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Editorial – RIPCO: Between Continuity and Disruption(s)

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RIPCO: Between Continuity and Disruption(s)

Since 2018, when a new Editorial Board was appointed, RIPCO has been striving to align its practices with the most stringent academic standards. The objectives pursued were clearly stated from the outset: the ambition is to position RIPCO as one of the reference journals in the field of Organizational Behavior (OB), to continually enhance the scientific quality of the published articles, to increase the international reach and outlook of the journal, which was originally predominantly Francophone, and finally, to ensure the integrity of the entire submission evaluation process. This directive has borne fruit, as evidenced by the journal's metrics, which have consistently improved over the years. These metrics now place RIPCO at a level broadly comparable to that of many Francophone management journals that were classified in rank 2 by FNEGE in 2022. While reaffirming these strategic principles, the Editorial Board decided in its latest meeting to open the journal up to new types of productions in addition to the classic research articles, which remain the *raison d'être* of the journal. The goal is to adapt RIPCO to contemporary evolutions in the world of management research.

Staying True to Its Strategy

To achieve the first objective of becoming a leading journal in OB, we endeavored to promptly issue a desk reject decision to authors whose articles did not aim to describe, understand, explain, or predict individual and/or collective attitudes or behaviors at work. When appropriate, the Associate Editors of RIPCO provided them with guidance to identify other journals. This particularly applies to research dedicated to human resource management practices, which are more aptly suited for sister journals such as RGRH or @GRH, for example. Consequently, our desk reject rate has stabilized at 35.85% in the first ten months of 2023. While this rate may seem high, it has helped preserve the journal's editorial line, avoid unproductive competition with other academic publication platforms, and limit the waiting time for authors whose chances of success were a priori low, due to their lack of focus on OB.

To achieve the second objective – enhancing the journal's scientific quality – we call on reviewers who are specialists in the specific subject of the articles submitted to RIPCO, as much as possible. OB has progressively evolved to the point where more specialized sub-domains have emerged. Consequently, it has become challenging to be an expert in all the topics that comprise this vast field. In light of this diversification, the Editor in Chief of RIPCO strives to assign the Associate Editor who is most familiar with the subject of the submission to handle its evaluation process. The same principle is applied when selecting independent, anonymous reviewers. Thanks to this approach, our acceptance rate has been progressively aligned with that of similar-level journals. It stands at 25.7% over the past five years, a figure that continues to decrease significantly in 2023.

The internationalization of RIPCO has been pursued on multiple levels. Firstly, the journal is proud to receive submissions from many different countries and geographical areas. There are no geographical quotas or special privileges. All submissions are examined according to the same rules and standards, regardless of country of origin, even if French research is still dominant today (60% in 2023). To this end, we draw on our database of 1,616 reviewers, whom we would particularly like to thank for their active contribution to the journal. Among

them, 650 are of international origin, i.e., just over 40%. They come from fifty different countries, and 159 of them are non-French speakers. This international outlook is also reflected in the composition of the journal's Editorial Board. Beyond the French, Switzerland is represented by Professor David Giaque, as are the United States with Professor David Wasieleski. Valuable advice is also offered by colleagues with significant international experience in Europe and North America (Corinne Gendron, Patrice Laroche and Nicolas Raineri). Lastly, the internationalization of RIPC0 takes the form of publication in English of all accepted French-language articles. This requirement for authors aims to avoid compartmentalization and better showcase Francophone research in OB internationally.

Finally, the progress made by RIPC0 in recent years is also largely attributable to the integrity of the evaluations and decisions of each and every member of the Editorial Board. Favoritism, preferential treatment, clannish practices, clientelism and demagoguery are banned. In this way, RIPC0 makes its decisions in all honesty if it cannot claim complete objectivity. Whether someone is well known or unknown, friendly or unfriendly toward the journal, the same evaluation principles are applied. This unalterable line of conduct, condemned by proponents of "political realism," sometimes generates tension with authors. The "publish or perish" principle indeed involves issues of financial rewards, career and even employment, of which we are well aware. Despite this, the Editorial Board strives to resist pressures from all quarters to ensure strict equality of treatment.

These operating principles are the iron laws of the journal. However, they do not preclude openness to new forms of publication, which the journal now calls for in align with evolving practices in organizational behavior research.

Embracing Contemporary Research Evolution

Epistemologists have debated for many years to establish a set of criteria distinguishing scientific knowledge from lay knowledge (Trinquecoste, 2022). Management in general, and OB in particular, represent a relatively recent field in the history of sciences and are, thus, still undergoing significant evolution. Disagreements are common in defining what constitutes research in this area. Different positions oppose each other, even clash, sometimes virulently, ultimately shaping a dynamic space. The boundaries separating research from informed journalism, expert reports, or consulting are not always clear. That said, without giving in to the 'anything goes' approach favored by science anarchists (Feyerabend, 1970), RIPC0 is determined to remain modern and to avoid clinging to conception which is too outdated. To this end, the Editorial Board has decided to open up the journal to "new" forms of publications. while of course continuing to prioritize traditional research articles.

Firstly, the journal would like to receive replication articles, defined as a "duplication of a previously published empirical study that is concerned with assessing whether similar findings can be obtained upon repeating the study" (Hubbard and Armstrong, 1994: 236). OB is particularly unique in this regard, as replications are rare, if not nonexistent. In contrast, life sciences only consider knowledge that has been replicated multiple times as established. The most prestigious journals such as *Science*, *Nature*, or *The Lancet* regularly publish replication articles. OB research often relies on samples that generally cannot boast statistical or theoretical representativeness (Moriceau, 2003). As a result, the scope of their conclusions is open to question, and the theories presented may possibly only be applicable locally. To prove otherwise, replication articles should refer to the original publication with respect to the state

of the art, pose strictly identical hypotheses, adopt the same method or, where appropriate, use recent methodological developments, and most importantly, discuss the obtained results. In other words, RIPCO expects type 1 replications, as defined by Easley et al. (2000: 85): "A Type I replication is a faithful reproduction of a prior study and, as such, is considered the 'purest' form of replication research in the social sciences" (e.g., same sample profile, same measure, and same method of analysis)." What about the crucial "so what"? To take just one example, an explanation for amending the bifactorial theory should be provided if the conclusions proposed by Herzberg and colleagues (1959) are challenged. Similarly, how could one explain the confirmation of these results sixty years later, when the world of work and its actors have profoundly changed? Replication articles could thus lead to fruitful discussions.

Likewise, rebuttals, i.e., reasoned debates about articles already published in RIPCO, are welcome. To prevent them from becoming overly contentious, the Editorial Board reserves the right to moderate the content. These discussions should take the form of dialogues along the lines of the Academy of Management Review:

"Dialogues should not merely identify assumptions or gaps in an article; they should go the next step by proposing constructive ways to address these limitations. They should also employ a constructive tone and be accessible to the average reader of the journal."
(<https://aom.org/research/publishing-with-aom/author-resources/submitting-to-review#dialogues>)

Dialogues must be submitted within six months of the publication date of the commented article. The author(s) of the original publication will be invited to respond.

Similarly, RIPCO would consider favorably papers that contextualize foundational articles, republishing their original version. This "republishing" would prevent second-hand readings that are still too common in our field, and borrowings that, while not entirely incorrect, are not always entirely accurate. This contextualization would better illuminate the pioneering work by situating it in its time, uncovering its roots and filiations through the schools of thought and criticisms it inspired. It would also be relevant to outline its strategic evolution, namely the arguments and means adopted to maintain its centrality in the field. Research, despite its perpetual quest for universality, remains situated in space and time, whether we accept it or not.

Finally, RIPCO also aims to publish articles that attempt to organize a research field that is either atomized, to make necessary connections between literatures that ignore each other but address the same subjects, or saturated, where the proliferation of concepts with closely aligned theoretical and operational contours hinders knowledge production rather than advancing it. In this regard, we aspire to publish works that structure a field to assist other researchers in developing their literature reviews. OB is a rapidly evolving and fertile field of research. Many of its themes exhibit an apparent disorder that could greatly benefit from theoretical organization. Given the magnitude of the work involved, priority will be given to research teams that are recognized in their field or have demonstrated their methodological expertise in the critical analysis of a subject area. The discussion can be purely theoretical but also empirical, for example through meta-analyses (Laroche, 2015).

Despite this open approach to new types of production, RIPCO's primary vocation remains the publication of high-quality scientific research articles. Indeed, maintaining these high standards also involves new safeguards. Thus, like many of the leading journals, we will in

future encourage authors to upload their primary datasets – quantitative data and/or qualitative interview transcripts – onto the journal’s electronic platform along with their article submissions. Authors will need to indicate to the journal whether they agree to participate in the open science movement, that is, to make them accessible to the entire community to form large and/or varied samples. Otherwise, the journal explicitly commits to keeping them confidential. This will enable reviewers to verify the results themselves. Finally, authors whose works are ultimately accepted for publication will be invited to publicize their research, in other words, to publish an accessible text in mainstream media such as *The Conversation*, *Tema soc* (info RH), *Forbes*, *RH Matin*, etc. The aim is to increase the visibility of both the authors and their articles published in the journal.

These new means of action should enable RIPCO to broaden its horizons without losing its essence or betraying its values, while continuing to make its modest contribution to the academic edifice that is gradually being built, deconstructed, and rebuilt by the community.

Editorial Team

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