

## 6th Doctoral Workshop on Critical Management Studies 28-29 March 2017

### Advancing knowledge of alternative organisations

Following the previous meetings held at University of Louvain in 2012, the University of Paris Dauphine in 2013, the University of Montpellier in 2014, the University of Louvain in 2015, EM-Lyon Business School in 2016, this 6th meeting organized by University Paris Est (IRG Lab) aims at gathering the critical community and discussing research mobilizing critical perspectives in management.

In recent years, “alternative” organisations have attracted much interest among many scholars in Critical Management Studies (Cheney *et al.*, 2014; Parker *et al.*, 2007, 2014). Indeed, alternatives to conventional capitalist organisations concretely extend the theoretical project of transformation or critical performativity strongly supported by some researchers in this area (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992; Alvesson and Spicer, 2012; Cheney *et al.*, 2014; Huault *et al.*, 2014; Heller, Huet and Vidaillet, 2013; Roscoe and Chillas, 2014).

Their work focuses on organisations - cooperatives, mutual organisations, associations, foundations, credit unions, etc. – and practices (see Parker *et al.*, 2007, 2014), that potentially pave the way for a more egalitarian and democratic society. Behind their diversity, these studies have the common objectives of deconstructing the “capitalocentric” approach ingrained in mainstream, organisation studies, and of showing that other forms of organisation are possible (Fisher, 2009; Gibson-Graham, 1996, 2006; Parker *et al.*, 2014). The traditional capitalist enterprise ultimately emerges as no more than “only one form of organizing amongst many” (Parker *et al.*, 2007: xiii). One of the main challenges in this project of recovering alternatives is to re-articulate the notion of possibility, and in particular, to counter the famous claim that ‘there is no alternative’, and that any hope of effective change is in vain.

In these studies, particular emphasis is placed on human, social and democratic values (Charterina *et al.* 2007; Cheney *et al.*, 2014; Cheney, 2006; Laville and Glémain, 2009), or on the principles of autonomy, solidarity and responsibility that distinguish alternative organisations from traditional capitalist enterprises (Parker *et al.*, 2014). Alternative organisation studies also draw attention to the heterogeneity of organisational and economic practices and re-conceptualize the economy as an intrinsically heterogeneous space (Healy, 2009) where different or new legal structures can be put in place to pursue other objectives than shareholder value (Segrestin and Hatchuel, 2012). What emerges is a diversity of modes of exchanges, of work design, ownership structures and forms of use, forms of funding or decision-making, and more generally of practices that do not follow the logic of capitalist accumulation, profit maximization and private appropriation. In parallel to these studies of alternatives, recent citizen movements (Podemos, Occupy Wall Street, Nuits Debout, etc.) have extended the critique of neo-liberal capitalism and experimented with new ways of organising the economy and the city.

Studying and theorizing such alternatives is not an easy endeavor. Indeed, these alternatives may have ambivalent relationships with capitalism. Some of the values that are put forward (autonomy, freedom, sharing...) are also those that distinguish the *New Spirit of Capitalism* (Boltanski and Chiapello, 1999), and many of these alternatives suffer from tensions and contradictions. The capacity of capitalism to incorporate its critiques is one of its notable characteristics, and some organisations or practices that started as ‘alternatives’ (e.g. recovered enterprises, Air B’nB, Blablacar, but also ‘new’ organizational practices such as teamwork, empowerment, flat organisations...) have quickly been recuperated. However, it is important not to ‘throw the baby with the bathwater’ if we are not to remain powerless against the depressing idea that ‘there is no alternative’. The challenge lies in the ability to maintain a critical stance on these alternatives, whilst being open to their emancipatory potential

Within the literature on alternatives, the question of the commons has attracted increasing interest. (De Angelis and Harvie, 2014). The commons, understood as a social process of organisation and production or as 'commoning' (Fournier, 2013), not only remain an enduring form of organisation, but also one that has become increasingly at the forefront of political demand. Whilst common regimes are an everyday reality for millions of peasants around the world (Netting, 1997; Ostrom, 1990), the commons are not merely a rural phenomenon (Blomley, 2008). Urban gardens, squats, social centers, or self-managed 'third spaces' are a few examples that demonstrate the increasing resonance that the injunction to 'reclaim the commons' has had in cities (Carlsson, 2008). Under certain conditions, commons prove to be essential spaces for reconstituting social relations and provide an efficient and sustainable ways of managing resources. Commoning, as a process of organising the production and distribution of use, also challenges traditional notions of ownership (Fournier, 2013). Thus bringing the commons within the study of organisation can open up productive avenues for exploring alternatives, and raises several interesting questions: firstly, how to organise in common, through democratic and collective decision-making processes rather than managerial hierarchy (this in turn points to various experiments in self-management); secondly, how to organise for the commons rather than for private appropriation (this raises questions about social justice and environmental sustainability in organising) ; thirdly, how to (re)produce the commons, or common wealth, so that we can take shelter from the market and the process of commodification (this raises questions about the production of use value rather than exchange value, and the importance of relational rather than material goods in constituting the 'good life').

The workshop welcomes papers that are relevant to the CMS stream in general and to the annual topic in particular (on alternatives). The submissions can address some of the questions raised in this call or others that are of interest to critical management scholars. To summarize, papers submitted to this workshop might consider, but should not be limited to, the following issues:

- What are the practices involved in constituting and reproducing organisational alternatives (new forms of ownerships, funding, decision-making, distribution of 'wealth', etc.)?
- How do these practices change the way value is produced, appropriated and distributed? (Relevant questions here could include what constitute 'value', for whom and by whom is it produced, through what processes can use value be sheltered from market encroachment?)
- What are the conditions (for instance: social, economic, institutional arrangements) that enable or hinder the emergence and development of alternatives?
- What are the tensions and contradictions inherent to enacting alternative practices?
- To what extent are alternative practices and organisations really emancipatory? How do we avoid dismissing the experiences of alternative forms or, conversely, how do we avoid mystifying them?

As with previous workshops, this 6th doctoral workshop in critical management studies aims at offering a supportive space of discussion to researchers who intend to position their PhD thesis within CMS. Accordingly, PhD Students and young CMS scholars are invited to submit a theoretical, epistemological or methodological paper, a PhD project, a literature review, an ethnographic or any other kind of study documenting current alternative organisation or illustrating experiments in commoning. Creative and artistic presentations (photograph, video, drawing, etc.) are also welcome.

## PROGRAMME

Several activities will be planned and (co)developed by scholars and doctoral students over the two days:

**Presentation and discussion of doctoral research:** Organized around broad themes such as those highlighted above, the presentations will be supervised by one or more members of the scientific committee (see below). In order to promote constructive discussions, the work of each participant will be distributed in advance within his/her thematic group. A senior researcher as well as a doctoral student within the group will discuss each paper. Because international invited professors may lead some sessions, some doctoral students may be asked to present and discuss their work in English.

**Keynotes:** It is also an opportunity to discuss crosscutting issues related to critical perspectives in management or to examine some of the issues on alternative organizations developed previously.

- **Valérie Fournier** (University of Leicester, UK; author of 'Commoning: on the social organisation of the commons'; and co-editor of '*The Routledge Companion to Alternative Organization*') will discuss how the commons challenge some of the core principles of capitalism (in particular hierarchy and private appropriation) and open up possibilities for alternative forms of organisation.
- **Hélène Picard** (PhD from University Paris-Dauphine, DRM and associated researcher of the OCE Research Center, Emlyon business school). Her dissertation, defended in 2015, was based on an in-depth study of two so-called "liberated companies". Her presentation will focus on: 'Studying the dark sides of managerial "emancipatory" projects: the case of liberated companies in France and Belgium'.
- **Bénédictte Vidaillet** (University of Paris Est Créteil, France) and **Youssef Bousalham** (University of Rouen, France) will develop the concept of 'syntopia' for theorizing a type of space whose main characteristic is that their potential as alternatives lies in the fact that they enable their users to articulate potentially conflicting dimensions (from the viewpoint of capitalism) that are usually present in separate spaces.

**Workshop tables:** Doctoral students will be invited to take part in collective discussions about doing fieldwork in CMS. Young critical scholars will discuss specific themes related to their experience and collect students' issues and questions. Thematic tables will be organized to offer various points of views and allow doctoral students to choose the most relevant one.

**Individual meetings and informal discussions:** In a more informal way, doctoral students will have the opportunity to meet senior scholars individually in order to discuss some elements of their doctoral research. Specific times will also be devoted to formal and informal discussions and debates on critical management perspectives in order to challenge and enrich the approaches and practices of researchers, but also to promote the emergence or consolidation of collective projects involving a critical perspective.

## REGISTRATION AND PRACTICAL ASPECTS

The 2017 doctoral workshop will be held over two days, the 28th and 29th of March, 2017. It will take place in Paris-Créteil at the IAE of Paris Est Créteil University (place de la Porte des champs, Créteil, France; metro line 8, stop at 'Créteil université') and includes a social event at the end of the day on March 28th. To ensure the quality of reviewing and discussion, the number of places will be limited to about twenty doctoral participants.

In order to attend the event, PhD students must have begun their thesis at least six months before the workshop. They have to submit a brief application including a CV (1 page) and an abstract (1.5 pages) of the contribution to be presented. This document of a maximum of 1000 words must mention a research question, a theoretical framework, a methodology and/or expected results.

Applications must be sent to [benedicte.vidaillet@u-pec.fr](mailto:benedicte.vidaillet@u-pec.fr) and [stephan.peze@u-pec.fr](mailto:stephan.peze@u-pec.fr) before November 20, 2016.

On notification of acceptance, PhD students will be invited to submit their full paper written in French or English. Such papers should not exceed 8,000 words (excluding references). In order to plan English sessions, doctoral students should also specify in their applications whether they are willing to present in English or not. In this case, it is strongly recommended that such papers be also written in English. There is no registration fee (but the transport, accommodation and the social event on March 28 will be taken in charge by each participant).

Feel free to contact Bénédicte Vidaillet or Stéphan Pezé in case you have a question!

## **KEY DATE**

November 20, 2016: Submission of applications

December 16, 2016: Notification of acceptance

February 3, 2017: Full paper and final registration

March 28–29, 2017: Meeting in Paris (Créteil)

## **ORGANIZING COMMITTEE**

Coordinators: Bénédicte Vidaillet (University Paris Est Créteil, FR, [benedicte.vidaillet@u-pec.fr](mailto:benedicte.vidaillet@u-pec.fr)) and Stephan Pezé (University Paris Est Créteil, FR, [stephan.peze@u-pec.fr](mailto:stephan.peze@u-pec.fr))

Helène Peton (University Paris Est Créteil, FR, [helene.peton@u-pec.fr](mailto:helene.peton@u-pec.fr))

Florence Allard-Poesi (University Paris Est Créteil, FR, [allard-poesi@u-pec.fr](mailto:allard-poesi@u-pec.fr))

Frédérique Pigeyre (University Paris Est Créteil, FR, [pigeyre@u-pec.fr](mailto:pigeyre@u-pec.fr))

Sylvie Chevrier (University Paris Est Marne-la-vallée, FR, [sylvie.chevrier@u-pem.fr](mailto:sylvie.chevrier@u-pem.fr))

## **SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE**

Nicolas Balas (Université de Montpellier, FR)

Youcef Bousalham (Université de Rouen, FR)

David Courpasson (EM Lyon, FR)

Françoise Dany (EM Lyon, FR)

Pauline Fatien (Menlo College, USA)

Valérie Fournier (University of Leicester, UK)

Olivier Germain (UQAM, CA)

Pierre-Yves Gomez (EM Lyon, FR)

Chris Grey (Royal Holloway University of London, UK)

Isabelle Huault (Université Paris-Dauphine, FR)

Gazi Islam (Grenoble école de management, FR)

Frank Janssen (Université catholique de Louvain, BE)

Maya Leroy (AgroParisTech, FR)

Jérémy Morales (Royal Holloway University of London, UK)

Florence Palpacuer (Université de Montpellier, FR)

Martin Parker (University of Leicester, UK)

Véronique Perret (Université Paris-Dauphine, FR)

Benoît Raveleau (Université Catholique de l'Ouest, FR)

Géraldine Schmidt (IAE Paris, FR)

Blanche Ségrestin (Mines ParisTech, FR)

Amélie Seignour (Université Montpellier, FR)

Laurent Taskin (Université catholique de Louvain, BE)

Corinne Vercher (Université Paris 13, FR)

Hugh Willmott (Cardiff Business School, UK)

Patrizia Zanon (Hasselt University, BE)

## REFERENCES

- Alvesson, M., & Spicer, A. (2012). Critical leadership studies: The case for critical performativity. *Human Relations*, 65(3): 367-390.
- Alvesson, M., & Willmott, H. (1992). On the Idea of Emancipation in Management & Organization Studies. *The Academy of Management Review*, 17(3): 432-464.
- Blomley, N. (2008) Enclosure, Common Rights and the property of the poor. *Social and Legal Studies*, 17(3): 311-331.
- Carlsson, C. 2008. *Nowtopia: How Pirate Programmers, Outlaw Bicyclists and vacant-lot gardeners are inventing the future today*. Oakland: AK Press.
- Charterina J., Albizu, E., & Landeta, J. (2007). The quality of management in Basque companies: Differences existing between cooperative & non-cooperative companies. In: S. Novkovic & V. Sena (eds.): *Advances in Economic Analysis of Participatory & Labor-Managed Firms*, Vol. 10. New York: Elsevier Science, 109–150.
- Cheney, G, Santa Cruz, Peredo, A-M, & Nazareno, E, (2014), Worker cooperatives as an organizational alternative: Challenges, achievements and promise in business governance and ownership, *Organization*, 21(5), 591-603.
- De Angelis, M. and Harvie, D. (2014) The Commons, in M. Parker, G. Cheney, V. Fournier and C. Land (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Alternative Organisation*. London: Routledge.
- Fisher, M. (2009). *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* Ropley: Zero Books.
- Fournier V. (2013), Commoning: on the social organisation of the commons, *M@n@gement*, 16(4): 433-53.
- Gibson-Graham, J. K. (1996). *The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It): A Feminist Critique of Political Economy*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Gibson-Graham, J. K. (2006). *A Postcapitalist Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Heller T., Huet R. and Vidaillet B. (eds), *Communication et organisation : perspectives critiques*, Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2013.
- Huault I, Perret, V and Spicer, A, (2014). Beyond macro- and micro- emancipation: Rethinking emancipation in organization studies, *Organization*, 21(1): 22-49.
- Laville, J., & Glémain, P. (2009). *L'économie sociale & solidaire aux prises avec la gestion*. Desclée de Brower.
- Netting, R. (1997) Unequal Commoners and Uncommon Equity: property and community among smallholder farmers. *The Ecologist*, 27(1): 28-33.
- Ostrom, E. (1990) *Governing the Commons*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Parker M., Cheney G., Fournier V., Land C. (eds) (2014). *The Routledge Companion to Alternative Organization*, London: Routledge.
- Parker, M., Fournier, V., & Reedy, P. (2007). *The dictionary of alternatives: Utopianism & organization*, London: Zed Books.
- Roscoe, P. & Chillias, S. (2014). The state of affairs: critical performativity and the online dating industry. *Organization*, 21(6): 797-820.
- Segrestin, B. & Hatchuel, A. (2012). *Refonder l'entreprise*. Paris: Seuil.