

## Editorial

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After two three-year terms as Editor-in-Chief of *Asian Business & Management (ABM)*, the time has come to pass the baton to my successor, Fabian Jintae Froese. I am delighted that he chose to accept the challenge of leading *ABM* from January 2018 onwards, and I wish him and his team the greatest success.

My plan for this final editorial of mine is twofold: to share some thoughts on the trajectory of *ABM* over the past years, and to thank the many people who have supported the journal along the way.

When I assumed the position some 6 years ago, I had both an open and a private, albeit not hidden, agenda. The former I laid out in my opening editorial (Witt 2012, p. 1):

*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 papers 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.

Most of this, though not all, has worked out. *ABM* has remained open to a wide range of topics, including in recent years an increasing number of marketing-related papers. And while not all submissions were on Asia, certainly all published papers retained the geographic focus of the journal.

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At the same time, surprisingly few articles (e.g., Rear 2013; Lin et al. 2014; Zimmermann and Bollbach 2015) took up the challenge to explore the implications of the embeddedness of the firm in society for business and management phenomena. Perhaps, this is partially a function of the orientation of business and management research towards identifying general universal principles rather than phenomena that are societally contingent. No matter what the reason, however, the deeper contextual understanding of Asia that has evolved in recent years (Witt and Redding 2013, 2014; Whitley and Zhang 2016) remains yet to be fully leveraged in business and management research. It is my hope that we will see more of this type of work, especially in a comparative perspective, in coming years.

The private agenda involved increasing the academic standing of the journal. At the 2012 meeting of the Europe–Asia Management Studies Association (EAMSA), I stated as a long-term goal a 3-year impact factor of at least 1.0—in 2012, it was 0.31. This meant tightening the quality standards of the journal over the years to expect, at a minimum, some contribution to theory and solid craftsmanship. The number of papers published dropped as a result, and pipeline management remains challenging to this day. Impact, however, has improved over the years, and I was happy to see that *ABM*'s 2016 3-year impact stood at 1.133. My hope is that the 2017 and 2018 impact factors, both of which cover only articles published during my tenure, will continue this upward trajectory so as to help provide momentum for my successor's term.

Running a journal is far from a one-man show, and it strikes me how blessed I was to have the support of so many people. Our publisher, Palgrave, have done what was possible to aid and sustain the journal, and I am grateful for that. Our Founding Editor, Harukiyo Hasegawa, has likewise continued to provide much appreciated advice and support.

Our associated organizations, especially EAMSA, have provided steadfast support, not least by organizing a number of special issues. I hope these fruitful relationships will continue to thrive and grow.

Our editorial review and advisory boards as well as a large number of ad hoc reviewers have been instrumental in assessing manuscripts and providing guidance on the course of the journal. I would like to express my sincere thanks to all of them for helping us safeguard academic standards and helping authors improve their papers.

I was also fortunate to have an excellent editorial team. Avegail Villanueva at INSEAD provided outstanding service as submissions editor, and John Billingsley patiently copy-edited manuscripts with a keen eye towards readability. Both have my deep gratitude. Profound thanks are further due to all the present and past Associate Editors, who have guided and accepted many of the articles in the past years: Asli Colpan, Kyoto University, Japan; Peter Dowling, La Trobe Business School, Australia; Axèle Giroud, Manchester Business School, UK; Martin Hemmert, Korea University, South Korea; Nahee Kang, King's College, UK; Fang Lee Cooke, Monash University Australia; Leonard H. Lynn, Case Western Reserve University, USA; Carlos Noronha, University of Macau, Macau; Elizabeth Rose, University of Otago, New Zealand; and Dylan Sutherland, Durham University, UK.



None of the above would have meant much without the many colleagues who gave us the opportunity to read and assess their manuscripts. I am profoundly grateful to them. To those who had their papers published, I add my congratulations; to those who had their papers rejected, my apologies—saying no to the hard work of a large number of people is the second-most difficult aspect of being an editor (the most difficult being dealing with plagiarism).

In the end, however, most important are you, our readers. A journal that goes unread and uncited is a wasted effort. So let me use this opportunity to thank you all for reading and citing *ABM*. It is my hope that you have found some value in it, and I am confident that the new editorial team will do its very best to work towards this same aspiration.

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