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# F R O M T H E E D I T O R S

AMP ARTICLES IN AN UNCERTAIN NEW WORLD

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WewritethiseditorialonthedayaU.S.presidential inaugurationmarkstheculminationofayearthatsaw a fraught and contentious election on one side of the AtlanticandtheU.K.referendumonwithdrawalfrom the European Union on the other side. Both of these events have already begun reshaping economic and political realities around the world. Trumpism and Brexit should at least cause us to examine our assumptions about the relationships among civil society,economy,business,politicalparty,andindividual well-being. We have seen this type of dislocation before, going back at least to the Industrial Revolution, but high-speed communications supercharge the rate of propagation, uncontrollably expanding the impact and reach of the social and economic disruptions.

Oneofthemoststrikingfeaturesoftheso-calledposttruth world that emerged during the U.S. presidential and U.K. Brexit referendum campaigns was the deep skepticism, if not outright hostility, toward elites and experts, including academics. Some of the backlash is earned, given that academics tend to ignore the details when they prescribe—prescribing being a consequenceofdescribingandtheorizing—andthosedetails can be terribly consequential to ordinary citizens in their daily lives.

Although criticism of the role and contribution of academics is not new, it has been gathering pace for some time. Growing demands for academics to demonstrate the relevance of their research to society have led inter alia to national research assessment exercises such as the Research Excellence Framework (REF) in the United Kingdom, which assigns a researchrating to an academicdepartment based on how much it affects practice and policy. Other examples include the national mandate on “valorization” (economic value creation) among the Dutch academic research enterprise, and the priority ontechnologycommercializationbytheU.S.National Institutes of Health in their intramurally and extramurally funded research programs. As society becomes more demanding of academics, increased

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pressure to publish in top journals with low acceptance rates have raised questions about the worth of papers that are increasingly incremental and divorced from practice.

These pressures and the notion that there should be little daylight between theory and practice in the appliedsocialsciencesiswhyAMPisaskingauthors towrestlewiththepolicy[[1]](#footnote-1)implicationsoftheirideas (Phan & Wright, 2016). The perfunctory “managerial implications” encountered in a typical paper are insufficient.Wearenotdemandingthatauthorsoffer specific prescriptions, but they should reflect on the principles for decision making and practice flowing from the core ideas in the paper. The goal is not to make AMP apolicy journal but to strengthen the link between the producers and consumers of research throughapolicydiscussionthatwillrevealthelimits of the ideas and so approach them with humility. Regarding the papers in this volume, we have the following comments on their policy implications.

Corley and Schinoff note in their article that “theoretical guidance has lagged behind press hype andanecdotalevidence”(p.TK).Within andoutside academia, concerns have been noted about a rise in unethical behavior on the part of authors. Such trends can further undermine the rapidly eroding trust in academic research. These developments place a heavy responsibility on journal editors, who are the gatekeepers of the field, many of whom are “novice experts.” If editors can develop their “taste function” only after much experience as authors, reviewers, and consumers of research, then it stands toreasonthatjournalsandscholarlysocietiesshould be deliberate about developing the human capital of their most important gatekeepers. Whether from

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repeated exposure to the editorial decision process as journeymen to old hands, or with formal training and education, the obvious policy implication is for journals to deepen their search and qualification processes and perhaps frame incentives to elicit the best talent from the field.

Subramony re-engages a well-developed argument on the need to look beyond narrow shareholders to the broader set of stakeholders of organizations. The electoral shocks in recent months have made this approach de rigueur for questions involving organizationalstrategyandpolicy.Wehaveseenagrowingshift from research that is context-free to research that recognizestheroleofthecontext,suchascommunities,in which a phenomenon occurs (Zahra & Wright, 2011).

Subramony looks at how the relationships between service organizations and their communities jointlycreatevalue.Serviceorganizationsarehighly varied and present an important sectoral context that touches all parts of communities. He focuses on how policy can be developed to help service organizations be more effective at bettering the communities they serve. Yet his focus on service firms brings into sharp relief the moral choices facing organizations. In manufacturing firms, for example, where the share of fixed asset investments is high, withdrawing from a community is costly. This cost of exit accounts for the stickiness of real asset investments in communities. In service firms, the value of fixed assets is low, relative to the value created. Therefore, it should be easier for service firms to sever their community ties when the opportunities to lower the cost of production present themselves. Yet it could also be argued that because human capital is correlated with its social network, whichis geographicallydemarcated,severing a community tie would disproportionately destroy the value-creating potential of the firm. The principle by which policy should be set is not obvious.

Reflecting further on Subramony, we note that translating ideas into policy can be challenging because it starts with a theoretical conundrum. In the standard theory of the firm, the residual claimants bearing the most risk are the entrepreneurs (investors, founders, manager-owners, etc.), which means that profits net of debt servicing and contractualobligationsbelongtothem.Yetwealsoknow that future risks inherent in any enterprise cannot be fully specified among contracting parties. Civil society is one such party, so in principle, part of the residual should belong to it. The rub comes from practical matters, in fact a serious consideration will likely alter the theoretical lens from which we view the problem, as the author suggests.

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civil society, and the obli-

gations owed. While these can be dismissed as mere

These papers and our reflections are some ex-

amples of how authors might discuss the policy

In asimilar vein, the article byChliovaand Ringov explores how to obtain replicable and sustainable growth solutions for organizations and communities at the base of the pyramid (BoP). Their approach speaks to the challenges in transplanting insights that work in one context to a significantly different context. Specifically, they examine how the BoP contextchallenges thereplicabilityoforganizational growth templates from the top of the pyramid (ToP). The growth pathways of firms in developed economies result from the interplay among evolving legal, economic,technological,andsocietalenvironments, and their adaption to these changes. Therefore, the template we observe is an ending and not a starting point. An obvious policy implication is that firms should be allowed to write their own growth templates, with policymakers being cautious of imposing specific models. Beyond this generalization, the paper provides implementation insights that might help nongovernmental organizations, consultants, and governments better design programs to serve BoP communities.

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Houdek’s tour deforceis a provocativeexposition of the biological precursors of decision making and behavior that should cause us to pause over decades of research that is grounded in assumptions of human agency. Employing an extensive literature review, he explores the individual and organizational implications of Toxoplasma gondii (T. gondii) infection, a widespread parasite, on the skills and careers of employees and managers, organizational dynamics, intercultural management, and gender work roles. The paper provides an example of how scholars might generate management research insights by bridging the biology, neuroscience, and management literatures.Theinsightsfromthearticleopenupimplications at the individual level relating to the development of human resources policies regarding mindfulness training, cognitive behavioral therapy, and medical leave and benefits for infected individuals. More important, the paper raises numerous policy issues regarding knowledge of an individual’s status on such organizational policies as promotions and compensation,performanceevaluation,andjobroles.Atasocietal level,theideasinthepaperraiseimportantdiscussions of a person’s status in relation to health insurance and liability under criminal and civil law. The moral and ethical implications are extensive and nontrivial. implications of their ideas when asked to do so. The discussions are potentially substantive and could consume a significant portion of the paper. At AMP, we give authors the space to do this, so they can generate more conversation and boundarybreaking research questions. In 2017, with this uncertain new world, management scholars need to take the lead on meaningful conversations by humbly acknowledging the limitations of our understanding, broadening the questions we ask, and critically assessing the policy implications of the answers.

## REFERENCES

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## AUTHOR QUERIES

PLEASE ANSWER ALL QUERIES

There are no queries in this article.

1. By policy, we mean “a set of ideas or a plan for action followed by a business, a government, a political party, or a group of people” (Cambridge English Dictionary online, [http://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/ policy](http://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/policy), accessed 1/23/2017). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)