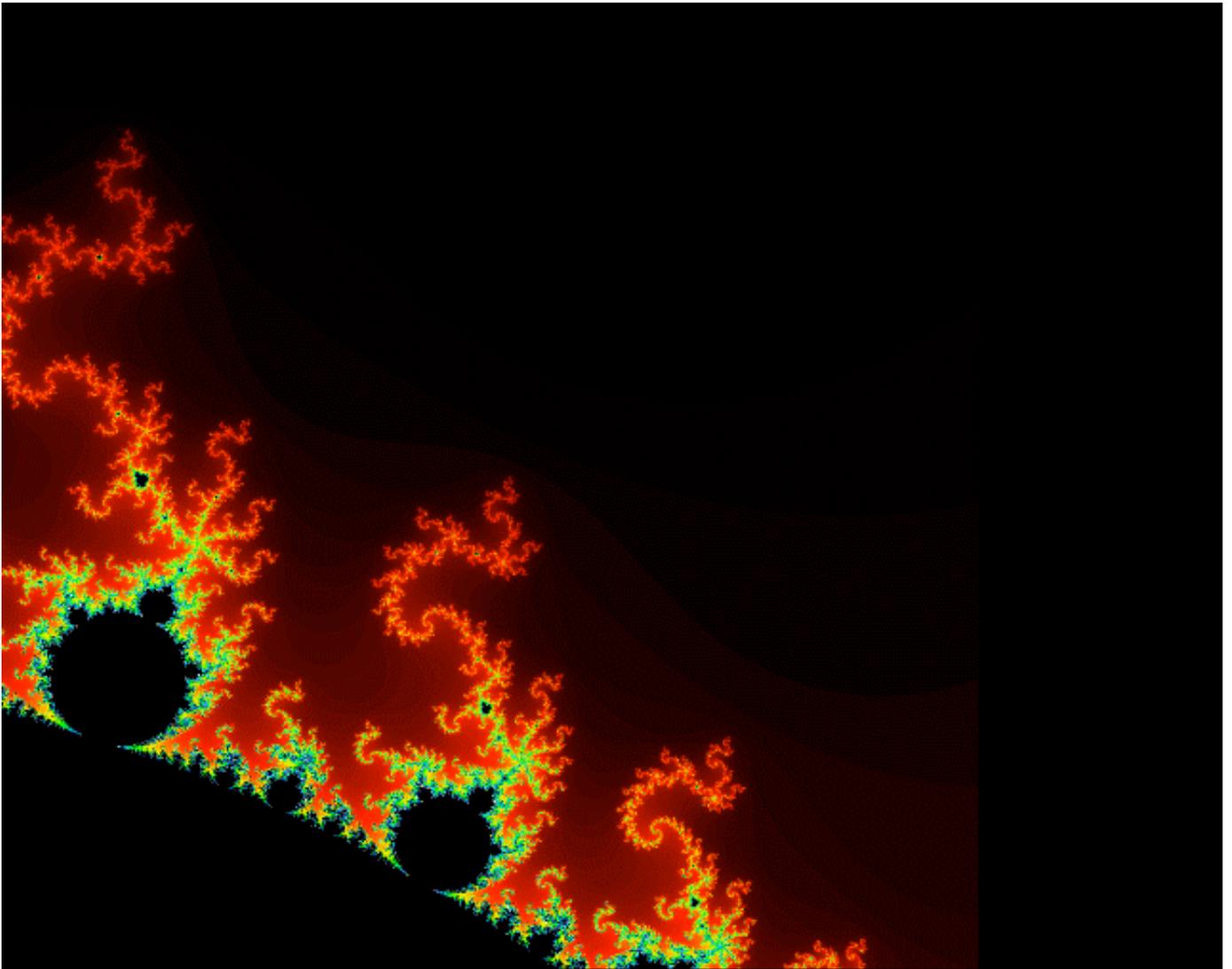
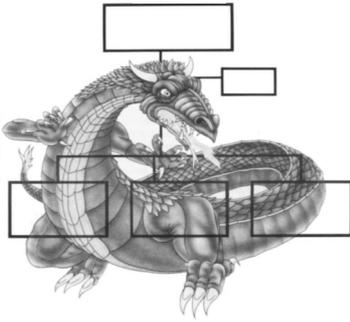


Museletter of the Standing Conference on  
Organizational Symbolism  
June 2006



*SCOS is an international and interdisciplinary network of academics and practitioners interested in organizational symbolism, culture and change. The SCOS philosophy of 'serious fun' is articulated throughout the network's activities, particularly in the encouraging of unusual and groundbreaking ideas in the analysis of organizing and organization. We are committed to providing a forum for research that crosses traditional disciplinary and functional boundaries, and a reflective space for the development of new forms and new voices for this work.*



*Come and have a go if you think you're hard enough!?*

*Ear we go. Ear we go. Ear we go.* Listen up now. World cup fever is upon us and we'll soon have you singing from the terraces in support of the latest SCOS offerings. Yes indeedly, spot the clumsy metaphorical tackle in this action packed issue of the Newsletter if you will, but we're not going to be caught offside when an open goal of opportunity and thinking outside the box of organization analysis comes to visit us.

Coming in with his usual elegance and deft ballpoint pen control is el Presidente Professor Peter Case with his notes from the chair. It's been a tiring few months for our usually energetic and industrious midfield maestro but as he tells us the arrival of two shin breaking ankle biters in the casa Case has been the cause of a few sleepless nights. Peter summarises the recent conference organization within SCOS and looks forward to SCOS 2007 which will be held in Ljubljana. Peter raises an interesting issue in the symbolics of organization with his allusion to the seemingly all-pervasive metaphor of the mother. It would seem maternity is rife with interest at the moment.

And another new arrival: Welcome to Carl Rhodes, our new regional representative who has been elected to represent Australia. Yes, you only get so long on the pitch here at SCOS and it was time to substitute the erstwhile Julie Wolfram Cox after a quite magnificent performance on the board. Carl is one of the most outstanding representatives of organization in his generation and he

is currently a laugh-a-minute putting together the final touches to his co-edited book on Humour with Bob Westwood. He may be laughing about Australia's chances in this month's world cup, but ... whatever, check out his considered reflections in the regional reports section. And, hey, g'day to ya mate. And welcome.

In the musery we have a rather peculiar piece by Janet Sayers who raises all kinds of issues in her short piece 'Postcards from the Edge'. In so far as we can gather Janet is exercised by a spate of hoax Tsunami mobile phone texts, 'bazookered sheep' and the general apocalyptic tone which seems to be hitting her part of the world. Janet tells us she also saw a Kaka (a native large green parrot) in her garden. So excited was she, apparently that she just about imploded. Strange, strange, and strange indeed are these tales of the intrepid academic researcher. A bonus extra-time this month in the musery: we move from traditional text to a kind of photo essay. Who is this to be spotted in the photograph? What is she doing?

In this months' Network we also bring to the turf an outstanding paper that provides what it calls 'A surrealistic mega-analysis of reorganisation theories'. Written by Andy Oxman, David L Sackett, Iain Chalmers and Trine E Prescott this paper was originally published in the Journal for the Royal Society of Medicine. Alongside our usual categories of organization, such as the modern and the postmodern, Oxman et al introduce us to the pathological features and diagnostic signs of a whole range of theories at large in the world of organization and management that most of us are only faintly aware. Thanks to the sterling work of this group of researchers, operating – it must be said – well outside the boundaries of their academic specialism and deep in potentially enemy territory, we are all now better able to identify the influence of the 'Bushian' and 'Disjointed incrementalism' theory. If you didn't think these were real you will be fascinated by the possibilities of the Kafkaesquian and Orwellian theories. These complement theories identified as the Machiavellian, the Maoist and the Von Clausewitzian. The authors also warn us of the quite sinister effects of

the Sun Tzuian and the Ultra-'Self-Centered Celebretarian' theories, in what amounts to one of the most stylish slide tackles on the management guru discourse we have seen here at Notework for quite some time. As part of our point-counterpoint series we normally invite a response by someone who might take an opposing view on the issues raised in our lead paper. This month however, we could find no takers. Peter Drucker, we were told, was simply unavailable and that we had no chance of speaking to him by phone or securing a response. Instead we spoke with the redoubtable Simon Lilley. His response in all decency cannot be published, but the essence of his reply was something along the lines 'Oh sweet lord Jesus the game is up, we're all out of a job'.

Ed's got something to say for himself again, and its academic textbooks that has got his goat this month. Sit back and admire it. Eat his goal! Zoe Bertgan has got herself lost in the library in the interests of methodological research, but apparently it took her 4 weeks to find her way out again. She needs a copy of the map that Weick used when he got lost in the Andes. We also have our usual assortment of regional rep' reports, the recent minutes of board meetings, and several other calls for forthcoming conferences and workshops of interest to SCOS.

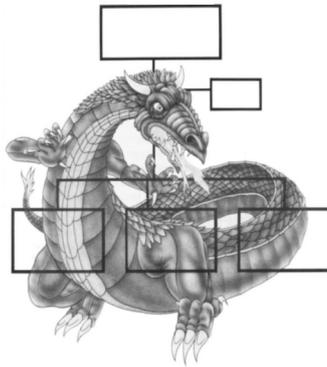
We hear the final whistle blow on this overblown editorial. It's a game of two halves and so it only remains for us to say thanks from the both of us

Damian and Sam xx

### *In this issue...*

SCOS – who are we?	3
Notes from the Chair	4
SCOS 2007 uncovered – a call for papers	5
Board meeting minutes	8
A surrealistic mega-analysis of reorganisation theories	12
ED SAY'S!	23
The Musery	24
SCOS regional reports	28
Tales from the Field	33
Calls & Announcements	35

# SCOS: the Standing Conference on Organization and Symbolism (oo-r-ya?)



We are...

...an international and interdisciplinary network of academics and practitioners interested in organizational symbolism, culture and change. Formed in 1981 as an autonomous working group of the European Group for Organisation Studies, SCOS has grown to become a global research network comprising of hundreds of members.

*Philosophy: scosophilia*

The SCOS philosophy of 'serious fun' is articulated throughout the network's activities, particularly in the encouraging of unusual and groundbreaking ideas in the analysis of organizing and organization. Since its formation, SCOS has run annual international conferences and regular workshops, producing both critical debate and a considerable output of original scholarship. SCOS has always been committed to a critical approach to qualitative research that crosses traditional disciplinary and functional boundaries as well as to reflection on the forms and voices that this work takes.

*Research*

Moving into its fourth decade, the SCOS network continues to develop innovative views of organization and management, taking inspiration from a variety of different fields and disciplines. SCOS has always been committed to providing a forum for research that crosses traditional disciplinary and functional boundaries, and a reflective space for the development of new forms and new voices for this work. The SCOS Network also aims to produce and develop theoretically and practically innovative views of organization and management and seeks to:

- encourage and foster new approaches in the study of culture and symbolism of everyday life in organizations
- provoke discussion of marginalised perspectives on the understanding of organized life
- provide an arena where the boundaries of conventional thinking about organized life can be challenged and blurred
- sustain continuity and development in this fast-growing field of study
- enable the continued exchange of information and the development of community amongst a highly dispersed group of researchers, scholars and practitioners.

## Notes from the Chair

Peter Case



Greetings from a somewhat sleep deprived chairperson. As some of you may have gathered from the previous issue of *Notework* and, in particular, ‘Notes from the empty chair’, I am now the proud father of two daughters – Lindsey and Anastasia – and leading a very different life than heretofore; one in which attachment to, or expectation of, sleep is a distinct disadvantage. This little missive finds me en route from Sweden to the UK, having just held the May SCOS board of management meeting in Malmö. This is the first time I’ve travelled abroad without the girls so it’ll be interesting to find out how they’ve coped with daddy’s absence. You might imagine that during the trip away I would have

jumped at the opportunity to catch up on some much needed sleep but, regrettably, this was not the case. Disturbed nights were substituted by fascinating conversation that ran on into the early hours. There is ‘no rest for the wicked’, as the English saying goes, which sentiment is at least excellent preparation for the evil fest that René ten Bos and Ruud Kaulingfreks are brewing up in the conference cauldron (note the less than seamless segue). This year SCOS is being hosted in Nijmegen, Holland, under the theme of, ‘Organizational Demonology: the Good the Bad and the Ugly’ (in fact, most of you reading this are probably doing so as a result of hastily dipping into your conference packs!). I’d like to thank René and Ruud for all their efforts over the past couple of years in preparing what promises to be a devilishly good affair (it seems that, in my case at least, sleep deprivation results in a pathological dependence on cliché). Of course preparations are also well under way for future SCOS conferences.

Next year we travel to Ljubljana under the guidance of the inimitable Campbell Jones et al, and I’m sure the aesthetic, intellectual and political encounters they have in mind will prove both provocative and engaging. 2008 will find us back in the UK. That intellectually redoubtable trio Dr. Damian, Dr. O’Doherty and Prof. Sir John Hassard are currently firming up plans for a SCOS at Manchester School of Management on a metropolis-related theme. What more apposite location in which to consider the changing organizational face of cities and city life under the conditions of late capitalism? Maybe we should be turning to the works of Borges, Calvino and Wittgenstein for inspired architectural metaphor in readiness for the Manchester extravaganza. You’ll have your own ideas, I’m sure...

As usual, I’d like to take this opportunity of thanking the diligent friends and colleagues on the SCOS board whose hard work and enthusiasm sustain this important forum for fresh ideas in the field. This year I’m particularly indebted to Annette Risberg who, in addition to being our regular meetings secretary, did a splendid job as chairperson during my recent absence. The wonderful irony is that, at the time of writing, Annette is immanently expecting her first child and will shortly be off on maternity leave herself. I’m sure you’ll be happy in joining me in wishing her very best wishes for her future family life.

If you’re reading the conference pack issue, it remains for me simply to welcome you to SCOS Nijmegen 2006 and hope that you have a stimulating, enjoyable and rewarding time with us.

Ex cathedra

Peter

## **First Call for Papers**

**25<sup>th</sup> Standing Conference on Organizational Symbolism 1-4 July 2007,  
Ljubljana, Slovenia**

### **SIGNS OF THE FUTURE: MANAGEMENT, MESSIANISM, CATASTROPHE**

Today the future seems both more promising and more perilous than ever before. What will the future look like, and by what signs will we know it? How are we organizing for the future, and how might we plan for different futures of culture and organization? After various attempts to bring history to an end, today we again sense a mood of possibility. There is, it would seem, a future for the future. What will that future hold?

Victor Hugo writes: 'For what tomorrow will be, no one knows'. This kind of remark might seem a poetic extravagance when faced with the need to plan and to organise for the future. Any practical person knows that in order to bring about our plans we must organise gradually and methodically, paying due care and attention to the demands of time. But at the same time, we sense that the more routinized our planning for the future, the less likely that the future will be particularly surprising. In this way, maybe the last thing that any manager wants is to come face to face with the future.

The future often appears today in the popular imagination as complete system failure or global ecological catastrophe. The end of the world is now no longer a religious problem, but something of immediate concern to policymakers and newspaper readers. If the future involves increasingly unmanageable waves of risk, out of this crisis emerges the possibility of a different future, the promise of a future as radically different.

If we learned from the twentieth century the dangers of eschatological promises of a perfect future, today we sense both the peril of those promises and at the same time the catastrophe that the future will bring if we remain on our current course. The theme of the future therefore asks profound questions about alternative futures. If these no longer appear in the form of Utopia, they do however imply the impossibility of refusing messianism and hope. Hence the prospect of speaking, following Jacques Derrida, of a 'messianicity without messianism' and a future that is forever to-come.

Writing in the spring of 1940, Walter Benjamin offered the image of *Angelus Novus*, which looks back at the past and sees 'one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage' ('Theses on the Philosophy of History'). But what if the angel looked over its shoulder to glimpse the signs of the future? If the angel could read those signs of the future, would it stop, would it shudder, would it take flight?

Contributions are invited that consider any aspects of the future of work, culture and organization, and some indicative topics follow:

- Visions of the future: utopias, dystopias, brave new worlds
- The future of the economy: prospects for capitalism and the state
- Trading on the future: futures market and their philosophical grounds
- Spectacle and speculation
- Prediction, anticipation, planning
- Interruption and discontinuity
- Attempts to create new worlds: 'Another world is possible' (The World Social Forum)
- Mourning, loss, trauma

- Memory, nostalgia and the relation to the past: the ‘future within the present’ and the celebration of the past in the name of the future
- Responsibility, promise, justice
- Mastering the future: chaos and control
- Managing risk and event
- Planetary futures: the rise of new economic and cultural superpowers
- Pensions funds, saving for the future
- The end of work, the endlessness of work
- The future of nature: ecological sustainability, environmental catastrophe
- Responsibilities for not yet born others
- The future of diversity, gender and difference
- The future of communication: new media technologies, the end of the book
- The future of the academy: the business school of tomorrow
- Cyborgs and other hybrid bodies
- Fictions of the future: science and fantasy
- Accessing the future: futurology, divination, sacrifice
- Concepts of time past, present and future
- The ‘now’, the out of joint and the untimely
- The future of the sign: signifying practices and the war against the signifier

This list is intended to be indicative only. We actively encourage innovative takes on the conference theme, as well as those that focus on more than one of the above areas. With its long tradition of interdisciplinary reflections, SCOS encourages papers that draw insights and approaches from across a range of disciplines. In addition to scholars working in management and organization studies we welcome contributions from anthropology, sociology, philosophy, politics, art history, communication, film and gender studies. Contributions can be theoretical, empirical or methodological, but should address their subject matter in a critical and rigorous fashion.

## **Workshops**

We also welcome suggestions for workshops, performances or events. Outlines of proposed workshops should be the same length as a paper abstract and should clearly indicate the resources needed, the number of participants, the time required, the approach to be taken and the session's objectives.

## **Open stream**

An open stream at SCOS XXV will facilitate interesting presentations of recent developments in research on organizational culture and symbolism that do not connect directly to the conference theme. Papers are therefore invited on any aspect of theory, methodology, fieldwork or practice that is of continuing interest to the SCOS community. If submitting to the open stream, please indicate this clearly on your abstract.

## **Venue**

SCOS 2007 will be held at Ljubljana, capital of Slovenia. Situated to the east of Italy and south of Austria, Slovenia is one of the most beautiful countries in Southeastern Europe. The capital, Ljubljana, with its walled river, castle and outdoor cafés, is a beautiful miniature of Prague. Daily sessions will take place at the Faculty of Economics at the University of Ljubljana, a large university situated 2 miles from the centre of Ljubljana. Accommodation will be in hotels, a choice of which will be provided to delegates, at a range of prices and locations, and at negotiated conference prices. Social events, receptions and meals will be held around the city, and we hope to hold the conference dinner at Ljubljana castle. For more information about Ljubljana, [www.ljubljana.si/en](http://www.ljubljana.si/en)

## Organizing Committee

Working in collaboration with the Faculty of Economics at the University of Ljubljana, SCOS 2007 is being organised by a committee of researchers based at the University of Leicester School of Management. This committee consists of:

- Armin Beverungen
- Michèle Bowring
- Jo Brewis
- Gibson Burrell
- Nick Butler
- Pippa Carter
- Ishani Chandrasekara
- Stephen Dunne
- Leonidas Efthymiou
- Nick Ellis
- Gavin Jack
- Norman Jackson
- Campbell Jones
- Eleni Karamali
- Ruud Kaulingfreks
- Tom Keenoy
- George Kokkinidis
- Geoff Lightfoot
- Simon Lilley
- Ming Lim
- Mark Tadajewski
- Martin Parker
- Carl Rhodes
- Charlotte Sanderson
- Christiana Tsaousi

For informal discussions about SCOS 2007, please feel free to contact any member of the organising committee. For more information about the University of Leicester School of Management visit [www.le.ac.uk/ulmc](http://www.le.ac.uk/ulmc)

## Abstracts

Abstracts of no more than **500 words** should be submitted as e-mail attachments (all common formats accepted) by Friday, **29 December 2006** to [scos@le.ac.uk](mailto:scos@le.ac.uk)

## **Musings of a Board Secretary ...**

Thanks to the inscriptional qualities  
of that hearty scribe Peter Elsmore  
we bring you the latest board meetings  
from the Nijmegen meeting in November.

SCOS EXECUTIVE BOARD  
26 November 2005, Nijmegen

### **Present**

Alf Rehn (chair), Saara Taalas, Sam Warren, Ruud Kaulingfreks, Rene Ten Bos, Peter Elsmore, Damian O'Doherty, David Crowther, Henk Willems, Bertil Guve (secretary)

#### **1. Apologies for absence**

Peter Case, Annette Risberg, Jean Mills, Albert Mills, Marjana Johansson, Bob Westwood, Anne Ripping, Heather Höpfl, Peter Pelzer

#### **2. Approval of minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes were approved with pending corrections

#### **3. Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

#### **4. Chair's report**

Board decided to send congratulations to the Chair of the board, Peter C, for the new parenthood.

#### **5. Conference report - Nijmegen 2006**

The conference organizers reported that the preparations are going according to plan. Deadline is 31<sup>st</sup> of December. Conference fee will not exceed 400 Euros plus accommodation, thanks to funding from publishers and business schools. The 135 USD fee to be paid to SCOS is included in the 400 Euros.

There will hopefully be about 10 full bursaries for doctoral students. £1125 of SCOS funds are available for bursaries. A decision regarding the amount used for bursaries in Nijmegen 2006 will be taken at the beginning of 2006, when the number of applicants and quality of applications are known.

The board discussed how SCOS 2006 should best be marketed.

Photos of the sites to visit will be on the SCOS web-site.

Conference language will be English, but there will be a call for papers in German.

Information about price will be added to the call for papers and conference home page. Key note speakers will be announced on the home page as well. Proceedings will be published by Alf.

The board agreed that planning is going well, and that a publicity effort is necessary.

## **6. Future conference venues**

### Helsinki 2007

No representatives from the Helsinki conference were present.

Marjana Johansson has left the post as Helsinki Conference co-ordinator.

Board decided to communicate to the conference organizers that the board requests that they should get back to the board before the 31 December 2005, with written information regarding the following 4 points:

1. Detailed information of institutional support
2. Full commitment is demanded of the organizers, such as attending to board meetings.
3. Evidence of substitute for Marjana Johansson as administrative coordinator.
4. Re-written call for papers, which needs to be improved on several points, including setting the correct date of the conference.

The board had a constructive debate regarding the Helsinki conference.

### Manchester 2008

Conference theme is still to be set but useful suggestions were debated. Prompted by O'Doherty board members held an interesting discussion about the possibility of 'the city' as a theme.

## **7. Treasurers report**

Treasurer reported that the SCOS economy is relatively good.

People who attended the conferences at Cambridge and Halifax have not yet received the journal *Culture and Organization*. The board decided to ask Heather Höpfl about how this problem should be solved. Alf Rehn will take care of this.

## **8. Membership secretary's report**

The board suggests that calls to the SCOS members should be sent out in a weekly digest, unless they are directly related to SCOS issues. Alf Rehn reports back to Ann.

## **9. Election officer's report**

Nothing to list.

## **10. Notework editor's report**

The notework editors reported that work is proceeding well with the issue coming out in December.

## **11. Journal editor's report**

The chair read the invitation of Heather Höpfl to comment and suggest on the editorial strategy of *Culture and Organization*. The board suggests that the strategy of the journal should be a point of the agenda of the next board meeting.

The board supports the suggestion that the out-going chair of the board should be a candidate for the post as editor of the journal.

The board would like to thank Steve for his excellent endeavours with regard to the journal.

## **12. Website officer's report**

The website officer reported that the site has a moderate, but good amount of hits.

## **13. Date and location of next meeting**

The date and location of next meeting will be decided after contacting with Annette and Peter C. The board proposes that the next meeting should be in May as usual in either Malmo or Copenhagen.

## **14. Any other business**

No other business

*Your board...*

Chair:	Peter Case (UK)
Secretary:	Anne-Marie Greene (UK)
Meetings Secretary:	Annette Risberg (Denmark)
2004 Conference organisers:	Albert Mills and Jean Helms-Mills (Canada)
2005 Conference organisers:	Alf Rehn, Claus Gustaffson and P.O.Berg (Finland/ Sweden)
2006 Conference organisers:	Rene ten Bos and Ruud Kaulingfreks (Netherlands)
Membership Secretary:	Ann Rippin (UK)
Treasurer:	David Crowther (UK)
Notework Editors:	Damian O'Doherty and Sam Warren (UK)
Web Officer:	Alf Rehn (Finland)
Journal Editors (C&O):	Steve Linstead and Heather Höpfl (UK)
Regional representatives:	Peter Pelzer (Germany) Saara Taalas (Nordic countries) Peter Elsmore (UK) Carl Rhodes and David Bubna-Litic (Australasia) J Santos & Rob Coda (South America)

## **A Surrealistic Mega-analysis of Redisorganisation Theories? A Network Special Re-Edition**

You know that old adage that reality is more fantastic and unbelievable than fiction? Well, for those who think that SCOS has a monopoly on irony in organization analysis, take a look at this. It seems that the absurdities peddled by fashionable management gurus are not missed by others in the academic community. We are both reassured and somewhat uneasy that scholars who have no formal training in organization studies are able to synthesise and accurately diagnose the perils of organization analysis with more style and aplomb than the specialists.

Thanks to the kind permission of the Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine we are able to reprint this paper. Special thanks must go to Helen McKay at the journal and to Andy Oxman for providing a word document of the paper. Also thanks to Norman Jackson and Pippa Carter for bringing this to our attention. Please visit the journal at <http://www.jrsm.org/> to keep up with the valuable work published there, where you will also find the occasional piece that tells us more about our subject than we might care to admit.

### **A Surrealistic Mega-analysis of Redisorganisation Theories**

Andrew D Oxman, researcher<sup>1</sup>  
David L Sackett, director<sup>2</sup>  
Iain Chalmers, editor<sup>3</sup>  
Trine E Prescott, physician<sup>4</sup>

1. Norwegian Health Services Research Centre, Oslo, Norway
2. Trout Research and Education Center, Markdale, ON, Canada
3. James Lind Library, Oxford, UK
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## **Abstract**

**Background** We are sick and tired of being reorganised.

**Objective** To systematically review the empirical evidence for organisational theories and repeated reorganisations.

**Methods** We did not find anything worth reading, other than Dilbert, so we fantasised. Unfortunately, our fantasies may well resemble many people's realities. We are sorry about this, but it is not our fault.

**Results** We discovered many reasons for repeated reorganisations, the most common being no good reason. We estimated that trillions of dollars are being spent on strategic and organisational planning activities each year, thus providing lots of good reasons for hundreds of thousands of people, including us, to get into the business. New leaders who are intoxicated with the prospect of change further fuel perpetual cycles of reorganisation. We identified eight indicators of successful reorganisations, including large consultancy fees paid to friends and relatives.

**Conclusions** We propose the establishment of ethics committees to review all future reorganisation proposals in order to put a stop to uncontrolled, unplanned experimentation inflicted on providers and users of the health services.

## **A surrealistic mega-analysis of reorganisation theories**

HARLOT<sup>i</sup> was commissioned by PSEUD (an international organization for the Preservation of the Status-quo through Evasion, Unreason, and Diversion) to systematically review the literature on reorganisation. We were offered not much money and ten days to respond. After spending eight days developing 4 strategic plans, undergoing 3 reorganisations, and going to a concert, we got started. Our preliminary search yielded 2,526 organisational theories, 2,600,000 links (Google: organization theory; accessed 20 July 2005), 1,309 books (Amazon: organizational theory; accessed 20 July 2005), 1,811 hits in MEDLINE (PubMed: organizational theory; accessed 20 July 2005), and one empirical study. Not having time to sort through all this garbage, we considered several different methodologies for synthesizing this "literature", including meta-analysis, best-evidence synthesis, qualitative synthesis, chaos synthesis, ethnographic synthesis, vote counting, random sampling, focus groups with 18 month olds, and realist synthesis. Given the amount of money we were offered and the boring nature of the topic, we elected to use surrealistic synthesis, a term that we coined to highlight the innovativeness of our venture and hide the fact that we don't know what we are talking about, nor it seems, does anyone else.

### **Methods**

We used the following inclusion criteria for our review:

**Population:** We considered restricting our review to healthcare personnel, but there was no point in doing so in light of the predominant conceptualisations of healthcare workers as assembly line workers (in modern theories), entrepreneurs (in post-modern

theories), and as galactic hitchhikers (in theories that go beyond postmodernism into new realms of reality).

**Interventions:** Anything that anyone has ever done to anyone (particularly to us) in the name of reorganisation, reengineering, modernisation, effectivisation, revitalisation, transformation, devolution, centralisation, strategic planning, risk management or crisis maximisation, regardless of whether it was well intentioned or not.

**Outcomes:** The consequences had to make us either laugh or cry or both (depending on how seriously we took them).

**Study design:** Story telling. We used the standard for research in this field: at least one organisational consultant has to have been paid at least once for having said whatever the study concludes. We included studies that generated reorganisational recommendations that we could not understand (99.99%). We excluded studies that did not offer a reorganisation plan (0.01%).

**Search methods:** We browsed the web a bit, sat around and chatted for an enjoyable weekend, asked a few people who are actually interested in the topic what they think, circulated drafts of this article to a few buddies, and made up the rest. We recorded interviews and focus groups between organisational consultants and reorganised health workers, managers, ministers of health, and academics. Unfortunately, a recently reorganised company (DILBERT, plc) produced the batteries for our recorder and we later discovered that our tapes were blank. None of us can remember much of what was said, so we have faked that part of our review.

**Data collection:** We used a large trash bin on wheels.

**Analysis:** We measured the heat:light ratio of consultants' recommendations when they were raised to Fahrenheit 451. We also used some fluorescent colours in our data summaries because bright colours increase credibility and statistical power.

## Results

We discovered that the literature is almost impenetrable due to creative jargon and the meaningless terminology generated by a variety of cults adhering to different beliefs and led by competing gurus. An abridged glossary decoding some of these terms is attached to this report (Box 1). Each cult has its own theory (Table 1), none of which is particularly coherent. These theories all use complicated diagrams called organograms (Figure 1) and support the OFF theory of research utilisation. OFF can be summarised as follows: You don't need a theory.<sup>ii</sup> Although thousands of articles and books have been written about these theories, the concepts they contain are remarkably simple and overlapping. These concepts are summarised here.

### Why reorganise?

We identified several over-lapping reasons for reorganisations, including money, revenge, money, elections, money, newly appointed leaders, money, unemployment, money, power-hunger, money, simple greed, money, boredom, and no apparent reason at all. Because we wanted to muscle in on this consultation market, we attempted to estimate the extent of financial incentives for reorganisations. To our delight, the advice business is booming. Estimated income rose from around 20 billion dollars per year in 1990 to over 100 billion in 2000.<sup>iii</sup> Of course, nobody seems to know quite what the business is, let alone whether it delivers value for money.

Consultants typically refuse to provide any evidence on the efficacy of their recommendations by pleading client confidentiality and hiding behind opaque terms such as “value propositions” and “service offerings.”

We were unable to find any reliable estimates of how often newly elected governments, new academic deans, and other newly appointed leaders reorganise, so we unblushingly guess at it. Based on a non-systematic survey of our own painful experience, we estimate that ‘regime change’ results in reorganisation roughly 99% of the time.

The benefits of reorganisation in terms of consultant employment are undeniable. The largest consulting companies (such as Earnest & Old, McOutley, and Cost-Dirthouse) each have over 50,000 employees and there are tens of thousands of smaller companies. Almost a third of MBA graduates go into consulting, lured by starting salaries for top graduates of \$120,000 a year (plus tuition reimbursement and bonuses). Consulting companies are getting worried that they are drawing too heavily on business schools, and are now tapping new sources of recruits, such as PhD programmes, medical schools, and art courses.<sup>iii</sup>

Beyond the hundreds of thousands of people who are gainfully employed as consultants, the amount of time that employees in virtually every modern organisation are forced to spend on strategic and organisational planning is astounding, even to us at HARLOT. A conservative estimate of one day per year per employee spent in strategic planning and at organisational retreats (not to mention leadership courses and team building adventures) would suggest that trillions of dollars are being spent on these activities each year. This figure does not include cost-centres in the hotel, restaurant and travel industries.

The internal justifications for reorganising identified in our mega-analysis include:

- You need to hide the fact that an organisation has no reason to continue to exist.
- It has been three years since your last reorganisation.
- A video conferencing system has just been purchased out of your employees’ retirement fund.
- Your CEO’s brother is an organisational consultant.
- The auditor general’s report on your organisation is about to be released.

The external justifications for pushing for a reorganisation of someone else’s organisation include:

- You are threatened by their organisation.
- You discover that their organisation is functioning effectively.
- You would like to direct attention away from your own organisation’s activities.

These justifications must never be made public. The fundamental rule is: Never let on why – really – you are reorganising.

### Leading in vicious circles of redisorganisation

New leaders typically take up their posts intoxicated with the prospect of transformation and radical revision. This triggers an avalanche of constant and hectic activity. Repeated redisorganisations<sup>iv</sup> result in exhausted managers who rush from one meeting to another with no time to step back and reflect. By the time the organisation decides to saddle somebody with the blame for the resulting chaos, the

leader has left to foul up some other organisation. The end result is a perpetual cycle of reorganisation.

While all new leaders feel compelled to reorganise, it is nonetheless possible to distinguish among several breeds of leaders based on their canine reorganisation behaviour:

- Mutts – The most common type of leader: self-focused, with a need to piss all over everything to mark territory.
- Bulldogs - Well meaning, but incompetent, and dangerous when aroused.
- German Shepherds – Bureaucratic, commonly suffer from anal retentiveness, which makes them irritable.
- Poodles – Ideological, focused on a specific peculiar aim derived from a specific peculiar way of looking at the world, to the exclusion of empirical evidence, practical experience and common sense.

These four breeds display, to varying degrees, the eight “secrets of success:” meet a lot, sniff a lot (yes, they can smell fear), talk a lot, listen infrequently, change a lot, delegate (particularly responsibility without authority), disappear and move on. These “secrets” seem to be in the genetic make-up of the common breeds of leaders since there is high concordance in monozygotic twins.

Two behaviours are common to all of these breeds. The first is a preoccupation with SWOT (Scandalously Wasted Opportunities and Time) analyses. The second is a natural talent for self-promotion. Leaders belonging to these breeds are masters of self-citation (exaggerating their credentials), and adept at “spinning” negative feedback into testimonials (such as “We were never the same again”). Their reputations resemble creative fiction more than genuine accomplishment. According to Tom Chalmers, by the time people have earned their reputations they don’t deserve them (Personal Communication). Common breeds of leaders are good at moving on before their reputations can catch up with them.

Two other breeds of leaders are now so rare that it is not possible to characterize them in any detail: Golden Retrievers (inspiring) and Saint Bernards (facilitative).

#### Indicators of successful reorganisation

We found many useful indicators of a successful reorganisation, including:

- All the good people have left, or become catatonic.
- Inept people have been given tenure, or its equivalent.
- Important decisions have been postponed, or are being made on a whim-to-whim basis.
- Resolutions are being mistaken for solutions.
- The number of administrators has more than doubled.
- In health care reorganisations, vast resources have been diverted from patient care, research and education and spent on relocating and refurbishing executives’ offices and supplying them with the flashiest business machines.
- Administrators’ office windows point toward, not away from, nearby mountains, lakes, and oceans.
- Large consultancy fees have been paid to relatives by blood or marriage (hence HARLOT’s recruitment programme).

The generation of these indicators can niftily be summarised as the ABCD of any successful reorganisation:

- **A** minimum amount of thought has gone into a maximum amount of change.
- **B**rownian motion has been mistaken for progress.
- **C**oincidence has been mistaken for cause.
- **D**ecibels have been mistaken for leadership.

### **Implications for practice**

We have discerned four key lessons from our mega-analysis of reorganisation:

1. For leaders and consultants who feed on cyclical reorganisations: Be loyal to organisations always, and to people never.
2. For victims of reorganizing leaders and consultants: Remember that the best-laid plans of mice and managers can be disrupted by creative imagination. Exploit the chaos for more worthy goals.
3. For those in well-functioning enterprises who want to avoid being reorganised: Fake it. Make it look like you are reorganising already: Schedule (but don't hold) countless meetings; plagiarise, photocopy and distribute (on coloured paper) strategic plans lifted from out-of-town victims; rename traditional sporting and social events "team-building"; and get on with doing your job.
4. For perpetrators of perpetual reorganisations: Why don't you just go . . . . . reorganise yourselves.

### **Implications for research**

The requirement for ethics approval of anything labelled "research" spells trouble for advocates of reorganisation. If they are going to continue to label as "research" the anecdotes that pass for incontrovertible evidence in this area they are going to need ethics approval for the uncontrolled, unplanned experimentation that they inflict on organisations, including the health services and users of the health services (i.e. all of us). The alternative is to admit that the emperor has no clothes and that they are just messing around with us. To get around this, we at HARLOT are establishing special ethics committees, which, for a price, will review the ethics of plans for reorganisations.

The answers to five simple questions will determine whether we approve any reorganisation proposal. The first three questions must be answered "NO", and the last two "YES":

1. Is it possible for the new leader proposing the reorganisation to get his/her jollies in some other way?
2. Is it possible for the organisational consultants to earn an honest living?
3. Does the organogram used to illustrate the new organisation have fewer than 22 boxes and 45 connecting arrows?
4. Is the organisational theory justifying the reorganisation lifted from a paperback best seller, written by a guru with good anecdotes and catchy phrases, and available in airport bookshops?
5. Will HARLOT get a piece of the action?

Reorganisation proposers who initially fail this review are invited to resubmit. If they are smart, they will then avail themselves of HARLOT's "reorganisation-in-a-box" recovery service. Mind you, if they had been really smart, they would have come to us in the first place.

### **Contributions**

ADO, IC, and DLS conceived the idea during a pleasant afternoon stroll on Port Meadow, in Oxford. DLS, IC and ADO went to the concert while TEP was working. All four authors enjoyed the fun of iterative reorganisations of the manuscript. SA was invited to illustrate the article, but politely declined.

### **Competing interests**

Lots.

### **Summary points**

#### **What is already known on this topic**

- There are over 2500 organisational theories.
- There is one empirical study.
- A lot of money is being spent on reorganisations.

#### **What this paper adds**

- The ABCD of successful reorganisations.
- A proposal for ethical review of reorganisation proposals.
- Hopefully, profits for us.

## **Box 1. Glossary of reorganisational strategies**

**Centralisation** (syn: merging, coordination): When you have lots of money and want credit for dispensing it.

**Decentralisation** (syn: devolution, regionalisation): When you have run out of money and want to pass the buck (i.e. the blame, not the money) down and out.

**Accordianisation**: When you need to keep everyone confused by instituting continuous cycles of centralisation and decentralisation. Best example: the NHS.

**Equalisation**: When you haven't (yet) sorted out which side is going to win.

**Interpositionisation**: When you need to insert shock-absorbing lackeys between patients and managers to protect the latter from being held accountable (this strategy is often misrepresented as an attempt to help patients).

**Indecisionisation trees**: When you are massively uncertain and incompetent, picking numbers out of the air and placing them in diagrams. Also used as a party game at management retreats.

**Matrixisation structure**: When your indecision tree has been exposed as meaningless twaddle, the introduction of a second indecision tree at right angles to it.

**Obfuscatisation**: When you need to hide the fact that you haven't a clue what is really going on, or what you should do about it. Makes heavy use of phrases such as "at this moment in time" instead of "now," and transforms things that are simple and obvious into complicated and impenetrable muddles.

**R&Dization**: When you have been exposed as a power-mad fraud and are offered a compensation package just to get you out of town. Employs the "Rake it in & Disappear" ploy.

**Black hole effect**: When a reorganisation absorbs large amounts of money and human resources without producing any measurable output.

**Honesty**: When your corporate conscience urges you to admit that when you say, "It's not the money it's the principle," it's the money. A dangerous and abandoned strategy, included here for historic purposes only.

**Table 1. Organisational theories and their diagnostic signs**

<b>Theory</b>	<b>Pathological features</b>	<b>Diagnostic signs</b>
Bushian	An imperial and moralistic approach, couched in ‘good old boy’ chatter. Popular among inarticulate, inept leaders as an alternative to thought	Proponents are unable to pronounce the word “nuclear”
Disjointed incrementalism	Advocacy of “muddling through” rather than rational planning models	Recent evidence of a failed reorganisation based on rationality
Kafkaesquian	Surreal distortion and a sense of impending danger	Proponents are suffering from redisorganisation, in an effort to explain their experience
Orwellian	Futuristic totalitarian approach to organising	Big Brother
Machiavellian	Expediency, deceit, and cunning	Proponents are strong, authoritarian, benevolent leaders (often misinterpreted)
Maoist	Permanent revolution and great leaps forward	Proponents think you’re talking about John when you quote Lenin
Modern	Characterises health professionals as assembly workers and patients as automobiles. Stresses supervision, division of labour, time and motion studies, and the work ethic	Proponents are business school graduates of 1960-89
Post-modern	Psychedelic networks of poly-centres that fold and unfold	Proponents are business school graduates $\geq$ 1990
Von Clausewitzian	Equates organisational planning with war, and highlights the need to seize on unforeseen opportunities	Proponents are retired generals or young geeks who grew up playing video games. Explanations written in dense Prussian
Sun Tzuian	Like von Clausewitzian theory, but with a greater emphasis on deception	Proponents are Western wannabe mystics
Ultra-Self-Centered Celebretarian	Ignores the expectations of all but its proponents, who live out their fantasies without worrying about the impacts they have on those they lead	Proponents are former or wannabe jocks



## References

### Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> Sackett DL, Oxman AD. HARLOT\*, plc. An amalgamation of the world's two oldest professions. \*A new niche company specializing in How to Achieve positive Results without actually Lying to Overcome the Truth. BMJ 2003; 327:1442-5.

<sup>ii</sup> Oxman AD, Flottorp S, Fretheim A. The OFF theory of research utilization. J Clin Epidemiol 2005; 58:117-8.

<sup>iii</sup> Anonymous. The advice business. The Economist 22 March 1997.

<sup>iv</sup> Smith J, Walshe K, Hunter DJ. The “redisorganisation” of the NHS. BMJ 2001; 323:1262-3.

## Ed Says....



There's a short story I once read, can't remember now who wrote it, about cornflakes – though it might have been about soap powder now I come to think of it. Anyway, the way I chose to remember it is that the story described how, *once upon a time* obviously, a bright spark of a marketing manager, working for a well known manufacturer of breakfast cereals, had this great idea of putting a toy in the box of cornflakes to promote sales. "Aha", exclaimed their competitors, "what an excellent idea, we've really been caught on the hoof", so to compete the other companies put two toys in the box. "Damn", went the first company, and they responded with three toys. And so, the 'arms race' of toys, promotions and the like began - resulting, as it inevitably would, with the fateful day when little Johnny reaching for the new box of cereal, tipped it into his bowl and found, amongst the hundreds of useless,

toxic, plastic, toys one, only one, solitary, insubstantial, lonely, and almost unrecognisably adulterated, flake of corn.

...And so, today in my mail tray I received another *Organisational Behaviour* management textbook sent unsolicited by the publishers. Behind an enigmatic cover featuring a picture of what looked like two blurred bowling balls and a dead cat were 746 pages of pictures, cartoons, learning outcomes, study guide questions, multiple fonts, bells, whistles, and ribbons. This one also came with a CD ROM and access to a companion web site where extra cases, self-assessment tests, power point slides, lecturer's guides, exam questions, and more, could be found. Though, for all that, for the flutter of excitement that still surfaces in my small, mean lecturer's heart whenever I get one of these brown-wrapped parcels, for all the seduction and appeal of the book's bright colours, the accompanying multi-media extravaganza, the obvious enormous time and energy of author, publisher, editor, copy editor, web designer and more, not to mention the damn trees giving up their woody flesh grown through an unfathomably miraculous process of sucking up nutrients from the unpromising ingredients of mud, water and sunshine, despite all of this how can it be that this book and others of its ilk invariably contain less intellectual and academic sustenance than the equivalent of little Johnny's single flake of corn?

If, as it is said, we are what we eat, then god help us all. And the next time I experience some students to be lethargic, sulky, or unenthusiastic rather than falling into the temptation of blaming them for not engaging with the material perhaps I should instead consider whether, in fact, they might just be starving hungry.

**Ed Wray-Bliss 2006**

**If you have comments, would like to rant back, or have suggestions for future rants please email: [Edward.Wray-Bliss@Nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:Edward.Wray-Bliss@Nottingham.ac.uk).**

(Would this be a bad time to plug a brand new, full colour, all singing all dancing, *Organisational Behaviour* textbook, published by Thompson, edited by David Knights and Hugh Willmott and with a contribution by Edward Wray-Bliss, due out by the end of this year?)

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## *The Musery*

Over to you – the Members – to share your news, views, ideas and ponderings with your fellow SCOSsers... we're a bit empty this issue, can only assume you are bottling up a good head of excessive steam for Stockholm....!

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### **POSTCARD FROM THE EDGE, Friday May 5, 2006**

**Janet Sayers**



Kia Ora from New Zealand, the land of the long white cloud: it is raining, so someone, somewhere must have died. Despite the weather, rugby in the weekend will not be cancelled. Everybody in England with relations and friends in New Zealand texted everyone here yesterday morning that a Tsunami was about to hit. Lots of people headed to higher ground. A spate of hoax Tsunami texts then eventuated, and everyone is looking at the sea and their mobile phones with suspicion. This is a

texting nation, as cell phone calls here are notoriously expensive. Everyone is geared up anyway to go 'to ground' because of the threatened Bird Flu epidemic.

As things happening in Europe and even Asia seem such a long way away, I myself have not yet stock-piled any baked beans, Vogels bread and vegemite at all, so I am anxious I am ill prepared. My cat keeps dragging birds into the house so I have put a bell on her. I saw a Kaka (a native large green parrot) in my garden the other day and got so excited I just about imploded. If the cat catches that bird I will never forgive her. Despite the fact the noise the Kaka makes reminds me of when I was attacked by monkeys once in Penang. The cat's bell is my only precaution so far against feline predators slaughtering native birds, and the Asian Flu. I wonder if my house, built during late 1990s Auckland housing boom, and therefore

quite likely to have skonky construction, would withstand a wave of water, glass and concrete. I doubt it. The front page of the Listener, New Zealand's number one current affairs weekly, is about Anti-American sentiment. I work with several Americans, and they seem pretty nice and very self-effacing (they might read this, but I doubt it, as it's not empirical enough 🤖). I would like to celebrate America (briefly). They have given us many Oscars here in New Zealand and that must have hurt - yet they did it gracefully and generously. We are a bit disappointed we only got a couple of small ones for Peter Jackson's King Kong this year. What a fantastic movie that was. King Kong!!! What more can you say. The scene with the cannibal Islanders really freaked my children out. Well, the kids got a bit bored, as did some adults I know, but that is just because they did not appreciate the nuances of a backyard movie done on such a grand scale or understand the inter-textual references and in-jokes. Others might say that was just Peter and Fran casting all their friends and not feeling they could edit them out. But, I don't think so. People might remember where they were when Princess Di died, or even John Lennon (I do), but my strongest memory is from Peter Jackson's first movie, Bad Taste, when he bazookered a sheep bleating quietly in a paddock. New Zealand was never to be the same again. Anyway, I digress.... What has been going on in NZ in the University sector? PBRF that is what. We have adopted the British performance-based research scheme. What joy we have all been having. I am really thrilled about having to retrospectively reach back into every email I have (thank goodness again for Goole's Desktop Search Tool - American invention?) received from anyone in the UK or Europe telling me that they enjoyed a paper of mine. Even Australian compliments will be kept in my PBRF folder from now on. But mainly I am desperately seeking European and American academic pen-pals who are willing to write me emails. As long as they are nice. Journal rejections don't count. "Piss off, who are you?" Doesn't count either. Anyway, the PBRF round is almost over but has been taking up an extraordinary amount of time in the last year for all of us. Despite this terrific pressure of rain, Tsunamis, aberrant texturing behaviour, PBRF, appalling building standards, Asian Flu, un-cancelled rugby games, exploding sheep, Kaka's shrieking like monkeys in the garden, and naughty cats, Craig Prichard, Deborah Jones and Roy Stager-Jacques hosted a very successful local Critical Management Studies meeting at Victoria University in Wellington in February this year. We pondered such interesting questions as how to get local (NZ) issues heard in the wider theoretical arena, and how to forward CMS in NZ. All good stuff. It rained but it didn't matter because we were inside anyway.

Of course my own institution is hosting a SCOS event later on this year.

Go to <http://mib.massey.ac.nz/MIB/Events.html> for more details. You will notice that everything is blind reviewed and published so that people can count it towards their PBRF portfolios. Also, hopefully, it will be an interesting and exciting event that will help keep our own local research community vibrant by talking about things that matter here and in the Pacific. This is a lovely country and we hope that our counterparts in other parts of the world, particularly the Pacific, Australia, and Asia and also Europe and America, might want to come.

Warm regards but anxiously, Janet

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The musery is probably the best place to publish the following item. It has been the cause of considerable speculation and meditation. But what we're going to do is run this as a caption competition. Remember that in renaissance painting artists would often use the position and pose of the fingers to suggest the true message of a work of art ... So, what *is* going on here?

For the chance to win a brand new Audi A4T Se, please write to us as Notework Towers telling us precisely what you think is being said or has just been said by this proud scholar. Winners will be announced in the next edition. Usual competition rules apply.



# ***News from the SCOS regions – reports from the regional reps in your 'hood...***

## **Missive from The South: Haunting Promises Carl Rhodes**



As winter descends of the great brown land known as Australia one's mind turns to writing ... writing for Notework.

A little while ago I was approached to take on the substantial responsibility of being one of the Australian Representatives for SCOS. I work at the University of Technology, Sydney, which is just west of the city near Chinatown. I received the invitation having just returned from one of my favourite eateries – Minh Ha BBQ. My belly was filled with delicious roast pork and rice. My mind wandering in culinary satisfaction, the invitation invoked in me a sense of magnanimity. I gleefully accepted. Several hours later, still savouring the glory, a little envelope appeared on the bottom right hand corner of my computer screen – the very screen I spend most of my days staring into as if it was a crystal ball. An email had arrived! Excitedly alt-tabbing across, I discovered it was a request (ok, a demand) to write for Notework. Feeling even more glorious and relishing the attention I set my mind to my first formal task.

But what would I say? What could I write? Searching both for inspiration and solace I turned to my ever-reliable dog eared copy of the SCOS constitution, the one I've had since I was a boy. What were these responsibilities I had signed up for? Were my shoulders broad enough? Sure enough, and as always, the answers lied within the text. It read with seductive magic:

Promotion of SCOS activities and events in the region represented, to develop membership base in regions where SCOS is presently under represented or not represented at all. In recognition of the fact that SCOS currently draws its membership primarily from a European base and that most of its major conferences occur within that continent, it is anticipated that (non-European) regional representatives will usually only attend the annual conference Board meeting.

Well, I thought to myself (repressing the implied marginality of my non-European residential status and drinking thirstily from my can of Fosters\*) what have I got myself into? But then I realized – I had already bought the tickets for my routine annual pilgrimage to the metropolitan centre in July and would be appearing at the SCOS conference. The second half of my duties were all sewn up. Nijmegen here I come! SCOS Board – keep a seat warm for me!

But what of the under-representation problem? Across the water in New Zealand they are busy planning for the ‘Australasian Caucus of the Standing Conference on Organizational Symbolism (ACSCOS)’ on 29 November to 1 December<sup>#</sup>, but what about Australia? It had been long 18 months since Bob Westwood, Loong Wong and I hosted ACSCOS in Brisbane, and the mileage from that had long since waned. Consistent with my hemispherically oppositional knowledge of the SCOS ethos, I chose next, and with vigour, to conduct some analysis of the state of affairs that I had jumped into with such sophomoric aplomb. Metrics, that’s what I needed. For the requisite empirics, I immediately rushed to the dedicated web-site of the SCOS 2006 conference to scrutinize the list of participants. As the date of my enquiry (30 May 2006) there were 82 people listed, three of whom were coming from Australian Universities. Now three might not seem like a lot, but for me (given my steel-trap like memory for international population statistics) I knew it was reasonable. I’ll explain. First, the list of delegates makes it clear that there are only two continents represented at SCOS – Europe and Australia. Second, the number of people living in Australia is 20,264,082. In the European Union there are 456,953,258. That means that the ratio of population figures, and that of conference delegates is dead even at 4% to Australia. All of a sudden it dawned on me – constitutionally, all was well. The fear of under representation glided out of my body and I felt warm and contented. All of my responsibilities had been discharged. And I hadn’t even done anything!

My peace was short lived. My mind kept ticking. I was relaxing at my local hotel<sup>§</sup>, when the taste of Tooheys New and the sound of the lapping waves swayed my attention to grander plans. Thoughts of domination overtook me like a jetcat rounding the ferry out of Manly Wharf. I knew then that I had my work cut out for me as Australian Rep. After all there are thirteen people from Leicester going to the conference – and that only 279,921 people live there. And this, my friends, is when I decided to take on a mission. I was inspired as ever by my cartoon heroes Pinky and the Brain. I decided my goal every night will be, henceforth, “to try to take over the world!” So, to all Australians reading this for the promise of northern muse, let us rejoice in our youth and freedom. Let me represent you – send news, suggestions, ideas and conspiratorial plans for world domination to me at [carl.rhodes@uts.edu.au](mailto:carl.rhodes@uts.edu.au) and I will do you proud.

A spectre should be haunting Europe – the spectre of Australia ... stay tuned for the gripping continuation of revolutionary news in the next issue of Notework.

\* Given the lack of availability of Fosters in Australia I had it specially imported from Milton Keynes for intellectual inspiration.

# Check out <http://mib.massey.ac.nz/MIB/Events.html>, I believe that limited space for European delegates has been agreed to.

§ For those without the appropriate cross-cultural knowledge, hotel is the word that Australians use for pub – in this case the Manly Wharf Hotel – see <http://www.manlywharfhotel.com.au/index.html>.

## A FrankFurt Bookshop

Peter Pelzer  
Germany

Occasionally there are events which are at the same time fun, symbolically interesting and important and enjoy huge public interest. In Frankfurt there is one of these tiny, almost extinct bookshops which do not just have an astonishing amount of quality books gathered in little space but also personnel who usually know the authors also 'scosy' people are interested in: Karl-Marx-Buchhandlung. This almost legendary place should close down was the rumour which not just the local media but also news magazines like "Spiegel" wrote. Luckily enough it was just a rumour: it was mixed up with the second hand bookshop next door which went virtual, into an Internet bookshop and left the premises. However, this rumour was the opportunity to an unusual event playing with the history of it and to make clear that they want to go on delivering their services. They organised a panel discussion with three participants of which two were among the founders of the bookshop some thirty years ago. With these names a part of Frankfurt history, the emergence of the Green Party, and recent German politics was gathered: Dan Diner, Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Joschka Fischer. The former Green foreign minister Fischer and Cohn-Bendit, in exposed positions of the German as well as the French Green Parties during his career, returning to their roots. The contradictions of this event and the development of much of the past thirty years is nicely contained in a remark by a visitor: in his worst nightmares he had never dreamt that he once would visit an event which was protected by the police, he claimed, pointing to the protection for the former foreign minister.



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A Wet English Man on Strike  
Peter Elsmore

The ivory towers in the UK are in utter foment. The blood of senior management gushes hourly through the (un)hallowed portals of these seats of scholarship as officers of the academic trades unions seek to exert influence in

the current pay dispute in the English and Welsh universities (but not the Scottish ones, I think).

Phew!

Where are we now? We have had a one day strike and presently are either not receiving coursework and exam scripts and then going on not to assess these items or alternatively receiving them, assessing them and then not going on to submit the marks depending upon to which academic trades union we belong. There will be more of this. Our claim is for 23% to be spread over three years. (Our Vice Chancellors have just paid themselves an average of 25% over the last three years.) Embassies from around the world that congregate in London quake in their boots (or shoes, or strappy high heeled sandals - you know the ones ...) as they wait for the news of a settlement offer to be made and then accepted so that the children of the awfully-well-to-do (and some others) might graduate or be progressed through their studies.

Why are we here? The late Harold Wilson talked the Labour Party to an election victory in 1964 with his election slogan about "Thirteen years of Tory misrule." More recently, Conservative and Labour governments have let academic slide to levels that are even below embarrassment. Tony Blair observed in last year's election campaign that academic salaries are too low and of course this year the financial basis of the system changes with the injection of £3000.00 per head per year tuition fees payments from students arriving in the income columns for the very first time. I mean the money, not the students ... there wouldn't be room ... Nice. New money. We want our fair share along with extra bursaries for students in need and extra car parking an' stuff (like new buildings) for our masters; one third of the extra money for each. What will happen? My guess is that we'll settle for 8% over two years, maybe less. With love from the English Midlands,

Peter Elsmore

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**Scando Panto**  
**Saara Taalas**

*We have just received the following desperate missive from our Scandinavian Rep, Saara Taalas and have thought carefully before publishin. Donations have been pouring in since we first received this distress call and we are currently putting together a Red Cross self-help package to send out to Saara...*

Dear Damian & Sam

>  
>  
>

> This place is a desert. Absolutely nothing happening. I have been  
> trying everything to come up with at least something. Sorry, will have  
> to give it a miss. So, shoot me. You'll be doing us all a favour.

>

>  
There was a photograph attached to this mail, which may help explain:





## *Tales from the field*

**Dr Zoé Bertgan... over to you Zoe**

Hello readers. You'll be pleased to know that spring finds me 'bonny' and 'fresh' as all of you say over there in Europe – ready for the summer conference season and the putting to bed of my latest findings for peer review and publication. There are signs in the air, however, that this season is going to be a wee tad wee tricky. Och! OK, ha ha! Indeed, joke over. Today, as I look out of my office I see Virginia Creeper winding its verdant green tentacles around the bosom of my somewhat decayed stone lion, which once served as a drainpipe here in this old gothic building once called the Faculty of Social Sciences, now called the McNulty Inc & Partners Faculty of Business, Management and Social Sciences. It used to piss. I mean, my stone lion. Out of its mouth, actually. But since the creeper has been allowed to grow untrammelled around the porticos and pediments of this here building the drains no longer work. We've outsourced estates management and it is perhaps to this issue that my answer will be found. As a consequence my office has begun to develop a wet patch – a dank, dark, brooding stain in the shape of a female ape suckling its young pup while reading a copy of 'Sensemaking in Organization'. It is not Weick though who is pictured in the adumbration caused by the shifting afternoon light. No. It is the Right Honourable Professor Cornelius Y.Tlee who comes shining through the shroud. That old simian will simply not retire!

It was the appearance of the wet patch that prompted the vignette I now wish to share, which was convenient because I really wanted to talk to you this month about my recent trip back to the library, a trip I made while finishing off a recent research application grant. Now, let's just say for the time being, and this cuts a long story short, that I have only just found my way out of there. Methodologically, this is fascinating. It is all about a map and the territory and how sometimes the two do not always equate. Does that matter, I hear you ask? Oh, yes, I hear you. Clever old symbolic analysts and postmodern party animals you might be, but this little incident reminds us of the importance of reality. Reality! Yes. It does exist. Listen, I'm not one of those tired old bores you find at academic conferences moaning about the reliability or accuracy of Karl Weick's story about lost Hungarians using a map of the Urals to find their way down the Alps. Indeed, this has become something of a sport of recent times. Just the other day I ran into some guy claiming to come from the Queen Mary College at your University of London who proceeded to tell me that he doesn't believe the Weick story. Now, hands off that narrative you guys. I *really* like it. I find it tardy and mean-spirited to knock this tale from the field. Do you realise how cold it gets at 3000 feet in the Alps? But I do have to say that reality struck me a cruel blow as I entered the library. I was perusing the columns of recent journals and acquisitions looking for a paper I had heard rumoured had just been published that finally took to task the whole Langrangian equation problem in organization analysis. Boy, was a I fixing for that. Now, here comes the wet patch, which might explain why I never did find that paper but was, ironically, never more in need of a good old mathematically assisted decision making tree.

You guessed it. Y.Tlee! There he was with his cute little simian smile, calling out to me – with his friend ‘the future’ Professor Rodney Red, sat on his shoulder. It was the tobacco of his smile and his stentorian cough – that some mistake for pomposity – which caught me unawares, causing me to drop my copy of ‘The Methodology of National Risk Systems Analysis’. I missed my step and fell, the stiletto of my Janet Reger’s caught in an old depressed wooden knot. Between rows 551.9956c and 555.2322b can be found a scatter of colourful cushions and soft bean bags all done out in beautifully Scandinavian business school style. Soft lights, shrubs, nuts and pulses add to the effect. With my mountain bike purple zinger water bottle I made myself comfortable with Tlee and Red. And man, did we talk. Finally, released from the shackles of the university bureaucracy, its stifling procedures and donkey ass nay-saying Mr Come-on-downs, we debated the merits of the Langrangian in contrast to the fables of organization. A little after, I guess 7, we bedded down for the night. No one thought this strange. With our torches and little pile of books to serve as pillows we settled down to a comfortable night of rest. 4 weeks later ... YES! 4 weeks later, I managed to crawl, half starved, dress torn and bramble scratched, out of the botanical gardens that border the university library. Was it worth it? Where was my map? As I sit here with my constipated stone lion and shrouded water mark I know the answer to Question 9 on this here research application grant: ‘Potential Impacts of Research?’ The answer? Realistic maps of organization that know their North from South and that tell you how long it’s all going to take. Life and how to live it – eh!

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## *Calls & Announcements – shout it out!*

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### *Organization: The Critical Journal of Organization, Theory and Society*

Call for Papers

Special Issue on

#### **Images of Organizing in Popular Culture**

#### **Editors**

Carl Rhodes: University of Technology, Sydney

Martin Parker: University of Leicester

Barbara Czarniawska, Göteborg University

For more than 20 years the field of organization studies has taken as one of its mainstays the study of culture. When culture is considered, however, it is usually done in terms of corporate culture, organizational culture or – recently – cultural diversity at work. Thus, while the culture of 9 to 5 has been discussed exhaustively, relatively little thinking has gone in to the relationship between work and the culture of 5 to 9. Meanwhile, in cultural studies organizations and businesses have also

received significant consideration but mainly in the context of the ‘culture industries’ and the control of cultural production and consumption.

In this special issue, we want to extend the study of culture by critically examining images of organizing in mass popular culture. We look for accounts of how these can be understood, researched and theorized in the inter-disciplinary nexus of organization studies and cultural studies. After all, the discussion and dramatization of working relations is ubiquitous in forms of mass-mediated popular culture – whether it be television, radio, popular music, the cinema, or the printed media. It is clear that the consumers of popular culture readily find entertainment when watching, listening to and reading about work. What is less clear, however, is how these cultural forms relate back to organized work itself.

We are calling for papers that explore the relationship between the experience of work, organizations and management and the portrayal of that experience in mass popular culture. Submissions should go beyond the assumption that the production of mass culture is purely economic and/or exploitative and try to explore popular culture’s ambivalence and even hostility to organizations. We welcome contributions that employ methodological approaches such as narrative analysis, semiotics, discourse analysis, ficto-criticism, audience research, ethnography and auto-ethnography.

Submitted papers might consider, but not be limited to, the following issues:

- How popular culture does (or does not) shape the way that people make sense of their experiences with and at work
- How the knowledge embedded in popular culture narratives differs from, and can exceed, that presented in conventional academic research
- How popular culture can be a shaper of professional identity, especially for those professions that have been fictionalized in the mass media (e.g. police, lawyers, doctors)
- How popular culture is consumed in official and unofficial ways in workplaces and how this influences the culture and meaning of work
- How representations of work and organizations in popular culture can be openly critical of, or oppositional to, management
- How popular culture can be considered as, or is used as, a site of resistance to management
- How popular culture accounts of the meaning of work, organizations and management compare with those accounts in the academic literature
- How popular culture is and can be creatively used in workplace settings (e.g. re-worked song lyrics, use of cartoon images etc.)

#### **Submission Procedure:**

Papers must be sent electronically to **Submission:** Papers must be sent electronically to [organization@wbs.ac.uk](mailto:organization@wbs.ac.uk) before 31 May 2007 as Word e-mail attachments, indicating **Images of Organizing in Popular Culture** in the subject line. Manuscripts must be prepared according to the guidelines published in every issue of Organization also available at the journal’s web site:

<http://www.sagepub.co.uk/journalManuscript.aspx?pid=105723&sc=1>. Papers should be between 5000 and 8000 words and will be blind reviewed following the journals

standard process. For further information contact either Carl Rhodes ([carl.rhodes@uts.edu](mailto:carl.rhodes@uts.edu)), Martin Parker ([mp136@leicester.ac.uk](mailto:mp136@leicester.ac.uk)), or Barbara Czarniawska ([barbara.czarniawska@gri.gu.se](mailto:barbara.czarniawska@gri.gu.se))

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## International Journal of Organization Theory and Behavior

(PrACADEMICS PRESS: Specializing in Publications That Aim at Bridging Theories and Practices)

### *Call for Papers for a Special Issue*

### *Organization Theory and Organization Behavior: Through the Lens of Psychodynamics*

Guest Editors: Adrian Carr – Principal Research Fellow, University of Western Sydney; Cheryl Lapp – President, Labyrinth Consulting

**The *International Journal of Organization Theory and Behavior* is seeking original contributions from academics and practitioners for a special issue that explores the manner in which psychoanalytic, or, more broadly, psychodynamic insights inform organization theory and our explanations of behavior in organizations. The editors of this special issue use the term “psychodynamic” in preference to the term “psychoanalytic” in an effort to emphasize behaviour that is beyond the ‘consulting room’ and as a less treatment orientated synonym that implies the normality and dynamic nature of these processes.**

**The aim of journals published by PrAcademics Press is to bridge theory and practice and it is in the same spirit that we invite contributions that highlight the utility of being psychodynamically informed when it comes to understanding theory and behavior in organizations. In keeping with our aforementioned distinction between psychoanalytic and psychodynamic, we ask that contributors address themselves to the more typical behaviors and processes rather than the aberrant, deviant, exceptional or the pathological. Topics that contributors might like to consider may include: strategy, technology, leadership; group dynamics; gender; authority relations (including bullying); creativity; emotionality; politics; identity; cultural change; social and organization defences; psychodynamic responses to bureaucratic and other organizational forms; and architecture and aesthetics. In addressing these or any other topics, in keeping with the Freudian origins of psychodynamics, contributors are asked to highlight the deeper understanding of the *unconscious motivation* and *meaning* of behaviors and processes. This understanding may come from any of the psychoanalytic schools of thought including; Freudian; Lacanian; Kleinian; Jungian etc.**

It is intended that this special issue of IJOTB will be Number 1 of Volume 11 (published in 2008) and the guest editors would like submissions no later than **the end of January 2007**. Contributors should send their manuscripts by email to *both* Adrian Carr ([a.carr@uws.edu.au](mailto:a.carr@uws.edu.au)) and Cheryl Lapp ([LabyrinthConsulting@shaw.ca](mailto:LabyrinthConsulting@shaw.ca)). In general, submissions should be in **APA style** and contributors should consult the web page for IJOTB (<http://pracademicspress.com/about-ijotb.html>) for specific notes about formatting submissions.

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## **CALL FOR PAPERS AND INVITATION FOR STREAM LEADERS**

### **Gender, Work and Organization 5th international interdisciplinary conference 27th - 29th June 2007**

As a central theme in social science research in the field of work and organisation, the study of gender has achieved contemporary significance beyond the confines of early discussions of women at work. Launched in 1994, Gender, Work and Organization was the first journal to provide an arena dedicated to debate and analysis of gender relations, the organisation of gender and the gendering of organisations. The Gender, Work and Organization conference provides an international forum for debate and analysis of a variety of issues in relation to gender studies. The 2005 conference at Keele University attracted approximately 300 international scholars from over 30 nations.

Plenary speakers:

**Silvia Gherardi**, University of Trento - 'The plans and the pennies from heaven'. Narratives from male dominated environments.

**Joan Acker**, University of Oregon and Sylvia Walby, Lancaster University debate 'Varieties of Gender Regimes'

Details on papers and streams

The Conference is organised primarily as a series of streams. Authors whose work is accepted and does not fit into one of the agreed streams will be able to present their work in an open stream. Expressions of interest for the role of stream convenors at the conference and suggestions for stream topics are invited. Stream papers often

make up a special issue of the journal and these are given priority in the publication queue. Stream convenors are responsible for:

- drafting a call for papers for their stream
- generating publicity for their call by using their own as well as the GWO network
- refereeing and then selecting the papers for inclusion within their stream
- co-ordinating the stream during the conference itself
- editing a special issue of the journal if such is agreed by the editors

Please email your stream proposals (as MS Word attachments) to [gwoconference@mngt.keele.ac.uk](mailto:gwoconference@mngt.keele.ac.uk) stating 'GWO 07 Stream Proposal' in the subject line of the email. Stream proposals should be no more than 1,500 words in length and sent to the journal as early as possible before 1st July. Stream convenors will be notified of their acceptance as soon as possible before the end of July 2007.

Papers for the 2007 event would be particularly welcome in the following areas:

Alternative modes of working; gendered organisation and disorganization; the body and emotion at work; consuming gender and the gender of consumption; gender and ethics; feminism at work; gendered knowledge; management and diversity; gender politics, gendered lives; globalization at work; post-colonial theory and gender; sexualities and organisation; men and masculinities; gendered subjectivity; gendered education; gender in the service sector; gender and marketing; gender and strategy; gender and new technologies; leadership and gender; harassment and discrimination; work/life balance; unequal pay; race and ethnicity; social exclusion; gender relations and management; public sector management and gender; professionalism; intimacy and organization; gender and friendship; romance and love in the organization; and sexuality and eroticism at work.

This list of topics is suggestive rather than exhaustive. Contributors may choose to draw on material from a wide range of empirical spheres and theoretical perspectives.

Abstracts of approximately 750 words (single spaced, excluding any references) are invited by 1st November 2006 and full papers by 31st May 2007 can be sent in independently of streams but may be assigned to them where appropriate. Prospective contributions will be independently refereed. New and young scholars with 'work in progress' papers are welcomed. A doctoral programme is planned for the afternoon prior to the start of the conference. Please EMAIL a copy of your abstract to [gwoconference@mngt.keele.ac.uk](mailto:gwoconference@mngt.keele.ac.uk) Abstracts should include FULL contact details, including your name, institutional affiliation, mailing address, telephone number and e-mail address.

The Conference will be held at Keele University, Staffordshire, in Central England, the UK's largest integrated campus university. The University occupies a 617acre campus site with Grade II registration by English Heritage and has good road and rail access. Many architectural and landscape features dating from the 19th century are of regional significance. International travellers are served by Manchester and Birmingham airports. On campus accommodation caters for up to 100,000 visitors per year in day and residential conferences.

Conference Organisers: Deborah Kerfoot and David Knights, Keele University  
Joint Editors, Gender, Work and Organization

Address for Correspondence:

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School of Economic and Management Studies      Fax: +44 (0) 1782 584272  
Darwin Building                                      [gwoconference@mngt.keele.ac.uk](mailto:gwoconference@mngt.keele.ac.uk)  
Keele University  
Staffordshire ST5 5BG  
England

WATCH OUR WEBSITES FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

<http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/journal.asp?ref=0968-6673>

<http://www.keele-conference.com/first.html>

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## **Equal Opportunities International Call for Papers for Special Issue:**

### **The Politics of Equality: Professionals, States and Activists**

Equal Opportunities International is pleased to announce a special issue focused on the politics of equality. This special issue will examine the different types of institutions, strategies, theoretical ideas, activities, and people involved in contemporary equality practices. The equality practices of the 1980s took particular forms which have since been analysed and debated. Since then, equality practice has undergone a number of significant changes: including the shift from equal opportunities and affirmative action towards diversity; increasing professionalisation, formalisation and bureaucratisation; and the rise of different versions of equality activism. This special issue aims to offer a range of perspectives on these and other related shifts; what these shifts mean both for those who do equalities work as professionals and as activists, and those who experience its effects.

The special issue poses questions around what is distinctive about current changes in equality and diversity work and why they matter. It asks these questions partly in response to critiques around the professionalisation, formalisation and bureaucratisation of equalities. These critiques suggest that this bureaucratisation has effects for the broader politics of equality, one of which is that this de-radicalises such work, constraining and narrowing its effects and focus. These critiques suggest that such work then becomes another means of reproducing the inequalities it purports to challenge.

Papers in this special issue will reflect on these changes. They will not necessarily

view these shifts as failure. Thus, papers may discuss the extent to which these changes means the failure of organisations to embrace the ethos of equality or of activists to retain the political purpose of their agendas in the sphere of formal organisational practice. We want to consider more critically, what the micro-realities of doing such work are. What are the effects both on those doing this work and for organisations? How do the boundaries between state craft and activism coincide in organisational practice for equality and diversity? How do these elements get negotiated by equalities professionals? What sort of time, resources and effort must be harnessed by individuals and organisations to make equalities work count for staff and users? What are the costs and what is gained?

Papers (7,000 words max) are invited from academics and practitioners who do work in the area of equality and diversity, including the areas of age, disability, ethnicity ('race'), gender, sexualities and from a range of national contexts. Papers could include reflections on:

- Activism and the politics of equality: insiders, outsiders, femocrats, social movements, communities, activist organisations, boundary work.
- State craft and institutions of equality: governance, municipalities, local authorities, equality commissions, third sector/not for profit organisations, funding regimes.
- The professionalisation of equality work: credentialisation, equality consultancy, the expertise of equality practice, equality professionals and competences.
- The bureaucratisation and technologies of equality practice: audits, equality measures, monitoring, policy documents, corporate plans, targets, equality standards, and diversity training.
- Equality formations: municipal anti-racism, corporate diversity, femocracies, office reform movements, corporate equity cultures, state equality practices. activism.

Papers will be subject to full peer review, using the journal's selection criteria. Submission will be taken to imply that a paper contains original work that has not previously been published and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere. Authors should follow the journal's regular guidelines, as published in every issue of the Journal. Papers should be no longer than 7000 words long.

- April 7th 2006 Call for papers issued
- Sept 3rd 2006 Submission of papers
- Early 2007 Anticipated publication of special edition

Prospective contributors can also liaise with the guest editors Shona Hunter and Elaine Swan at [s.hunter@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:s.hunter@lancaster.ac.uk) and [e.swan@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:e.swan@lancaster.ac.uk) before this date to discuss the suitability of their work for this publication. All submissions for the special edition will be subject to full peer review.

For further information about the Journal, and link to author guidelines and submission, please visit the Journal web pages via:

<http://www.emeraldinsight.com/info/journals/eoi/eoi.jsp>

*...and finally!*

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