Karlshochschule
International University

ReThinking Management

International Conference | Thursday 16th to Friday 17th October 2014
at Karlshochschule International University in Karlsruhe, Germany

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What should be remembered? Projectification and cultural memory

Abstract

Our daily life is full of projects: we drive on streets done as result of an infrastructure project, we buy shoes delivered by virtual project-based organization, we go to the cinema to watch a movie made possible thanks to project-oriented support from international funds, we take part in our personalised daily workout project which we have as an app on our smartphone (getting continuously better and better as an outcome of innovative IT projects). Almost all human activities become a part of projectification. They are often done in this form because other organizations and individuals make projects and because the word "project" conquered the language of public, scientific, economic and popular discourse replacing other terms like "undertaking", "plan" etc. Above all, however, what we may observe is that there has been a shift in the emphasis from the work focused on the continuation and accumulation to projects, which have one-off nature and are short-lived. This change modifies the awareness of time.

Time is no longer a symbol of duration. It is an indicator, a "freeze-frame," the start and finish. We live in the reality of "from-to", which was first present in the organizational context and now does affect also our personal environment. Paradoxically while we are making more projects – which are perceived as unique – we are repeating more or less the same. To make this considerations complete it's necessary to combine the theory of management with the cultural studies. The purpose of this paper is a critical analysis of the phenomenon of projectification in terms of time and sustainability of ideas as part of preserving the collective identity of particular groups. The emerging concept of anti-performativity in project management – developed as part of the Critical Management Studies – will be compared with the reflection on cultural memory in age of speed and random selectivity.

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