The 2nd workshop on

Making Projects Critical:
'Projectification' and its Discontents

13th-14th December 2004
St Matthias Campus, University of the West of England, Bristol

organised by

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http://www.uwe.ac.uk/bbs/research/research/mpc

Call for Papers

There is emerging evidence from several sources of an increasing reliance upon projects as an alternative to bureaucratic and hierarchical means of organising (Pettigrew, 2002) which has been linked by some to the move toward post-bureaucratic, even post-modern organisations (Clegg, 1990; Heckscher and Donnellon, 1994). At the same time, for many writers such evidence appears to support those writers who first drew attention to the 'projectification of society' (Midler, 1995; Lundin and Söderholm, 1998) to encapsulate the apparent colonisation of all quarters of life by project-related principles, rules, techniques and procedures to form a new 'iron cage' of project rationality. For many, then, 'the project' may be seen as a defining feature of late modernity, reflecting shifts towards discontinuity, flexibility, insecurity and impermanence across both developed and developing societies. The attraction of 'projectification' lies in its promise to deliver both 'controllability and adventure' (Sahlin-Anderson, 2002) and at the same time 'devolution and accountability'.

In the 12 months since the last Making Projects Critical workshop, the debate on the future of project management and our understandings of projects has shown signs of opening up, with an increased willingness from several in the field to re-examine taken-for-granted assumptions underpinning current practice. In large part, it is concerns about the poor performance of project management *on its own terms*, and the enduring failure to deliver projects 'on time, on budget, and to specification', which have motivated this reassessment of the discipline. However, such criticisms may be seen as locked into the same instrumental rationality which has characterised the discipline so far, focusing almost exclusively upon the (in)effectiveness and (in)efficiency of projects as currently organised.

We wish in this workshop to move beyond this functionalist position to consider the other side of projects more often neglected in this debate – the broader consequences of projects for those who work within projects, those who are directly affected by projects and indeed those who manage projects. On the one hand, there are strong arguments that project working typically leads to the removal of discretion and autonomy from skilled and committed employees and a tendency to deskill project workers of all levels. At the same time, the intensity of project working has major human impacts within and beyond the workplace, which are often ignored or obscured in the search for greater project efficiency. At the same time, the increased reliance upon projects in the public sector and in international

development can be argued to have had deleterious effects upon representation and local democracy, transplanting a neo-liberal form of 'control at a distance' in a broad range of contexts.

This workshop is intended to encourage research which applies **critical** perspectives to understand the implications of project management and project organisations for work in the contemporary workplace and for society more broadly. Among the broad range of themes we wish to address in the workshop, issues of power and domination, control and resistance, autonomy and surveillance, figure strongly. Through the workshop, we hope to both highlight and break down the theoretical and methodological limitations of traditional conceptions of projects, project-based organisations/organising and Project Management. We would welcome abstracts from all critical perspectives – Marxist, feminist, labour process, post-structuralist, post-colonialist – without wishing to prescribe a 'critical' approach. In addition to work on projects in 'traditional' sectors such as engineering, construction and IS/IT, we would particularly invite abstracts dealing with the impact of projects in the public sector, international development, and change management.

Specific themes include;

- Discipline and Control in Project Teams
- Critical Approaches to Project Management Education
- Project Managers and Professionalisation
- Surveillance and Control in Virtual Projects
- Complexity versus Order in Projects
- Projects and Governmentality
- The Place of Projects in New Public Management
- Gender, Project Work and Project Rationality

Work emanating from the previous workshop is to be published in a forthcoming text by Palgrave, and we would also hope to develop publication possibilities based on the themes and contents of this workshop.

International Invited Speakers: **David Courpasson, EM Lyon**
Stuart Green, University of Reading
Donncha Kavanagh, University College Cork

The cost of attendance will be £150 (€215) per person, which includes lunches, dinner and refreshments. As attendance will be limited to 30 persons, please book early. The registration form, as well as full details of recommended hotels in Bristol, can be found on the workshop website at;

http://www.uwe.ac.uk/bbs/research/research/mpc

Any other queries regarding the organisation of the workshop, registration or accommodation, please contact Fiona Watt at Fiona.Watt@uwe.ac.uk. Any queries regarding the theme or the papers, please contact either;

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Making Projects Critical 2: Projectification and its Discontents

Bristol Business School, UWE   *December 13-14th*

	Monday 13th December		*Tuesday 14th December*
	Lady Chapel, H126, St Matthias Campus		Lady Chapel, H126, St Matthias Campus
8:30 AM		8:30 AM	Coffee
9:00 AM		9:00 AM	***Projects and the Production of Corporate Elites in Contemporary Business Firms*** David Courpasson
9:45 AM		9:45 AM	***The Professionalization of Project Management? Training Programmes in Germany*** Eberhardt Keyl
10:30 AM	Coffee and Welcome: Charles Harvey, Dean, BBS	10:30 AM	Coffee
11:00 AM	***Contrasting Project Ontologies*** Donncha Kavanagh and Carol Linehan	11:00 AM	***Supporting Projects, Cannibalizing Firms? The Ambivalent Role of Personal Networks in Project Ecologies*** Gernot Grabher
11:45 AM	***Projects as Emergent Space: Shifting Boundaries of a Multiple Horizon*** Manuela Nocker	11:45 AM	***"Beyond Project Management Rationality" Round Table*** *Discussants:* Mats Engwall, Anders Soderholm and Terry Williams
12:30 PM	LUNCH	12:45 PM	LUNCH
1:30 PM	***What Happens When You Label Something A Project?*** Monica Lindgren and Johann Packendorff	1:45 PM	***Exploring the Impact of an Official Discourse on an Emerging Profession*** Janice Thomas and Pamela Buckle
2:15 PM	***UK Feature Film Units: Extremely Temporary*** Linda Ludwin	2:30 PM	***Pleasing Everyone? Actionable Knowledge and Critical Perspectives in Undergraduate Education*** Sofia Borjesson, Susanne Ollila, Alexander Styhre and Per Svensson
3:00 PM	Coffee	3:15 PM	Round-up/Close
3:30 PM	***Critical Perspectives on Project Management*** Stuart Green	3:30 PM	
4:15 PM	***A Cure That Harms? The Enactment of Project Management in IS Projects*** Paul Brown	4:15 PM	
5:00 PM	***Rethinking Project Management*** Mark Winter and Charles Smith	5:00 PM	
5:30 PM	Close	5:30 PM	
7:30 PM	DINNER (The Glassboat Restaurant, Bristol) http://www.glassboat.co.uk/	7:30 PM	