Editorial

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It is my great honor and privilege to succeed Professor Harukiyo Hasegawa to become the second General Editor of *Asian Business & Management (ABM)*. Harukiyo passes on an ascendant and healthy journal, and it is difficult to overstate his role in making *ABM* a success. Harukiyo founded the journal 10 years ago and put in place a highly qualified and dedicated team. He worked tirelessly to attract high-quality articles, and he accomplished the feat of making *ABM* the first business and management journal on Asia to be included in the Social Science Citation Index. The impact factor of the journal, now at 0.61, is rapidly rising, and there is growing recognition of the journal as a leading outlet for Asia-related research. In the first 6 months since the start of the online submission system, we received almost 500 submissions, and in response, we are moving to five issues annually, starting this year. The new submission system has also allowed us to shorten turn-around times considerably. Therefore, on behalf of everyone in some way connected with *ABM*, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Harukiyo for, and congratulate him on, his pioneering spirit and outstanding leadership over the past decade. It is my hope and intention to continue his good work.

The first formal duty of a new General Editor is usually to lay out his vision for the future. Fortunately, for a journal as healthy as *ABM*, this does not require a major rethink. Rather, the task is more one of reinforcing existing strengths while fine-tuning the overall positioning and processes of the journal.

Considerable thought has gone into these questions, and in the following paragraphs, I lay out the main results of these deliberations.

ABM is, as the name suggests, a journal on business and management in Asia. It views itself as an academic general management and business journal, that is, we are in principle open to all disciplines and fields of research on management and business – subject, of course, to the condition that submissions must be related to Asia. We especially encourage submissions that draw on one of the various streams of the business systems literature, broadly conceived, to generate new insights into the societal embeddedness of firms in Asia and the consequences of such embeddedness on managerial and business processes, structures and outcomes.

Several aspects in this last paragraph bear elaborating further. First, in terms of thematic fit, the journal routinely receives submissions that would be better placed elsewhere. Clearly unsuitable for *ABM* are submissions on macroeconomic or microeconomic questions or issues of economic policy and politics. These papers should be sent to economics or policy and political science journals instead. Unlikely to be accepted are likewise submissions on subjects such as accounting or process and operations management. Finance papers may fit if they are directly related to managerial issues such as corporate governance, whereas economics-style finance papers should be directed to finance journals. *ABM* does not publish practitioner-oriented articles.

Second, submissions need to be geographically connected to Asia. The journal's definition of Asia in principle encompasses all economies from the Arab Peninsula eastward to Japan. Excluded are Russia and African countries as well as the Antipodes.

It is, however, not enough to have an Asian empirical setting. A successful *ABM* submission generates new insights into what is 'Asian' about the business or management phenomenon under study – in other words, after reading the article, the reader should understand at least one facet of business and management in Asia better. One of the most common reasons for rejection is that a submissions tests general theory of Western origin using Asian data without taking into account the specificities of the Asian context or trying to generate any conclusions about business and management in Asia.

Accounting for the Asian context and generating new insights can be done mainly in two ways. First, a paper can specify local contingencies that mediate general theory. For instance, in studying the effects of group dynamics on decision-making processes, one would probably want to consider that Asian societies generally tend to be more collectivist than the Western societies in which most of the existing theories originated. This expectation needs formulating and testing, and appropriate conclusions about business or management in Asia need drawing. Second, a submission can derive, or draw on, indigenously Asian theories of management and business. This approach is more difficult, as it will often require a good amount of theory building, but it is also potentially more rewarding.

All of this requires bringing into the analysis the societal embeddedness of firms. One tool that is as useful as underutilized for this purpose is the business systems approach. It is a potentially rich source of inspiration for theory building and testing, both with respect to contingencies and genuinely Asian modes of business and management.

Although most of the business systems literature has focused on Western advanced industrialized economies and Japan, a number of works have developed and applied frameworks suitable for Asian economies. Redding (2005), for instance, builds on the work of Whitley (1999) to present an

elaborate model of the societal embeddedness of business and management. In short, the model views organizations in terms of their ownership and governance structure, their networking with other organizations, and their internal dynamics. These three elements are embedded in a number of elements forming the local 'context' of business. One layer of societal institutions governs the availability of financial, human and social capital. An additional layer provides for embeddedness in different systems of meaning, or culture, which include not only the well-known dimensions of power distance and collectivism, but also different values and instrumental logics. The elements within and across layers tend to form complementarities, or interdependencies, with one another. They are also shaped by, and shape, the actions of actors such as the state (government) and non-government organizations. Further forces in the evolution of a business system are external ideational and material influences, as well as path dependency. The model has been applied to the Asian context in various later publications (for example, Redding and Witt, 2007).

ABM articles would usually explore procedural or structural phenomena at the highest level of the framework – ownership, networks, internal dynamics – or performance outcomes, such as growth, profitability, technological prowess or survival. The other elements of the model – the context – are usually brought into the analysis as local contingencies.

The Redding model is obviously not the only approach to understanding context, and submissions drawing on, or perhaps even developing, different frameworks are welcome as well. In addition, to help strengthen our understanding of contextual variations across societies, *ABM* encourages submissions concentrating on context. Their focus can range from individual aspects of the context to the presentation of a whole business system, whether national (for example, the business system of Cambodia) or sub-national (for example, the business system of Kyoto or of Zhejiang). For such submissions, it is crucial that they make a strong and credible argument how the specific aspects of the context discussed are likely to have an impact on business or management.

Other elements of fine-tuning involve our submissions process. To name just the two major points: first, *ABM* now has a minimum length of 6000 words (all inclusive) and a maximum length of 10 000 words. Second, to help our authors save precious time, we no longer require first submissions to follow precisely the formatting requirements for references, tables, and figures, although accepted articles will obviously need to do so. Other formatting requirements remain in place, please make sure to check the submission guidelines on our web site.

It is my hope that the above points will help enhance the future potential of *ABM* and keep the journal attractive to you, our valued authors and readers.

Please continue to support us by reading us, discussing us, recommending us, writing for us, reviewing for us and citing us. And in the spirit of continuous improvement, any constructive input on streamlining our processes is very welcome. I look forward to working for and with you.

References

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