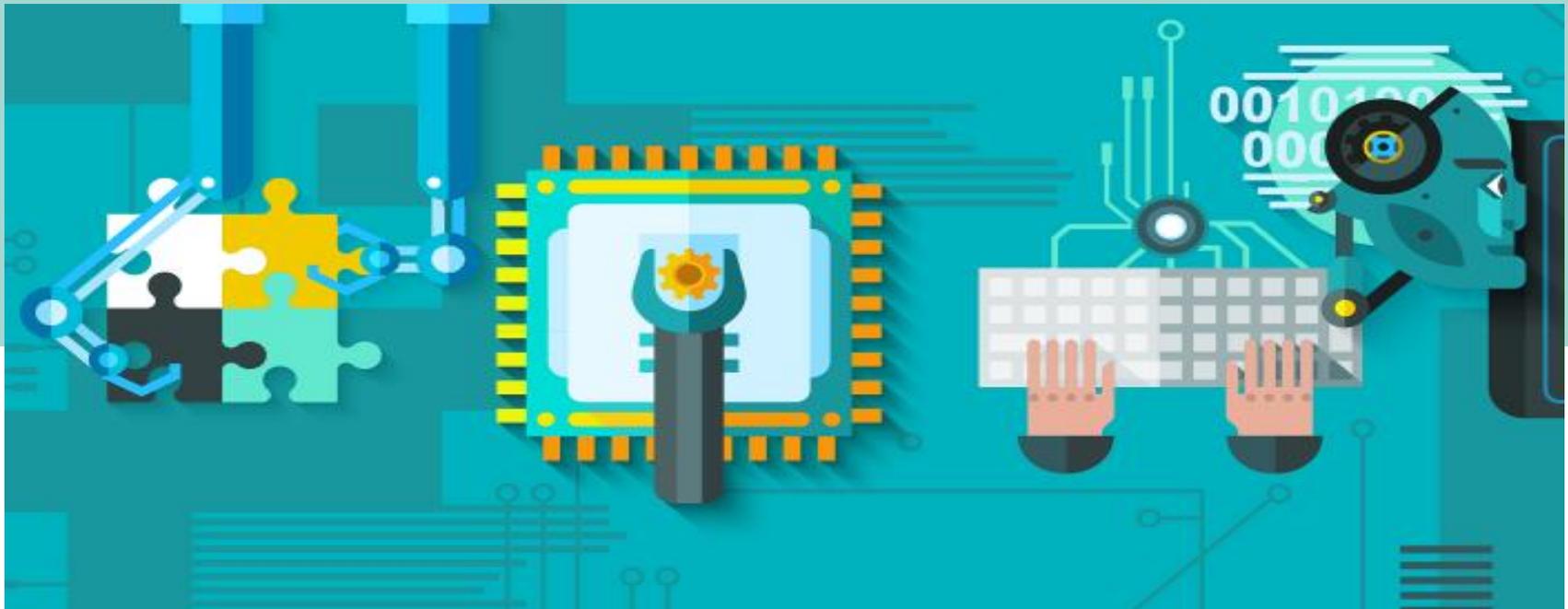


# Social Conflict and Control in Digital Capitalism

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DECODE Symposium: Beyond Surveillance Capitalism: Reclaiming Digital Sovereignty,  
16.-17. October 2018



# The dark possibility: The Big Other (Zuboff)

- Big Other: “[A] ubiquitous networked institutional regime that records, modifies, and commodifies everyday experience from toasters to bodies, communication to thought, all with a view to establishing new pathways to monetization and profit.” (Zuboff 2015)
  - The Big Other is everywhere, no routes of escape
  - Behaviouristic control through Big Data: Paves the way for anticipatory conformity
  - Logical conclusion: the end of reciprocity and solidarity and resistance
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# Cybernetic Capitalism



Cybernetics: „Science of Communication and Control“ (Norbert Wiener)  
Data – Feedback Loops – Self Regulation

Big Data: Cold War fantasies of control via data and communication  
should finally be realized

Digital Capitalism: Digital Production Regime: Merger of Production, Distribution, Information and Control in a unified system.

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# Limits of Control

## History of Capitalism is the History of Control Models

- From direct control to the governance of subjectivities today
- New control forms always met new forms of resistance
- Alternatives had elective affinities to the form of control

## Limits

- No mode of control was universal and complete
- And never will be - every technical form of control is contingent
- The practice of control mechanisms render the resources of dissent

## Decline of Solidarity or New Struggles?



### **The Strategy of Platform Companies:**

- Atomistic Work Organisation
  - Tracking and Permanent Evaluation by Algorithms
  - „Automatic“ Management (no physical supervision)
-

# New Struggles – The Example of Food Delivery

## Creating a workers community:

- Informal *Meeting Points*
- Informal *chat groups* for organizing
- Beverly Silver: conflicts follow capital mobility
- Example UK: in 2017 42% more working days have been lost in the Food Delivery sector compared to the national average
- Example UK: McStrike on October 5th – Delivery Sector Strike including McDonalds-Workers
- *Transnational* strikes reflect the transnational character of the social and technical production regime



# The big other possibility: Big Data Socialism/Democratic Cybernetics

- Neoliberalism is the project of eliminating Imagination of our political thinking.
- Socialist calculation debate: Von Mises, Hayek: Socialism is not feasible, because central planning could not match the effectiveness of decentral decisions
- Big Data Socialism:
  - Technology as a social possibility
  - Machine Learning of the development of human needs
  - Democratic Control of Big Data and “smart“ decentralized decision making

