Editorial

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Five Formative Years

In some ways, the years since *ABM* first appeared in 2002 have seemed a long time, but it is not so long a period in which to build the character of a journal. Looking back over our first 5 years, I recall particularly the well-received editorial with which we began in 2003. At that time, the threat of war in the Middle East was looming, and there was clear public concern around the world over the morality of an attack on Iraq. I felt it was important, in line with *ABM*'s overall perspective, to deplore any such military action in our editorial, and point out that it would undermine the sense of interdependency of equals that must underpin true international communication and equitable development.

Public concern has, if anything, increased as death tolls on all sides have risen in Iraq and beyond, without discernible improvement in social cohesion or civil liberties. Pointing fingers of blame is too easy; however, it would be more helpful to see such conflicts as symptoms. The genesis of current tension, in our opinion, is enmeshed within contemporary social trends that have upset cultural balance and autonomy. Capitalism, which in many ways could be a force assisting the world to greater general affluence and the intercommunication essential to solving shared problems, has arguably taken a privateer's course, in which not only is the lure of profit socially prioritized, but also the destination of profit is unequally distributed socially and internationally. Conspicuous inequality has been a perennial problem within societies, and its redress has been an issue for those societies themselves; but today, as a spin-off of globalization, it occurs internationally, and redress is also sought internationally. Were it just an economic issue, then political means might defuse tension; but we can now appreciate that globalization in its current form carries with it a cultural payload that is increasingly seen as an affront to cultural integrity, autonomy and distinctiveness.

Need it be like this? *ABM* believes that it is within the academic remit of business and management studies and the social sciences to perceive and draw attention to side effects of business behaviour, and investigate alternative models and paradigms; and that, given prevailing social and environmental concerns, it is now imperative that academics review the ethical status of business approaches around the world. The narrow concepts of corporate competitiveness, efficiency and profitability have passed their use-by date; we now need a new paradigm that is broader, contextual and intellectually

conscientious, whatever theoretical approach it may take. *ABM*, with the help of our contributors, readers and other supporters, will continue to support this quest for a new approach that will address the manifest shortcomings of the present one.

To express concern over the implications of globalization is, of course, not to favour parochialism or to contest the benefits of international communication. We are pleased, therefore, that the 96 articles and 30 book reviews we have published to date have come from writers based around the world; moreover, they are read in institutions, as well as by an international Internet audience, around the world. Although our unique focus region is Asia, it is quite clear that interest in the material published in *ABM* goes much wider — web hits and orders (eg, 1,300 article downloads each month in January–September 2006) and institutional subscriptions (now spread across Asia/Pacific, North America and Europe) indicate that much of our content has proven to be both Asian and global in their perceived relevance, and it is against this background that we are now seeking the ISI's recognition for their Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI).

We must hope that the next 5 years bring progress towards resolution of international divisions and the creation of a new outlook in the way business–society interrelationships are pursued. We will be gratified if we can play even the smallest part in such a necessary social development; but whatever happens, we shall continue to pursue our aim of making *ABM* both an invaluable and challenging voice in the field of business and management.

It remains for me to thank again all those who have supported us through a successful first half-decade, especially those on the Editorial and Advisory Board and the numerous reviewers (see below) — without their generous and constructive input, the quality of *ABM* could not have been created and maintained. We look forward in appreciation of their continued support.

Harukiyo Hasegawa
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