Editorial

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Biographical notes: Heather Höpfl is an organisational psychologist by training. She started her career as an industrial researcher working on the design of paper cutting equipment. She has worked with a number of large organisations including British Airways Safety Services, the Home Office (prison services) and DHSS on the design of IKBS development for the benefits system. Her PhD (1980) was on the subjective experience of time. Her research interests are in myths and symbolism, theorisation and gender and, in the context of this special issue, in 'the site of performance' and 'sites of resistance'. She works at the University of Essex, where she is Professor of Management in the Business School.

In the Autumn of 2006, I spent a very pleasant period of sabbatical leave as the guest of Prof. Antonio Strati at the University of Trento, where I had the opportunity to work with his Masters students on a study of home and work using photographic research techniques. It was during my period in Trento, that I shared an office with Dr. Barbara Allen, an architect from Virginia Tech, USA. Her work at that time was on the after-effects of hurricane Katrina and we found a common interest in the relationship between architecture and design, and social architecture and response. We found that our interests coincided around the relationship between structures, behaviours, failures and reactions. We came to the conclusion that despite the proliferation of research on spatial aspects of organisation very little research had been devoted to the relationship between the structural aspects of design and its implications. Consequently, in 2008, we decided to run a workshop under the auspices of the European Institute for Advanced Studies in Management (EIASM) in Brussels on *Architecture and Social Architecture: Disturbing Notions of Structure in Organisations.* This took place in May 2008.

In recent years, a number of organisational scholars have given attention to ways of conceiving space in organisations. This has led to different ways of conceiving spatial arrangements, analysing social organisation and understanding spatial relationships in terms of power, mobility and materiality. In terms of recent work on space, it is salutary to consider work by Bachelard (1994 [1958]), Lefebvre (1991), Massey (1995), Kociatkiewicz and Kostera (1999), Crang and Thrift (2000). However, there has also been a growing number of publications on architecture, design and design firms, from researchers such as Yanow (1995), Jevnaker (2005), Kornberger and Clegg (2004), Yaneva (2005), Taylor and Spicer (2007), Dale and Burrell (2003, 2008a, 2008b), Jelinek et al. (2008) and van Marrewijk and Yanow (2010). While this second body of

research inevitably draws on concepts of space and spatial arrangements, it also gives attention to the relationship between architecture, structure and management and organisational arrangements. There is also a parallel development in the literature that finds a common strand with emergent issues in this discussion of structures and spaces. These papers in one sense or another are concerned with the relationship between structures and resistance and *inter alia* include work by Fleming and Sewell (2002), Dale (2005), Costea et al. (2005), Fleming and Spicer (2007, 2008), Böhm et al. (2008), Stiernstedt and Jakobsson (2009), Land and Taylor (2009), Gastelaars (2010), Ng and Höpfl (2011), Hancock and Spicer (2011). There is an emergent concern with the way that structures shape consciousness (Peltonen, 2011) and also with the resistance with which such structures are met (see Thanem et al.).

Consequently, this special issue had two related objectives. First, to give attention to the relationship between design and structure; not in a deterministic way, but rather with the purpose of challenging assumptions about the design of organisations – as both spaces and places of work – to expose the definitional character and rigidities of social architecture. It also sought to examine the *logic* architectural design and to consider its rhetorical character. That is to say, there was a desire to highlight the intentions of architects and the way that they conceptualise the relationship between the organisation and its culture. As de Certeau (1986, p.53) has pointed out, rhetoric is completed by the *Other* and in a similar way, design intentions have specific and intended implications for employees who have to work within the structures, the workplaces that are designed for them. In his paper, Vincent Degot offers some insights into the way this can be understood in the contemporary organisation by paying particular attention to the rise of the engineer. Secondly, the intention was to take these issues specifically into the realm of architecture rather than space *per se*. This is because there is, as suggested above, a wealth of OS literature on space but less which gives attention to theorising and speculating on architecture itself. Consequently, this special issue is replete with accounts of architectural design and its effects. It is also well served by photographs and material that serves to illustrate the authors' intentions. The concern here was with the implications for spatial arrangements and relationships of structures. This special issue invited contributions that examined the relationship between the architecture of organisation and its implications: at intentions and at regulation and response.

Taken together, this collection of papers has much to contribute to an understanding of the relationship between structures and organisational behaviour particularly for employee behaviour and experience. Undoubtedly, the papers taken as a whole throw light on a range of issues in contemporary work organisations.

It is perhaps entirely appropriate that the first piece in this special issue is from Vincent Dégot. As one of the founding members of SCOS, Vincent Dégot was one of the first researchers in organisational theory to discuss the relationship between aesthetics and management. In this paper, he lays the foundations for a history of modern architectural design by looking at the relationship between design and building materials. This tangential look at architecture provides rich insights because it permits Dégot to pose challenging questions about the nature of management and organisational transformation. In this respect, what he is able to do is to consider how changes in the availability of building materials and, consequently, of building techniques introduces a new standpoint in the production of architectural design, that of the engineer. This significant point has clear implications for structures: regularity, predictability and normalisation which, in turn, have recognisable consequences for organisational

behaviour, which subsequently comes to reflect these design characteristics so that predictable and normalised behaviour arguably become the inevitable consequences of the logic of engineered design.

In the second paper in this special issue, Varda Wasserman analyses two architectural case studies: the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Open University (Israel). In this fascinating paper, she seeks to demonstrate how organisations try to find aesthetic means to gain legitimacy in their professional fields, and she gives attention to the ways in which organisations use 'aesthetic imitation' to construct, re-construct and change their collective identities. In many ways, Varda Wasserman's paper follows naturally from some of the issues raised by Vincent Dégot by giving attention to the significance of old and new design and the intentions of their designers and to processes of normalisation and reproduction. Wasserman lays down the challenges for further research might, she argues, might usefully examine 'aesthetic mimicry' and symbolic isomorphism.

Marianne Stang Våland's paper offers a means of understanding the role of participation in design. Her paper provides an ethnographic study of the process of designing a town hall in which the end users formally participated in the design process. One of the things that Våland seeks to demonstrate is the way in which the end users initially resisted the notion of open-office design and the consequences of participation for an understanding of the process. The paper makes a valuable contribution to a discussion of the relationship between organisational and architectural design processes and, in particular, to the significance of participation. She concludes with the view that participation supported the organisation's ability to understand its own practise more readily and, as a result, was able to come to terms with its complexity. In other words, participation, in itself, contributed to a greater understanding of the goals, direction, purpose, identity and so forth of the organisation. This presents both opportunities and challenges for the architectural process and for end-user involvement.

This position is further elaborated and extended by the argument put forward by Alfons van Marrewijk. In his paper, van Marrewijk turns his attention to employees' aesthetic experience of designed organisational space. His argument is that architects seek to relate the organisational goals and notions of corporate identity through the buildings and structures they create: by the design of organisational spaces. The paper gives attention to employees' aesthetic experiences by examining two contrasting buildings that are part of the Dutch telecom operator KPN where van Marrewijk was both a telecom engineer and an organisational anthropologist. The paper reflects on his own aesthetic experiences and ponders the methodological consequences of his engagement with the buildings both as employee and as researcher. What is critical to this paper is the point he is making about the significance of this dual relationship to the buildings and how this colours his experience. Consequently, the paper throws light on the importance of the standpoint for an understanding of the aesthetic experience and points to some of the problems of interpretation for the non-native anthropologist.

Torkild Thanem, Sara Värlander and Stephen Cummings offer a thought-provoking and challenging piece on open-office design. This paper draws on qualitative research data from two case studies – a Swedish occupational pensions firm and a UK call centre. The paper looks at the implications of open-plan office design and finds that beyond the more obvious and immediate effects are a series of consequences that are both unintended and subversive. In fact, as they demonstrate, the consequences frequently run completely counter to the declared benefits much vaunted by architects of open-plan

working, such as creativity and spontaneity. Creativity, they argue, is put to use to avoid surveillance and in ways that subvert attempts to intensify work patterns. This paper initiates a discussion about the unforeseen consequences of the imposition of workplace design and its implications.

Finally, the paper from Albert Lejeune and Ira Sack is rightly the final paper in this special issue since it provides both an attempt to reconcile different methodological positions and an imaginative and engaging perspective on the relationship between design and human behaviour. Lejeune and Sack draw on the sociology of architecture on the one hand and activity theory on the other and locate their work in an organisational setting to see if there is any useful conjunction between these approaches. The theoretical position they adopt as a result, they term the *space of strategy* and they seek to apply this concept to the description of three types of space: the empty space, the programming space and the inhabited space. As such, their paper makes a valuable contribution to this discussion because it is located between quantitative approaches to organisational space and qualitative interpretations. Beginning with an account of an earthquake in Sicily in 1693, the paper offers insights into both the logic of design and the architectural vision. It moves comfortably between Herbert Simon and Le Corbusier, between strategic design and Greek villages. The paper presents a sweeping and majestic vista with which to close this special issue and initiates a discussion that clearly goes beyond the limitations the immediate concerns of this issue. However, it is indicative of a methodological shift toward the reconciliation of hard and soft methodologies.

It has been a great pleasure to work with the authors whose work is presented in this special issue and to think about the issues they raise in their papers. In particular, it has been interesting for me to consider the conjunction between the concerns raised in the papers and the way that these work together to raise further issues for discussion and research. Some of these issues are conceptual as those raised by Vincent Dégot and Varda Wasserman, whereas some concern methodological issues such as those raised here by Marianne Stang Våland and, Lejeune and Sacks and Alfonse van Marrewijk. Thanem, Värlander and Cummings offer engaging empirical evidence and new challenges for research. Perhaps inevitably when matters of structure and the intentions of design are under discussion, there is an implicit (and sometimes explicit) concern with issues of power and of who has the power to define – structures, outcomes, identities, the design prerogative and about how this is both experienced, accommodated to and resisted.

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