

Speaker: Dane Pflueger, Associate Professor, Accounting Group, Warwick Business School.

Time and Location: 15:00-16:00, Thursday 12 February 2026; in-person at WBS in Room 1.005

Register: Email cohcr@wbs.ac.uk to book your place

Quality and Organization Studies:

Mapping the changing dimensions of an organizational metalogic

Quality is a common but under-theorized concept in organization studies - invoked to legitimize, transform, and explain diverse organizational practices. While quality management approaches such as Total Quality Management (TQM) have long influenced organizational life through metrics, quality circles, and continuous improvement programs, scholarship has often treated quality either as a managerial technology or as a discursive trend, without reflexive engagement with the concept of quality itself. This essay aims to reorient the study of quality and organizations by conceptualizing it not merely as a catalyst for organizational change but as a metalogic of organizing, complete with its own distinct infrastructures, norms, and practices. We identify four key transformations in the meaning and consequences of quality in contemporary organizations. Quality has guided a shift from craft to accounting; reframed assurance and audit as continuous improvement; discouraged professional resistance; and become a doctrine of governance immune to evaluation. With this essay, we wish to call for renewed scholarly attention to quality not just an object of study for organization theory, but a fundamental dimension of theorizing organizations today, which has implications for understanding of organizational change, audit, professional resistance, and governance. In this presentation, the focus will be on the healthcare setting.

Dane Pflueger is an Associate Professor in the Accounting Group at Warwick Business School. His research has focused on the way that developments in management accounting affect the organization of professional work, private and public sector organizations, and markets and market regulation. Much of his work has explored the emergence and effects of the measurement and management of quality in healthcare. This includes the rise of quality as an undemocratic basis for healthcare policy-making, the patient survey as an imperfect means for healthcare providers to know their patients, quality improvement as a new identity for healthcare professionals and administrators, and confrontations in practice between professional ethics and quality improvement demands. His research is published across leading journals from various disciplines such as *Accounting, Organizations and Society, Social Science and Medicine*, and *Journal of Purchasing and Supply Chain Management*.