+ Models
SCAMAN-905; No. of Pages 9
ARTICLE IN PRESS
Scandinavian Journal of Management (2014) xxx, xxx—xxx

Available online at www.sciencedirect.com
ScienceDirect
journal homepage: http://www.elsevier.com/locate/scaman

EDITORIAL

End-of-term editorial: On (Scandinavian) management studies: What works, what doesn't, and what can we do better?

Introduction

Being an academic researcher and a scholar is to endure a dismal existence of constant worry that one lives in a time characterized by decline and wherein academic institutions and liberties are under the threat of eroding or being compromised. Such worries have been articulated regarding the university (Bok, 2002; Washburn, 2005) or academic research work per se (Lorenz, 2012; Mirowski, 2011). More specifically, for many scholars contributing to management studies and working in business schools and similar institutions, there is an additional set of concerns pertaining to for instance the role and position of the business school within the education system and vis-à-vis industry and society (Adler, 2002; Bennis & ÓToole, 2005; Khurana, 2007; Pfeffer & Fong, 2002; Starkey & Tempest, 2005), the practical relevance of the research conducted and reported in business schools (Baldridge, Floyd, & Markóczy, 2004; Gulati, 2007; Hitt & Greer, 2012; Kieser & Leiner, 2009; Lorsch, 2009), or the discipline of management studies' ability to get recognition and gain influence in policy-making quarters (Pfeffer, 1993). More specifically, there are worried commentaries published addressing the inability to produce new and challenging theory (Hillman, 2011; Suddaby, Hardy, & Huy, 2011; The Editors, 2013) or how credit and recognition in the field are increasingly dependent on potentially faulty bibliometric methods (Baum, 2011). In short, working at a business school appears from afar to be quite unnerving. At the same time, as being quite recent a invention within the medieval university system, dating from the 1880s, the business school and business school education is by and large a success story as business school diplomas are today highly attractive credentials when competing over career opportunities, and in many countries disciplines such as business administration are today the largest academic subject in terms of student enrollment.

Being granted editorial responsibilities is in many ways to be located at the very birthplace of the future of a discipline, the site where new innovative ideas and research programs are formally presented and where fields of research are consolidated in the form of literature reviews and research field oversights. This is also where newcomers are entering the professional trade of academic publishing, no longer merely relying on in-house competencies of the home department but seeking help and advice from the wider community. Needless to say, as journal offices are at the crossroads between the new and the old, the mainstream and the periphery, what is already well-established and what is in the making, there is always of necessity a bit of tensions and "creative abrasion" between different interests and concerns. Journal editors at times publish quite helpful commentaries (e.g., Gephart, 2004; Pratt, 2006) to offer some good advice on how to succeed in "making it" into the journals. In other cases, editors, either in office or on their way out, publish thought pieces wherein they address issues they think are of importance for the future (e.g., Davis, 2014). When David Courpasson left his editorial responsibilities in *Organization Studies* in 2013, one of the leading European journals in the field, he paid much attention to what he portrayed as a decline in "passionate scholarship." In an era increasingly obsessed with the external control of business schools and academic departments, there is today a strong focus on academic output, i.e., publications. These publications are in many cases not so much valued in terms of their actual content and contributions to the shared stock of know-how as much as they are valuable to auditors in terms of enabling various calculative practices and commensurations. That is, publications can in various ways be used to calculate and rank academic proficiency and skill that in turn determine status positions in the field. As have been frequently remarked by accounting scholars and economic sociologists, calculative practices per se are not of necessity inherently political but they easily become so when quanta and ratios are advanced as indisputable facts, yet being more or less disconnected from local conditions. That is, expecting academic researchers to produce some tangible research

http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.scaman.2014.09.001

Please cite this article in press as: Styhre, A. End-of-term editorial: On (Scandinavian) management studies: What works, what doesn't, and what can we do better?. *Scandinavian Journal of Management* (2014), http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.scaman.2014.09.001

results is a fully legitimate demand, but there are also reasons to believe that there are, as in so many cases of social change, unanticipated consequences of purposeful action. In Courpasson's (2013: 1246) view, the accelerated "publish or perish" regime easily lead journal editors to treat innovative papers as "trouble-makers" demanding more time to read and understand, and therefore they suffer from what Arthur Stinchcombe once called "the liability of newness." In addition, Courpasson argues, in a community increasingly obsessed with self-promotion and short-term performance reporting, there are fewer persons willing to invest time and effort in the community work that is necessary to keep the system running. Says Courpasson (2013: 1246): "[O]ur current system of scientific manufacturing creates more papers to review, with less committed and less timely reviewers, with a lower density of challenging ideas, as well as of ideas that are less significant for 'the world'; in other words, for other worlds than the closest colleagues and networks." This is a dour conclusion from an editor-in-chief leaving office; the sense of belonging to a professional community and having joint responsibilities is displaced by a "culture of individualistic achievement" losing its "solidarity ties," which in turn leads to the decline of the project to build "serious collective knowledge" (Courpasson, 2013: 1246). "A community can allow leaders to emerge but it requires people to be aware that collective achievements are more powerful than individual ventures and egoistically seeking reputation," Courpasson (2013: 1247) writes.

No matter if one shares with Courpasson (2013) this view of the loss of community, a decline of passionate scholarship, an increased focus on individual accomplishments, and a skeptical attitude towards anything new or what does not fit neatly into existing narratives and theoretical frameworks, there are reasons for taking such concerns seriously. Academic research work has been relatively sheltered from political influence to date but things, we learn, may change quite swiftly. Academic liberties are never to be taken for granted and they must be understood, regardless of the appetite for romantic heroism of the present period also in academic circles, as ultimately being justified by collective accomplishments rather than individual contributions. As an attempt to underline the collective efforts of journal editorship, this editorial published in the last issue of the three years term of the editorial team listed above is a joint contribution. Rather than being the editor-in-chief's "Thank you and goodbye!" essay, customarily published at such occasions, we have decided to publish an extended essay where all the editors reflect on the last three years of editorial work for *Scandinavian Journal of Management*. This structure of the editorial enables us to show individual learnings and insights acquired over the last three years of work for the journal.

Christine Coupland

Over my time as Associate Editor for SJM I have noticed and experienced an increasing concern with academic roles which includes the role of editing and reviewing papers for journals. Recent publications such as Knights and Clarke (2013) demonstrate this angst ably by identifying how academics see themselves as actively engaged in their profession. These positions are constantly under some kind of performative threat which at the very worst manufactures for the individual a life lived as a fraud — on the verge of being found out to what degree their inadequacy is visible to others. Set within this insecure world our fragile selves could be forgiven for gripping tightly to whatever floating object feels like some kind of apparent anchor, theoretical rigidity, ontological certainty, practitioner value, 'impact' etc. The kind of behavior that this drives is to create a territorial exclusion zone with gate keepers who ensure that strict codes are adhered to in order to maintain a consistent pattern among those who are allowed to enter. This behavior is enacted in the name of a number of causes; science, relevance, purity, theoretical development, maturity etc. However, what is most obviously reproduced in this context is a temporarily secured world of what is deemed appropriate to be written about and published by academics for, in the main, other academics.

I entered academia as a mature student from a psychology background. My undergraduate studies were in the area of social psychology at a time when minor revolutions were taking place as theorists began to challenge the apparent certainty that was in place around capturing, measuring and understanding psychological concepts such as memory, attitude, beliefs, personality etc. These early proponents were seen to be 'quite mad' to quote one of my social psychology lecturers and the theorists were marginalized within their departments. The reaction of the more traditional psychologists seemed to be to strengthen their position in 'repelling' these potential 'boarders' to their established ways of thinking about the discipline by utilizing the rhetoric of science. I provide this example of intra-disciplinary change to demonstrate that prior to, what at times is a painful move to embrace new ways of thinking, there is an entrenchment of positioning which precludes opportunities for challenging, playful or creative ways of thinking *new* about old ideas. I propose that scholars engaged in management and organization study are currently illustrating this kind of behavior.

We have had many calls for more interdisciplinary research and yet, through the review process, authors who attempt to do this often have their work rejected. This occurs sometimes after a long and difficult set of reviews as the reviewers themselves cannot deal with the apparent challenge to their own long held convictions around what matters, what is important and what is science. The review process often says more about the reviewers and their strongly held belief systems than about what an author originally intended to demonstrate through empirical study.

I understand if we were to take this to its extreme position then we could have an 'anything goes' attitude — where academic work is published and exposed to the audiences of the journals for the readership to determine whether it is a plausible account which makes a contribution to knowledge. But perhaps there is an intermediary position where a less-fearful community of scholars allows creative thought to emerge within a well-crafted, appropriately cited article?

The Scandinavian Journal of Management, in keeping with its geographical location in Northern Europe, is well positioned to offer an intellectual home to some exciting new ideas for management and organization scholars. Within the well-known rating system, that we all decry and yet work towards, it is averagely placed, therefore it is often a place of last hope for articles when other journals have been less accepting. Unfortunately, by this time the submissions can sometimes be devoid of the original passion that pre-empted the study — a 'perfectly' crafted yet lifeless account. In a personal communication from Gabriel (2013) he reported one response to a call to consider whether there are any 'alive' journals nowadays, an anonymous commentator said:

> "Love the question! That's exactly how I feel. Many of the papers in journals have been so heavily 'processed' through peer review and are written so defensively that all the life (if it had any in the first place) is drained out of them. I'm trying to think of metaphors. Zombies. Androids. Vampires. I quite like vampires — sometimes they drain the life out of the reader too."

It is not so much that ground breaking research is to be expected from every article rather, the way that the material is discussed should have potential to engage the reader at least some of the time.

Perhaps academics can re-consider their submission strategies to provide a good chance for the passion to actually emerge from the review process? This will require their activities as reviewers to change too of course. Again, given the position of SJM in relation to other well-known journals, finding reviewers to agree to provide timely reviews has been, in my experience, a system of relying on friends and bartering — falling just about short of coercion and bribery. Quite difficult and ultimately wearing out friendships, evidenced by the actions of people you know diving out of your path as you circulate at conferences.

It may be timely to remind ourselves that we are a community of scholars who are adhering to a system of rules that we are complicit in upholding. The Journals are, (perhaps ought to be), a vehicle of our expressions of debate, interest and argument that engage audiences. The future is in our hands.

Martin Fougère

Junior academics (doctoral students) might first learn about the dynamics of academic publishing by attending sessions or workshops about publishing, during which they are typically expected to adopt a certain ethos appreciative of the appropriateness and supposed fairness of the double-blind peer-review system. They then learn a good deal more about the messiness of many submission-to-publication processes — and thus, unlearn a good deal of the initial ideal understanding of how these processes should be — when they start submitting their own work to journals. Acting as reviewers gives them an additional layer of insight into publishing dynamics which may make them both more cynical and more understanding of the often suboptimal outcomes of review processes. And then working as an associate editor adds one more piece to the puzzle of understanding the different dynamics and the different stakeholders in academic publishing, and it is what I have found most rewarding while working with associate editor responsibilities in the past three years. Interesting discussions with the latest two SJM editors-in-chief have also provided some glimpses of a more holistic view of the journal and of additional challenges related to the need for negotiating with other stakeholders such as the publishers or the academy that the journal is attached to. So there is no doubt that a number of thankless tasks notwithstanding, editorial responsibilities entail a great deal of interesting learning.

That said, certainly the most striking immediate learning relates to how challenging it is to get perfectly matched expert scholars to review submissions. Especially when searching for reviewers for a paper in a topic outside of one's own — and the journal's — core expertise, it may be difficult to get a scholar with that specific expertise to accept to review for SJM, regardless of the quality of the submission. 'Matching' a reviewer, in this context, becomes a balancing act taking into account such characteristics as where people are from (e.g., SJM is more likely to be recognized in the Nordic countries), where they publish (e.g., whether they seem to only aim for A+ US journals or if they publish in journals closer to SJM in spirit), and whether they conceivably might find that they have something to win in reviewing for SJM. Thus, all too quickly in my associate editorship development path I started taking a more pragmatic approach internalizing certain norms that I would otherwise seek to oppose, such as the implicit notions that reviewers review only if they feel they can benefit from that, or that only those reviewers who publish in journals of a similar impact level as SJM might want to review for SJM. In addition, I felt that the editorial tools put at my disposal by the Elsevier online system, with the 'find reviewers' function indicating for example the reviewers' h-indexes, served as technologies that disciplined me as an editor seeking to find "SJM-matched reviewers quality-wise" based on metrics that from another subject position (e.g., as a critical management scholar) I would strongly problematize.

As I have become conscious of these somewhat schizophrenic dynamics, I have tried to resist being too strongly influenced by these norms and instead increasingly have sought to "sell" the reviewing assignments by adding in the review request letter a little sentence meant to attract the attention to the specific features that resonate with a scholar's core interests, regardless of my impression of them being perhaps not interested in reviewing in SJM. Of course, this does not always work — at the moment of writing, I am stuck in a vicious circle of invited reviewers telling me they have no time to review but that I should contact their colleagues . . . who already declined and suggested them as alternative reviewers in the first place. But I have found that my review request acceptance rate has improved a bit as a result of this "more dignified" approach centered on the core interests of the prospective reviewers. A recent experience has also strengthened my conviction: at the Meet the Editors session in which SJM was presented at EGOS in Rotterdam in July 2014, the three SJM associate editors who were present received an unexpected reinforcement when Roy Suddaby, who was there to present AMR, shared with the audience that he often reviews for SJM because it is one of the few management journals that is open enough to alternative approaches that it includes truly groundbreaking studies. I refer to this anecdote so that it may give us (the SJM editorial team, but also Nordic scholars and SJM contributors in the past, present and future) more confidence in the journal's distinctive identity and quality, and thus in our possibilities to attract high-quality submissions and submit them to high-quality review processes. Perhaps some work on strengthening this identity — with possibly an even more strongly stated

Please cite this article in press as: Styhre, A. End-of-term editorial: On (Scandinavian) management studies: What works, what doesn't, and what can we do better?. *Scandinavian Journal of Management* (2014), http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.scaman.2014.09.001

preference for empirical, qualitative research that illuminates 'the exotic in the mundane' — is needed if we want to receive papers that are even better matched with the journal, and not just submissions that are sent due to a desired impact factor level without any consideration for what SJM values.

Monica Lindgren

Being an associate editor for an internationally recognized journal is a hard and sometimes tedious task — but also a very rewarding one. Every manuscript that is submitted makes you reflect not only about the specifics of the study presented, but also on the scientific standards against which it is judged. After assessing the relevance of the manuscript for the journal and the potential contribution, you inevitably start to think about why we do research, what is desirable research, and how we look upon ourselves as researchers.

Having spent a quarter of a century in Academia, I find that the last ten years have implied quite radical changes in both the conditions for research and our view of what it entails to be a researcher. These changes become manifest not least in our ways of presenting ourselves and our work in applications for academic positions. Today's applications look as reports written to enable universities to make optimal investment decisions, prompted both by the increasingly complicated and detailed templates for applications and the applicants' proclivity to write increasingly complicated and detailed texts on their superior performance in relation to all the criteria. To me, it signals a profession acting on a competitive market, where the professional her/him-self leads a fragmented life reacting on external events, performing in measurable ways, and attending to the usefulness and practical value of research to innovation and economic growth.

As part of some recent research collaborations I have found the discursive notion of the enterprising self (Bröckling, 2005; du Gay, 1996) — with its emphasis on how individuals become responsible, rational, calculative and useful actors in a riskful marketplace through self-responsibilization — to be a particularly suitable conceptualization of emergent subject positions also for professionals in contemporary Academia. We can see how this appears both in the increasing emphasis on competition between scholars for scarce research funds, and in the commodification of scientific knowledge and education. The professional identities of young scholars increasingly seem to include an awareness of existing at the mercy of existing or imagined customers, and a calculative understanding of funding and publication success in determining one's professional worth. Even if academics still are supposed to be autonomous and self-regulating individuals with a moral obligation to further intellectual development and human knowledge, we are also to accept and embrace the immersion of market mechanisms and notions of economic usefulness. This implies that emergent subject positions may include a sense of being existentially exposed and always at risk, of relying on one's own measurable performances rather than on employers and organizations.

These changes already become manifest in the lives of academics through insecurity and fragmented identity work (Clarke, Knights, & Jarvis, 2012), and the reliance on evaluations, assessments, performance measurement and bibliometrics may thus become part of emergent subject positions through performative notions of professionality (cf. Ball, 2003; Willmott, 2011). In some universities — now also in a department near me — there is a screen in the entrance hall stating who has published what, pictures of successful colleagues and the impact factor of the journal where the article has been published. We like it to some extent — after all these years in the shadows, our research achievements finally get the attention and praise they deserve — but we are also slowly being trapped in a certain way of presenting and valuing these research achievements. As management scholars we become part of an enterprise culture in which notions of employability, flexibility, project-orientation and individual responsibilization become central to our way of justifying and regulating our existence and our actions (Chiapello & Fairclough, 2002; Peters, 2001).

So what does all this imply for academic publishing? First, that all sorts of quantitative studies are on the increase, not least those emphasizing practical issues and normative recommendations. Consequently, there is usually not much theory development. Second, I also have some issues with many of the qualitative studies that are published today. Manuscripts are increasingly filled with lengthy methodological descriptions — which, as the word count limits have not changed — tend to narrow the space for thick empirical descriptions and theoretical reasoning. Instead of trusting senior academics to be able to perform empirical analysis of, e.g., interview materials, we journal editors require more and more methodological minutiae and even interview guides (been there myself, cf. Lindgren, Packendorff, & Sergi, 2014). Third, as editors we cannot neglect the importance of bibliometrics if we want a journal to be a recognized voice in the academic community and to attract high-quality manuscripts from young and aspiring scholars. We have several UK colleagues that often lament the ABS list fetishism (cf. Willmott, 2011) and its detrimental consequences for provocative and interesting journals such as *ephemera: theory & politics in organization*, but we are at the same time using the list in various evaluations despite that it is not constructed with Scandinavian research traditions in mind.

If we want to question and change these developments, we need to resist from the inside, in daily practice. If we, e.g., find that new theoretical developments should be promoted, then we have to act in that direction in a responsible manner. Instead of handing over journal ranking lists to our young colleagues we should urge them to read — widely, intensively, extensively and creatively. If we consider some of the developments in organizational research, for example Organization Culture and many contemporary directions within Critical Management Research we find that they are all results of careful, painstaking applications of theoretical perspectives from various corners of the social sciences to management problems. In the beginning all such theoretical game-changers are done by engaged and brave researchers choosing not to go into a mature field but instead trusting their own collective ability to establish something new and interesting.

As reviewers and editors we can also take action and be part of developing more provoking, critical and engaged research. To me, the prime value of having an article published in a recognized journal is that I will (hopefully) connect to other researches across the globe, which in the best of worlds would be starting point for intellectual debate and collaboration. That is also a potential that I find necessary to judge when evaluating the works of others. Could this question — how to use the academic publishing infrastructure to promote and disseminate interesting, thought-provoking and collaborative research — be a theme for a conference or a journal to be discussed?

Inger Johanne Pettersen

I have been member of the editorial board as associate editor for SJM during almost 10 years (from 2005), and in this period I have noticed several changes. Of course, the digital reality has changed the context both for editors, reviewers, and authors. And as my colleagues editors in this editorial have noted, academic life has also changed during these years, as there are increasing competition both on national and international levels. As Lundin (2014) says, universities are graded in accordance with how active the researchers at the universities are when it comes to publishing, and accreditation of schools and educational programs is largely based on the level of publication and in which journals they appear. In what way has this affected the profile and identity of SJM?

One main experience as an associate editor is that the number of submissions from non-Nordic authors has increased substantially. Looking back 10—15 years we can observe that the tendency is quite clear: The authors are no longer mostly from the Nordic countries. The international profile has been strengthened, and consequently, the impression is given that the journal has become a more general management journal. Yes, I think this change may have blurred the profile of the journal and it motivates me to ask if the future emphasize of the journal should be put on the Nordic roots and traditions. Do we need a journal with a stronger focus and responsibility towards a Nordic perspective? This question might of course be judged as old-fashioned, as strategies today is towards the international markets also within academia.

Sten Jönsson, the second editor of the journal, has several times posed the question as to whether there is a Scandinavian management tradition which should be nurtured and developed. This focus was developed by Jönsson and Mouritsen (2005) as they edited the book *Accounting in Scandinavia — The Northern lights*. Here they pointed at the fact that the link between academia and practice has been — and I think still is — strong in the Scandinavian countries. Further, businesses are here far more open to researchers than in most other European countries. A good journal with a responsibility towards the Nordic academic community could, in my opinion, offer a place for developing such empirical research. Here the role of the Nordic Academy of Management is relevant to include as to the future strategy of the journal.

On the other hand and here is my second experience, the Nordic research community within Business Administration is not large. Especially the Norwegian research activity seems to be minor. Looking through the content of SJM in the 2005—2007 period, I count about 15 Norwegian names among the authors, whereas the number of Norwegian authors is only about 5 during the 2011—2013 period. I admit that this is a very, very small number. When I ask colleagues why this trend is observed, they say that they prefer to submit to specialized journals. Further, some colleagues admit that they submit to higher ranked journals, which in Norway are labeled level 2. As the Norwegian Ministry of Education for several years has introduced a payment system to higher education institutions based on (partly) per case payment calculated from publication points (level 2 giving the most points), I understand that SJM is not the first journal to be chosen for high quality manuscripts.

I have no answer to the challenge of increasing the number of high quality manuscripts from my national colleagues. Could we make the journal be more visible at the Nordic conferences and also more actively promote it among our academic friends? Further, I think it is a fruitful step to take to motivate authors to submit empirical papers, based on theoretical frameworks and crafted on basis of on insight from studies of businesses and organizations, which we traditionally have had rich access to in the Nordic countries.

Last, I have an impression that the number of manuscripts within accounting and accounting related fields (management accounting and control, finance) have been decreasing. As an associate editor, I have received an increasing number of quantitative studies based on panel data. Unfortunately, these papers are often desk rejected due to the lack of contribution to new knowledge or the lack of theoretical rigor and insight. I hope that SJM in the future will receive more good manuscripts within these parts of the business administration fields.

Per Skålén

Writing and publishing articles is important, especially for young scholars. My experience as an associate editor of SJM, especially when it comes to handling papers from younger scholars, is that they are well crafted when it comes to form but that too many papers lacks substance/content: almost a reverse problem to that suggested by Courpasson (2013). The main reason to this is simple: the research problem is weakly grounded in previous research. Such papers often have sound but a bit general literature review, methods and findings sections but fail to articulate a proper scientific contribution because of not addressing a theoretically grounded problem. A hypothetical example of such a paper is measurement of customer satisfaction at company X. The review of the satisfaction literature is well done even though it is a bit too general, methods and the statistical analysis is according to the schoolbook, and the results are well presented. But the aim of the paper is merely to measure customer satisfaction at X. No theoretical justification for the aim is given. Therefore the paper at the end does not say anything about the implications of the paper for customer satisfaction theory (or any other research stream). It only uses theory but does not seek to advance, problematize or falsify the theory or parts of the theory based on the findings. It does not engage in any theoretical discourse and the practical implications concerns X, not companies in general or companies in the sector X operates in. When receiving such paper as an associate editor I have mostly rejected them without sending them out for review. But sometimes I have been fooled by the good-looking

Please cite this article in press as: Styhre, A. End-of-term editorial: On (Scandinavian) management studies: What works, what doesn't, and what can we do better?. *Scandinavian Journal of Management* (2014), http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.scaman.2014.09.001

surface and sent them out with frustrated review comments coming back.

My worry is that this "form-without-substance" research is becoming, if not institutionalized as a norm, at least accepted in the Scandinavian business schools. I have been involved in evaluation committees for professorship positions with applications from candidates already professors. When reviewing the CVs of some of these candidates I have at first been impressed and said to myself "this is a strong candidate". However, after reading through their works, of which some have appeared in ABS 3 level journals, I have come to the conclusion that theory is only used, not created; findings are well reported but the implications of findings in relation to previous research is not articulated. (In this respect it is interesting to note the differences in evaluating merits when appointing Business Administration professors today and in the 1970s described by Lundin (2014), the first editor of the *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, in his recent guest editorial). In one case I reviewed a promotion of a person to associate professor. Almost all the appended publications ended after the findings section with a short summary of the findings. No discussion/analysis/interpretation was done of the findings in relation to previous research. Only the context specific findings of the case descriptions were reported. (At this stage I feel the need to nuance the black picture painted: I have reviewed applications from candidates that have managed to produce several substantive works in a short period of time despite teaching extensively — but this bright side of things is not my focus her).

Why are we where we are? As noted above, the increasing pressure to publish articles is probably the root cause. A more particular reason is according to myself the increase in the number of compilation thesis. Think of it — how many of your senior colleagues write one paper per year, the ratio demanded out of a doctoral student? How realistic is it that an inexperienced researcher should be able to write that many substantial papers in such a short time? The compilation thesis forces the candidate (and their supervisors, one might add) to come up with four to five very limited focus areas for the thesis and then start to work on writing papers about these from day one in order to be able to submit the first paper within the first year of studies. The result is usually papers with good form but not that much content. The risk with the compilation thesis is that we produce scholars that are good in writing poor papers. A second risk is that we educate researchers that never really get the time to dig deep into a theory area but due to the time pressure focus on getting the form rather than the content right. If the scholars we educate continue to write poor papers and refrain from reading theory we have a serious problem. Shall we change to the American system of writing a monograph and based on that one, or exceptionally two, well-crafted and substantive papers together with the supervisors? That system is a good compromise between the necessity to learn to write papers (needed if one should survive as a researcher in these days) and producing substantive works.

Alexander Styhre

Khurana (2007: 369) remarks that the dual assignment of business schools, to conduct both practically relevant and rigorous, "scientific" research in many cases makes the business school a site characterized by a loss of "cultural authority"; in the worst case, this body of research is neither useful for the practitioners, nor credible in the eyes of hardcore scientist. This ambiguity is also visible in the papers submitted to management journals, at times being overtly "practical" in orientation, reporting "hard facts" data and allegedly presenting a snap-shot view of the conditions or beliefs regarding some practical managerial issue, while in other cases being very much concerned with academic discussions relatively disconnected from the world of practice. This division of labor of the business is almost like in Rudyard Kipling's poem where the East and the West sadly "shall never meet." As the essayist Emil Cioran (1998: 43) once remarked, "Firsthand thinkers mediate upon things, the others on problems." Cioran continues: "We must live face to face with being, and not with the mind." This suggests that the practical concerns that managers and administrators encounter — not the theories the community of academic scholars make use of — should to a higher extent be the principal object of analysis in management studies. This does not, however, privilege the mere reporting of brute data but rather underlines the purpose of relevant theoretical perspectives that shed light on managerial practices. Practical problems seen through the lens of useful and intellectually credible theories and thoughtfully examined and reflected upon always have the potential to become good texts. Therefore, conceptual papers are important but, I think, relatively overrated; empirical papers without accompanying theoretical frameworks are at risk of being anecdotal or, at least for the theory-minded scholar, just boring to read. The best papers effectively blend practically relevant problems with insightful analyses on basis of theory.

This brings us the development of new theory in management studies. Our discipline has at numerous occasions been both acclaimed and criticized for being "eclectic" (apparently a bad thing) and receptive to theory development in other disciplines (yet another vice). Such a scholarly culture would perhaps be a fertile soil for new theoretical developments, but that cannot be honestly said to have been the case recently. The editors of a special issue on "New Theoretical Development in Organization Theory" in *Academy of Management Review* deplore the lack of submissions that actually make a contribution of new theoretical perspectives (Suddaby et al., 2011). When not even the most prestigious conceptual journal in our discipline receives new theoretical contributions despite precisely asking for such work, it is not a too assuring indication of the vitality of the field. Reports from universities in both North America and Europe suggest that the time spent reading the classics and works published in neighboring disciplines is in decline, a tendency that suggest that an increased specialization within more narrowly defined research areas have been the favored strategy of the new generation of management scholars. This would represent a shift from a scholarly tradition to an "expert model" of academic research work. In the first decades after the World War II, there was much emphasis on novel perspectives on managerial practice and organization, and well into the 1990s — my own "formative years" in the academy — there were still new theories (e.g., literature theory, complexity theory, a wave of continental philosophy-inspired theories) put to use in management studies. Today, there

Please cite this article in press as: Styhre, A. End-of-term editorial: On (Scandinavian) management studies: What works, what doesn't, and what can we do better?. *Scandinavian Journal of Management* (2014), http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.scaman.2014.09.001

is not so much of this enthusiasm for new conceptual framework left. In summary then, management researchers should explore the practical problems managers grapple with but they mustn't leave the theoretical tool-box behind; they should also nurse the ambition to articulate novel management theories.

Morten Thanning Vendelø

When considering key concerns and major challenges for management and organization studies, as well as for Scandinavian Journal of Management, then I must admit that, in contrast to Lundin (2014), I am more concerned about the future of Scandinavian Journal of Management, than about the future of management and organization studies. My concern is rooted in the observation that, even if the journal's homepage describes it as the official journal of the Nordic Academy of Management, and emphasizes its Scandinavian roots, then many management and organization scholars seem to perceive it as a general management journal, rather than as a journal with a strong Scandinavian flavor. In particular, this is evident when one looks at the submissions to the journal. A fair share of these either do not connect to Scandinavian traditions for management and organization research, or result from the not very interesting "form without substance" research described earlier by Per Skålén, and thus, the journal receives submissions, which cover a broad range of subject matters, as well as theoretical and methodological approaches, and which varies a lot with regards to quality. In the past, this might not have been an important problem, but after the introduction of electronic submission systems, then a submission to a journal is only 'a click away', and thus, nowadays Scandinavian Journal of Management receives a significantly higher number of submissions than just a few years ago. In addition, the stronger focus on publishing in high-impact journals by business school and university faculty has intensified the competition among journals for the best (Clark, Floyd, & Wright, 2013) and most interesting submissions, and with its not so high impact factor, Scandinavian Journal of Management is not exactly first in line for these submissions. On the contrary it is, as mentioned earlier by Christine Coupland, likely to receive submissions, which have been rejected from journals with higher impact factors.

Even if, as editor and associate editors, we do our best to desk-reject papers, which either do not possess the qualities needed to become publishable, or do not really fit with the journal's aim, then such papers slip into the review process. In the first case the result is demotivated reviewers who return frustrated review comments, as mentioned earlier by Per Skålén. In the second case it can be fairly positive reviewer evaluations of papers with no connection to Scandinavian traditions for management and organization research, and thus, a number of these papers are eventually published in the journal. As the number of submissions with no connection to Scandinavian traditions for management and organization research grow, then it is also likely that a larger number of these will be published in the journal. Such a development will make the journal look very inclusive, and it will result in a blurred profile for the journal. When a journal's profile becomes blurred readers will not know what to expect when they open a new issue of the journal, and thus, it will most likely be difficult for the journal to maintain both a stable readership, which perceives it as a must read, and a community of scholars who identify with the journal, and commit themselves to review for it on a regular basis, and without these a journal is likely experience increasingly longer turn-around times for submissions.

During my three years as associate editor I have reflected over these issues, and I have become increasingly convinced that the destiny outlined above might be avoided if the editors of the journal decide to stick to its Scandinavian roots, and revise its editorial statement to emphasize these far more explicitly, and thereby, make clear to both potential authors and themselves that the journal has; (a) A passion for empirical inquiry driven by curiosity, (b) a relative preference for case studies using qualitative research methods, and (c) an openness to critical and creative refashioning of existing conceptions of management. One possible consequence of sticking to the journal's Scandinavian roots can be that the journal stop publishing quantitative research, and with good reason. Barley (2006, p. 19) reminds us that in a poll held among Academy of Management Journal (AMJ) review board members about what is the most interesting paper published in that journal. Eleven of the seventeen papers, which received two votes or more relied on qualitative data. It is interesting that 65% of the nominated papers rely on qualitative data, given that most of the papers published in AMJ rely on quantitative data. Yet, one should not be too surprised about the result of the poll, as it can be argued that rigorously done qualitative studies are more likely to discover something new, precisely because qualitative researchers approach topics with little clue as to what they will find. Another consequence can be that the journal will be even more prone to publish papers, which both report studies undertaken in empirical settings, such as an opera company (Beech, Gilmore, Cochrane, & Greig, 2012), a prison (Lemmergaard & Muhr, 2012), and Rotary International (Parsons & Mills, 2012), and produce interesting insights into identity work and the outsourcing of gender, and thereby, contribute to the advancement of management and organization studies. In fact, editors of major journals in the field (Bamberger & Pratt, 2010) emphasize that frame-breaking research demands frame-breaking research contexts, and thus, there is good reason to hope for a future where management and organization scholars will focus their attention and energy on such research, and will experience that Scandinavian Journal of Management is the most interesting outlet for the resulting papers.

Some final remarks

Asking academic researchers to "critically reflect" on something, a critical reflection is what you will get, in most cases with an emphasis on the first term. There may be a fair share of "doom and gloom" in this editorial, but we must not forget that academic life also include these bright and shining moments of insight and understanding, of a sense of self-fulfillment, and the great pleasure (including a tiny but not negligible element of pure narcissism) of finally having a manuscript accepted for publication. *Scandinavian Journal of Management* is today a well-respected journal that

Please cite this article in press as: Styhre, A. End-of-term editorial: On (Scandinavian) management studies: What works, what doesn't, and what can we do better?. *Scandinavian Journal of Management* (2014), http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.scaman.2014.09.001

attracts a variety of scholars operating within different fields of management studies to both read the journal and to submit their research work. The journal maintains the tradition to publish empirically based papers that still aim to further develop and refine theories of organization and management. The challenges that the journal faces in the coming years are by and large shared with the institutions of the business school and the academy as such, including the fierce pressure to publish, the shortage of time to further develop new theories, and the difficulties involved in being relevant for both the practicing managers and scholarly community. Despite all these challenges, *Scandinavian Journal of Management* is now entering its fourth decade (Lundin, 2014) and we hope that this journal will continue to serve the academic community for a foreseeable future. A little bit of critical reflection every now and then is still helpful to make that happen, we believe.

Coda

The editorial team would like to thank all of you that contributed to the journal over the last three years, and the reviewers in particular, for their work for *Scandinavian Journal of Management*. It is not easy to make the practical work of editing a journal as smooth and transparent as prescribed by manuals and formal presentations, but without the work of reviewers, there would be no peer-review system at all. So thank you again helping us maintain and develop our scholarly community.

References

Adler, P. S. (2002). Corporate scandals: It's time for reflection in business schools. *Academy of Management Executive, 16*(3), 148–149.

Baldridge, D. C., Floyd, S. W., & Markóczy, L. (2004). Are managers from Mars and Academicians from Venus? Toward an understanding of relationship between academic quality and practical relevance. *Strategic Management Journal, 25*, 1063–1074.

Ball, S. J. (2003). The teachers' soul and the terrors of performativity. *Journal of Educational Policy, 18*(2), 215–228.

Bamberger, P. A., & Pratt, M. G. (2010). From the editors: Moving forward by looking back: Reclaiming unconventional research contexts and samples in organizational scholarship. *Academy of Management Journal, 53*(4), 665–671.

Barley, S. R. (2006). When I write my masterpiece: Thoughts on what makes a paper interesting. *Academy of Management Journal, 49*(1), 16–20.

Baum, J. A. C. (2011). Free-riding on power laws: Questioning the validity of the impact factor as a measure of research quality in organization studies. *Organization, 18*(4), 449–466.

Beech, N., Gilmore, C., Cochrane, E., & Greig, G. (2012). Identity work as a response to tensions: A re-narration in opera rehearsals. *Scandinavian Journal of Management, 28*(1), 39–47.

Bennis, W. G., & ÓToole, J. (2005). How business schools lost their way. *Harvard Business Review, 83*(5), 33–53.

Bok, D. (2002). *Universities in the marketplace: The commercialization of higher education*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Bröckling, U. (2005). Gendering the enterprising self: Subjectification programs and gender differences in guides to success. *Distinktion, 11*, 7–23.

Chiapello, E., & Fairclough, N. (2002). Understanding the new management ideology: A transdisciplinary contribution from critical discourse analysis and new sociology of capitalism. *Discourse & Society, 13*(2), 185–208.

Cioran, E. M. (1998). *The trouble with being born*. New York: Arcade Publishing.

Clarke, C. A., Knights, D., & Jarvis, C. (2012). A labour of love? Academics in business schools. *Scandinavian Journal of Management, 28*(1), 5–15.

Clark, T., Floyd, S. W., & Wright, M. (2013). In search of the impactful and the interesting: Swings of the pendulum? *Journal of Management Studies, 50*(8), 1358–1373.

Courpasson, D. (2013). On the erosion of 'passionate scholarship'. *Organization Studies, 34*(9), 1243–1249.

Davis, G. F. (2014). Editorial essay: Why do we still have journals? *Administrative Science Quarterly, 59*(2), 193–201.

Du Gay, P. (1996). *Consumption and identity at work*. London: Sage.

Gabriel, Y. (2013). *Are any academic journals still alive?* URL: http://www.yiannisgabriel.com/2013/12/are-any-academic-journals-still-alive.html#!/2013/12/are-any-academic-journals-still-alive.html Accessed August 20.08.14.

Gephart, R. P., Jr. (2004). From the editors: Qualitative research. *Academy of Management Journal, 47*(4), 454–462.

Gulati, R. (2007). Tent poles, tribalism, and boundary spanning: The rigor-relevance debate in management research. *Academy of Management Journal, 50*(4), 775–782.

Hillman, A. (2011). Editor's comment: What is the future of theory? *Academy of Management Review, 36*(4), 607–609.

Hitt, M. A., & Greer, C. R. (2012). The value of research and its evaluation in business schools: Killing the goose that laid the golden egg? *Journal of Management Inquiry, 21*(2), 236–240.

Khurana, R. (2007). *From higher aims to hired hands: The social transformation of American business schools and the unfulfilled promise of management as a profession*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Kieser, A., & Leiner, L. (2009). Why the rigour-relevance gap in management research is unbridgeable. *Journal of Management Studies, 46*(3), 516–533.

Knights, D., & Clarke, C. (2013). It's a bittersweet symphony, this life: Fragile academic selves and insecure identities at work. *Organization Studies, 35*(3), 335–357.

Lemmergaard, J., & Muhr, S. L. (2012). Golfing with a murderer — Professional indifference and identity work in a Danish prison. *Scandinavian Journal of Management, 28*(2), 185–195.

Lindgren, M., Packendorff, J., & Sergi, V. (2014). Thrilled by the discourse, suffering through the experience: Emotions in project-based work. *Human Relations,* in press.

Lorenz, C. (2012). If you're so smart, why are you under surveillance? Universities, neoliberalism, and new public management. *Critical Inquiry, 38*, 599–629.

Lorsch, J. (2009). Regaining lost relevance. *Journal of Management Inquiry, 18*, 108–117.

Lundin, R. A. (2014). Changing contexts for the Scandinavian Journal of Management: Publish and perish. *Scandinavian Journal of Management, 30*, 263–265.

Mirowski, P. (2011). *Science-Mart: Privatizing American Science*. Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press.

Parsons, D. B., & Mills, A. J. (2012). I've got a Gal in Kalamazoo: Rotary International change and the outsourcing of gender. *Scandinavian Journal of Management, 28*(4), 311–320.

Peters, M. (2001). Education, enterprise culture and the entrepreneurial self: A Foucauldian perspective. *Journal of Educational Enquiry, 2*(2), 58–71.

Pfeffer, J. (1993). Barriers to the advance of organizational science: Paradigm development as a dependent variable. *Academy of Management Review, 18*(4), 599–620.

Pfeffer, J., & Fong, C. T. (2002). The end of business schools: Less success than meets the eye. *Academy of Management Learning and Education, 1*(1), 78–95.

Pratt, M. G. (2006). From the editors: For the lack of a boilerplate: Tips on writing up (and reviewing) qualitative research. *Academy of Management Journal*, *52*, 856—893.
Starkey, K., & Tempest, S. (2005). The future of business schools: Knowledge challenges and opportunities. *Human Relations*, *58*(1), 61—82.
Suddaby, R., Hardy, C., & Huy, Q. N. (2011). Where are the new theories of organization? *Academy of Management Review*, *36*(2), 236—246.
The Editors. (2013). The driver of new theory development in management studies: Imagination or rigour? *Journal of Management Studies*, *50*(1), 126—127.
Washburn, J. (2005). *University Inc.: The corruption of higher education*. New York: Basic Books.
Willmott, H. (2011). Journal list fetishism and the perversion of scholarship: Reactivity and the ABS list. *Organization*, *18*, 429—442.

Alexander Styhre*
University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg, Sweden

Christine Coupland
Loughborough University, Loughborough, United Kingdom

Martin Fougère
Hanken School of Economics, Helsinki, Finland

Monica Lindgren
Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden

Inger Johanne Pettersen
Sør-Trøndelag University College, Trondheim, Norway

Per Skålén
Karlstad University, Karlstad, Sweden

Morten Thanning Vendelø
Copenhagen Business School, Copenhagen, Denmark

**Corresponding author. Tel.: +46 317866568.*
E-mail address: Alexander.Styhre@handels.gu.se *(A Styhre)*

1 September 2014