

Call for Papers

for the 8th international workshop on critical studies of project based work, project management and the projectification of society and life at large

We are pleased to announce the Call for Papers for the 8th Making Projects Critical Workshop, to be held at Newcastle University on January 21st-22nd 2016.

The workshop will be hosted by the Newcastle University Business School and KITE (Centre for Knowledge, Innovation, Technology and Enterprise), in cooperation with the Institute of International Management Practice, Anglia Ruskin University; the Department of Business and Management, Faculty of Business and Law, University of the West of England; Manchester Business School, University of Manchester; and School of Industrial Engineering and Management, KTH Royal Institute of Technology.

Organising committee:

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Background

'Making Projects Critical' is the title of series of international workshops intended to provide a forum for research from a wide range of critical perspectives relating to all aspects of projects, including project management, project based organising and the 'projectification' of society. Such critique finds inspiration in the writings of a range of authors, drawing, among others, on Labour Process Theory, Critical Theory, Actor Network Theory (and post-ANT), critical Environmentalism, Feminism, Post-Modernism, moral-philosophical pedagogy and other traditions broadly related to Critical Management Studies. Through the workshop, we hope to highlight and, where possible, remedy the theoretical and methodological limitations of traditional conceptions of projects and project management. In particular, the intention is to draw upon wider intellectual resources than the instrumental rationality, quantitative and positivist methodologies and technicist solutions, which have been used traditionally to understand, implement and control organisational projects, and to reflect on the implications of alternative perspectives for project management practice.

The first seven workshops have resulted in a themed stream at the 2011 CMS Conference and have produced two major publications:

- *Making Projects Critical* (2006), an edited volume with 16 chapters, eds. Hodgson, D.E. and Cicmil, S. Palgrave: Basingstoke, UK and New York, USA;
- 'Project Management behind the Façade', a special issue of *ephemera: theory & politics* with 7 contributions <http://www.ephemerajournal.org/issue/project-management-behind-façade>

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The broad range of themes addressed in past workshops include issues of power and domination in project settings, ethics and moral responsibility within projects, tensions between standardisation and creativity in project organisations, the limits to projectification and the dysfunctions of project rationality. Contributions on any of these themes or related critical topics drawing on pragmatic conceptualisations, empirical ethnography, narratology or concrete case studies continue to be welcome.

We particularly welcome papers that employ critical perspectives to analyse and evaluate the practice of project management and decision making as evidenced in the approval, governance and control of project work and project workers, and which seek to bridge the gap between abstract theorising and the *practice* of project management. We would like to encourage papers addressing new contexts within which organisations and organising are increasingly structured around the project form. A growing area of interest is the extent to which principles and practices of project management that have evolved in a commercial or business context are being translated into non-commercial contexts in the public and third sectors and whether this involves processes of adaptation or the emergence of new approaches to the management of projects that reflect the realities of different settings.

For MPC8 we would like to consider ways in which a richer, creative dialogue between critical perspectives and the conventional rationalistic view of project management can be developed. In order that the various critiques of the conventional project management body of knowledge can be made meaningful and useful to those such as project managers who work closely with, and struggle with the demands of, project-based organisation and who are trying to find fairer, more acceptable and participative/democratic ways of coping with their roles, we invite authors to consider the implications of their analyses for practice and practicing project managers. What are the reactions of practitioners to the 'making projects critical' agenda?

Papers which contribute to this debate are particularly encouraged. In an era of increasing emphasis on relevance and impact, what is the real contribution provided by the adoption of critical perspectives to the practice and lived experience of project managers and others engaged in project-based activities? Can project studies adopt a critical performativity to facilitate pragmatic interventions and provide alternative ways of organising in projects? In short, what do we *do* with critical project studies?

Submission deadlines and selection process:

- Extended abstracts (2-3 pages including references) required by **September 1st 2015**
- Notification of decision with feedback to authors by **October 16th 2015**
- Full paper submission by **December 18th 2015**

Please send all submissions via e-mail to neil.alderman@ncl.ac.uk with "*MPC8 abstract*" in the subject header. Extended abstracts will be reviewed by the organising committee members and the authors of selected abstracts will be invited to develop their papers for presentation in the workshop. Full and final papers should be between 20 and 25 pages, A4, 1.5 spacing, Arial 12 and written in English.

For all enquiries, please contact Neil Alderman at Newcastle University Business School: neil.alderman@ncl.ac.uk

The format of the workshop will closely follow previous events in the series, with numbers limited to around 35 and papers to be presented over two days. We expect the costs to be similar to previous workshops.

For details of previous MPC conferences, please visit:

<http://www.kth.se/en/itm/inst/indek/mpc7>

<http://www1.uwe.ac.uk/bl/research/bristolleadershipcentre/research/currentandrecentprojects/makingprojectscritical.aspx>

For information and discussions on this and other MPC events, please see the "Making Projects Critical" LinkedIn group:

www.linkedin.com/groups?about=&gid=4002024&trk=anet Ug grppro