

EDITORIAL

Rethinking Responsibility in Organization and Management Research

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Organizations have been facing a cascade of global disruptions nowadays. Record-breaking climate crises are devastating ecosystems and infrastructure worldwide. The acceleration of generative AI adoption is reshaping how decisions are made, work is organized, and responsibilities are allocated. The proliferation of burnout, disengagement, and so-called silent quitting reflects growing societal discontent and the weight of organizational systems experienced as oppressive or meaningless. Political tensions, armed conflicts, and the erosion of democratic norms further challenge institutional stability across multiple regions. These phenomena are not isolated. They signal deep systemic transformations (Reinecke & Ansari, 2016) characterized by interdependence, nonlinearity, and potentially irreversible consequences for both organizations and the society alike.

In recent years, a growing body of research has focused on grand challenges (e.g. Berkowitz et al., 2024; George et al., 2016; Gümüşay et al., 2022), wicked problems (e.g. Frey-Heger et al., 2022; Reinecke & Ansari, 2016), and processes of transformative changes (Schot & Steinmueller, 2019). This work highlights not only how organizations are increasingly exposed to complex and uncertain environments but also how they bear significant individual and collective responsibilities in shaping societal outcomes (Ergene et al., 2021). As 'vectors of managerial logic', organizations actively structure the relationship between humanity and the Earth system (Acquier et al., 2024, p. 13), often reinforcing environmental degradation, inequality, and other societal harms through routine organizational practices. Yet organizations are also key actors for intervention and transformation, with the capacity to support transitions toward more sustainable, just, and regenerative futures. In this respect, management research has a crucial role to play in foregrounding these dynamics and must assert a stronger presence in scholarly and public debates on these global challenges (Acquier et al., 2024).

Yet, academic publishing continues to be shaped by entrenched 'publish or perish' dynamics, fostering strong path dependencies toward incremental, mundane contributions (Alvesson et al., 2017; Tourish & Craig, 2025). These pressures often limit scholars' capacity to devote time and intellectual resources to engaging deeply with complex societal issues (see Berkowitz & Delacour, 2020) and to produce knowledge that is meaningful and actionable for organizational actors and professionals (see Fernandez & Garreau, 2023). In some cases, institutional pressures surrounding publications and performance metrics may even encourage *irresponsible* research practices (see, for instance, the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute case or the Gino case at Harvard Business School, in Bazerman, 2025), a risk that is amplified by the availability of increasingly powerful generative AI tools. While we remain confident that such practices do not characterize the vast majority of academic work, recent high-profile cases have nonetheless drawn attention to vulnerabilities in contemporary research systems, where technological affordances and institutional incentives may interact in problematic ways.

In this evolving landscape, debates are intensifying around our *collective responsibility* as academics, not only to uphold standards of research integrity but also to produce knowledge that helps organizations assume their responsibilities and contribute to transformative societal change. This raises a fundamental question for our field: what does scientific responsibility mean for organization and management research today?

At *M@n@gement*, we are committed to placing this question at the heart of our editorial mandate. Responsibility is not an optional add-on, it is a condition for scholarly relevance. Beyond avoiding clearly irresponsible research and questionable practices such as plagiarism, data fabrication or misrepresentation (Tourish & Craig, 2025), scientific responsibility entails producing knowledge that is meaningful, reflexive, methodologically rigorous, open to conceptual and

methodological renewal, and capable of contributing collectively to societal debates. In what follows, we articulate both epistemic and methodological orientations of responsible research, and outline our vision of responsibility as a shared scholarly horizon for the *M@n@gement* community.

Responsibility as a reflexive stance

There is a growing risk of cynicism in academic publishing, where publications become a game driven by academic career and institutional prestige, at the expense of intrinsic meaning and wider professional or social use (Alvesson et al., 2017; Becker & Lukka, 2023). This risk is not merely anecdotal but has been widely discussed as a structural condition of contemporary academia, shaped by audit culture, rankings, and performance metrics (Burrows, 2012; Espeland & Sauder, 2007). Scientific responsibility, by contrast, aims to illuminate contemporary organizational dynamics in meaningful ways (Wright & Nyberg, 2017).

Meanings, as we understand it here, differ from mere sense-making or producing comprehensible research. A research output can be perfectly intelligible and methodologically robust, published in reputable journals, making sense within institutional expectations or career goals, and yet still lack meaning or substance for ourselves or for others. In contrast, meaningful research strives toward purpose and value (Alvesson et al., 2017), in the sense that it speaks to issues that matter beyond the internal logics of the academic field.

In response to the growing sense of meaninglessness in academia (Bothello & Roulet, 2019), many early-career scholars have begun seeking deeper meaning through alignment with personal values and identities. This 'ego' turn in the search for meaning (Alvesson et al., 2017) reflects a desire to craft research that resonates with who we are. However, there is a risk that meaningfulness becomes individualized and inward-looking, confined within the academic sphere and accessible only to those initiated into a particular way of thinking and acting, making little sense or significance to outsiders.

Responsible research, by contrast, relies on meaning that extends beyond the self and the interests of specific groups, holding relevance for wider society (Tourish & Craig, 2025). Such research does not have to be comprehensible to all, but it implies attending to a broader range of stakeholders who may be affected by our work, directly or indirectly (Lindebaum & Hibbert, 2024).

Responsible research, therefore, calls for a reflexive stance on who is involved, who benefits, and who bears the consequences of our research beyond managerial audiences (Tourish & Craig, 2025). As meaning systems are often intertwined with societal power relations (Alvesson et al., 2017), we must also reflect on how our research may reinforce or challenge existing power dynamics. This involves asking

difficult questions: to what extent does our research reinforce existing power dynamics? Whose interests are being served or marginalized? Who is included in, or excluded from, our empirical and conceptual frames?

In line with these questions, there is an urgent need to attend more seriously to the voices and lived experiences of less visible or underrepresented stakeholders, such as minorities within organizations (Hideg et al., 2020) as well as asymmetries between organizations and institutional contexts in the Global North and the Global South.

Such a reflexive stance can help to disrupt entrenched power dynamics, demystify taken-for-granted meanings, and denaturalize what appears as commonsensical or inevitable (Alvesson et al., 2017). In this sense, responsible research can also benefit from embracing epistemological pluralism, exploring alternative worldviews alongside established theoretical traditions (Banerjee & Arjaliès, 2021).

Established analytical frameworks, developed for relatively stable organizational settings, may become ill-suited for capturing phenomena characterized by uncertainty, interdependence, and systemic complexity. This limitation becomes apparent in research on grand challenges, where issues such as climate change are translated into narrow organizational responses that reproduce 'business as usual' (Wright & Nyberg, 2017); in studies of the changing nature of work, where project-based, precarious, and fragmented careers escape traditional employment models (Barley & Kunda, 2001); and in analyses of institutional change, where agency unfolds through dispersed, contested, and often unintended forms of institutional work that challenge linear accounts of change (Lawrence et al., 2011). When frameworks travel uncritically across contexts, they risk reducing complex realities to manageable but impoverished representations (Tsoukas, 2017).

Rethinking what constitutes meaningful organizational practices, thus, involves questioning the categories, assumptions, and methodological conventions through which such practices are made visible and legitimate. Responsible research therefore entails not only selecting relevant topics but also revisiting and renewing the analytical tools through which these topics are studied.

Responsibility as a way of questioning and revisiting our analytical tools

A growing body of scholarship has warned against the dominance of incrementalism and methodological conformity in management research, which may generate cumulative output while limiting the field's capacity to engage with novel and complex realities (Davis, 2010; Hambrick, 2007). When inherited frameworks are mobilized without critical scrutiny, they risk narrowing what becomes visible and reinforcing assumptions developed for contexts that no longer prevail.

Responsible scholarship therefore requires questioning and revisiting our conceptual and methodological apparatus. As Weick (1989) famously argued, theorizing is an exercise in disciplined imagination, demanding both rigour and openness. This balance becomes especially salient when phenomena such as digital work, platform-based organizing, or algorithmic decision-making challenge established distinctions between technology and organization, or between structure and agency (Orlikowski & Scott, 2016). Revisiting analytical tools is not a rejection of existing theories, but an acknowledgment of their historical situatedness and their limits.

Such questioning naturally leads to methodological and theoretical renewal. Renewal should not be understood as a search for novelty for its own sake, but as a scientific response to shifting empirical realities. Responsible inquiry involves updating conceptual categories, exploring methodological alternatives, and enabling various modes of theorizing. In line with recent work on *impactful theory*, this also means recognizing theory itself as a meaningful pathway to societal impact, rather than treating impact as an external or subsequent add-on to scholarly work (Reinecke et al., 2022). From this perspective, theoretical ambition and societal relevance are not competing demands, but mutually reinforcing ones.

This commitment to responsible theorizing also informs M@n@gement's standpoint on emerging research technologies. While generative AI tools may offer limited support for technical or linguistic aspects of the research process, the journal adopts a clear position against their use for automated knowledge production, theorizing, or evaluative judgment. The development of theory (through problem formulation, conceptual reasoning, and interpretation) remains an irreducibly human and collective endeavor.

Taken together, these considerations reaffirm M@n@gement's long-standing openness to both theoretical and methodological pluralism and innovation. As organizational realities evolve, the journal remains receptive to new and emerging methods that are theoretically grounded, reflexive, and appropriate to the questions under investigation. At the same time, M@n@gement adopts a clear and responsible stance on the use of generative AI and will provide updated guidelines for authors and reviewers clarifying expectations regarding methodological rigor, disclosure, and appropriate use of such tools. Responsible science, in this regard, is also transparent science.

Responsibility as a shared orientation for the journal and its community

Orienting scholarly attention toward contemporary challenges

In line with our commitment to scientific responsibility, we aim to reinforce M@n@gement's engagement with contemporary

challenges through targeted and ambitious special issues. The journal has already addressed important themes, such as alternatives to dominant systems (2017: vol. 20, issue 4), scaling up in the face of grand challenges (2024: vol. 27, issue 3), and most recently, sustainability and innovation ecosystems (2025: vol. 28, issue 5). Building on this trajectory, we intend to continue and amplify this orientation by highlighting the role of management and organization scholars in critically examining, questioning, and reshaping responses to major societal transformations.

Ecological transition remains a central and urgent area for M@n@gement and still requires deeper engagement from management scholars. Future contributions could critically explore how nature is (or is not) integrated into organizational strategies and practices, and how dominant economic models might be disrupted to place the biosphere at the center of individual and collective action for transformative changes (Banerjee & Arjaliès, 2021; Ergene et al., 2021). Such work also invites renewed attention to institutional arrangements (such as sustainability standards and regulatory regimes) that increasingly structure organizational responses to ecological issues, while raising new questions about accountability, legitimacy, and power.

The responsibility of individual organizations and collective action is also essential in the face of inequality, precarity, and the evolution of work. For instance, in the face of platform capitalism as an expression of neoliberal control, scholars have explored how individual strategies and collective dynamics can both reproduce oppression (Le Breton & Galière, 2023) and, conversely, become sites of resistance and alternative organizing (Tassinari & Maccarrone, 2020). There remains a strong need to renew our analytical lenses on how organizational arrangements, governance mechanisms, and managerial practices contribute to the reproduction or contestation of inequality, particularly by foregrounding marginalized voices and situated political contexts.

The phenomenon of platform capitalism also sheds light on broader processes of algorithmic governance and digital transformation. The expansion of digital infrastructure reshapes control, visibility, and accountability, redistributing decision-making authority between humans, algorithms, organizations, and regulatory bodies, and transforming power relations both within and across organizations. Recent work from Garcias and Noury (2021) has further questioned the organizational sustainability of digital labor platforms, emphasizing their capacity (or lack thereof) to integrate, preserve, and develop knowledge over time, a dimension captured by the notion of 'cognitive sustainability'. Viewed in this way, platforms are not merely sites of algorithmic coordination but evolving organizational forms whose viability depends on how cognitive capabilities are distributed and hybridized between technologies and human actors. These dynamics call for closer examination of how governance is enacted through data, metrics, and

automated systems, and how responsibility is negotiated when authority, knowledge, and decision-making become increasingly opaque, dispersed, or hybridized.

Finally, debates on institutional and governance change and their implications for organizational dynamics and work need to be renewed in the light of escalating political and societal crises. From democratic tensions and institutional contestation in France, to border disputes and identity crises in Europe, and to global geopolitical conflicts, these upheavals are redefining the rules, norms, and power structures that shape organizational dynamics and their relationships with states, markets, civil society, and transnational actors. Recent advances in institutional theory and the growing literature on institutional work (Gidley & Palmer, 2021) provide valuable lenses for understanding these transformations. Beyond its initial focus on institutional creation and disruption, this literature highlights the importance of institutional maintenance, the plurality of actors involved, and the situated and temporal nature of agency. It invites renewed attention to how governance arrangements are actively produced, stabilized, and contested through everyday organizational practices, rather than through linear or top-down change alone.

This perspective is particularly relevant for analyzing contested governance regimes, including the politicization of regulation, evolving corporate governance models, and the growing prominence of ESG-related accountability mechanisms, which increasingly embed organizations in complex and conflictual systems of governance extending well beyond organizational boundaries.

While we emphasize these contemporary challenges as central to *M@n@gement's* editorial agenda, they are by no means exclusive. Other major transformations affecting organizations are equally welcome, and we encourage contributions that engage with them from plural, reflexive, and critical theoretical, methodological, and geographical perspectives.

Not a narrowing of scope, but a reaffirmation of relevance

While open to a plurality of perspectives, *M@n@gement* continues to affirm its core commitment to research in management, strategy, and organization studies. This focus should not be understood as a narrowing of scope, but rather as a reaffirmation of the journal's relevance for understanding organizational and strategic dynamics, and responsibility for addressing how organizations shape (and are shaped by) contemporary societal challenges.

M@n@gement values empirical research that explores and illuminates organizational phenomena through rigorous methodologies and original theoretical framing. The 'Original research' section welcomes such contributions, anchored in rich and carefully constructed empirical materials, and aiming to advance scholarly debates in management and

organization studies. These contributions play a central role in the journal's mission to support research that is both analytically demanding and meaningful for understanding organizational realities.

At the same time, the journal seeks to foster plural perspectives of what counts as impactful and responsible research by offering two additional sections that expands the forms, voices, and orientations of knowledge production beyond conventional article formats.

The 'Business voice' section foregrounds practice-oriented and practice-engaged forms of knowledge (see the previous editorial, Fernandez & Garreau, 2023). Drawing on approaches ranging from problem-driven theorizing to action research (Reinecke et al., 2022), it encourages submissions grounded in engaged scholarship, collaboration, and dialogue with practitioners. This section creates space to reflect on how we generate knowledge *with*, rather than merely *about*, organizational actors, through processes of co-construction, mutual learning, and reflexive engagement. Contributors are invited to critically examine the research process itself: who is involved and how, whose voices are amplified or silenced, who is affected by the knowledge produced and in what ways. In this sense, 'Business voice' embodies *M@n@gement's* broader commitment to scientific responsibility by promoting a dialogical, reflexive and socially situated forms of inquiry.

The 'Essays' section offers a space to renew the intellectual creativity underlying responsible research. As organizational and societal challenges evolve, the academic community must continuously revisit its collective assumptions, imaginaries, and epistemological frames (Wright & Nyberg, 2017). This section welcomes bold theoretical development and critical reflection aimed at disrupting established knowledge systems and opening new conceptual pathways. An essay in *M@n@gement*, however, is neither a personal opinion piece nor a provocation detached from scholarly engagement. Rather, 'Essays' combine conceptual depth, theoretical ambition, and critical reasoning to challenge prevailing frameworks and invite the community to rethink the boundaries of management, strategy, and organization studies. In doing so, the section contributes to the journal's broader ambition of encouraging novel, critical, and visionary perspectives that inspire new ways of thinking about organizations and their role in society.

Conclusion: Responsibility as a collective scholarly horizon

Responsibility is not borne by individual scholars alone (particularly early-career scholars navigating the path dependency and pressures of 'publish or perish') but is understood as a collective process embedded in editorial policies, review practices, authorial choices, and the expectations of scholarly communities.

As editors, we inevitably occupy the position of 'academic gatekeepers' (Tourish & Craig, 2025), a role that involves not only safeguarding the scientific quality of published works but also actively shaping the types of questions, approaches, and forms of scholarship that are valued and made visible. In this capacity, we seek to place greater emphasis on contributions that embody the principles of responsible research articulated throughout this editorial, while remaining attentive to pluralism, debate, and intellectual risk-taking.

We also recognize our responsibility to guide reviewers, whose work constitutes an essential, yet often invisible, dimension of scholarly life. Peer review relies on significant forms of intellectual, relational, and emotional labor that frequently remain unacknowledged, despite being central to the quality and integrity of the publication process. As part of our mandate, we aim to better support reviewers, provide clearer guidance, and acknowledge the crucial 'shadow work' they perform in sustaining the collective endeavor of knowledge production.

Taken together, these commitments reflect the core orientation of our editorial project, grounded in a shared understanding of scientific responsibility. Our ambition is to reinforce a sense of scholarly community and dialogue across all actors involved in the publication process, and to strengthen connections between the French and international academic communities. At the same time, we seek to foster a more reflexive stance on the broader societal implications of the research published in *M@n@gement*, reaffirming the journal's role as a space where rigorous scholarship, collective responsibility, and meaningful engagement with the society at large can coexist.

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