

Special Issue Call for Papers

The Politics of Projects in Technology-Intensive Work

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Projects represent the habitual context for much of the work associated with new technology; across a range of industries, the development and implementation of new technology is typically organised as a project, planned and controlled by project managers and project management methodologies, and often subject to project management technologies which monitor and report on progress against a schedule and a plan. Projects are the standard, even universal mode of organisation used to develop, enhance, implement or deliver new technologies through a time-bounded collective endeavour. The creation of the latest Xbox or PlayStation blockbuster, the design of the latest iPhone or the implementation of an ERP system typically relies upon practices, language, tools and methodology associated with the burgeoning field of project management. Indeed, in many technical fields, it is difficult to differentiate management as an institution from project management. For many technical experts across a range of industries, project work is inevitable if they want to exercise their expertise, and project management represents the only alternative career ladder to ever-increasing technical specialisation. Adopting project management, as a role or as a set of responsibilities alongside technical work, frequently requires technical professionals to learn and embrace a detailed set of project management methodologies for planning, monitoring and control of their own work and that of others, enshrined in globally standardised project management bodies of knowledge. Moreover, the enactment of project management frequently relies heavily on various technologies to enact control, from Gantt charts to Microsoft Project and more sophisticated tools, increasingly embedded in information systems.

In light of this, it is little surprise that much of the research into project organisations and project management from the earliest studies (Wilemon and Cicero, 1970; Morris, 1987) derives from studies of technical work, including R&D and new product development, typically in engineering, construction or IT. Only recently has research paid serious attention to the political consequences of project work; the pressure of precarious and discontinuous employment (Eskinsmyth, 2002; Koch, 2004), the multiple demands of multi-project work and leadership (Garrick and Clegg, 2001; Zika-Viktorsson et al, 2006), the transfer of organisational and managerial responsibilities onto individual workers (Hodgson, 2002), the implications of such conditions for work-life balance and gender discrimination (Lindgren and Packendorff, 2006; Styhre, 2011) and the larger political consequences of the rise of project management (Clegg and Courpasson, 2004). In many settings, projects also represent a 'state of exception' (Agamben, 2005; Gregg, 2011) where time and resource pressures normalise otherwise unacceptable working conditions.

This special issue of *New Technology, Work and Employment* (NTWE) seeks to explore key issues relating to the impact and implications of project work in technology-intensive settings, informed by recent work in *Critical Project Studies* (Hodgson, 2002, 2004; Hodgson and Cicmil, 2006; Cicmil et al, 2009). The aim is to draw together and build upon critical work examining the boundaries between management and technical work in project settings (Metcalfe, 1997; Barrett, 2001; Howcroft and Wilson, 2003), implications of the professionalisation of the project management role (Marks and Scholarios, 2007; Paton et al, 2013), the disciplinary effects of project work (Araújo, 2009; Gleadle et al, 2012), as well as broader work and employment issues relating to projects and project management in this area.

We are particularly interested in papers adopting a critical lens to address the following themes;

- PROJECT WORK: The political consequences for individuals of the practices, language, tools and methodology of project management in technology-intensive work.
- PROJECT MANAGEMENT AS CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT FORM: Political implications of short term work, the dual career ladder and the professionalisation of project management.
- PROJECT MANAGEMENT CONTROL TECHNOLOGIES: Critical analyses of the implementation of project management tools, including resistance to and transformation of such tools.

Other possibilities are encouraged and we invite potential contributors to discuss their ideas with the guest editor, by contacting in the first instance Damian Hodgson (damian.hodgson@mbs.ac.uk).

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Articles should be between 6,000 and 8,000 words. All articles should be accompanied by a 150 word abstract. All submissions to the journal must be submitted online at <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ntwe>.

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