



## Editorial



This issue of the Journal marks a new stage in the development of *Organization*. Mike Reed is retiring from the editorial group and the main editorial and administrative functions of the Journal will now take place at the University of Warwick in the UK. At the same time, the editorial team has been looking at ways to improve the Journal. In this short editorial we explain some of these changes and restate our broad goals as a Journal.

Firstly, it is important to note that for most of its life, the main editorial work for the Journal has rested on the shoulders of its four founding editors, alphabetically—Gibson Burrell, Marta Calás, Mike Reed, and Linda Smircich. This has been a great burden to carry along with all the other growing responsibilities of academics in our society. That they have stuck with the Journal through these years and through their own reputation and work have contributed to building the Journal has been very important. Gibson and Mike have now moved on to other things but we want to record our thanks to them for their work on the Journal.

These changes have raised the broader issue of how the Journal is governed. Unlike many journals, *Organization* is not associated with any professional organization. It emerged out of a series of meetings between the publishers, Sage, and Gibson, Marta, Mike and Linda. Its intellectual base was broadened by the willingness of many others to join the editorial board, submit papers and review for the Journal. Thus the structure and membership of a group of main editors, a series of co-editors and the editorial board emerged from the start as an informal process and although there have been some changes, many of the same people have been involved throughout this period. Now that the Journal is reaching into its 13th year it is necessary to formalize the system of governance and renew our editorial board.

In terms of governance, the main editors of the Journal from this point forward will serve a three-year term and then rotate out from this main group. This ensures that no individual becomes too overworked by the role and that there is a circulation of energy and ideas. Similarly, associate editors will serve for a three-year term, renewable by agreement. New editors will be appointed by agreement between the existing editors and the associate editors subject to



## Organization 13(1) Editorial

editorial board approval. Associate editors will also have a more significant role in the reviewing process, taking papers through from initial submission to final decision. Finally, individuals will be invited to join the board by the editorial group and will serve for a three-year term, renewable by agreement. Editorial board members will be asked to review a number of manuscripts per year and will be invited to board meetings at EGOS and the Academy of Management.

In this issue, you will see that the editorial board has been changed significantly in line with these proposals. We wish to thank those who have been members of our board in the past, in particular those who have moved on this year. We are grateful for the work they have done for the Journal and the contributions they have made to its growth and success. We welcome the new board members and hope that they will enjoy their experience with us.

This issue also sees the Journal moving to a fully electronic system of submission. The objective is to speed up the turnaround of manuscripts and reviews (and to reduce the amount of trees which we consume). There is no doubt that all of us as authors want a fast turnaround for our manuscripts and as short a time to publication after acceptance as possible. That is certainly our goal for the future and we hope that electronic submissions and the increased role of associate editors will contribute to that. We also hope that our renewed editorial board will help us in getting speedier reviews. Of course this sheds light on one of the paradoxes of the current publishing frenzy. As authors we want reviews to be timely, comprehensive and helpful but when it comes to reviewing other people's work, often we are far from being timely, comprehensive and helpful. Naturally no one wants to be spending their time with papers that are far from a publishable standard, so *Organization*, like many other journals is regrettably having to desk-reject a lot of papers, i.e. rejecting on the basis of the editors' initial reading and without sending the paper for external review. We will also give authors a final decision after their first opportunity to revise and resubmit. If the paper in its second version is not deemed by referees to be more or less ready for publication, we will normally reject the paper. This should provide a balance for reviewers to continue their engagement with the process only for truly promising manuscripts.

Finally we want to reaffirm what this Journal is about. Many institutions are now taking decisions about promotion and appointment on the basis of candidates' publications in particular journals which in turn are chosen according to their ranking in the Social Science Citation Index. This has led other journals to compete more strongly by ensuring that all the little ways in which these positions can be influenced are maximized, including changing their orientations. *Organization* cannot go down this route. Of course, we cannot afford not to be in the SSCI and we are pleased when *Organization* moves up in the rankings as it has done this year, (up 5 to 25th out of 60 if you are interested!).

*Organization* stands for a certain approach and for a certain style. A key word in our sub-title is 'critical'. All our readers (though unfortunately seemingly not all our potential contributors) understand that this makes us distinctive. It is of course difficult to define with any degree of precision what is critical. Clearly there is now a strong turn to 'critical management studies' that has been growing in the period since *Organization* was founded. Our Journal welcomes such a trend and has been supportive of it in the Academy of Management where we



## Editorial

Marta Calás, Glenn Morgan and Linda Smircich

have funded prizes for the best papers and the best dissertation in the Critical Management studies interest group. Many of the papers we receive for review begin as presentations to this division or at the UK based biennial Critical Management Studies conference. However, as is clear from debates within these fora, there are different opinions on what critical management studies is and what it should be doing. We welcome those debates and open our pages to authors involved in them.

There are many ways to be critical, to uncover the underlying assumptions that structure organizations and management and subject them to scrutiny. Indeed, this Journal has always been committed to what we described in our editorial in issue 10.3 as neo-disciplinarity. The study of organization is not confined to business and management schools. Indeed we should be thankful that this is not the case because we know that in these contexts, there are strong pressures to see the world from one particular direction—that of management and its ‘problems’ of control. Other disciplines address the issue of organization without this not-so-hidden agenda hanging over them. Sociology, philosophy, history, anthropology, politics, geography and even some forms of economics have made some substantial contributions to opening up the discourse of organization in productive and fertile ways. *Organization* is fully committed to that as a way of critiquing existing understandings and also as a contribution to innovative knowledge production in organization studies.

In these senses, then, *Organization* continues to be willing to take risks; to publish papers which are on the edge, both in terms of where they come from, what they consider and in the way in which they express themselves. We also encourage people who want to edit special issues that are innovative and risky to come to us and discuss their ideas. We want authors who are innovative, who are pushing the boundaries, who are challenging our own comfortable assumptions. For this to happen we want papers that are ‘interesting’. Interesting is a small word but in the context of papers that ever more resemble arcane medieval religious disputes, it is still an important point to make. But we also want writing that is skilful, clear and well structured, and more importantly, papers that are strongly theoretically informed, including the most contemporary debates in critical scholarship.

All of these criteria are contentious and difficult to specify in detail. That is why we have reviewers and we seek to reach consensus on our editorial decisions and be clear in our explanations to authors on our reasons. Pious statements about judgements of ‘academic excellence’ are for the mainstream journals competing for rankings. Any journal wants great papers—we can all take that for granted. But *Organization* wants something more!—work that is critical, neo-disciplinary, interesting and well-written. In the next three years, we hope to push that agenda further whilst improving the speed and quality of our responses to authors. We hope in that way to build further on the reputation of our Journal and make it the natural place for exciting and innovative writing about organization.

Marta Calás  
Glenn Morgan  
Linda Smircich