

## Theme: Change and resistance

An ancient Chinese proverb says: "When the wind of change blows, some people build walls, others build windmills". Often this particular proverb has been used to argue that in the swirling currents of today's changeable society we need 'windmill builders' who can sense opportunities and exploit the winds of change to create something new and useful, instead of trying to duck down and shield themselves from the elements. Building a protective wall is rarely seen as something positive, but tends to be regarded as the hallmark of people who are neither visionary nor adaptable, and who just want business as usual.

In this issue of *Research and Change* we want to add shading to our understanding of change by focusing on opposition to it. There is no doubt that for a number of years now, change, reforms and reorganisation have marked the working lives of employees in virtually all sectors of employment. But from where and from whom do these visions and ideas of change come? From above or below; from the inside or the outside? What environments, motives or reasons are behind the various visions of change? And what if that which on the surface looks like resistance to change may also be perceived as a desire for change - just in another direction?

In recent years, the public sector has been through a number of reforms and restructurings predominantly initiated by political or administrative aspirations to increase productivity, with a view to producing a slimmer and more efficient public sector in the future. Yet it cannot be denied that more and more welfare professionals are vociferously protesting that they can no longer look themselves in the eye, or defend the work they do. Some of these protests take place in the public domain, on the streets or in the media, but many are subdued and made to smaller audiences - or perhaps they never become a protest, but are expressed as an individualised dilemma, a resignation, or protracted sick leave.

In fact, the response to protests is often turned back on individual employees, who are singled out as difficult people of fixed habits who are insufficiently adaptable. If the protests come from students, children, patients or citizens in general, such protesters are perceived as grasping, pampered consumers who take the welfare society for granted and have not sufficiently understood the seriousness of the situation.

If any particular reform or proposed change is not welcomed by all parties, should this resistance be understood as protection of the status quo? What if we consider resistance as a desire to alter the direction of change? What if we try to understand what 'opponents' of change *do* want when rejecting something they do *not* want? What if we were just as interested in the visions of the builders of walls as we are in those of the builders of windmills?

In this issue of *Research and Change* we encourage contributors to focus on resistance in all its variations and at all levels. We are interested in articles that explore vociferous protests, but also more muted and hidden forms of resistance that are perhaps more about circumventing, ignoring or pretending to embrace change. We are interested in the ways

power and resistance are expressed in particular social interactions, and in how individuals experience, navigate or find themselves trapped between opposing agendas, some of which parade as legitimate, while others lead a shadowy existence in more illegitimate or tabooed places.

### **Practical information**

Deadline for abstracts: 1 January 2019

Abstracts may be submitted in Danish, Norwegian, Swedish or English.

Length: A maximum of 500 words

The author must describe the expected structure and content of the article as well as the following elements (in the order that is relevant to your article):

- Purpose
- Conceptual/theoretical framework
- Research design/methods
- Results
- Limitations
- Implications for research and/or practice
- Contribution to knowledge sharing

Abstracts should be uploaded to the journal's digital platform:

<https://forskningogforandring.dk/index.php/fof>

To upload an article you must register as a user. Please note that usernames must not contain uppercase letters or spaces.

### **About Research and Change**

*Research and Change* is a double blind peer reviewed journal, published twice a year and covering specific themes in an open access online format. The first issue was published in May 2018. It is published by Cappelen Damm Publishing and is a cooperative project involving Scandinavian universities and university colleges. The journal publishes articles in Danish, Norwegian, Swedish and English.