

FOR OUR ENGLISH-SPEAKING READERS

OVERLOOKED...

The “managerialization” of the planning process for large industrial projects

Lambert Lanoë.

This paper aims to analyze the process of drawing up planning for the realization of large industrial projects characterized by multidimensional complexity. Indeed, these major projects must respond to major political challenges, involving strong media exposure, and also induce temporal complexity, making planning an essential activity for their success. In this context, we will first see how political ambitions disconnected from industrial realities, combined with a “managerialism” of these organizations, have led to the construction of fictional strategic plans, artificially freed from reality. Secondly, we will see that this situation increases the representation’s gaps between the actors of the projects, and leads to deleterious problems in terms of construction and evaluation of workloads.

Overstaffing: A cost to be reduced or “slack” to be encouraged?

Stéphane Deschaintre & Salomon Bernier-Khedache.

Overstaffing is commonly seen as a cost that should be reduced. However, our research, based on two industrial cases, presents managing directors who advocate it. To analyze this counter-intuitive result, we use the concept of organizational slack. The arguments of the managing directors are then structured around functions of organizational slack: Overstaffing allows them to prepare for the future and to preserve their employees. Showing overstaffing as a slack to be favored is unusual in the present context, and questions more broadly the widespread representations of a workforce that must necessarily be reduced. Our research also sheds light on the concept of organizational slack by showing that it can be consciously rationalized by managing directors, and therefore be part of a reasoned managerial logic.

Organizing the riot: The “Black Bloc” method explained

Louis Vuarin.

The “Black Bloc,” a group of activists dressed in black who engage in various subversive or riotous actions during demonstrations, has emerged as a practice that disrupts both the habits of protest groups and those of policing (Wood, 2007; Dupuis-Déri, 2003; 2018; Farde, 2020; Véchambre, 2020). In this article, we propose an

organizational analysis of the phenomenon, through unpublished material composed of observations (under “semi partial” and “total” coverage, cf. Roulet *et al.*, 2017) and interviews collected in the heart of activist groupings in Paris between 2016 and 2020. Beyond all political considerations, the Black Bloc is analyzed insofar as it represents an exemplary organizational device, in the vein of works on riots and policing in organizational theory (Lacaze, 2004; Kudesia, 2021). In particular, our study highlights a surprising balance between integrating and disintegrating processes, allowing the Black Bloc to have both a form of cohesion that ensures its stability in the face of attempts to destabilize police maneuvers, and an unpredictability that makes it more dangerous and less controllable. The other reason for the success of the Black Bloc appears to be its ability to maintain a convergence between sub-groups with different – and sometimes even competing – ideologies and methods. Indeed, the organizational culture of the Black Bloc allows for an obscuring of dissimilarities between its members within a common political experience. By maintaining an assimilative blur, the Black Bloc can radicalize, but also temper some of the subgroups that comprise it.

OTHER TIMES, OTHER PLACES

The fall of Kodak: A closed case?

Albéric Tellier.

Kodak’s bankruptcy is generally considered to be an exemplary case of disruption. Our objective is to revisit this thesis, which is now widely shared by researchers and the general public.

A systematic analysis of data published on the company between September 2003 and January 2008 demonstrates that the disruption theory does not fully explain Kodak’s decline. In particular, our analysis highlights the role played by shareholders in the rejection of the initial plan for digital development.

These results show the impact of shareholder activism on disruptive innovation strategies. They also allow us to discuss the risks of circularity bias in the use of case studies to illustrate theoretical approaches.

MOSAIC

Aude Montlahuc-Vannod

“On Agnès Vandeveldel-Rougale’s *Mots et illusions : quand la langue du management nous gouverne*” (FR: Éditions 10/18) 2022