

**CALL FOR PAPERS for a RESEARCH WORKSHOP
and a special issue of
FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY & MANAGEMENT**

**CALCULATIVE PRACTICE AND
THE SHAPING OF PUBLIC SERVICES**

New Public Sector Seminar, Edinburgh, 8-9 November 2018

Co-Chairs: Irvine Lapsley, Peter Miller, Ileana Steccolini

This research workshop is interdisciplinary and welcomes contributions from all disciplines interested in **Calculative Practice in the Shaping of Public Services**. However, the primary focus of this event is on the role of accounting in framing and shaping everyday experiences of citizens, managers and policy makers in public services delivery. The role of accountants and auditors has assumed a marked significance in recent decades; they have come to embody one of the central forms of expertise-shaping management practices, organisational processes and regulatory mechanisms in many organisational settings. Equally, the potential impact of accounting, and calculative practices more generally, have an increasingly extensive reach. There is substantial evidence of the influence of accounting work in, for instance, central and local government, hospitals, higher and further education. Such influence within the sphere of the State continues despite debates over the status of professional accounting expertise and critiques of the provenance, uniqueness and usefulness of accounting and auditing. This research workshop seeks to extend our understandings of the intermingling of accounting practices and bureaucratic procedures in the context of reforms to and within public service organisations. This is a research arena which may yield rich insights into the role of accountants, auditors and calculative practices in the shaping of social and economic life. This workshop is interested in research which may address *inter alia* the following questions:

- What do accountants do in the name of neutrality, in the domain of public service reform?
- What devices and tools do accountants, auditors and policy advisors deploy which enhance calculative practice in the design of public services?
- What role do calculative practices play in fostering trust in political leaders?
- How do leading accounting firms, policy advisers, consultants facilitate the 'travelling' of ideas and interventions (whether from the private to the public sector, or across different public service domains) and does this promote or hinder the shaping of public services?
- What bodies of expertise do think tanks, policy advisers, accounting firms and consultants mobilise in the management of public service delivery, and does that expertise foster efficacy in public services?
- How do accountants engaged in the management of government entities communicate their knowledge and advice? Do they promote or impede meaningful change?
- What are the contested features of public service policy advice in the world of modernisation and reform?
- How might we theorise the influence of auditors and accountants in the context of the public domain? Does their expertise influence efficiency and effectiveness?
- Do market reforms of public services enhance or undermine the quality and efficiency of service provision? Are politicians aware of the inherent tensions and difficulties of marketisation?

We seek contributions that have an accounting, management, regulatory or policy-making dimension, and which may be theoretical, empirical or methodological, or a combination. The research may be contemporary, historical or comparative. We are particularly interested in novel and creative approaches to the investigation of these phenomena. This seminar also has a doctoral forum and offers of papers from doctoral students are welcome.

The submission deadline for the workshop is 30th June 2018, but earlier submissions are welcome. Completed papers will be preferred. Manuscripts should be sent electronically (in a Word file format) to Irvine.Lapsley@ed.ac.uk and copied to Yvonne.Crichton@ed.ac.uk. There is a modest conference fee for participants with a limited number of conference fee waivers for doctoral students. If you are interested in attending, but not presenting, contact Yvonne.Crichton@ed.ac.uk