

Call For Papers

Never Waste a Crisis: Strategies of Representing and Managing Crisis after the Crash.
Workshop organised by CPERC and the Great Transformations Project, Lancaster University

Date: 1-2 November 2012

Location: The Midland Hotel, Morecambe, Lancashire

Speakers include: Colin Hay, David Howarth, Brigitte Young

Deadline for proposals: 17 June 2012

The North Atlantic Financial Crisis that surfaced in 2007/08 and subsequent efforts at crisis management have produced unstable constellations. Whereas the financial sector has been rescued with large injections of capital but minor structural adjustments, the symptoms in many economies of “epic recession” and fiscal crisis remain. The rescue of financial institutions has generated public sector debt with its own economic and political implications: increased vulnerability to credit ratings; fiscal crisis and growing problems of concerted action in the Eurozone; and deepening recession in many countries. With national and regional variation, the major crisis responses have been austerity and technocratic governance that shift the costs of adjustment and debt servicing to tax payers, vulnerable members of society, and peripheral economies. Among political and economic elites, such finance-centred crisis management remains largely unchallenged. At the same time, the economic and social costs of the austerity packages and of a finance-dominated economy more generally have spurred contestation from various quarters. While small-scale to date and confined to specific locales, these instances of contestation have helped alternative proposals and different forms of popular resistance to emerge.

The workshop on “Strategies of Representing and Managing Crisis after the Crash” seeks to explore the politics (broadly interpreted) of this unstable constellation. The workshop is organized by the Cultural Political Economy Research Centre at Lancaster University on November 1-2, 2012, as part of Bob Jessop’s ESRC professorial fellowship on “Great Transformations: a Cultural Political Economy of Crisis Management”. The workshop will address the following questions: what representations and imaginations of the crisis and recovery have come to inform crisis responses? How did different actors at different scales of governance make use of the various conjunctures in crisis development to push their particular policy proposals and economic imaginaries? Why have some of these proposals acted upon and others not? Why did they fail both in practice and elite or popular perception? Papers in the workshop will **review different agents’ strategies of tackling the North Atlantic Financial Crisis through discursive construction, contestation, and policy-making. We encourage the submission of papers that highlight the discursive and semiotic of economic and political processes or that situate the analysis of crisis discourse in broader questions of political economy.** While contributors should specify their chosen analytical strategy, papers should move beyond epistemological and methodological questions towards substantive matters addressing one or two of the following themes:

- 1) **Construing crisis and crisis responses:** how has the crisis been constructed by experts, public economists and intellectuals, government officials and politicians? In articulation with what strategies and settings have these constructions contributed to the selection of certain approaches to crisis management and recovery, e.g. regarding emergency action (bailout vs. bankruptcy), political projects (austerity vs. green recovery; technocracy vs. participation), sectors (finance vs. manufacturing), or scales of action (e.g., deepening integration vs. national-mercantilist options)? How have these been translated into financial, economic, and political policy measures? Of particular interest would be studies that focus on crisis narratives and their relation to policy narratives and policy-making.
- 2) **Construing resistance:** how do actors whose lives are threatened with disruption by the crisis imagine its sources and alternatives? What strategies of resistance have they

developed in which conjunctures? And what popular projects are emerging? Of particular interest are studies that situate the strategies of contestation of specific actors or social forces in the broader context of the political economy of crisis management, its actor constellations and dominant discourses.

- 3) Learning through crisis: how do social and political actors deal with profound disorientation regarding theoretical and policy paradigms? Do they draw lessons from policy failure and, if so, (how) do these feed into policy-making and implementation? Of interest would be studies that deal with learning, policy transfer, and policy networks while including a discourse dimension; e.g. in the rhetorical and narrative dimensions of commissions and committees of inquiry into the financial crisis or methods of debt management.
- 4) Varieties and variegation of the Eurozone crisis: the Eurozone crisis is embedded into global processes of finance led capitalism while still being structured by different national social, economic and political systems. How does this count for the chosen methods of crisis and debt management? The responses to the European sovereign debt crises cast further doubts on the legitimacy of European integration itself and bring the question of democracy to the fore. How is the project of European integration played out by different actors at different levels in the negotiation of Eurozone crisis management?

We welcome papers that review existing primary and secondary analysis through one or two of these lenses. Abstracts (maximum 250 words) should be sent to a.kutter@lancaster.ac.uk by 17 June 2012. Those selected for presentation should send their draft papers (maximum 8000 words) three weeks in advance of the workshop. Talks will be 20 minutes with 10 additional minutes for discussion.

Note: The number of participants is limited by the venue. We have a budget for travel and accommodation but those who can pay their own travel costs will enable more participants to be invited up to the limit of the venue size. The Midland Hotel is an iconic art deco hotel situated on Morecambe Bay overlooking the Lake District (<http://englishlakes.co.uk/hotels/lancashire-hotels/the-midland-hotel-morecambe/index.aspx>).

For more information and updates see <http://www.lancs.ac.uk/cperc/events/seminars.htm> and http://www.lancs.ac.uk/cperc/research/great_transformations.htm.