

Advancing Theory and Debate in Project Studies

SPECIAL ISSUE EDITORS

Joana Geraldi, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark, jge.ioa@cbs.dk

Jonas Söderlund, BI Norwegian Business School, Norway, jonas.soderlund@bi.no

Alfons van Marrewijk, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands, a.h.van.marrewijk@vu.nl

INTRODUCTION

This special issue was borne out of a wish to stimulate a vivid academic debate addressing some of the more fundamental theoretical issues within project studies. To some extent, we miss the academic debates, disagreements, and provocative claims needed to bring insightful theories to project studies and develop new ones. This is in line with earlier calls for critical project studies and the advancement of theories of projects (Cicmil & Hodgson, 2006; Geraldi & Söderlund, 2018; Söderlund, 2004).

With this special issue, we support the *PMJ* Editorial Board's decision to enhance the profile of *PMJ* in terms of publishing interesting theory (Müller & Klein, 2018). Therefore, with this call for papers, we want to stimulate explorative thinking and "bold theorizing" to further develop project studies as a scholarly field and generate debate among project scholars.

We are specifically looking for organization and management theories that are relevant to project studies as well as contributions demonstrating how project studies can enrich the fields of organization and management more generally. In that respect, we are trying to discuss how project studies might be advanced, and—equally important—how project studies might advance management and organization studies.

We are looking for conceptual papers and essays that develop the needed thoughtfulness, normative thinking, and abstraction to further advance theorizing within project studies. Such papers would ultimately contribute to our understanding of why projects exist, how they differ (Van Marrewijk, Ybema, Smits, Clegg, & Pitsis, 2016), how they behave (Aubry, 2011), how they are managed (Söderlund, 2004), and how they relate with the broader institutional context (Sydow & Staber, 2002).

We call on contributors to "construct their voices" as project scholars—personal and vested. Therefore, we call for contributions that would defend well-argued, solid opinions about theories. Topics might include, but are not limited to:

- Projects and culture
- The promises of temporary organizations
- The temporality of temporary organizations
- The routines of projects
- Projects and change/stability
- Projects and learning/unlearning
- Projects and processes
- Projects and institutions
- Projects and power
- Projects and social identity
- Projects and uncertainty
- The human in projects
- Escapism in projects
- Collaboration and conflicts in projects

REVIEW PROCESS AND SUBMISSIONS

We initially ask potential contributors to submit a paper proposal and brief outline of their idea (around 1,000 words) to Joana Geraldi (jge.ioa@cbs.dk) before **15 December 2018**. Authors will receive feedback on their idea and learn if their paper proposal is relevant to the special issue. The criteria for assessment of contributions include: Is the idea interesting/provocative? Does it have potential to catalyze new ways of thinking in project studies? To what extent does it also address more fundamental theoretical challenges in management and organization studies? When accepted, the authors will be invited to submit a full paper of approximately 6,000 words plus references for the second step in the submission process by 15 April 2019, which will be sent out for review..

REFERENCES

- Aubry, M. (2011). The social reality of organizational project management at the interface between networks and hierarchy. *Project Management Journal*, 4(3), 436–457.
- Cicmil, S., & Hodgson, D. (2006). New possibilities of project management theory: A critical engagement. *Project Management Journal*, 37(3), 111–122.
- Geraldi, J., & Söderlund, J. (2018). Project studies: What it is, where it is going. *International Journal of Project Management*, 36(1), 55–70.
- Müller, R., & Klein, G. (2018). What constitutes a contemporary contribution to *Project Management Journal*? *Project Management Journal*, 49(5), 1–2.
- Söderlund, J. (2004). Building theories of project management: Past research, questions for the future. *International Journal of Project Management*, 22(3), 183–191.
- Sydow, J., & Staber U. (2002). The institutional embeddedness of project networks: The case of content production in German television. *Regional Studies*, 36(3), 215–227.
- Van Marrewijk, A. H., Ybema, S., Smits K., Clegg, S, Pitsis, T. (2016). Clash of the titans: Temporal organizing and collaborative dynamics in the Panama Canal Megaproject. *Organization Studies*, 37(12), 1745–1769.