



TRACK 11: Downsizing, financialization and regulation

Track Chairs:

Rachel Beaujolin-Bellet, Professor (organizational coordinator of the proposed track)

Reims Management School

59, rue Pierre Taittinger 51100 Reims, France

Tel: +33 (0)3 26 77 47 14 / E-Mail: rachel.beaujolin@reims-ms.fr

Ola Bergström, Associate Professor

School of Business, Economics and Law, Göteborg University

Box 610 SE-405 30 Göteborg, Sweden

Tel: +46 (0)31 773 15 44 / E-mail: ola.bergstrom@handels.gu.se

David Knights, Guest Professor

School of Business, Economics and Law, Göteborg University

Box 610 SE-405 30 Göteborg, Sweden david.knights@virgin.net

Géraldine Schmidt, Professor

IAE of Paris, University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne,

21, rue Broca, 75005 Paris, France

Tel: +33 (0)1 53 55 28 17 / E-mail : Schmidt.iae@univ-paris1.fr

Abstract:

Downsizing hits the headlines, triggers debate and raises controversy. For Jeffrey Pfeffer, as he explained it during the Opening Session of EURAM 2009 Conference, downsizing is the major topic nowadays, and there is a need for research inquiries on its mechanisms and on its individual (for instance in terms of health and pathways), social and organizational consequences. Actually, and particularly in the context of this crisis, one can analyze permanent and worldwide downsizing practices as a quest for an ideal of flexibility and event more of liquidity in labor and employment relations. At the same time, one can consider that understanding downsizing processes makes it possible to shed light on transformations in progress and on their modalities of regulation.

From one point of view, individuals (employees, temporary workers, managers, employers, unionists, administrative actors, political actors, etc.) can be considered as objects of globalized financial mechanisms. From an other point of view, they can be seen as actors locally, nationally

and worldwide involved in resistance (covert and/or overt, individual and/or collective) against those mechanisms and/or in the creation of new social regulation mechanisms. What are the spaces, means and ways to be (an) actor(s) in front of financial, economic, institutional constraining and cloning forces leading to downsizing? How can we analyze and understand the construction of those forces? What are the individual and collective consequences of downsizing and how are they evaluated? Are there alternative practices to downsizing and how can they emerge? What are the roles of social movements in the construction of new regulations? Are there individual and collective apprenticeships in front of the permanence of downsizing practices? ...

Furthermore, this co-existence of constraining forces and human issues (and damages) that characterizes downsizing is questionable for management practices: what are the implications of downsizing on the work of managers? What are the new forms of human resource management (for instance in terms of compensation and benefits, evaluation, redundancy management, career management, etc.) within organizations, which are typical of the “financialization” era? What are the functions and effects of standardized norms and evaluation practices? How to analyze the construction, the role and the implications of “socially responsible practices” in the field of downsizing? How can be (re)defined the “social link” and the wage relations between employers and employees in a context of permanent downsizing? ...

This track invites empirical and theoretical contributions that elaborate on the driving forces and consequences of downsizing, in a context of a financialized economy, but also on drawing on a range of different theoretical, disciplinary and methodological approaches. In particular, we welcome papers that address the following topics:

- Rhetoric, ideology and discourses on organizational change, redesign, and downsizing
- Impacts of worldwide financialization on downsizing decision making
- The human resource management practices in an era of financialization
- Impacts of downsizing on “victims”, “survivors” and “executioners”
- The consequences of downsizing on industrial relations (trade-unions) and on social movements as part of more general processes of individualization and de-collectivisation
- Institutionalization and social acceptability of downsizing
- The nature of relationships between the different stakeholders (conflict, shared responsibilities, cooperation, etc.) in the regulation of downsizing practices and consequences

Keywords: downsizing, restructuring, financialization, regulation