Call for papers
5th Meeting on Critical Management Studies
March 17-18, 2016
EMLYON Business School, France

Deadline for submission: Friday, November 20th, 2015 at CMSLYON2016@gmail.com

[Scholarly] Engagement at Times of Disengagement

Following the previous meetings held at University of Louvain in 2012, the University of Paris Dauphine in 2013, the University of Montpellier in 2014, and the University of Louvain in 2015, this 5th meeting aims at gathering the critical community and discussing research mobilizing critical perspectives in management.

Disengagement has become a central characteristic of today’s workplace. The well-documented disengagement from labour unions and collective action has been coupled with the rise of cynicism (Fleming and Spicer 2003) and the “post-recognition” turn (Fleming 2013). This supposed disengagement contrasts with increasing criticisms of capitalism in media and by post-capitalistic research on alternatives to capitalism (Parker and al. 2014).

Recently, some authors have also suggested that certain forms of disengagement could be understood as political acts that deserve scholarly attention (Fleming 2016; Courpasson 2016) because they can be subversive even if they do not challenge the managerial system of domination. Following this line of thought, today’s employees appear as neither direct opponents to managers, nor compliant adepts of corporate policies. Instead, they seem to mobilize a wide range of tactics, at different moments in their careers, to accommodate for their subcultures, identities, values, interests or beliefs within an overall system that they do neither challenge nor defend.

In parallel, the academic milieu has undergone similar changes. Expressions such as the “erosion of passionate scholarship” (Courpasson 2013) capture the increasing academic cynicism or distancing from actual real-life issues, while urging for more social and environmental engagement. More generally, Critical Management scholars have called for a “performative turn”, seeking “to actively and pragmatically intervene in specific debates about management and encourage progressive forms of management” (Spicer et al 2009: 537). This is done in an ethical attempt to impulse changes that outbalance the diffusion of
unproductive managerial practices. Moving from critique to more overtly affirmative positioning (Huault, Perret & Spicer, 2014) exploring possibilities for action and construction, is recognized as necessary at some point, to turn critique into a strategy of providing suggestions (Parker et al. 2014: 31). Last but certainly not least, post-capitalistic critique has been developing around issues such as alternative organizations, or in theorizing the re-politicization and re-socialization of the economy to question capitalism totalitarian reach (Gibson-Graham 2008).

This double movement of disengagement in the workplace coupled with calls for increased engagement in scholarly work induces tensions. In this workshop, we shall discuss these tensions. In particular, we aim to discuss the simultaneous tendency of workplace actors to disengage from political issues and the call for scholars to engage in influencing organizational practices and policies to re-establish the link between organizations, work, and employees. Why are employees disengaged? How can they link back with work and the workplace? What does it mean to develop an engaged scholarship? How can engaged scholarship become compatible with the ever increasing imperatives to publish? How can scholars who are interested in wider social theory, such as CMS scholars, continue to work to bring about progressive change within organizations and society as a whole, whereas actors themselves disengage from central political issues related to work and invest their energy and creativity elsewhere? Is disengagement political? Are there new forms of contention in the workplace today? Are current CMS approaches sufficient to study these new ways of expressing contention?

The workshop aims to discuss and explore these questions. We believe that possibilities, challenges and struggles involved in being critically inspired and aware scholars in today’s environment are particularly significant for doctoral students and young scholars. This, because the struggles and opportunities that will occur in the attempt to directly engage with corporate practices and policies are yet to be elaborated, especially in a workplace where actors would seek to escape rather than resist and invent alternative practices and models.

The workshop welcomes papers that are relevant to the CMS stream in general and to the annual topic in particular. 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:

- Engagement as a means to be attentive to power relations: what power relations in a post-recognition corporate world?
- Engagement as providing knowledge about alternative ways of organizing: how can CMS be active in proposing, experiencing, testing new ways of organizing?
- Engagement as providing knowledge about creative resisting movements: what forms of resistance in today’s workplaces? What about the tension between recognition and post-recognition politics at work?
- Resistance from senior management to alternative and creative solutions: where does workplace resistance come from today: senior managers? Middle managers? Workers? Are there alternative forms of resistance?
- Academics’ everyday activism and the academic as an activist: how can militancy be compatible with the pragmatics of publishing and teaching in higher education institutions?
- Effects of critical education on managerial practice: what does being a critical manager mean? Does it mean anything?
- Etc. …

As with previous workshops, this 5th doctoral workshop in critical management studies aims at offering a place of supportive discussions for researchers who intend to position or already place their PhD thesis within CMS. Accordingly, PhD Students and young CMS scholars are invited to submit a theoretical or a methodological paper, a PhD project, a literature review, a methodological approach or a reflection on epistemological issues underlying such an approach1. Creative and artistic presentations (photograph, video, drawing, etc.) are welcomed and encouraged.

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1 Presentation of a paper during the workshop is granted by 2 ECTS. A certificate of attendance can be provided, if needed.
Program

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. Each PhD student will have 30 minutes devoted to her/his work: 10 minutes of presentation, 10 minutes of comments from reviewers and 10 minutes of discussion. 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 cross-cutting issues related to critical perspectives in management and, particularly, to examine the dynamics of the political project of critically inspired scholarship. Professors Peter Fleming and Annette Jobert will generate these debates, leading us to reflect about the tension between engagement and disengagement, as well as about ways and opportunities to translate the project of the CMS in political action.

- **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. The aim is to share about field methodologies and specific issues in CMS. Four 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 2016 doctoral workshop will be held over two days, the 17th and 18th of March, 2016. It will take place in Lyon at the EMLYON Business School (Ecullly) and includes a social event at the end of the day on March 17th. To ensure the quality of reviewing and discussion, the number of places will be limited to about twenty five 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 expected results.

Applications must be sent to: CMSLYON2016@gmail.com before Friday, November 20th. 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. The Registration fee is just 50€ but this does not include transport, accommodation and the social event. Feel free to contact any member of the organizing committee in case you have a question!

SEE YOU IN LYON !!

**Key dates**

- **Friday, November 20th, 2015:** Submission of applications
- **Monday, December 21st, 2015:** Notification of acceptance
- **Monday, February 15th, 2016:** Full paper and final registration
- **March 17-18, 2016:** Meeting in Lyon

**Organizing Committee**

- David Courpasson (EMLYON Business School)
- Marie-Rachel Jacob (EMLYON Business School)
- Ludivine Perray-Redslob (EMLYON Business School)
- Mar Perezts (EMLYON Business School)
- Dima Younès (EMLYON Business School)
- Carine Farias (EMLYON Business School and ESSEC)
- Tapiwa Seremani (EMLYON Business School)
- Eric Ghiglione (EMLYON Business School)
- Yousra Rahmouni (EMLYON Business School)
- Ignasi Martí (EMLYON Business School)
- Marie-Claire Loison (EMLYON Business School)
- Handan Vicdan (EMLYON Business School)
- Aurélie Toivonen (EMLYON Business School)
### Scientific Committee

Florence Allard-Poesi (Université Paris-Est Créteil, FR)  
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### References


