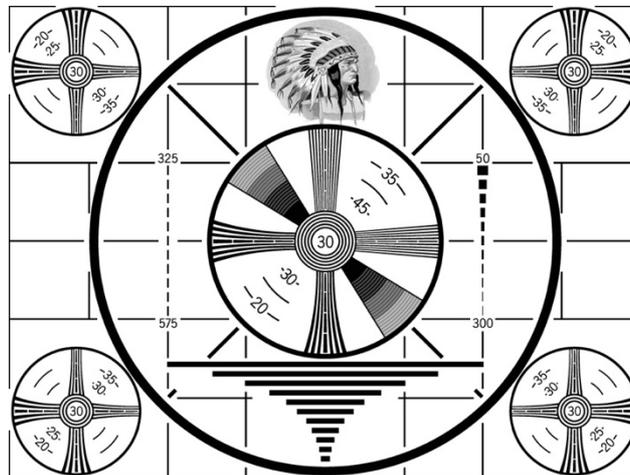# Put to the Test: Critical Evaluations of Testing

International workshop, University of Warwick
10 and 11 December 2018

With: **Jonathan Bach** (New School for Social Research), **Nathan Coombs** (University of Edinburgh), **Francisca Grommé** (Goldsmiths), **Noortje Marres** (University of Warwick), **Daniel Neyland** (Goldsmiths), **Joan Robinson** (Columbia University), **Willem Schinkel** (Erasmus University), **Luciana de Souza Leão** (Columbia University), **Antoine Hennion** (Mines ParisTech/CNRS), **David Stark** (University of Warwick/Columbia University), **Martin Tironi** (Catholic University de Chile), **Janet Vertesi** (Princeton University).

This workshop brings together established scholars and junior researchers from across science & technology studies (STS), sociology and related fields to discuss new topics and problems in the study of testing in society, and to outline a research agenda for the critical evaluation of testing.

Topic: A test can be defined as an orchestrated attempt to reveal an entity's potentially unknown properties or capacities. A driving exam, a drug trial and a planetary probe are all procedures designed to ascertain the properties of some entity. However, while tests and testing are well-established social forms, the role of test and testing in culture, economy and politics seems to be expanding. With stress testing of financial institutions, smart city experimentation, beta-testing in software development, pilot projects in crime control, and randomized controlled trials in economic development, the protocols, grammars, and logics of testing are becoming increasingly prominent as ways of intervening in society, managing organisations, and enacting public life.

In an age of digital innovation, testing seems to have become ubiquitous, as tests are routinely deployed as a marketing device, a form of governance, or an everyday practice to evaluate the self. Indeed, some have argued that we are increasingly "governed by pilot" (Grommé, 2015). What are the social and political consequences of ubiquitous testing? What are its implications for relations between innovation, organisations, public politics, and everyday life? And what remains of the potential for experimentation as an emancipatory form?

Format: For this event, scholars whose work has already contributed to the social study of testing, have been invited to work through the above wider questions through an examination of exemplars. The workshop will take the form of structured discussion of working papers.

Organised by: Noortje Marres and David Stark (Centre for Interdisciplinary Methodologies, University of Warwick)

Participation: We have a limited number of places available for this workshop, and places will therefore be allocated through an application process. Consideration will be given to research interests as related to the event, as well as distribution of career trajectory.

Applications will close 15 November, 17.00 GMT. Decisions will be communicated by the end of November 2018.

Please apply to attend at the following page:
https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/cim/events/put-to-the-test/workshop-registration

For queries, please contact U.Martin@warwick.ac.uk