**EDITORIAL: REFLECTIONS ON THE FUTURE OF THE JOURNAL**

*Leadership* is fast approaching its tenth anniversary. Reflecting on its past and future is all the more timely since this issue of the journal coincides with a change of editorial regime. After nine years, in which they have guided *Leadership* from strength to strength, David Collinson and Keith Grint are stepping down. As of now we take the reigns as co-editors of this journal. We are honoured to inherit such a position, and mindful of the responsibility that comes with it to continue developing the journal, and the global community of scholars that is increasingly coalescing around it.

Our first and most pleasant duty is to acknowledge that the journal’s current position has been achieved due to the sterling efforts of David and Keith in the past. We want to register our appreciation for their enormous efforts in starting the journal, and sustaining it in an increasingly difficult environment. Under their guidance *Leadership* has published numerous excellent papers. If we collectively maintain that trajectory then we can build constructively on their legacy. David and Keith have agreed to stay on as ‘founding editors,’ which means that we can call upon their expertise and experience anytime we wish. They, in turn, can offer us counsel when they feel that it is necessary. We anticipate many fruitful conversations.

In addition, we have appointed several new associate editors: Michelle Bligh, Richard Bolden, Brigid Carroll and Donna Ladkin. It was particularly pleasing that the new associate editors were our first choices for these roles, and that they all agreed to come on board. We have also refreshed the editorial board, with a view to including established and emergent scholars, and to reflect the growing international diversity that characterises our field. A journal depends on the whole team behind it, and we are sure that with the active support of its associate editors, the editorial board and all of you as readers, reviewers and contributors *Leadership* can build further on its present strengths.

This journal was founded by David and Keith because they recognised the need for an outlet that was particularly receptive to critical perspectives on leadership, rather than in thrall to the functionalist orthodoxy that at that time dominated what were seen as key journals, particularly those published in the US. We believe that this need is as strong as ever. Many of the established journals that look at leadership specifically, or which (as part of their remit), publish material on the subject, remain dominated by America-based authors and/or take functionalist, instrumental perspectives and utilise quantitative methodologies as the only viable ways in which to make sense of and improve leadership. This journal, too, is open to such approaches. It was never the intention to side-line any perspective. Our field is too complex to rely on only one explanation, or to be explored via only a small coterie of methodologies. We reaffirm that we see the journal as offering an outlet for a broad range of theoretical perspectives and multifarious methodologies. But it is above all receptive to ideas that challenge the status quo. It remains the case that most papers addressing leadership issues in most mainstream journals are far too reluctant to question established theories and practices. As a result, they are often overly modest in their research ambitions. While there is a space for research that seeks to build incrementally on what it is imagined is already known, there is also a need for work that is iconoclastic, provocative and, on occasion, plain annoying. We encourage contributors to ask big questions, go against the prevailing trends, and to take risks with their work.

In many ways this need is even greater than it was when *Leadership* was founded. Since 2008 the world has been dealing with what is now commonly described as ‘The Great Recession. Despite this, most journals have adopted a ‘business as usual’ approach to publication. Bizarrely, it is as if nothing much has happened. There have been relatively few papers that have dealt with the recession and its effects, and even fewer that have dared to rethink management, organisation and leadership theory. Yet we have to consider the possibility that research and pedagogy, particularly in business schools, has been materially implicated in what has happened. In leadership terms, for example, it is at least possible that some of our dominant theoretical concepts – such as transformational and charismatic leadership – have legitimised an overconcentration of decision making power in the hands of a few, with consequences that have been less than socially and economically useful. We hope that *Leadership* offers a forum for scholarship that is critical in the best sense of the word – that is, which interrogates some of our key domain assumptions, asks penetrating questions of itself and dares to offer new ideas that can at least help to make leadership theory and practice more fit for purpose in an enduring way. How, collectively, can we accomplish this?

Our first priority must be to continue publishing high quality papers. None of our readers will be unaware of the pressure journals now face to improve their impact factor, or position themselves in various journal ranking systems. We do not intend to become fixated on such issues. We believe that their effects are mostly harmful to academic values and work, most especially in excluding marginal voices and in promoting an obsession on the part of academics about where their work is published rather than with the quality of their ideas. This journal has in the past debated how they are particularly damaging for emergent journals and specialities (Tourish, 2011). The metrics often prioritised by journal ranking systems can too easily become ends in themselves rather than a means of sustaining quality journals that make a difference, or which can live up to their original critical intentions.

That said, it would be naïve to assume that we can ignore them completely. Within the UK, for example, it is well known that the Association of Business Schools Journal Guide (shortly to be immodestly reincarnated as ‘the International Guide to Academic Journal Quality’) is often misused as a surrogate measure of the quality of papers published in journals. It accomplishes this impressive feat by ensuring that they can be judged without anyone having to read them. In our view, this journal’s position in such systems depends mainly on the quality of the material that we publish. Our commitment to maintaining this is absolute. It is our overwhelming priority.

Beyond that, we also intend publishing more review articles. This issue of the journal bears some of the fruit of that approach, with a key article on communication and leadership by Gail Fairhurst and Stacey Connaughton. Their paper was presented at a conference of the International Communication Association in London in July 2013, at which Kevin Barge, David Collinson, and Dennis Tourish presented. Their papers also appear in this issue. We welcome forums of this kind, that address important issues, which challenge dominant assumptions, and which attempt to map out fresh theoretical directions for the field. We plan to publish many more.

Next year is the 10th anniversary of the journal’s arrival on the scene. We mentioned above the failure, in our view, of most journals and the wider academic community to engage with the theoretical and practical implications of the recession. With that in mind, we intend to ensure that the tenth anniversary of this journal will see a strong focus on issues for leadership theory that arise out of the Great Recession. A call for papers for a Special Issue on ‘leadership and authority in a crises-constructing world’ has already been issued (O’Reilly et al, 2013). We hope that this will go a long way to addressing these important questions. Such forums also have the potential to further improve the journal’s general visibility and – above all – make a long term difference to the health and vitality of leadership studies. Ideas for special issues, papers, forums and themes are welcome.

In our view this journal also plays a special role as a community building forum for leadership scholars throughout the world, particularly those who have been dissatisfied with mainstream approaches. In line with this, we wish to strengthen the involvement of the Editorial Board in the journal, along with that of the wider leadership community. This will involve  meetings at conferences, such as the International Studying Leadership Conference and the International Leadership Association (ILA) conference, and the regular distribution of a newsletter to all members of the editorial board. Other initiatives will be announced in due course.

This is an effort in which we can all participate. *Leadership* depends on its whole community of writers, readers and reviewers. We encourage you all to deepen your involvement with the journal, by reviewing for it, promoting it and – above all – by sending us your best work, and your ideas about how the journal can progress. These are exciting times for our field, and our journal. We look forward to working with all of you to build on the journal’s strengths as it faces one landmark birthday and positions itself for many more in the future.

Brad Jackson and Dennis Tourish

Editors

**References**

O’Reilly, D., Lamprou, E., Leitch, C., and Harrison, R. (2013) Special Issue: Leadership and authority in a crises-constructing world, *Leadership,* 9, 145-147.

Tourish, D. (2011) Journal rankings, academic freedom and performativity: What is, or should be, the future of *Leadership? Leadership,* 7, 367–381.