Stream title: Critical Studies of Leadership: Critical methodologies and alternative spaces

Convenors:

Doris Schedlitzki, University of the West of England, UK
doris.schedlitzki@uwe.ac.uk

Neil Sutherland, University of the West of England, UK
neil.sutherland@uwe.ac.uk

Pasi Ahonen, University of Essex, UK
pasi.ahonen@essex.ac.uk

Hugo Gaggiotti, University of the West of England, UK
Hugo.gaggiotti@uwe.ac.uk

Paresh Wankhade, Edge Hill University, UK
Paresh.Wankhade@edgehill.ac.uk

Description of Theme

'Critical Leadership Studies' (Collinson, 2011) as a field of study within organisation studies, has come to be associated with research that intends to explore previously ignored issues of power, resistance, performativity, identity and gender. It has also been associated with contributing to the linguistic turn (Fairhurst, 2011) in the broader field of leadership studies through discursive and other linguistic studies of leadership (Schedlitzki et al., 2016). Critical contributions on leadership development (Edwards et al., 2015) have started to open up new avenues for creative and innovative perspectives on identity construction within organisational practice. Yet, these critical contributions are still outweighed in number, and arguably, status by their mainstream counterparts. They are still encountering resistance within executive education, and funding agendas remain largely interested in the exploration of transformational, strategic and individualistic models of leadership that are seen to be 'effective'. The field of leadership studies remains dominated by either questionnaire or interview based research conducted in traditional organisational structures and industries and focussed on structurally assigned leadership or management roles. As such, CLS has a long way to go on its quest to bring multiplicity and difference (Collinson, 2011) to our understanding of leadership. We therefore invite critical contributions on leadership that not only challenge dominant, essentialist views but also offer ways forward in promoting this critical agenda through academic publications and investigations of application to practice. We particularly invite contributions that offer research using critical methodologies to study leadership and/or in alternative spaces.

Indicative topics that might be explored in conceptual or empirical papers include, but are not limited to:

- Researching leadership in alternative and/or dissolved spaces
- Using critical methodologies to study leadership
- Exploring and conceptualising power, resistance and performativity in the context of leadership and leadership development
- Studying leadership in conflict
- Think leader, think white, middle-class, male – studying issues of gender and diversity
- Becoming a leader – critical explorations of leadership and identity
- Making sense of leadership or leadership as sense-making – explorations of language and discourse
- Studying leadership as a cultural phenomenon or construct
- Dilemmas at work – philosophical, spiritual and ethical approaches to tackling leadership challenges
- Critical investigations of application to practice
- Critical and creative contributions to leadership learning and development

References

Collinson, D. (2011) "Critical Leadership Studies". In Alan Bryman, David Collinson, Keith Grint, Brad Jackson and Mary Uhl-Bien (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Leadership*. London: Sage, pp. 181-194.

Edwards, G., Elliott, C., Iszatt-White, M. and Schedlitzki, D. (2013) Critical and alternative approaches to leadership learning and development. *Management Learning*, 44 (1). pp. 3-10

Fairhurst, G. (2011) *The power of framing: Creating the language of leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Schedlitzki, D., Ahonen, P., Edwards, G., Gaggiotti, H. and Wankhade, P. (2016) Working with language: A refocused research agenda for cultural leadership studies. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, online first.