

SCOS/C&O Joint statement of protest and solidarity with colleagues at University of Leicester

February 10, 2021

In our capacity as the Board of the Standing Conference on Organizational Symbolism (SCOS), and the Editorial Team of our in-house journal, Culture and Organization (C&O), we issue this statement of protest and solidarity in support of our colleagues in political economy and critical management studies at the University of Leicester, who have been threatened with redundancy during a public health pandemic.

We would like to express our dismay at the recent announcement by the School of Business at the University of Leicester that it will divest all research activities in the areas of critical management studies and political economy and make faculty working in these areas redundant. The decision to erase this field of expertise is particularly concerning given the leading role that the School of Business at Leicester has played in the establishment of critical management studies and the reputation and quality of the faculty associated with it. SCOS and C&O have always had a very close connection to the University of Leicester, with a number of journal editors, conference organisers and Board members all coming from the School of Business/Management. This decision significantly damages the reputation of the University as a research-intensive institution.

SCOS proudly supports the vital importance of pluralist critical research and scholarship in the social sciences, particularly at this moment of crisis. Political economy and critical management studies are a vital part of a rich academic eco-system where inclusion not divestment should be the watchword. Rather than being diluted, pluralist critical scholarship in our universities should be supported and extended.

SCOS is a global network of academics and practitioners, who hail from a hugely diverse range of disciplines and professional backgrounds. We were formed in 1981, and hold an annual international conference and have hundreds of members worldwide. Our central interest is in the interlinked issues of organizational symbolism, culture and change, articulated in the broadest possible sense and informed by our commitment to interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary understandings of organization and management. SCOS is known for its inclusivity, providing a space where scholars from any background and discipline can come together, and importantly SCOS has always been particularly welcoming of non-academic participants including consultants and practitioners from a variety of profit and non-profit sectors.

This ethos is reflected in our official journal, Culture and Organization, launched in 1995. C&O exemplifies the SCOS tradition of a critical approach to qualitative research that crosses traditional disciplinary and functional boundaries as well as providing reflection on the forms this work takes, the methods it adopts and the voices it represents. C&O has been proud to one of a number of high quality journals which have published leading research in the critical management studies field from scholars based at Leicester.

The SCOS Board.

Culture and Organization Editorial Team.