**STREAM**

**The 11th International Critical Management Studies (CMS) Conference**

**The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, UK, 27-29 June 2019**

**Beyond neo-liberal practices as a response to the crisis: Positive lessons and examples in the light of an alternative welfare model in terms of employment and HRM.**

The Global Financial crisis had led to a number of responses by either states or organisations in terms of employment and people management. However, most of these responses (e.g. layoffs, pay and pension cuts, anti-union legislation) seem to subscribe to the neo-liberal agenda. Such an agenda mainly seeks to preserve the interests of employers through the delivery of short-term results and with predominantly negative effects to employees. Indeed, we need a partnership between employers and employees in order to maximize the long-term outcomes for all parties, including the society and the economy (Bozionelos, Lin and Lee, 2018).

For example, in October 2015 Twitter announced a 10% reduction of its workforce in an attempt to catch up with rivals Facebook. However, there are strong arguments in the literature against these tactics which argue that HRM is fixated on short-term performance goals and satisfying solely shareholder demands while it has ignored or neglected its ultimate goal which is to develop longer-term sustainable contributions based on values and fairness (Marchington, 2015). For example, there is evidence (Bolton and Houlihan, 2007; Marchington and Kynighou, 2012; Psychogios, Brewster and Parry, 2015) suggesting that in a long-term crisis neo-liberal practices led to worsening of working conditions and damaging organisational citizenship and enhancing behaviours of cynicism and indifference from employees. Other studies suggest something even more dramatic, that when people experience serious job insecurity they are more likely to attend work when genuinely sick, which renders them more likely to have an accident but at the same time less likely to report it, leading to a vicious cycle (Livanos and Zagellidis, 2013). This is certainly not to the interest of anyone, employees, employers and governments alike. Also, a substantial body of empirical literature, summarized by Baruch and Bozionelos (2011), suggest that in general employers that offer basic job security and some prospects of development to employees enjoy dramatically greater commitment and effort from their people and vice versa. Examples of successful companies, such as Southwest Airlines under Kerb Kelleher, who consistently resisted the easy solution of layoffs as response to downturns but preferred instead strong partnership with employees and a long long-term strategy for survival and stability exemplify that idea. Cases such as that of General Electric, now in great difficulties (Colvin, 2018), which in the last two decades of the 20th century apparently sacrificed employee job security and well-being and to some extent community stability in exchange for delivering shareholder value, also demonstrates that the interests of employers and employees must go in tandem for long term stability and success.

Nonetheless, we are continuously bombarded with a specific narrative by both organisations and governments in favour of the neo-liberal approach in an attempt to restore social order by depoliticizing the event, (re)legitimize the institutions concerned, and restore trust in public action and control (Boudes and Laroche, 2009). Yet, at the same time, Sweden announced that they are moving to a six-hour-long working day in an attempt to increase efficiency, reduce turnover and improve the well-being of the Swedish people. With Sweden currently being one of the best performing countries globally (World Economic Forum, 2018) one cannot help but wonder whether these approach is restricted in Nordic countries and under which circumstances in can be adapted by other economies and organisations.

Hence, this calls for a wider reflection and pondering: are organisational practices and state reforms, which might hinder the well-being of the workforce and, consequently, be detrimental to the long-term success of the organisation and the community in which it is embedded, the only resolution to the problem? Are there any practices or reforms, which are more aligned with a non-neoliberal or alternative welfare approach that can be implemented across the world in various industries and organisations as a response to the crisis? Have their outcomes had more long-term benefits for all key stakeholders compared to short-term profit-maximising actions?

This stream aims to highlight practices and approaches in which specific countries and specific organizations dealt with employment issues during the crisis, which improved the well-being and welfare of various key stakeholders. We invite theoretical, methodological and empirical contributions from a variety of perspectives on the realities in the workplace in a number of themes, including but not limited to:

* New approaches to tackling sovereignty debt or corporate financial distress without hindering employment and social well-being.
* Approaches to careers and their management that promote partnership between employers and employees for sustainable employment and a stable society.
* HRM practices which promote the well-being and welfare of employees as well as employers during recession times.
* Employment policies/reforms at the national level which are non-liberal and are aligned to an alternative welfare system.
* Organisational examples/cases which promote the pluralist HRM paradigm rather than the unitarist approach as a response to the crisis.
* New ways to organise national industrial relation systems or employee voice systems which are not detrimental to the employees’ interests.
* New paradigms on people management approaches and strategic HRM models based on evidence from the responses of firms to the global financial crisis.
* Emerging ways of financial and corporate organization: What are the characteristics of a ‘good’ organisation in terms of people management?

Please submit a 500 word abstract (excluding references, one page, Word document NOT PDF, single spaced, no header, footers or track changes) together with your contact information to a.koskina@keele.ac.uk. The deadline for submission of abstracts is January 31st 2019, and we will notify you of our decision by the end of February

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