. [Sandy]*

> *Convaincus que l'architecture est un support à l'évolution de la culture de l'entreprise, nous procédons à des aménagements dans nos sites existants et construisons de nouveaux bâtiments plus ouverts, plus propices à la collaboration, en proposant une variété d'environnements partagés, adaptés à la tâche à réaliser, incitant à la créativité dans une plus grande convivialité. [Plan stratégique 2015-2020, p. 32]*

> *[Le CEO] était en place depuis un mois qu'on est venu avec le consultant faire la présentation de ce Nouveau Monde du travail et il a vraiment tilté dessus, il a dit « Ça on doit le faire ». Et là-dessus, on avait déjà des plans pour que Gosselies qui étaient faits avec des poulaillers et donc des bureaux comme ici. Et donc on a revu les architectes, on était dans la phase de choix de l'architecte donc on avait encore quatre qui étaient en course, on leur a fait complètement revoir leur plan en disant « Voilà ce qu'on veut ». [Mathias]*

> *Et Gosselies prenant du retard parce qu'on avait des problèmes de permis, Leuze est passé avant. [Mathias]*

> *Enfin je n'ai droit qu'à un jour puisque c'est deux jours sur cinq. On doit être 3 jours par semaine au bureau. [Ariane]*

> *Comme je vous disais, lorsqu'après les heures déjà on effectue le service de garde pour assurer une continuité du réseau ben la journée… Et comme on doit voir les gars, je les vois mal venir à la maison chercher du matériel ou des plans, ce n'est pas possible… Donc à l'heure où je vous parle, nous ce n'est pas possible [Loïc]*

> *Nous on est non-éligibles. Alors, ça peut être entendu sans aucun problème, d'un commun accord avec ma hiérarchie […], d'un commun accord avec mes agents, s'ils désirent un jour faire du télétravail, aucun problème. Un petit coup de fil, tu me dis que tu fais du télétravail, pas de problème. Ou s'ils veulent le planifier, ils me disent : « Ecoute, mercredi prochain je fais du télétravail, je dois récupérer, j'ai beaucoup de boulot en retard. » Bah, ok. Mais on le fait en interne. [Gaspard]*

> *Je pense que c'est pour avoir une meilleure répartition vie famille et travail mais c'est clair que c'est aussi pour avoir plus de performance des travailleurs. C'est pas seulement pour nous faire plaisir. Le fait de pouvoir télétravailler et de pouvoir aller sur un autre site, c'est sûr que ça nous apporte un certain confort mais à côté de ça il faut aussi qu'on soit plus performant pour continuer à faire ce type de travail. [Agathe]*

> *Pour l'instant on n'en a pas encore vraiment discuté avec notre chef, mais c'est vrai qu'on aimerait bien pouvoir bénéficier du télétravail. [Laurianne]*

> *On s'est éloigné un petit peu de la clientèle. On s'est isolé quand même un petit peu en venant ici à Leuze. Quand on était à la rue de la Lys, on était quand même accessible pour la clientèle. Mais ici je ne sais pas comment font les clients. Tout se gère maintenant par ordinateur, même pour la clientèle. [Jérémy]*

> *Et on nous a amené ici dans une toundra désertique en plein vent où il n'y a aucune vie possible ni quoi que ce soit. J'ai l'impression qu'on est en prison dans un bâtiment où il est impossible d'ouvrir, d'aérer ou de ventiler. Dès qu'on sort, on est coupé en deux par le vent. Avec en plus 20 minutes de route par rapport à avant. [Raphaël]*

> *Le déménagement je pense que c'était pour plus nous, comme on nous disait, recentraliser par rapport aux réseaux qui étaient existant. Bon le réseau va quand même jusque Enghien donc Tournai était quand même fort décentré par rapport à l'ensemble de la zone. [Audrey]*

> *Ici on est vraiment au milieu de nulle part. Donc ça c'est un petit point… mais bon, je suppose qu'on a choisi la pour être opérationnel, ce qui est logique. […] Plus au milieu de la région, puis pour les agents c'est beaucoup plus facile. Il y a beaucoup de routes principales ici aux alentours. [Simon]*

> *Il fallait que les gens soient conscients que l'emplacement de travail d'aujourd'hui peut être celui de mon collègue demain, il peut même l'être dans deux heures. Ben voilà il faut un certain respect de ne pas laisser son gobelet de café. Ça paraît logique mais il a fallu quand même instaurer des règles de vie. Même l'intonation de la voix. Je ne vais pas commencer à parler très fort avec un client au téléphone parce que j'ai mon collègue à côté qui est en train de bosser. Ne pas déranger un collègue qui est dans une bulle parce que s'il est dans une bulle… Voilà il a fallu instaurer le fait que le collègue qui est dans une bulle travaille et qu'on ne peut pas le déranger. [Natacha]*

> *Ces fameuses règles de vie pour moi, c'est déjà du bon sens à la base. [Simon]*

> *Au niveau de la charte, il y a quand même eu un relatif consensus parce que cette charte c'est quand même beaucoup de bon sens. Mais c'est encore mieux quand c'est écrit donc c'est pour ça qu'on l'a écrit. Et ça rassure les gens. [Mathias]*

> *Face à un monde de l'énergie qui change de plus en plus vite, ORES a choisi de s'adapter pour non seulement assurer sa pérennité, sa légitimité et* ses *responsabilités en tant que gestionnaire de réseaux de distribution et entreprise de services d'utilité publique, mais aussi pour répondre aux attentes légitimement placées en elle par l'ensemble de ses parties prenantes. Notre détermination est claire : nous voulons leur faciliter l'énergie, leur faciliter la vie. [Plan stratégique 2015-2020, p. 4]*

> *En plus on est dans le* DOMO *donc quelque part c'est ce qui est actuel. Donc ça va faire d'*ORES *une société qui parait plus jeune. Vous voyez ? On a dit que c'était un dinosaure mais c'est un dinosaure qui se rafraichit puisqu'il doit évoluer s'il veut continuer à vivre. Donc cette nouvelle méthode de travail, ils essaient de se rajeunir… [Sandy]*

> *Il faut pouvoir s'adapter, il faut pouvoir évoluer, il faut pouvoir proposer d'autres choses. Et pour ça, il faut une société qui soit justement souple et qui puisse évoluer en peu de temps et pas dire « On fera le projet dans 10 ans ». Avant, les projets c'était dans 10 ans. […] Il faut aller rapidement sinon on va se faire bouffer. [Paul]*

> *On doit vraiment avoir une attitude beaucoup plus ouverte, beaucoup plus prête au changement si on ne veut pas demain être juste des poseurs de câbles et de raccordement, si on veut vraiment jouer un rôle actif dans le rôle de la distribution. Donc ça demande vraiment un changement d'état d'esprit […]. Demain on doit faire appel à du personnel qui est beaucoup plus ouvert, qui a de l'autonomie, qui peut prendre ses responsabilités et qui, face à un client qui ne demande pas exactement ce que nous on a prévu dans nos procédures, puisse prendre à son niveau la décision adéquate pour satisfaire le client. Et donc ça demande vraiment un changement complet de culture où, dans nos valeurs, je ne sais plus es valeurs qu'on avait il y a 15 ans, il y avait le professionnalisme, peut-être bien le sens du service comme aujourd'hui, et aujourd'hui, on a ajouté des valeurs comme la convivialité, l'audace [Mathias]*

Je pense qu'il faut se rendre compte qu'on ne peut pas tout avoir, le beurre et l'argent du beurre. À un moment donné, il faut bien comprendre qu'il faut aussi, si on veut pouvoir garder son emploi, pouvoir lâcher quelque chose. [Lise]

[Les gens qui se plaignent, j'ai envie de leur dire :] « Mais arrête de te plaindre à un moment donné, sois contente d'avoir du boulot ». Mais voilà quoi, il y a toujours des gens, peu importe ce qu'on propose… Alors que moi je suis contente de voir qu'on évolue, peut-être parce qu'il faut et je préfère qu'on fasse ça tout de suite que quand c'est trop tard. […] Mais on sait qu'on a intérêt de séduire les gens, de séduire les communes, de faire du bon boulot sinon ils vont peut-être partir. Si un jour la commune de Tournai - qui représente quand même beaucoup de clients - se barre et va chez quelqu'un d'autre, si on commence à perdre des clients comme ça, ça risque de poser un problème. Donc on est quand même obligé de faire un peu une opération séduction et on est obligé de tout mettre en œuvre. Moi j'en suis contente et je n'arrive pas à comprendre comment certains ne comprennent pas qu'on est obligé de faire tout ça. Ils pensent toujours que le client ne peut pas partir ailleurs mais il se trouve qu'à partir de 2020, il pourra. Donc voilà, il faut qu'on soit performant, il faut que le client soit content, il le faut, il n'y a rien à faire. [Jeanne]

Je pense qu'ils ont voulu changer la mentalité des collaborateurs en leur construisant un bureau ouvert, assez urbain. Encore une fois, on n'a pas la mentalité… La personne de Bruxelles qui va venir ici, elle va peut-être plus se fondre parce que c'est des méthodes de travail qu'en capitale, ils ont déjà ça depuis longtemps je pense. C'est pas nouveau pour eux ça. Mais ici, faut pas oublier qu'on est loin de tout.

C'est l'idée de village dont vous parliez ?

C'est l'idée de village. C'est ni plus ni moins qu'un très grand village. Ath c'est la même chose. Pour moi, c'est trop urbain. Je pense pas que les gens ont été près à travailler dans un bâtiment comme ici. [Adam]

Au début on avait dit « Oui on ne fait plus la bise ». La région Wallonie Picarde, c'est une région très familiale. Tout le monde dans la boîte se fait la bise. C'est un principe qui est chez nous. C'est vrai maintenant que les gens de l'extérieur, les travailleurs d'autres sites qui viennent chez nous n'ont pas les mêmes principes peut-être chez eux. C'est quelques fois pas évident. Nous on n'allait certainement pas se laisser dicter la façon dont on dit « Bonjour » à son collègue le matin. On nous dit « Voilà vous vous faites plus la bise, vous vous donnez la main », pour nous c'était un non-sens. [Aurélie]

Enfin, moi je pense que les règles de vie, y avait un groupe règle de vie. On avait essayé des nouvelles méthodes de travail. Par exemple, dire bonjour. Est-ce qu'on dit bonjour à tout le monde ? Ce sont d'autres façons. Parce que, par exemple, nous à Tournai, on a dit « Tout le monde fait la bise à tout le monde ». Et encore ici maintenant généralement on se fait la bise quand on se voit. A part quand on mange sauf si on ne dérange pas les gens. Ce sont des petites choses qui sont apparues. Et si vous allez à Bruxelles par exemple, vous ne faites pas la bise aux autres personnes. Ici on était vraiment… C'était notre façon d'être. [Sandy]

Dans le fin fond de la Wallonie, on est peut-être moins avant-gardistes qu'en Norvège. Plus on va dans le nord de l'Europe, plus on est pionniers dans ce genre de choses. Plus on va vers le Sud, plus on est hiérarchique. En Italie, quand le boss n'a pas son bureau, c'est inimaginable. On voit les mouvements des sociétés qui changent, aussi géographiquement. A Paris, il y a beaucoup plus de hiérarchie qu'à Bruxelles aussi par exemple.

[…]

En Belgique, on voit que les Flamands sont plus en avant que les Wallons. C'est une question culturelle. Encore une fois, il n'y a pas de bons et mauvais à cela, mais est-ce qu'ORES dans l'âme est une société qui déjà est très internationale, qui voyage tout le temps... ? Non. C'est un autre type de personnes aussi. [Manon]

[Déjà à Tournai pour m'habituer], j'avais retiré les cadres des enfants, j'avais mis en fond d'écran, déjà quelques petites habitudes qui ont fait que, quand on est arrivé ici, finalement c'est pas plus mal de ne pas stocker des papiers dans le bureau encore et encore. [Lorraine]

Avant, le calepin était là. Et les gens arrivaient au matin, le calepin était toujours là. Maintenant, on le prend, on le met dans l'armoire, on ferme l'armoire : « Ah c'est beau ! ». Alors avant de quitter on peut faire une photo et dire « Oh quel beau bureau ». Ça, ça fait un peu bureau IKEA *quoi. Dans une cuisine, vous avez la photo, la cuisine est toujours beau. Y'a la table, y'a même un vase avec une fleur. Enfin moi, quand ma femme fait à manger, y'a pas de fleur dans la cuisine. Y'a un pot, de la farine, du lait. Une cuisine, ça vit. Non mais sérieux : quand vous faites... Une cuisine... Ici, c'est un peu* IKEA *quoi.*

Vous avez l'impression qu'ils essaient de cacher que quelque chose se passe?

Non, mais on doit partir et il faut que tout soit nickel. Il ne doit plus rien avoir sur les bureaux car demain, y'en a peut-être un qui va venir. D'accord et alors ? Je comprends parce qu'il y en a... Il faut un petit peu... Mais ici, c'est aseptisé quoi.

Et ça vous dérange ce côté aseptisé ?

Bah ça ne fait pas réel quoi. Ça ne fait pas vivant. [Etienne]

DOMO *c'est peut-être adapté pour des assurances, mais bon pas pour le boulot qu'on fait ici. Parce que chacun a un travail différent, donc t'as besoin d'une surface de travail différente. Quand tu vois la haute tension, ils ont une salle de manœuvre. Peut-être pour les filles qui font du PTRA, là un bureau comme ça c'est suffisant, elles n'ouvrent pas de plan, elles répondent au téléphone. Pour du purement administratif, là oui. [Thomas]*

Le projet DOMO*, si vous faites ça dans une banque, ou pour des assurances qu'avec des gens de bureau, sans être méchant, ce n'est pas la même chose que dans une société avec des gens de bureau, des gens de terrain. C'est une pensée différente. Je pense qu'on a voulu copier ça avec des sociétés où ce ne sont que des gens de bureau. Donc je pense que la philosophie, elle aurait dû être creusée un peu plus de ce point de vue-là. [Etienne]*

Bah disons que la plupart du temps, quand on parle du nouveau monde du travail, etc., on se représente Google *ou le monde bancaire. Ici, ce sont des techniciens, on travaille avec des grands plans, bah oui on a toujours besoin d'avoir de la place, d'avoir du papier, d'avoir plein de choses et c'est vrai que c'est pas toujours évident de vivre ça au quotidien. [Aurélie]*

Nous, on doit gérer l'administratif et le technique. Là peut-être qu'on a été un peu trop loin dans la « Domotisation » du bâtiment ou la « Domotisation » de Leuze en tout cas.

Comment ça trop loin ?

Quand on gère uniquement de l'administratif, ce n'est pas très compliqué. Les gens font à peu près tous le même métier, derrière un PC. Mais on a quand même la moitié de nos agents qui sont des agents techniques externes. Quand tu regardes le bâtiment, qu'est-ce qu'il y a pour nos agents techniques externes ? Qu'est-ce qu'on a pensé pour eux ? Est-ce qu'on les a impliqués dans le projet ? Pas vraiment. Ils sont externes. Donc on a peut-être été un peu trop loin en faisant un copié-collé de ce qui existait dans une équipe purement administrative. Si on prend une banque par exemple, ce n'est que de l'administration. Nous, on gère aussi du technique. Rien n'a été prévu pour afficher un plan, car ce sont des choses qui sont venues après. [Gaspard]

C'est tout fait compréhensible qu'il y ait des gens qui apprécient et pour qui c'est mieux. Chacun son métier. Le DOMO*, ça a été uniformisé tout le monde l'a même chose mais comme on a des métiers différents, ils auraient dû faire différemment et adapter au métier. Pour nous, on ne retrouve pas notre place. [Thomas]*

Ici c'est vrai bon je suis au 1er étage aussi mais le fait de replier, puis je passe devant tous mes collègues puis je mets mes affaires dans mon locker, je descends les escaliers et tous ceux du bas, malgré tout, lèvent la tête et regardent qui part… Donc il y a certainement un peu plus de surveillance, c'est peut-être un grand mot mais on fait plus attention à ce que les autres font ça oui… Et ça ce n'est pas toujours gai non plus…
[Chloé]

Maintenant d'un point de vue, pour tout ce qui est responsables, je dirais qu'on se sent beaucoup plus surveillé qu'avant parce que bon je vais dire qu'il y a quand même certains points stratégiques dans le bâtiment comme la

> *machine à café, le réfectoire qui sont à la vue de tout, il y a des endroits bien stratégique je vais dire, on va dire ça comme ça pour voir ce que les gens font, maintenant volontaire ou pas ça c'est à chacun d'en décider mais… [Audrey]*

> *Donc tout le monde se contrôle indirectement. D'ailleurs, on a déjà remarqué que […] les cadres, ils sont toujours aux mêmes endroits. C'est toujours les mêmes places qui sont occupées. Et c'est vrai que, quand tu es assis à ces places, tu vois tout ce qui se passe dans le bâtiment. C'est des points de surveillance. [Thibault]*

> *Moi je pense qu'on n'a pas le temps d'épier les gens si on travaille vraiment. Donc même les managers qui passent leur temps à épier, je crois qu'ils n'ont rien à faire dans cette boîte et dans cette nouvelle culture d'entreprise. Il faut faire confiance à ses équipes. [Olivia]*

> *Souvent, malgré tout, je me promène. Donc je regarde un peu discrètement sans aller voir pour voir un petit peu si ça tourne. [Paul]*

> *Je suis peut-être assise le plus souvent possible du côté du groupe de filles parce que forcément on doit avoir un œil sur elles et je ne peux pas dire que je vais parcourir 10 km tous les jours à faire tout le bâtiment pour savoir où elles sont [Léa]*

> *On n'a même pas la possibilité par exemple de manger son sandwich sur sa table. On ne peut pas pour favoriser la convivialité. Au niveau de la restriction des libertés, franchement… je parlais du goulag tout à l'heure, c'est un terme choisi. Le goulag dans la toundra. C'est un petit peu stalinien comme mode de fonctionnement. [Raphaël]*

> *On t'a déjà imposé l'open-space donc c'est une autre façon de travailler donc c'est une autre culture. Puis on te demande de travailler avec le management de confiance. C'est des impositions qui sont faites. [Thibault]*

> *On avait encore quand même des armoires avec des plans, avec des dossiers sur les cabines, des tas de choses donc l'aspect technique. Les armoires exploitations sont là-bas, celle du STBE là-bas, celles de la construction là-bas, celles du gaz là-bas. Sans se concerter, les agents STBE ont été se mettre là-bas, près de leurs documents. Donc géographiquement, ça s'est un peu figé. C'est le premier aspect. Le deuxième aspect, c'est la salle des manœuvres. Comme on gère les manœuvres, on a besoin d'avoir accès et d'entendre le téléphone qui sonne de la salle des manœuvres... […] Donc on est toujours cantonnés à cause de la salle des manœuvres et des documents. [Gaspard]*
> *Ça c'est embêtant, parce qu'à un moment donné, il y avait encore toute une série d'archives qu'il fallait installer et donc les armoires... Forcément, si tu devais déterminer les endroits des armoires, elles allaient devoir être déterminées à un endroit. Donc forcément, si tu détermines l'endroit des armoires, si mon armoire est ici, je ne vais aller me mettre au bout de l'autre bâtiment. [L'architecte/consultante] ne voulait pas déterminer l'endroit des armoires car ça allait déterminer l'endroit des places. On demandait aux gens : « Est-ce que tu vas te plaire dans le bâtiment ? » « Ben oui. » « Et donc, où est-ce que tu vas t'installer ? », « Bah je ne sais pas où on va mettre mon armoire. ». [Samuel]*

> *C'est-à-dire qu'il y a plusieurs ordinateurs fixes et c'est vrai que je pourrais prendre la place de mon collègue le matin si je le voulais. Ce qu'on ne fait pas parce que bon quand on a un profil sur un ordinateur on se dit que c'est beaucoup mieux de le garder. Je me mets toujours au même endroit mais je pourrais peut-être me mettre à la place juste à côté parce qu'il y a plusieurs ordinateurs fixes mais bon on n'a pas beaucoup le choix du changement. [Sandy]*

> *À savoir que mon poste est un peu à part des métiers ici en* ORES*. C'est que nous avons des lignes directes, pompiers, bourgmestres, lignes urgentes. Et donc ces lignes sont fixes. Et nous, préposées planning, on a été un peu à l'écart du projet parce que justement, on n'a pas le choix d'avoir une place fixe dans le bâtiment à Leuze. Donc nous*

sommes les seuls qui restent toujours à la même place dans le bâtiment. On n'a pas la possibilité de se déplacer ou d'aller s'isoler dans une bulle pour travailler. [Natacha]

En général vous travaillez du coup plutôt dans le même coin. Qu'est ce qui fait que vous êtes amenée à travailler dans ce coin-là ?
Parce que les gens avec qui je m'entends bien sont là, donc voilà, j'aime bien être avec eux. [Charlotte]

Oui, ça aussi c'est vrai que je ne change pas beaucoup beaucoup de place parce que c'est vrai que je préfère me regrouper avec les personnes que j'apprécie plus. [Audrey]

Non je suis restée à la même place, avec les personnes du BOT en fait parce que les relations sociales... [Anna]

Maintenant, après quelques jours on se met forcément avec les personnes avec qui on a des affinités, on se regroupe et même si on peut changer de place tous les jours, au final on se remet souvent à la même place avec les mêmes personnes. [Agathe]

Disons qu'on a fait exprès de... Disons que le principe c'était de se mettre n'importe où alors que nos chefs, enfin, ils ne disaient pas officiellement mais ils auraient voulu que toute l'équipe soit à peu près sur le même plateau quoi. Donc nous, on a fait exprès, puisqu'on pouvait se mettre n'importe où, de se mettre à l'opposé de l'équipe. Et voilà, on a gardé… [Ludovic]

Là, c'est le dessin, là c'est la construction, là c'est le dépannage et en bas c'est le BOT TP. Tout est regroupé. Ça devient comme à Tournai alors qu'à la base, c'était pas ça. Donc nous, si on change de place, ben on est un peu mal vus. Il y a des endroits où on ne veut pas être non plus. Donc ça partait d'une bonne intention, mais au final, c'est tombé à l'eau. [Edouard]

Et puis il faut dire aussi que les filles au début ont fait un peu le tour et il y a des gens qui se sont plaints parce que forcément elles téléphonent donc elles parlent beaucoup et ça a dérangé certains services donc elles sont descendues parce qu'on leur a dit « Vous êtes chiants, vous êtes tout le temps au téléphone, vous parlez tout le temps » et donc voilà, ça aussi ça a fait qu'elles sont redescendues. [Lise]

On a testé un peu au début quand on est arrivé jusqu'au jour où on a eu la réflexion qu'on était trop bruyant. On avait pourtant choisi une zone où on pouvait. Je sais pas si vous avez vu avec le volume… Donc on avait été dans une zone où on pouvait parler mais c'est arrivé aux oreilles des chefs qui nous ont dit que ce serait peut-être bien de revenir en bas donc on est revenues en bas. [Camilla]

Je me suis mise un petit peu partout et puis finalement, on se rend compte que pour une question de facilité, pour ne pas devoir me déplacer à chaque fois que je devais poser une question ou demander quelque chose, je m'installe toujours en bas avec les personnes de mon service. [Lise]

Maintenant, je peux dire que je ne bouge pas beaucoup. Je reste toujours dans la même zone. J'ai essayé de changer de zone. J'ai eu beaucoup de réflexion de mes surveillants. Le souci c'est, vu qu'ils sont là que 40%, 30% de leur temps, si je ne suis pas là pour répondre à leurs questions quand eux viennent... Donc 40% de leur temps plus moi mes réunions sur chantiers, je suis obligé de rester au même point. Je m'oblige au moins à rester dans la même zone pour qu'ils aient un confort, au niveau de leurs attentes. Et donc, c'est très embêtant pour moi, car je ne peux jamais m'isoler. Et j'en ai besoin. [Nathan]

Ils ont prévu le bâtiment sans donner de cloisons, de dire « Là ça sera la cellule élec, là ça sera le gaz ». Parce que malgré tout, j'ai un électron libre chez moi, c'est une fille qui ne veut pas se plier « Ta cellule, c'est l'élec, c'est l'EP, c'est là que tu dois travailler ». Ben non, on a essayé par la porte, par la fenêtre, par le grenier, par la cave, par tous les moyens, on ne peut pas obliger la personne parce que c'est comme ça. Elle ne veut pas, elle ne veut pas. C'est gênant parce qu'elle n'a pas la proximité avec les maîtrises, n'a pas la proximité avec les informations, si on a besoin d'une information, on ne sait même pas ce qu'elle fait, très dans un coin. [Michaël]

Non, moi je choisis mes places en fonction des jours de travail. Par exemple, le vendredi j'ai une grosse affluence d'agents donc les agents rentrent le vendredi matin donc principalement, je sais que là je dois me mettre au rez-de-chaussée et je me mets généralement dans une bulle. Comme ça je sais que si je dois recevoir les agents, c'est pas forcément devant tout le monde avec le bruit des releveurs qui pourraient déranger les gens qui travaillent dans l'open-space. Donc le vendredi, par exemple, je me mets plutôt dans une ville. Les autres jours de la semaine, c'est plus à l'étage même si généralement c'est dans la même zone mais pas forcément avec mon service. [Gabriel]

Par exemple, quand je suis en haute tension, là c'est une fois par mois, ça dure à peu près une semaine, c'est en fin de mois, bah là j'ai besoin d'être plus concentré, de terminer mon travail absolument pour le six du mois donc bien souvent j'essaye de trouver un espace, une bulle, un endroit où je suis un peu à l'écart des conversations de l'un ou de l'autre pour essayer d'être le moins distrait possible. [Félix]

Si maintenant, effectivement, il arrive des moments où avec mes collègues on a envie de s'isoler, bah on va s'isoler dans une pièce, en général c'est la bibliothèque, quand on a vraiment besoin de calme et qu'on sent qu'on doit donner un bon coup, on se coupe du téléphone, on se coupe de tout et on va dans la bibliothèque. [Aurélie]

On me dit que je m'isole beaucoup mais je suis obligé de m'isoler sinon je ne sais pas travailler. C'est un des reproches qu'on m'a faits depuis que je suis au bureau d'études, c'est que je m'isole et c'est vrai, si vous regardez je suis toujours dans le petit local en bas. Je ne sais pas me mettre avec les autres, on entend ce téléphone qui n'arrête pas de sonner, on n'avance pas. [Félix]

Moi j'ai tendance à aller m'isoler dans une bulle. Peut-être pas avec la porte fermée mais de trouver un coin tranquille où je ne subis pas toutes ces distractions qui sont liées principalement au bruit, et à tous ces gens qui caquettent à gauche et à droite et qui rigolent. Ce n'est pas dans ma façon de travailler, j'apprécie être au calme. Souvent c'est pour des tâches de réflexion hein. Je ne peux pas dire que j'ai... même pour de l'encodage il faut faire attention à ce qu'on fait donc il y a toujours une bonne partie de réflexion là-dedans. [Gérard]

Je l'ai fait dans des bulles de temps en temps quand vraiment j'ai besoin de calme. Et maintenant que je travaille à domicile, une fois par semaine le calme complet ça me suffit et c'est chez moi en fait. L'année passée j'allais de temps en temps, une fois peut-être tous les 15 jours-3 semaines, j'allais dans une bulle pour dire de mettre un gros coup, d'être plus concentrée et plus au calme mais maintenant j'en n'ai plus besoin vu que j'ai ça une fois par semaine chez moi. [Ariane]

Vous, ça vous arrive d'aller dans des bulles ?
Ça m'arrive oui. Pas souvent mais ça m'arrive. Si aujourd'hui j'ai envie d'être un peu plus concentrée que les autres jours...
Sinon vous préférez être avec vos collègues en général ?
Oui voilà. Surtout depuis que j'ai commencé le télétravail parce que d'office là, je suis seul chez moi et une journée par semaine, c'est suffisant. Et je n'ai pas forcément envie de me retrouver les autres jours de la semaine dans une bulle. [Emma]

Il y a des zones où on ne doit pas faire de bruit et ce n'est pas respecté. Pourquoi ? Parce que chaque service est mis à un endroit mais il y a des zones. Par exemple, là c'est très silencieux et là c'est très bruyant. Celui qui a envie

> *de parler doit aller là, mais il ne le fait pas. Donc le problème, c'est que si je vais à un endroit plus calme, je ne le fais pas car je sais que ça ne va pas être silencieux. Parce que je connais le service donc je sais comment ils travaillent. Ils travaillent comme ça, ok. Mais alors qu'ils se mettent dans une zone plus bruyante. Mais ils ne le font pas. C'est leur endroit, leurs bureaux entre guillemets et puis c'est tout. [Edouard]*

> *En fait les zones ne sont plus respectées et donc c'est difficile je pense pour quelqu'un qui a envie de se retrouver dans un endroit où c'est censé être calme et silencieux de l'être vraiment car comme on veut plus se mettre finalement par affinités avec les personnes et comme les tables ne le permettent pas, on ne sait pas se mettre à beaucoup sur une table en même temps. Ben on a essayé de trouver des endroits où on se sait se mettre un maximum mais du coup ces endroits là… Regarde moi j'arrive le matin mais je ne regarde pas si je suis assise à un endroit où je peux faire du bruit ou pas… [Anna]*

> *Toujours dans le même endroit, comme tout le monde. Parce que le truc de la flamouche, elle disait un truc comme « chaque place de travail pour chaque job ». Enfin connasse, t'as pas encore compris qu'on fait toujours la même chose ici chez nous ? [Raphaël]*

3.3. Excerpts cited in the chapter 7

> *Enfin le bien-être s'est fortement amélioré. Et comme je disais tout à l'heure, une meilleure communication avec d'autres personnes. C'est surtout ça que je retiens. Et voilà et au niveau du boulot, ça permet de changer un peu, de faire une meilleure motivation. [Emma]*

> *Oui franchement, pour moi le nouveau bâtiment a apporté un certain bien-être. Les gens se parlent beaucoup plus, et je trouve qu'il y a vraiment des interactions entre services qui n'existaient pas du tout avant. [Noah]*

> *Et forcément, je me sens mieux. L'époque où on était à Tournai où les places été imposées, où j'étais pas forcément assise à côté de quelqu'un avec qui j'avais plus d'affinités, moi personnellement je me sentais un peu moins bien dans la fonction en fait. Et j'ai vraiment connu une différence flagrante depuis que je suis ici, depuis que je peux m'installer avec mes copines [Ariane]*

> *Anciennement, il y avait des tensions. Et pour [certaines personnes], le fait de ne pas se mettre forcément à côté de la personne qu'elles n'aiment pas, ça a redonné pas mal de motivation à ces personnes-là. [Karl]*

> *C'est beaucoup plus fatiguant. Je suis plus fatigué. Et je le suis plus car il faut faire des efforts de concentration beaucoup plus importants. […] Quand on est présent, ils viennent car ils savent aussi qu'ils vont avoir la réponse vite. On est des bases de données et le serveur donne, donne, donne. Et ça c'est très fatigant. [Gaspard]*

> *Ce que je vois beaucoup, c'est des gens qui sont moins bien qu'avant par contre. Il y en a. Donc des gens qui ont tendance plutôt à très mal vivre le fait qu'il y ait un bruit permanent. Il y a beaucoup de gens qui utilisent des bulles régulièrement. On pourrait presque dire qu'ils ont la leur attitrée. [Victor]*

> *Ce qui ne convient pas du tout, ce sont les open-spaces. Pour moi, c'est une véritable catastrophe. Je ne parviens pas à travailler dans cet environnement de travail. Donc moi personnellement, je m'isole dans une bulle dans laquelle je ne me sens pas spécialement bien ou alors je bloque une réunion fictive dans les salles de réunion parce que j'ai besoin d'étaler mes dossiers et j'ai besoin de calme et d'espace.*
> *Le but recherché c'est le bien-être au travail, c'est l'efficacité. Sincèrement, je me demande si sur ces deux points-là on n'est pas en échec. [Martin]]*

> *On parvient à déplacer des montagnes mais j'ai quand même l'impression qu'en termes de productivité, c'est -30% et en termes de charge, de stress, là on est plus à +30 % facilement. [Arnaud]*

> *Ici j'ai l'impression que toute la journée on se dit bonjour en fait car on croise les gens au fur et à mesure, on se dit bonjour tiens ça va, ça a été ton week-end, donc tout le monde se parle un petit peu, 5-10' à chaque personne et donc on perd énormément de temps sur une journée… [Anna]*

> *En pratique oui il y a beaucoup de convivialité mais en même temps pour travailler ce n'est pas toujours évident non plus… […] On est plongé dans un travail et à chaque fois on est interrompu et c'est normal on va pas commencer à dire "Je suis occupé laisse-moi travailler" donc on papote un peu plus aussi et sur le boulot parfois ça se ressent un petit peu quoi… On m'a déjà fait le reproche "Tu es trop concentrée, tu dois pouvoir lever la tête". Je dis oui mais parfois on est dans un travail et si on ne le fait pas c'est comme ça qu'on fait des erreurs donc parfois moi j'aime bien finir ce que je fais et après m'arrêter et discuter. Et bon faire plaisir à tout le monde ce n'est pas toujours évident non plus. [Chloé]*

> *On me dit que je m'isole beaucoup mais je suis obligé de m'isoler sinon je ne sais pas travailler. C'est un des reproches qu'on m'a faits depuis que je suis au bureau d'études, c'est que je m'isole et c'est vrai, si vous regardez je suis toujours dans le petit local en bas. Je ne sais pas me mettre avec les autres, on entend ce téléphone qui n'arrête pas de sonner, on n'avance pas.*
>
> ***Vous travaillez donc dans quel espace de travail ?***
>
> *Dans les bulles, tout le temps. Ici en bas, je suis tout le temps-là. D'ailleurs on vient toujours me voir là parce qu'on sait que je suis là. [Lucas]*

> *Il y a eu la possibilité de se mettre avec des gens avec qui on s'entend bien. Donc, contrairement à ce qu'on pourrait croire, ça a cloisonné des gens. [Samuel]*

> *Avant on avait des places attitrées donc automatiquement, même si c'était une personne qu'on n'aimait pas ou avec laquelle on avait moins d'affinités, on devait faire avec donc on faisait l'effort de parler avec ces personnes et de travailler avec elle. Alors qu'ici, comme on peut se mettre un peu où on veut, on ne fait plus l'effort de parler avec certaines personnes. Les personnes avec lesquelles on a moins d'affinités, forcément on les voit beaucoup moins. [Agathe]*

> *Quand tu es à trois dans le même bureau, tu mets de l'eau dans ton vin. Maintenant, s'il y a un truc qui te plaît pas, tu évites les gens » mais c'est pas forcément une bonne solution parce que quand tu partages le bureau de quelqu'un, à la longue, tu parles de ses enfants, de ses week-ends et tu te dis « Cette personne n'est pas si mal que ça ». Il reste des liens et tu commences à connaître les gens un peu plus en profondeur. Maintenant, si ça se passe mal, tu changes d'endroit mais tu n'essaies pas de faire un effort. Le message c'est « Vous pouvez vous mettre où vous voulez » mais c'est aussi « Vous pouvez éviter qui vous voulez ». Ici, on se retrouve comme dans certains quartiers d'immigrés alors qu'on pourrait les mélanger et ça se passerait très bien. [Eliot]*

> *Humainement, c'est beaucoup mieux qu'à Tournai parce que c'est vrai que moi, à Tournai, j'ai rencontré des gens...à Tournai je voyais qui c'était, on se disait bonjour, au revoir, on se croisait dans le couloir mais c'était tout. Que ici, bah c'est vrai qu'en pouvant changer de place et en travaillant avec d'autres personnes, y'a vraiment beaucoup de collègues avec qui j'ai beaucoup plus de contacts et on se voit même en dehors du travail. Donc on a appris à se connaître vraiment grâce à Leuze. Je suppose que si j'étais restée à Tournai...à moins de changer de service et d'arriver dans ce service-là, bah c'est vrai qu'au niveau contacts c'était quand même limité. [Marine]*

> *C'est vrai que maintenant j'ai l'impression de faire plus partie d'un ensemble, de faire partie du service de WaPi comme on l'appelle, tandis qu'avant je me sentais plus cloisonné dans ma cellule. [Christopher]*

> *Même si je vais dire il y a toujours des hiérarchies bien déterminées, on se sent quand même plus proches, il y a un dialogue qui est plus facile. Je vais prendre le cas d'Amaury Formule. Il s'est installé à côté d'une conseillère clientèle quand il est arrivé, il a regardé comment elle travaillait, il lui a demandé des explications, etc. Ben voilà, ça permet un dialogue. Même s'il est le cadre, si la personne a une question à lui poser, elle ne va pas avoir peur d'aller le trouver parce qu'elle aura déjà eu un petit rapport privilégié avec lui puisqu'elle lui a donné des informations, il s'est intéressé au travail qu'elle faisait et donc ça crée des liens même s'il y a toujours le respect de la hiérarchie. [Lise]*

> *Je suis beaucoup plus intégré et ça c'est un avantage par rapport à l'autre côté où, de l'autre côté, on était vraiment considéré comme ce qu'on appelait les rouges parce qu'avant Indexis était en rouge, et les bleus c'était Electrabel management. [Paul]*

> *Par contre, dans notre équipe à nous, en RVC, moi je trouve que l'équipe n'est plus comme avant. Ça veut dire qu'on se voit beaucoup moins aussi. Moi mon chef par exemple, il est toujours en bas mais il se met tout le temps à la même place et il ne monte jamais. [Félix]*

> *Je dirais que c'est beaucoup au niveau des relations et du social, je trouve que ça a énormément changé ou avant je trouve qu'on avait plus de moments dans un service où on pouvait se réunir et se dire ben tiens on mange tous ensemble ce midi, on se commande des pizzas, on fait ceci, cela et là ben plus personne ne le fait… [Anna]*

> *C'est vrai qu'avant on faisait plus de petites choses dans notre service alors que maintenant on est un petit peu réduit parce que si on fait quelque chose, il y a tout le monde qui rapplique. [Clémence]*

> *Il y a quand même une chose qui s'est perdue, et c'est vrai que ça les conseillers clientèles sont demandeurs. C'est qu'avant, ça nous arrivait de faire des repas entre nous. Même peut-être pour les anniversaires où, chaque fois qu'il y avait un anniversaire, il y avait quelqu'un qui ramenait un gâteau et on arrivait à se mettre une demi-heure de côté et faire vraiment un moment de convivialité autre. Et je pense que ça, malgré tout, ça se perd pas mal parce que, vu que tout est ouvert, tout le monde peut venir et c'est peut-être plus gênant qu'on soit à la vue de tout le monde alors qu'avant on était enfermés dans notre petit bureau on va dire. Et peut-être qu'après, il y en a d'autres qui viennent s'incruster et donc du coup il y a des morceaux de tarte qui partent vers d'autres personnes et que on ne veut vexer personne non plus, mais du coup ben c'est vrai que si on prend pour tout le bâtiment, c'est pas faisable non plus. [Lorraine]*

> *J'ai un surveillant qui m'a interpellé la semaine passée et qui m'a dit : « J'ai l'impression de travailler tout seul. » Je lui ai dit, mais je sentais qu'il n'était pas très bien et je lui ai dit : « Qu'est-ce que tu veux dire par là ? » Et il dit : « C'est bête mais c'est important aussi le lundi de me dire que, quand je vois mes collègues, je vais leur raconter un peu tout et rien. » Ça fait partie de la vie professionnelle de raconter un peu tout. Et ici tout le monde court, on n'a pas le temps, tu viens entre deux. Et il me dit : « J'ai l'impression de ne plus être intégré, de ne plus avoir de collègue. » Il dit : « On voudrait essayer de se réunir mais on ne peut plus. On voudrait essayer de faire mais on ne peut plus. » C'est assez compliqué. [Nathan]*

> *Dans tout ce qui est DOMO, il y a aussi l'informatique. On oublie d'en parler mais tout le monde a son PC portable, se met n'importe où, a son casque pour téléphoner, toutes des facilités. On nous aurait dit ça il y a trois ans, personne n'y aurait cru. Ça fait du bien, les gens ont l'impression d'avoir un job qui est beaucoup plus intelligent, beaucoup plus passionnant, plus professionnel. Enfin c'est l'impression que ça laisse. Tu ne viens pas le matin avec ton petit cahier « qu'est-ce que je vais faire ce matin ? », faire ta routine. Non, ça devient vraiment très passionnant. [Jean]*

> *On voulait aller vers le DOMO et le sans papier, et d'un autre côté, on avait l'I.T et un peu le protectionnisme du process-owner en disant : « Bah attend, on ne peut pas tout changer, on a encore besoin de signatures, de ci, de*

> *ça... » Donc là, y'avait un écart, ça n'a pas suivi. Sinon, ça aurait été effectivement très chouette. Là, on n'aurait plus eu besoin d'armoire ou d'un tiroir quoi. Mais ça, ça n'a pas suivi quoi. [Samuel]*

> *Il faut toujours un minimum de supports papiers. Expliquer un travail à un technicien sans un plan, pour lui dire : « Tu vas de là à là », ce n'est pas possible. On peut essayer d'imaginer un système de tablettes, oui. Mais techniquement, on n'y est pas encore et notre service informatique n'y est certainement pas. S'il y avait un talon d'Achille chez nous, en* ORES*, c'est le service informatique. [Gaspard]*

> *Non. Ce n'est pas possible. J'ai besoin des plans d'architecte, de documents officiels. Pour gérer tout ce qui est cabines. Pour proposer un planning à l'entrepreneur, je dois sortir ça sur papier. Dans toutes les tâches qui me sont confiées, dans quatre-vingt pourcents des cas, il me faut un papier. [Gérard]*

> <u>*Vous le sans-papier c'est difficile pour vos métiers ?*</u>
> *Je ne peux pas, j'ai des documents légaux, vis-à-vis de la loi qui sont définis par les terres royales, pour les preuves etc. Donc zéro papier non.*
> *[…]*
> *En-dessous, on a des armoires avec tous nos plans pour le rôle de garde car c'est obligatoire encore une fois vis-à-vis de la législation d'avoir les documents papiers en cas de bug informatique. Si on a une intervention, on ne peut pas se permettre de laisser une fuite de gaz trois jours, le temps que le programme revienne. [Karl]*

> *Dans certains services, ils ont encore des plans grands comme les tables ici et ils ont encore des choses qu'ils sont encore obligés de faire avec le papier. Donc ils n'ont pas le choix, il y a encore des choses qu'ils sont obligés de faire avec le papier. [Jeanne]*

> *Le zéro papier, d'accord mais quand on doit payer un entrepreneur, on est obligé d'imprimer un papier sur lequel on rédige tout ce qu'on doit payer à l'entrepreneur, on le remet ici, il est scanné une fois, on l'envoie à Strépy, il est scanné une deuxième fois. Il y a des choses à améliorer. Si on veut du zéro papier, il y a possibilité mais il faut nous donner la possibilité d'encoder nos fiches sur un fichier Excel avec les références du dossier, on envoie et c'est bon. Tandis qu'ici, on nous dit « Il faut faire sur papier » donc c'est paradoxal. [Jérémy]*

> *En gros nous c'est juste le programme. On ne doit pas commencer à prendre des feuilles et à encoder. [Edouard, RVC]*

> *C'est vrai que ma fonction est assez répétitive, je fais la même chose tous les jours et je n'ai pas de papier, je fais tout avec mon pc portable, c'est sur un logiciel en ligne donc du coup je n'ai pas vraiment de contraintes ou d'avantages dans le projet DOMO justement pour tout ce qui est le côté pratique, les imprimantes etc. parce que je les utilise pas… [Anna, service client]*

> *Avant, on avait forcément nos dossiers papier. Mais ça s'est vraiment en fait naturellement en fait. Au niveau du travail, il n'y a pas vraiment de différence. On scanne et on jette mais après on travaille le dossier de la même manière que si c'était sur papier. [Camilla]*

> *La toute grosse grosse différence c'est que, depuis qu'on est à Leuze, c'est zéro papier donc effectivement, tout est digitalisé mais à part ça, c'est la même façon de travailler. [Maxime]*

> *Qu'ici, on doit plus utiliser les outils comme Lync et les mails pour communiquer avec son chef car il n'est pas forcément à côté. [Emma]*

> *Par exemple, l'outil Lync, finalement je l'utilise le plus souvent quand mon responsable de cellule ou l'agent de maîtrise sont à Mouscron ou en télétravail. [Christopher]*

> *Après quand c'est pour une bêtise, j'aime autant l'envoyer par Lync, c'est plus rapide. Et après, pour tout ce qui est conversation un peu plus privé. Si ma collègue de l'autre côté du bureau, on communique aussi par Lync. [Jeanne]*

> *Sinon Lync c'est aussi pour les petites discussions. [Clémence]*

> *Ici, on a ce système de Lync qui permet de savoir si la personne est présente ou pas donc on ne s'ennuie pas à chercher deux heures après lui. [Benjamin]*

> *Il y a des gens qui changent pas mal de place, donc dans ce cas-là je préfère envoyer un Lync pour un peu la localiser avant de faire tout le tour. [Charlotte]*

> *Ecoute, le Lync, moi je l'utilise premièrement pour savoir un petit peu... L'avantage, c'est que dans le bâtiment, c'est important de se voir je trouve. Quand je me connecte, j'essaye de voir si le Lync a bien capté la salle dans laquelle je me trouve. Donc ça c'est chouette pour que les gens puissent me retrouver facilement. Quand tu as un petit message instantané, bah hop, j'envoie un petit truc. [Samuel]*

> *Avec Lync, automatiquement on sait qu'on est surveillé de toute façon, qu'on soit ici aussi ou chez soi peu importe. Même ici parce que je sais que mon chef a un pop-up et quand on se connecte, il a un pop-up et il sait qu'on est connecté. Et si on est inactif, il reçoit un pop-up comme quoi on est inactif. [Agathe]*

> *Les gens préfèrent faire un petit truc et qu'on réponde « oui, non, okay » que de venir. Je trouve dans l'espace où on est, où on peut communiquer un maximum, la communication. Et c'est dommage. Je préfère parler, je trouve que c'est plus agréable. Sauf si c'est vraiment important et qu'on veut garder une trace de ce qu'on a dit, alors on fait le mail. [Lise]*

> *Avant, c'étaient des services cloisonnés. A Tournai, sur le même site, on se téléphonait. Ici, les téléphones fixes ne servent quasi pas. On oublie même de logger son numéro. Je le fais car des gens externes peuvent me joindre. Mais on ne se téléphone jamais, on va se voir, c'est un décloisonnement et ça permet d'avoir plus de contacts. [Gaspard]*

> *On doit plus être attentif à ce qu'on fait. Du fait que, par exemple, avant, quand on était dans le même bureau, quand il y avait une information à faire passer, on le faisait oralement et on savait que les personnes allaient l'entendre. Qu'ici, on doit plus utiliser les outils comme Lync et les mails pour communiquer avec son chef car il n'est pas forcément à côté. Donc les outils de communication ont changé.*
> ***Avant, c'était une communication…***
> *Plus orale.*
> ***Et maintenant c'est…***
> *Plus écrit donc Lync et mail. [Emma]*

> *Parce qu'il y a tellement de suspicions de ci, de là qu'on fait tout par mail pour ne pas pouvoir être accusé de ne pas l'avoir fait. C'est un peu comme à l'école gardienne. Donc en faisant par mail, on garde des traces. [Thomas]*

> *E-mail, j'utilise beaucoup aussi parce que quand on demande des infos, etc., on a quand même besoin d'un support écrit pour prouver qu'on a fait la demande. Chez nous, c'est très surveillé donc il faut des preuves pour tout à la limite. Donc les e-mails, c'est important. Tout ce qu'on reçoit, on annexe. Tout ce qu'on envoie, on annexe. Donc l'e-mail c'est important. [Clémence]*

> *Le fait que ce soit ouvert, on voit tout le monde et on va plus facilement vers les autres plutôt qu'avant de voir sortir de son bureau, traverser plusieurs couloirs, aller ouvrir une ou deux portes pour pouvoir accéder à l'intervention d'une autre personne pour la rencontrer. Ici, c'est ouvert. Tu te lèves, tu fais quelques mètres et tu rencontres la cellule d'à côté, je trouve ça génial. On va beaucoup plus facilement vers les autres. Ça je trouve que c'est vraiment quelque chose de positif. Chose qui ne se faisait pas ou moins précédemment. Ça, c'est vraiment une évolution énorme. Et tout le monde, enfin les gens avec lesquels je travaille, le ressentent aussi. On va plus facilement vers les autres. L'ouverture, on voit tout le monde, je trouve très intéressant. [Michaël]*

> *Je pense qu'on réagit, enfin moi personnellement pour ma part, on réagit mieux et peut-être plus vite aux urgences en ayant comme ça un contact direct. Qu'avant, ben voilà, le dossier passait dans ce bureau-là, puis ça allait dans ce bureau-là, puis ça allait là. Ici voilà, on s'échange plus vite les informations, ça peut vite se régler, enfin je trouve. [Charles]*

> *Enfin voilà, l'avantage aussi dans un bâtiment ouvert c'est qu'on entend nos collègues discuter au téléphone avec un client ou bien avec un collègue. Et comme généralement certains dossiers font le tour de plusieurs services, on peut dire « Ah tiens justement, ce client m'a demandé... » ou « J'ai fait ça dans le dossier » ou « J'ai traité telle demande ». Je pense que quand on était cloisonné, on n'avait pas cette information là non plus donc c'est vraiment ça, c'est vraiment toute la culture d'entreprise qui change. Et je pense que c'est vraiment beaucoup pour aller vers le client. [Natacha]*

> *Avant, il y avait une certaine frustration de ma part dans le sens où je ne connaissais pas trop le fonctionnement, l'infrastructure, l'exploitation, les BOT TP, les solutions techniques. Je ne dis pas que maintenant je jongle avec tout ça mais je commence à avoir un peu une vision de comment ça s'organise en interne. C'est important quand même quelque part quand on voit les dossiers qui passent de service en service. Si on veut un peu suivre, c'est bien de savoir. Avant, c'était trop cloisonné et ici maintenant, on peut plus facilement s'intéresser, se rendre compte de comment ça fonctionne. Je pense que le fait de pouvoir travailler à côté de certaines personnes d'autres services, d'entendre déjà et des fois d'en discuter entre nous, oui [ça permet cela]. [Gabriel]*

> *Bah le but, c'est surtout de se dire qu'aujourd'hui il faut conférer des missions aux gens et que très clairement c'est pas parce que deux personnes ont le même travail qu'ils vont l'appréhender de la même façon. Donc le but c'est une obligation de résultat et pas l'obligation sur la méthode. On n'est pas là pour vérifier « Tiens il a fait telle étape après telle étape après telle étape », c'est pas ça l'intérêt. C'est de se dire « Voilà aujourd'hui on a un objectif qui est celui-là, je t'ai donné les moyens pour l'atteindre, après tu mets ça en musique », après on n'est pas là pour venir vérifier, pour s'assurer que tu es toujours dans les clous. C'est pas ça le but. C'est une obligation de résultats pour le coup. [Victor]*

> *Après le management de confiance, je ne sais pas trop ce que ça veut dire en vrai, je ne sais pas trop ce que ça représente, si on n'est plus ou moins surveillés, surveillés de loin. Je ne ressens pas… Encore une fois, par rapport à ça, en tout cas au management, je ressens pas de différence par rapport à avant. Pour moi je ne dirais pas que c'est bien ou pas bien, parce que je ne vois pas de différence en fait. [Ariane]*

> *Pour rappel, le projet DOMO vise à insuffler une nouvelle culture par la mise en œuvre d'une nouvelle façon de travailler, qui encourage le management de confiance, la responsabilisation, l'autonomie et qui facilite la mobilité des collaborateurs, renforce leur collaboration et augmente leur bien-être au travail. [Rapport d'activités 2015, p.59]*

> *Mais ce qui a beaucoup changé c'est par rapport à la hiérarchie, ils sont devenus plus proches, plus proches de nous et ça c'est un bien : il y a plus de transparence, peut-être pas encore assez, mais il y a un grand pas qui a été fait en transparence et par rapport à la hiérarchie plus proche que ce soit de nous ou des conseillères clientèles. [Léa]*

> *Je pense qu'avec ces bâtiments ici, il y a une certaine crainte du supérieur qui a disparu. Avant, quand les bureaux étaient fermés, s'il fallait monter dans les bureaux du directeur ou l'administratif qui devait monter dans le bureau du contremaitre, je pense qu'il y avait une certaine crainte. Il allait dans la colline et ne savait pas ce qu'il se passait. Maintenant, il est assis à côté de vous. S'il y a quelque chose à dire, ça se fait naturellement dans la discussion et ça fait disparaître l'aspect craintif. [Karl]*

> *Nous, [notre superviseur] elle contrôle absolument tout ce qu'on fait. On ne peut prendre aucune initiative. Il ne faut surtout pas qu'on réfléchisse, parce qu'elle n'aime pas. […] Il faut qu'elle vérifie tout. Faut qu'elle sache tout, qu'elle mette son grain de sel partout. Faut surtout par réfléchir. [Marine]*

> *Bêtement, on a l'impression qu'on peut prendre des initiatives et quand on en prend, ça ne va pas. C'est ça que j'ai du mal avec cette idée de management de confiance parce que dans un sens elle dit qu'elle nous fait confiance, oui mais on ne le ressent pas vraiment. [Laurianne]*

> *Peut-être que parfois on fait trop de bruit mais pourquoi ne pas venir nous le dire directement au lieu d'aller voir le chef de machin qui doit venir dire… Je sais pas la personne est à côté, elle peut se lever et dire « Excuse-moi, je n'arrive pas à me concentrer, tu fais trop de bruit ». Mais ça ici ça ne marche pas comme ça (rires). Il faut toujours passer par le N+1 qui va aller le redire après à la personne… [Anna]*

> *Management de confiance… on ne pourrait pas faire de télétravail ou travailler sur un autre site s'il n'y en avait pas. Mais voilà, maintenant le travail à domicile, la personne part avec son travail, le lendemain elle arrive, ça été fait. Est-ce qu'on sait tout vérifier ? Non. Est-ce qu'il a vraiment commencé à travailler à 7h45 du lundi au jeudi et, s'il a pris le vendredi, est-ce qu'il a vraiment travaillé pendant sept heures ? Je sais pas voir ça. [Michaël]*

> *Dans le projet DOMO, il y a tout le projet de management de confiance…*
> *Alors là, zéro. On fait du télétravail aussi. Moi j'ai un superviseur qui est formidable au niveau efficacité, vraiment très très très bien, vraiment efficace et à l'écoute. Mais, quand on est en télétravail, on doit faire 7h45 mais c'est au point que, quand on commence à 7h35, on doit le noter dans son agenda. Quand on termine à midi pour prendre sa pause, on doit le noter dans son agenda. Quand on prend un break de 15 minutes, on doit le noter dans son agenda. Donc aucun management de confiance, rien. Moi ça ne me dérange pas, je le fais mais ça me fait rire le terme « management de confiance » dans un cas pareil. [Marion]*

> *Je pioche, je ne passe pas mon temps à espionner parce que sinon ça devient vraiment de l'espionnage. Je pense qu'il faut faire confiance et de temps en temps je regarde, je vais voir dans leurs [données]. [Lise]*

> *Comme je dis, on travaille sur KPI donc sur chiffres. J'ai été très clair quand on a commencé le télétravail, j'ai dit « Comme on travaille dans le management de confiance, il faut quand même des taquets. Je fais confiance, je n'ai pas de souci, je n'ai pas à contrôler à chaque fois, ce n'est pas mon but. Moi être devant un écran et voir que « Ah c'est vert ». Et encore, ça ne veut rien dire. Pour moi ce qui compte c'est de savoir ce qu'on fait comme chiffres par jour. Vous le faites comme vous le voulez mais il faut attendre un minimum quelque part ». Donc qu'est-ce qu'il se passe ? On sort des statistiques, les statistiques de travail sur place et les statistiques de travail sur un autre domaine. Et par rapport à ça, je vois. Si le travail est correctement fait c'est-à-dire dans les taquets qui sont tout à fait convenables pour moi, je ne vois pas pourquoi je ne ferais pas confiance, c'est que le travail est fait. [Paul]*

> *Pff… ça j'ai justement l'impression que ça c'est une grosse vaste blague. Je crois pas que quelqu'un au niveau des subalternes y croit, et j'y crois pas plus que tous les autres, parce que… En fait, il n'y a pas de changement par rapport à tout ce qui s'est toujours passé. Si un employé fait en sorte de montrer qu'il a de la bonne volonté dans son travail, il va d'office et il a toujours entraîné de la confiance de sa direction. Et c'est ce qui se passe maintenant, c'est les propos qui sont tenus. En fait soi-disant la hiérarchie doit montrer, doit laisser une certaine liberté vis-à-vis de ses subalternes alors qu'en réalité, si on lit entre les lignes, c'est d'abord montrer que vous faites ce qu'il faut*

> *et ensuite on vous montrera une certaine liberté. C'est comme ça que je comprends la chose. On vous fait croire que c'est l'inverse, qu'on va d'abord vous donner une certaine liberté et que c'est à vous de ne pas en abuser, mais en réalité c'est l'inverse. Montrez d'abord votre bonne volonté et ensuite vous aurez une certaine liberté. [Christopher]*

3.4. Excerpts cited in the chapter 8

> *On a, par exemple, l'exploitation qui a toujours peut-être cette formation de « Nous c'est le réseau et pas le client » et on essaie de les faire changer un peu et de faire que toutes ces formations qu'on fait mais qu'eux font aussi vont les aider à changer un peu parce qu'il n'y a pas que le réseau et il n'y a pas que des incidents qui arrivent, il y a aussi le client derrière. [Lorraine]*

> *Tu as sûrement entendu parler du carnet noir. En fait, à l'exploitation, au lieu de travailler avec les mails, ils notent tout dans un cahier et si c'est écrit au Bic et qu'il y a une rature, c'est une catastrophe donc ils notent au crayon et si ce n'est pas dans l'agenda, c'est que ce n'est pas planifié. Donc s'ils perdent leur agenda, ils sont foutus. Il n'y a rien par informatique. Et encore, depuis qu'on est ici, quelqu'un gère la boîte mail mais avant si on leur envoyait un mail, c'est comme si on n'envoyait rien. Ils travaillent vraiment à l'ancienne. Et tout ce qui les perturbe, ils viennent et ils en font un scandale pour rien. Il y a un client qui change son rendez-vous, c'est un drame. Ça ne va pas, il faut que le client ne change pas son rendez-vous. Mais nous, qu'est-ce qu'on peut y faire ? Le client il change, il change. « Mais non tout était prévu », je comprends que c'est embêtant mais on ne peut pas dire au client qu'il ne peut pas changer son rendez-vous. [Jeanne]*

> *Bah, nous on est un service un peu particulier. Moi, j'ai toujours un peu eu ce management de confiance. J'étais surveillant aussi, donc tu sais comment les gens travaillent. Moi je leur ai dit : « Ecoutez, de toute façon, moi j'ai confiance en vous et entre guillemets, entre nous, je n'ai pas beaucoup le choix. » Oui, je le vois ici une heure et demie par jour. Maintenant, il monte dans sa camionnette et s'en va : où est-ce qu'il va ? Ou alors je veux le suivre, le gendarmer, prendre ma voiture et me cacher pour voir s'il va bien sur son chantier. Et je vais être vu et on va me dire : « Tiens, tu me surveilles. » Et donc là, tu vas évidemment perdre la confiance de tes agents, ils vont dire : « Tu me surveilles pourquoi ? ». [Samuel]*

> *Au début je me suis pas vraiment posé de question par rapport à ça, venant du bâtiment où j'avais déjà le management de confiance vu qu'on me donnait au matin la camionnette, on me donnait un travail, je partais avec 2-3 hommes, le chef était pas forcément là, le boss non plus, donc c'est déjà un peu ce management de confiance où j'arrive au boulot, je vais faire ce qu'il y avait à faire et puis voilà quoi. [Charles]*

> *Moi je viens, je fais mon boulot le mieux possible mais après... Tout le reste après... Désolé ! Je ne suis pas contre eux, mais c'est du blabla. Et c'est un balancier. Il y a quelques années : « Chouette, on n'a plus de client. On ne va plus s'occuper que du réseau. La clientèle, c'est plus nous ! ». Maintenant, le client c'est notre préoccupation. Moi, depuis le 9 février 1981, les clients, donc les consommateurs et les gens qui payent, sont au centre de ma préoccupation. [Etienne]*

> *Maintenant, on revient à « client d'abord ». Nous, on a toujours connu ça donc pour les anciens, ça ne change pas grand-chose, c'est notre philosophie. Surtout qu'entre les deux, on était toujours orienté client, on ne change pas les trucs qui fonctionnent. [Thibault]*

> *Un administratif… j'ai eu une discussion avec des gens, les papiers c'est les papiers mais nous, le technique, c'est du client, c'est le réseau… Donc quand nous on a notre vision vraiment extérieure, on voit la production. Un administratif, c'est ses documents… mais s'il n'y a pas de clients derrière ou de kilowatts qui passent, pour moi il ne faut pas d'administratif (rires), vous comprenez… [Loïc]*

> *Enfin si, je me souviens d'une règle de vie qui avait été évoquée avant qu'on arrive et qui avait fait un foin. Et je dois dire que moi-même ça m'avait un petit peu choquée. On disait que les agents ne pouvaient plus rentrer avec leurs bottines pour ne pas salir le bâtiment. Finalement ça n'a pas changé. Ça, c'est quelque chose qui avait été évoqué. Je me demande même ce n'est pas quand même dans les règles de vie, qu'on ne peut pas ramener de la terre dans le bâtiment et qu'il faut avoir des chaussures propres en gros. [Ariane]*

> *Je comprends que c'est un nouveau bâtiment mais on est du technique, il en faut, c'est comme ça et ça doit rester comme ça. Mais quand on voit des photos avec un petit de terre qui dit que c'est honteux, il faut arrêter. L'aspect technique, il est là et il faut le laisser. C'est carrément nous scinder et dire « Ceux de dehors, restez dehors ». Je n'ai pas trouvé très agréable de faire ça. [Lucas]*

> *Et puis, c'était un petit peu aussi pour ne pas les laisser rentrer et nous laisser tranquille pour travailler en fait. Déjà, c'est pour ça d'ailleurs qu'il y a des salles de travail en bas, donc il y a deux salles : une pour l'élec et une pour le gaz. Et tôt le matin, c'est la maitrise qui descend pour donner le travail qu'alors à Tournai, les hommes avaient leur bureau à côté du nôtre et ils étaient un petit peu avec nous au fait. Maintenant, ils sont à part. Ça, ça été mal pris au début ; ça a été très mal perçu. Et puis notre ancien cadre, on a vraiment senti qu'il ne voulait plus les voir ici en fait parce que pour lui, le travail des gens de réseau c'était sur le réseau et plus être dans les bureaux. [Camille]*

> *Nos agents disaient : « Parce qu'on a une toile bleue, on est en salopette, on ne pourra pas rentrer. » C'est vrai que le travail se donne dans des salles limitrophes avec la partie magasin, pour ne pas que les agents viennent dans les bureaux. C'est vrai que quand on rentre avec les bottes toutes crasses, tu vas en retrouver partout. Quand ils sont sur le réseau, ils ont leurs semelles chargées, t'en retrouve dans tous les coins. Techniquement, les agents de réseaux n'ont pas été impliqués, il n'y avait pas de travail avec eux. [Gaspard]*

> *Et souvent on entend : « Oui, ici c'est possible car on est à Bruxelles, oui c'est possible car c'est Flamand. » Donc peut-être moins l'habitude d'être avant-gardistes aussi. Dire voilà, de vouloir être le premier à dire qu'on arrête la hiérarchie. [Manon]*

> *Le bâtiment qu'on est allés voir, c'était à Bruxelles, où la majorité des gens c'étaient des cadres, où la majorité avait fait des études supérieures, au minimum type long. Ce n'est pas la même mentalité. Bruxelles déjà... [Nathan]*

> *Je pense qu'ils ont voulu changer la mentalité des collaborateurs en leur construisant un bureau ouvert, assez urbain. Encore une fois, on n'a pas la mentalité… La personne de Bruxelles qui va venir ici, elle va peut-être plus se fondre parce que c'est des méthodes de travail qu'en capitale, ils ont déjà ça depuis longtemps je pense. C'est pas nouveau pour eux ça. Mais ici, faut pas oublier qu'on est loin de tout. [Adam]*

> *Bah disons que la plupart du temps, quand on parle du nouveau monde du travail, etc., on se représente Google ou le monde bancaire. Ici, ce sont des techniciens, on travaille avec des grands plans, bah oui on a toujours besoin d'avoir de la place, d'avoir du papier, d'avoir plein de choses et c'est vrai que c'est pas toujours évident de vivre ça au quotidien. [Aurélie]*

> *Quand on gère uniquement de l'administratif, ce n'est pas très compliqué. Les gens font à peu près tous le même métier, derrière un PC. Mais on a quand même la moitié de nos agents qui sont des agents techniques externes. Quand tu regardes le bâtiment, qu'est-ce qu'il y a pour nos agents techniques externes ? Qu'est-ce qu'on a pensé pour eux ? Est-ce qu'on les a impliqués dans le projet ? Pas vraiment. Ils sont externes. Donc on a peut-être été un peu trop loin en faisant un copié / coller de ce qui existait dans une équipe purement administrative. Si on prend une banque par exemple, ce n'est que de l'administration. Nous, on gère aussi du technique. Rien n'a été prévu pour afficher un plan, car ce sont des choses qui sont venues après. [Gaspard]*

> *C'est un bâtiment passe-partout on va dire, pour tout le monde. Ce n'est pas un bâtiment propre à ORES pour moi. N'importe quelle entreprise pourrait s'installer ici. […] De toute façon, celle qui a fait la décoration et tout ça, elle a fait exactement... Elle nous a montré des vidéos, on a vu un bâtiment, c'était exactement le même bâtiment qu'ici quasi, et l'intérieur c'était la même chose. En fait, elle a repris... elle fait des copiés-collés. [Edouard]*

> *Maintenant, on m'a dit qu'on ne doit plus avoir de documents, et maintenant, moi je fais la grève du zèle. J'ai tout pris, et j'ai tout jeté au container, les fardes, les documents, les plans, tout ce que j'avais j'ai tout jeté. On m'a dit, il faut faire le clean-desk. Et maintenant, quand on me demande quelque chose, je prends un malin plaisir à dire que j'ai fait clean-desk comme on m'a dit. [Thomas]*

> *Un cadre nous a demandé de fermer les portes. On a joué le jeu et chacun est parti travailler sur son ordinateur. Et les gars, à la radio, ils nous appellent, le téléphone il sonne et... Ah bah nous, on ne sait pas hein ! Si on nous impose quelque chose alors on joue le jeu. On lui a expliqué les raisons, il ne comprend pas le gars donc on a tout fermé. [Etienne]*

> *Je pense qu'il y a un moment je me suis dit "Voilà, c'est DOMO on n'a pas le choix, il faut y être, on va jouer le jeu" et on va jouer et on le fait correctement. [Laurianne]*

> *Donc il ne faut pas faire de vague, pas créer de remous, fermer sa gueule, dire oui amen et essayer d'avoir des bons chiffres et du bon rendement. Et cette culture induit le fait que maintenant plus aucun n'oserait aller dire « Non là on fait une connerie, c'est une ineptie » car il va se faire démolir. Donc, les doigts sur la couture du pantalon, c'est la position à adapter. On se tait, on dit « Oui, amen ». C'est une culture qui, évidemment, est appliquée du haut vers le bas et jusqu'à tous les niveaux. Donc il n'y a plus aucun esprit d'initiative. On parlait d'audace mais qui oserait encore ? [Raphaël]*

> *Oui, on a plus l'impression parce qu'on va plus vers de l'administratif que vers du technique qui est la base 1ère de notre travail. On a vraiment cette impression là aussi c'est qu'il n'y a plus que ça qui compte et que le technique n'a plus de valeur. [Antoine]*

> *Maintenant on devient plus une société financière qu'une société de travaux. C'est ma vision des choses mais il faut que je vive avec le temps et que je me dise qu'on est plus financier que travaux. […] Les moindres paroles maintenant qu'on a c'est les courbes. On entend plus que ça. […] Je vois que par-là, au bureau d'études, on parle courbes, là-bas aussi on parle de courbes, on parle de courbes partout. On ne parle jamais du travail en lui-même. Généralement, je trouvais que toutes les réunions avec nous, ça devrait être plus technique que courbe mais ça n'est pas le cas. Il faut dépenser, il faut ralentir, il faut accélérer, c'est toujours comme ça. [Lucas]*

> *Mais sincèrement, je trouve qu'on a laissé tomber le corps du métier, pour s'occuper de communication, d'esbroufe quoi. Et le corps du métier, on ne s'en occupe plus parce que ce n'est plus intéressant, ce qui compte c'est l'actionnaire, le financier. Mais le technique, c'est quand même notre métier. On le laisse tomber. [Sofia]*

> *Les priorités ont changé… On est plus dans du tape à l'œil aujourd'hui par rapport à ce qui était beaucoup plus technique ou autre avant…maintenant on parle de la société…on met une image… moi je trouve que le client, on l'a un peu oublié dans tout ça…et c'est…pour moi c'est le client le plus important… [Loïc]*

> *On doit vraiment avoir une attitude beaucoup plus ouverte, beaucoup plus prête au changement si on ne veut pas demain être juste des poseurs de câbles et de raccordement, si on veut vraiment jouer un rôle actif dans le rôle de la distribution. [Mathias]*

*Quand vous êtes dans une boîte, vous avez envie qu'on en parle bien. Moi, mon ambition, quand je partirai d'ici, c'est que les Wallons parlent d'*ORES *mieux que quand je suis arrivé. C'est tout. Qu'au final, ils se disent… On ne sera jamais aimés des gens. Je suis pas* Google. *Je suis pas iPhone. Ça, vous êtes en pamoison devant. On aime bien. La télé, tout ça c'est fun, c'est entertainement, c'est paillettes, c'est machin. Je serais* Netflix*, je serais* Canal+*, même* Proximus*, j'aurais envie qu'on m'aime. J'aurais envie que les clients m'aiment et qu'ils se disent « Grâce à eux, on a passé un chouette samedi. Grâce à eux, on a passé un moment sympa ». Moi j'apporte pas de plaisir, soyons très clair.*

C'est quand même un besoin vital.

Vous avez du plaisir avec votre prise électrique vous ?

Je préfère quand même quand il y a de l'électricité.

*Mais non, vous n'êtes pas contente, vous n'êtes pas contente, non. Vous êtes mécontente quand vous n'en avez pas, vous n'êtes pas contente quand vous en avez, c'est juste normal. Vous n'allez jamais faire une soirée avec vos copines « Cool, on va faire une soirée électricité au gaz naturel ». On va faire une soirée séries, on va faire une soirée jeux vidéo, plein de choses. Mais pas nous. Tu sais pas être aimé. Tu peux même faire une soirée Jupiler ou une soirée Beaujolais Nouveau. Bref, là il y a des produits qui créent un moment où on se dit « On a eu bon » pour le dire en wallons. Alors que nous, pas. On n'est même pas l'*Electrabel *qui amène l'électricité et le gaz. On est juste les types qui mettent les tuyaux. C'est que des emmerdes, c'est ouvrir le trottoir, c'est ne pas être à l'heure, c'est que des emmerdes. Donc on est condamnés à ne pas pouvoir être aimés. Donc ça change la donne objectivement. J'ai fait de la comm' chez Electrabel, j'étais le patron de la comm' chez Electrabel et on faisait de la pub. Je rêvais devant ces marques qui avaient la chance de proposer quelque chose que les gens aimaient. Quand je voyais une campagne pour* Duvel*, quand je voyais une campagne de* Proximus *pour* Belgacom TV*, je me disais « Mais qu'est-ce qu'ils ont de la chance. Quand ils font un événement, chacun retourne avec sa* Duvel *». Moi je vais pas retourner avec un kilowatt. Qu'est-ce que je peux matérialiser ? Je ne peux pas créer de l'amour autour de mon truc, je ne sais pas créer du plaisir autour de mon truc. Nous on est condamnés à ne pas être aimés. Faut pas attendre ça, il faut juste faire en sorte que, quand on s'exprime de nous, c'est se dire, pas « Ils sont géniaux » mais « Ils sont efficaces, ils sont pro, ils font bien les choses ». Et bien ça, c'est déjà très satisfaisant. [Arthur]*

4. Appendix 4: interview guide for the administrative employees. First version.

What is the role of the office in the construction of an organisation's identity?

Guide d'entretien

Avant l'entretien

1. Remercier pour le temps accordé
2. Présenter l'objectif de l'entretien
3. Rappeler les modalités de l'entretien (anonymat)
4. Demander l'autorisation pour enregistrer l'entretien (préciser qu'il s'agit d'un moyen de ne rien louper sans se concentrer sur ses notes)

Thème A – Présentation du travailleur et de l'organisation

1. Pourriez-vous vous présenter et présenter votre parcours professionnel ainsi que votre rôle au sein d'Ores ?
2. Pourriez-vous m'expliquer comment Ores est structuré (e.g. services, hiérarchie) ?

Thème B – Projet DOMO (axe bâtiment en particulier)

1. Pouvez-vous m'expliquer comment a émergé le projet DOMO, et en quoi il consiste ?

2. Comment le projet DOMO vous a-t-il été présenté ? Avez-vous été impliqué dans ce projet ? À l'origine, quel était le but/l'intention du projet DOMO et du nouveau bâtiment ? Cela correspond-il à la réalité ?
3. De manière globale, quel est votre avis sur le projet DOMO et le nouveau bâtiment ? Cela a-t-il évolué au fil des mois depuis 09/2015 ?

Thème C – Organisation du travail et vie dans les nouveaux espaces

1. Pourriez-vous m'expliquer comment se passe une journée type, pour vous, dans ces nouveaux espaces de travail ? Et comment cela se passait-il sur l'ancien site (Tournai) ? Ces nouveaux espaces de travail ont-ils modifié votre organisation du travail ?
2. Pour vous, quels sont les changements principaux qui sont intervenus suite au déménagement ?
3. Y a-t-il des nouvelles valeurs qui ont été mises en place dans le projet DOMO ? D'après vous, y a-t-il un lien entre ces valeurs et le nouveau bâtiment ? Les différents espaces de travail sont-ils cohérents avec ces valeurs ?
4. Comment décririez-vous le travailleur idéal dans ce nouvel environnement de travail ? Quelles sont les règles de vie dans ce nouveau bâtiment ? En quoi sont-elles différentes d'avant ? Qui a édicté ces règles ? Comment cela se passe-t-il si un travailleur ne respecte pas les règles ?

Thème D – Lien à l'organisation et perception de l'identité organisationnelle d'Ores

1. Pour vous, que signifie « être membre d'Ores » ? En quoi cela a-t-il évolué depuis que vous travaillez dans ces nouveaux espaces ?
2. Quels termes utiliseriez-vous pour décrire Ores ? Par rapport à d'autres entreprises, qu'est-ce qui vous semble propre à Ores ? Cela a-t-il évolué avec le projet DOMO et les nouveaux espaces ?
3. Le projet DOMO et, en particulier, les nouveaux espaces de travail ont introduit plusieurs changements (*clean-desk*, organisation du travail, règles de vie, etc.). En quoi ceux-ci ont-ils modifié votre perception de l'identité d'Ores ?
4. Comment définiriez-vous l'identité d'Ores (le « qui sommes-nous ») ? D'après vous, en quoi la transformation des espaces de travail a-t-elle modifié l'identité d'Ores ?

Clôture de l'entretien

1. Nous arrivons à la fin de l'entretien. Y a-t-il quelque chose que vous souhaiteriez ajouter ? Avez-vous des questions ?

5. Appendix 5: interview guide for the administrative employees. Second version

What is the role of the office in the construction of an organisation's identity?

Guide d'entretien – séquence inversée après le 11.04.17

Avant l'entretien

1. Remercier pour le temps accordé
2. Présenter l'objectif de l'entretien
3. Rappeler les modalités de l'entretien (anonymat)

4. Demander l'autorisation pour enregistrer l'entretien (préciser qu'il s'agit d'un moyen de ne rien louper sans se concentrer sur ses notes)

Thème A – Présentation du travailleur et de l'organisation

1. Pourriez-vous vous présenter et présenter votre parcours professionnel ainsi que votre rôle au sein d'Ores ?
2. Pourriez-vous m'expliquer comment Ores est structuré (e.g. services, hiérarchie) ?

Thème B – Lien à l'organisation et perception de l'identité organisationnelle d'Ores

1. Pourriez-vous me parler de la société Ores ? Quels termes utiliseriez-vous pour décrire Ores ?
2. Comment qualifieriez-vous un « bon travailleur d'Ores » ? Comment est-il ou serait-il ?
3. Pour vous, que signifie « être membre d'Ores » ?

Thème C – Projet DOMO (axe bâtiment en particulier)

1. Pouvez-vous m'expliquer comment a émergé le projet DOMO, et en quoi il consiste ? Comment le projet DOMO vous a-t-il été présenté ?
2. Avez-vous été impliqué dans ce projet ? À l'origine, quel était le but/l'intention du projet DOMO et du nouveau bâtiment ? Cela correspond-il à la réalité ?
3. De manière globale, quel est votre avis sur le projet DOMO et le nouveau bâtiment ? Cela a-t-il évolué au fil des mois depuis 09/2015 ?

Thème D – Organisation du travail et vie dans les nouveaux espaces

1. Comment ces nouveaux espaces de travail ont-ils modifié votre organisation du travail, par rapport à Tournai ?
2. Pour vous, quels sont les changements principaux qui sont intervenus suite au déménagement ?
3. Depuis sa mise en place, dans quelle mesure le projet DOMO a-t-il modifié les valeurs (ou la culture) de la société ? Concernant les valeurs Ores, d'après vous, y a-t-il un lien entre ces valeurs et le nouveau bâtiment ?
4. Comment décririez-vous le travailleur idéal dans ce nouvel environnement de travail ? Quelles sont les règles de vie dans ce nouveau bâtiment ? En quoi sont-elles différentes d'avant ? Qui a édicté ces règles ? Comment cela se passe-t-il si un travailleur ne respecte pas les règles ?

Thème E – Changement dans le lien à l'entreprise et la perception de l'identité organisationnelle d'Ores

Faire un retour sur le début de l'entretien

1. Le projet DOMO et, en particulier, les nouveaux espaces de travail ont introduit plusieurs changements (*clean-desk*, organisation du travail, règles de vie, etc.). En quoi ceux-ci ont-ils modifié votre perception de la société Ores (de son identité) ?
2. Ces changements ont-ils modifié votre attachement à la société ? En quoi ?

Clôture de l'entretien

1. Nous arrivons à la fin de l'entretien. Y a-t-il quelque chose que vous souhaiteriez ajouter ? Avez-vous des questions ?

6. Appendix 6: interview guide for the administrative employees. Third version.

What is the role of the office in the construction of an organisation's identity?

Guide d'entretien – V3 après le 24.04.17

Avant l'entretien

1. Remercier pour le temps accordé
2. Présenter l'objectif de l'entretien
3. Rappeler les modalités de l'entretien (anonymat)
4. Demander l'autorisation pour enregistrer l'entretien (préciser qu'il s'agit d'un moyen de ne rien louper sans se concentrer sur ses notes)

Thème A – Présentation du travailleur et de l'organisation

1. Pourriez-vous vous présenter et présenter votre parcours professionnel ainsi que votre rôle au sein d'Ores ?
2. Pourriez-vous m'expliquer comment Ores est structuré (e.g. services, hiérarchie) ?

Thème B – Lien à l'organisation et perception de l'identité organisationnelle d'Ores

1. Pourriez-vous me parler de la société Ores ? Quels termes utiliseriez-vous pour décrire Ores ?
2. Comment qualifieriez-vous un « bon travailleur d'Ores » ? Comment est-il ou serait-il ?
3. Pour vous, que signifie « être membre d'Ores » ?

Thème C – Projet DOMO (axe bâtiment en particulier)

1. Pouvez-vous m'expliquer comment a émergé le projet DOMO, et en quoi il consiste ? Comment le projet DOMO vous a-t-il été présenté ?
2. Avez-vous été impliqué dans ce projet ? À l'origine, quel était le but/l'intention du projet DOMO et du nouveau bâtiment ? Cela correspond-il à la réalité ?
3. De manière globale, quel est votre avis sur le projet DOMO et le nouveau bâtiment ? Cela a-t-il évolué au fil des mois depuis 09/2015 ?

Thème D – Organisation du travail et vie dans les nouveaux espaces

1. Quand vous êtes arrivé(e) dans ce nouveau bâtiment, comment avez-vous fait pour savoir comment travailler et vous comporter ?
2. Comment ces nouveaux espaces de travail ont-ils modifié votre organisation du travail, par rapport à Tournai ?
3. Pour vous, quels sont les changements principaux qui sont intervenus suite au déménagement ?
4. Depuis sa mise en place, dans quelle mesure le projet DOMO a-t-il modifié les valeurs (ou la culture) de la société ? Concernant les valeurs Ores, d'après vous, y a-t-il un lien entre ces valeurs et le nouveau bâtiment ?
5. Comment décririez-vous le travailleur idéal dans ce nouvel environnement de travail ? Quelles sont les règles de vie dans ce nouveau bâtiment ? En quoi sont-elles différentes d'avant ? Qui a édicté ces règles ? Comment cela se passe-t-il si un travailleur ne respecte pas les règles ?

Thème E – Changement dans le lien à l'entreprise et la perception de l'identité organisationnelle d'Ores

Faire un retour sur le début de l'entretien

1. Le projet DOMO et, en particulier, les nouveaux espaces de travail ont introduit plusieurs changements (*clean-desk*, organisation du travail, règles de vie, etc.). En quoi ceux-ci ont-ils modifié votre perception de la société Ores (de son identité) ?
2. Ces changements ont-ils modifié votre attachement à la société ? En quoi ?

Clôture de l'entretien

1. Nous arrivons à la fin de l'entretien. Y a-t-il quelque chose que vous souhaiteriez ajouter ? Avez-vous des questions ?

7. Appendix 7: interview guide for the employees with a technical background. First version.

What is the role of the office in the construction of an organisation's identity?

Guide d'entretien – Agents de terrain

Avant l'entretien

1. Remercier pour le temps accordé
2. Présenter l'objectif de l'entretien
3. Rappeler les modalités de l'entretien (anonymat)
4. Demander l'autorisation pour enregistrer l'entretien (préciser qu'il s'agit d'un moyen de ne rien louper sans se concentrer sur ses notes)

Thème A – Présentation du travailleur et de l'organisation

1. Pourriez-vous vous présenter et présenter votre parcours professionnel ainsi que votre rôle au sein d'Ores ?
2. Pourriez-vous m'expliquer comment Ores est structuré (e.g. services, hiérarchie) ?

Thème B – Lien à l'organisation et perception de l'identité organisationnelle d'Ores

1. Pourriez-vous me parler de la société Ores ? Quels termes utiliseriez-vous pour décrire Ores ?
2. Comment qualifieriez-vous un « bon travailleur d'Ores » ? Comment est-il ou serait-il ?
3. Pour vous, que signifie « être membre d'Ores » ?

Thème C – Projet DOMO (axe bâtiment en particulier)

1. Pouvez-vous m'expliquer comment a émergé le projet DOMO, et en quoi il consiste ? Comment le projet DOMO vous a-t-il été présenté ?
2. Avez-vous été impliqué dans ce projet ? À l'origine, quel était le but/l'intention du projet DOMO et du nouveau bâtiment ? Cela correspond-il à la réalité ?
3. De manière globale, quel est votre avis sur le projet DOMO et le nouveau bâtiment ? Cela a-t-il évolué au fil des mois depuis 09/2015 ?

Thème D – Organisation du travail et vie dans les nouveaux espaces

1. À quelle fréquence et à quelle occasion êtes-vous amené à travailler dans ces espaces de travail ? Comment cela se passait-il à Tournai ? En quoi ce changement d'espace a-t-il modifié votre organisation du travail ?
2. Pour vous, quels sont les changements principaux qui sont intervenus suite au déménagement ?
3. Depuis sa mise en place, dans quelle mesure le projet DOMO a-t-il modifié les valeurs (ou la culture) de la société ? Concernant les valeurs Ores, d'après vous, y a-t-il un lien entre ces valeurs et le nouveau bâtiment ?
4. Comment décririez-vous le travailleur idéal dans ce nouvel environnement de travail ? Quelles sont les règles de vie dans ce nouveau bâtiment ? En quoi sont-elles différentes d'avant ? Qui a édicté ces règles ? Comment cela se passe-t-il si un travailleur ne respecte pas les règles ?

Thème E – Changement dans le lien à l'entreprise et la perception de l'identité organisationnelle d'Ores

Faire un retour sur le début de l'entretien

1. Le projet DOMO et, en particulier, les nouveaux espaces de travail ont introduit plusieurs changements (*clean-desk*, organisation du travail, règles de vie, etc.). En quoi ceux-ci ont-ils modifié votre perception de la société Ores (de son identité) ?
2. Ces changements ont-ils modifié votre attachement à la société ? En quoi ?

Clôture de l'entretien

1. Nous arrivons à la fin de l'entretien. Y a-t-il quelque chose que vous souhaiteriez ajouter ? Avez-vous des questions ?

8. Appendix 8: interview guide for the employees with a technical background. Second version.

What is the role of the office in the construction of an organisation's identity?

Guide d'entretien – Agents de terrain (V2)

Avant l'entretien

1. Remercier pour le temps accordé
2. Présenter l'objectif de l'entretien
3. Rappeler les modalités de l'entretien (anonymat)
4. Demander l'autorisation pour enregistrer l'entretien (préciser qu'il s'agit d'un moyen de ne rien louper sans se concentrer sur ses notes)

Thème A – Présentation du travailleur et de l'organisation

1. Pourriez-vous vous présenter et présenter votre parcours professionnel ainsi que votre rôle au sein d'Ores ?
2. Pourriez-vous m'expliquer comment Ores est structuré (e.g. services, hiérarchie) ?

Thème B – Lien à l'organisation et perception de l'identité organisationnelle d'Ores

1. Pourriez-vous me parler de la société Ores ? Quels termes utiliseriez-vous pour décrire Ores ?
2. Comment qualifieriez-vous un « bon travailleur d'Ores » ? Comment est-il ou serait-il ?
3. Pour vous, que signifie « être membre d'Ores » ?

Thème C – Projet DOMO (axe bâtiment en particulier)

1. Pouvez-vous m'expliquer comment a émergé le projet DOMO, et en quoi il consiste ? Comment le projet DOMO vous a-t-il été présenté ?
2. Avez-vous été impliqué dans ce projet ? À l'origine, quel était le but/l'intention du projet DOMO et du nouveau bâtiment ? Cela correspond-il à la réalité ?
3. De manière globale, quel est votre avis sur le projet DOMO et le nouveau bâtiment ? Cela a-t-il évolué au fil des mois depuis 09/2015 ?

Thème D – Organisation du travail et vie dans les nouveaux espaces

1. Les premières fois où vous êtes venu(e) travailler dans ce bâtiment, comment avez-vous fait pour savoir comment travailler et vous comporter ?
2. À quelle fréquence et à quelle occasion êtes-vous amené à travailler dans ces espaces de travail ? Comment cela se passait-il à Tournai ? En quoi ce changement d'espace a-t-il modifié votre organisation du travail ?
3. Pour vous, quels sont les changements principaux qui sont intervenus suite au déménagement ?
4. Depuis sa mise en place, dans quelle mesure le projet DOMO a-t-il modifié les valeurs (ou la culture) de la société ? Concernant les valeurs Ores, d'après vous, y a-t-il un lien entre ces valeurs et le nouveau bâtiment ?
5. Comment décririez-vous le travailleur idéal dans ce nouvel environnement de travail ? Quelles sont les règles de vie dans ce nouveau bâtiment ? En quoi sont-elles différentes d'avant ? Qui a édicté ces règles ? Comment cela se passe-t-il si un travailleur ne respecte pas les règles ?

Thème E – Changement dans le lien à l'entreprise et la perception de l'identité organisationnelle d'Ores

Faire un retour sur le début de l'entretien

1. Le projet DOMO et, en particulier, les nouveaux espaces de travail ont introduit plusieurs changements (*clean-desk*, organisation du travail, règles de vie, etc.). En quoi ceux-ci ont-ils modifié votre perception de la société Ores (de son identité) ?
2. Ces changements ont-ils modifié votre attachement à la société ? En quoi ?

Clôture de l'entretien

1. Nous arrivons à la fin de l'entretien. Y a-t-il quelque chose que vous souhaiteriez ajouter ? Avez-vous des questions ?

9. Appendix 9: Sections, themes, sub-themes and definitions

Sections	Themes	Sub-themes	Definitions
DOMO project	Purposes and content	General purpose of DOMO	Description of the official and perceived objectives of the DOMO project, as well as various aspects of its implementation (e.g. rules of life).
		Rules of living	Current, implicit and explicit, rules of living.
		Trust-based management	Description of the type of management expected by the term "trust-based management".
		Teleworking and working on another site	Official rules surrounding the practice of teleworking and work on another site.
	Processes	Definition of the rules of living	Description of how the rules of life were formulated and communicated.
		Historical background of the project	Description of the genesis of the DOMO project.
	Perception of the project	Leuze building	Workers' opinion of the new building.
		Misfit with *ORES* mind-set	Expression of a feeling of adequacy or inadequacy of the DOMO project with the mentality of ORES WaPi.
		Misfit with the technical core business	Expression of a feeling of adequacy or inadequacy of the DOMO project with the ORES company and its professions.
		Embodiment of a corporate evolution	Perception that the DOMO project embodies an evolution of ORES.
		Project at the service of the company branding	Perception that the DOMO project is a trend or a marketing project.
	Appropriation of the project	Spaces organisation	Rules and principles, explicit or implicit, explaining the organisation of the different spaces.
		Spaces use	Rules and principles, explicit or implicit, explaining the use of the different spaces.

		(Im)mobility	Practices and reasons for mobility and immobility in the workspace.
		Work-to-rule	Cues of exact execution of rules at the expense of work organisation, deliberately.
The office	Material dimension before		Physical description of the workspaces used by the different categories of workers in the previous ORES building (in Tournai or on another site).
	Material dimension after		Physical description of the workspaces of the ORES building in Leuze.
	Management dimension after		Official and perceived objectives of the introduction of the new workspaces of the ORES Leuze building.
	Symbolic dimension after	De-personalisation	Perception of the new spaces as impersonal.
		Feeling of imposition	Perception of the rules as coercive.
		Surveillance	Description of a sense of supervision and associated (spatial and non-spatial) monitoring practices.
Labour organisation	Labour organisation before		Description of how the work was done in the previous ORES building (e.g. division of labour, procedures, coordination, etc.).
	Labour organisation before after	Transformation of the interpersonal relations	Modification of intra- and inter-service informal relations.
		Work conditions	Description of changes in working conditions.
		Digitalisation and computerisation of work	Description of a computerisation of work.
		Transparency and acceleration of work	Description of a job visibility, and an increased speed in the work.
	Ideal worker		Description of what would be the ideal worker for the ORES company (and the current organisation in DOMO) in terms of behaviours, knowledge, etc.
Management	Type and practices of management before		Description of the type of management and associated practices in the previous ORES building.

	Type and practices of management after	Decompartmentalisation	Cues of a proximity management.
		Maintenance of a vertical management	Cues of maintaining an authoritarian and pyramidal management.
		Attempts of trust-based management	Cues of the introduction of trust-based management, and its effects.
ORES	Organisational identity	Discourses about the organisational identity	Description of the different discourses on the identity of the organisation, that is to say on what characterises and distinguishes it.
		Organisational identity before	Description of what constituted the identity of the organisation before the DOMO project and in the previous work organisation.
		Organisational identity after	Description of the new / evolving organisational identity from the DOMO project.
	Organisational image		Representation that workers have of the image that ORES has with external stakeholders.
	Company evolution	Company modernisation and privatisation	Indices of a modernisation of the company, in its procedures and its image.
		Disappearance of the technical core business	Expression of a feeling of loss of the technical core business.

10. Appendix 10: Categories, sub-categories and definitions

Categories	Sub-categories	Definition
Identity mimicry		Cue that, through the DOMO project, the organisation tries to appropriate the codes specific to other organisations.
Adhesion in the name of a corporate and individual salvation		Cue of the need to change the organisation and work organisation in order to sustain employment and the sector of ORES.
Reject for identity denial	Misknowledge of the technical modernity	Cue of a lack of knowledge of what, in the work organisation of the technical positions of ORES, already constitutes the identity prospected.
	Concealing of the technical positions	Cue of a rejection of what constitutes the core business and roots of ORES.
Tensions between speech and work and management practices	Ambivalence of the control / trust ratio	Cue of a lack of understanding of the discourse on trust-based management, and the management practices in place.
	Tension between the preservation of individual and collective success	Cue of a difficulty in finding a balance between collaboration for the benefit of the collective, and the preservation of individual performance.
Resistance manifestations	Reaffirmation of the technical identity	Attempts to materially reaffirm the technical identity of ORES.
	Staged stupidity	Respect of the rules with the purpose to show their unfounded and unnecessary nature.