Restoring a Taste for Science:
Enhancing Strategic Management Knowledge by Changing the Governance of Academic Journals

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Acknowledgments

Abstract

Too many strategic management scholars may have lost their passion for research or what Robert Merton has defined as the 'taste for science.' A lack of passion curtails the pursuit of original, creative research, and the knowledge generated often may be of questionable value for the field's advancement and business practices. We argue that the reduction of a scholar's passion for research and an insufficient generation of meaningful knowledge are influenced by a flawed academic governance system. The current governance system of our academic journals and universities undermines attaining the legitimate interests of individual faculty, the scientific community, and broader society. To resolve this situation, we propose a new governance system based on open access and open evaluation. We demonstrate how this alternative system can meet the interests of its stakeholders, encourage more meaningful research and knowledge, and restore a scholar's 'taste for science.'

1 Introduction

As a field of academic inquiry, strategic management has a long tradition of developing theory to explain strategic phenomena, but its identity also comprises a strong practical, applied orientation (Durand, Grant, & Madsen, 2017). During the past twenty-five years, much research has focused on four fundamental questions identified by Rumelt, Schendel, and Teece (1994) in their attempt to define the field of strategic management: How do firms behave? Why are firms different? What is the function of, or value added by, headquarters in a multibusiness firm? What determines the success or failure of the firm in international competition?

While many theoretical lenses have been used to study these canonical questions of the field during past decades, many scholars have criticized that, today, strategic management research is overly fragmented, insufficiently integrated, and too far removed from helping general managers to resolve practical problems (e.g., Hambrick, 2004; Durand et al., 2017; Goshal, 2005). Arguably, the balance between theory and application has tipped in favor of developing and testing theory at the expense of enhancing business practices, a danger that Rumelt et al. (1994: 546) already foresaw and cautioned against over 20 years ago.

This paper focuses on academic governance as a means to recreate a more balanced view of the strategic management field. To this end, we posit a need to change academic governance systems, i.e., the systems academic journals use to decide which articles to publish, and universities to determine who will be awarded promotion, tenure, or other benefits. While the focus of the paper will be on academic journals publishing strategic management research, most criticisms raised and recommendations made also apply to other disciplines.

We distinguish three major stakeholder groups concerned with strategic management research and publications: university faculty, the scientific community of strategic management scholars, and the broader society. All stakeholder groups have legitimate interests in academic publishing[1],

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[1] We use the term 'legitimate' to denote interests that are justifiable according to the principle of publishing high-quality research. For example, while it is legitimate for authors to expect fair and developmental review processes, it would be unjustified, i.e., illegitimate, to expect lenient reviews. Similarly, the scientific community of strategic management scholars has a legitimate interest in advancing and consolidating the field. But it would be illegitimate if journal editors or groups of scholars would favor a specific research paradigm at the expense of others in trying to further this interest.

and all have complained that their interests are not being met (e.g., Bedian, 2003; Walsh, 2011; Dunbar & Bresser, 2014).

A recurrent theme of this paper is that the present academic governance system may crush a scholar's passion for research. While most doctoral students enter their programs intrinsically motivated to pursue research questions that make a difference in advancing knowledge, they may lose this intrinsic curiosity once they encounter the academic publishing system (Ashforth, 2005). Robert Merton (1973) described a scholar's distinctive intrinsic motivation as 'a taste for science' which is characterized by a passion for discovery and innovation, the autonomy to follow one's own scientific goals, the desire to gain peer recognition, and the low importance of financial rewards (Osterloh & Frey, 2009; Roach & Sauermann, 2010). The ultimate aim of this paper's recommendations for an alternative academic governance system is to restore the 'taste for science' in academia and a scholar's passion for innovative, creative research questions.[2]

Arguably, many currently active strategic management scholars are engaging passionately in interesting, innovative research, and they have built their careers in doing so. But many others have lost their passion for pursuing new and creative research agendas. While it is difficult to estimate how many active researcher have lost their passion for research as a result of the flaws inherent in the current academic governance system, the number is likely to be sizeable. As we will highlight below, contributing factors are, on the one hand, authors who have become cynical because they do not believe in the fairness of the double-blind peer review process (Bedeian, 2003). On the other hand, the increasing prevalence of journal rankings in tenure and promotion decisions has led scholars to shift their focus from intrinsically rewarding questions to a more mechanical 'cookie cutter' approach to publishing where the focus is on publishing as many top-tier journal articles as possible in a short period of time, regardless of innovative content (Walsh, 2011). Frustrations with the review process and the prevalence of journal rankings in tenure decisions exist in all types of research institutions, regardless of whether universities are private, public, large or small. Additionally, the risk of losing one's passion for research occurs across all ranks: Bedeian (2003) reports of a growing cynicism among graduate students and junior faculty, and Hambrick (2005) estimates that 20 to 25 percent of all newly tenured professors will have stopped or sharply reduced their scholarly pursuits only five years after the tenure decision. In sum, while there is no hard

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[2] We use the terms 'taste for science' and 'passion for research' interchangeably in this paper to characterize the priority a scholar places on discovery and the pursuit of innovative research questions.

evidence specifying the numbers or percentages of scholars who have lost their intrinsic motivation for pursuing innovative, meaningful research, the numbers among strategic management and other management scholars are likely to be high. In our view, even if only a few researchers would lose their passion due to the prevailing academic governance system, these few would be too many. Therefore, we develop and present an alternative system in this paper.

The paper begins by considering each of the three stakeholder groups. We identify the legitimate interests of each group and demonstrate why the current academic governance system often does not live up to these interests. We then turn to an alternative governance system, one based on open access (OA) and open evaluation (OE). To illustrate the alternative system, we develop an OA/OE governance system for a new journal in the field of strategic management called the Open Evaluation Journal of Strategic Management (OEJSM). We will show why the new academic governance system is capable of satisfying the legitimate interests of all stakeholders, thereby contributing to restoring 'a taste for science'. We conclude by discussing caveats of the new system and how these concerns can be addressed.

2 University faculty and their interests

University faculty and prospective faculty, i.e., doctoral students, have a legitimate interest in a fair and developmental review and publishing process for the research papers they develop. Yet, it is not at all clear whether these interests are being met. The publishing process in its current format often gives rise to perplexing author experiences because, when submitting a manuscript to a journal, current editorial practices establish a hierarchical relation between authors and reviewers (editors) that may elicit overly harsh critiques and biased reviewer judgments (Miller, 2006). In some cases authors may feel that they have been victims of reviewers or editors who harbor hidden agendas based on personal goals that stray from that of publishing science based on a fair and developmental review process. Furthermore, authors are likely to feel powerless to exercise their "voice" in the editorial process so that the only other available path of dissent is to exercise the "exit" option, and withdraw their papers from the review process of a journal as a way to voice their displeasure (Hirschman, 1970; Glick, Miller, & Cardinal, 2007). Unfortunately, the exit option may impose unnecessary costs on both the authors and the journal.

In spite of the well-known deficiencies of hierarchical organizations discussed by management scholars for decades (e.g., Child, 2015), academic journals, typically, use a strictly hierarchical

governance structure for their editorial management. Editors, co-editors, and associate editors decide on a submission's fate based on written reports from reviewers. The editorial decisions are final because the manuscript publication system has no formal appeal procedure (Miner, 2003).

Recent developments in social psychology have reexamined two of the most fundamental dimensions of organizational hierarchies, i.e., status and power (Blader & Chen, 2011, 2012), and insights from this research can easily be adapted to the editorial practices of academic journals. Editorial and reviewer positions within the hierarchy of an academic journal bestow both power and status, and editors and reviewers can be expected to behave differently when making and communicating editorial decisions, depending on whether they are more sensitive to the status or the power of their roles. Those individuals who are more sensitive to their role's status may, in fact, be inclined to build their status as excellent editors or reviewers. Such individuals tend to look outward and will be aware of the concerns of others, e.g., authors or journal readers, because status originates externally and is ascribed to an individual through a status-conferral process (Blader & Chen, 2012: 995). A concern for status supports a focus on developing and reporting knowledge based on fair review processes and enhancing the reputation of the journal in the scientific community. Thus, members of a journal's hierarchy who are sensitive to the status of their role can be presumed to provide relatively more support, i.e., constructive feedback for author development, both in their reviewing practices and in the way they communicate their decisions, even if the decision ultimately is to reject a paper (Dunbar & Bresser, 2014).

In contrast, individuals who are relatively more sensitive to the power of their position are more likely to be less sensitive to others' concerns. Such reviewers or editors may feel less dependent on the social environment and thus prefer to use criteria in their decision making that they think of as important and correct, and they also can be expected to simply communicate their editorial decisions without much concern for author development (Blader & Chen, 2012; See, Morrison, Rothman, & Soll., 2011). These individuals may display less tolerance for theories or ideas with the potential to create new pathways for inquiry that come from outside of their own narrow research domains (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2014; Alvesson & Gabriel, 2014). Social scientists have informed us that powerful individuals have a tendency to be less responsive to the needs of individuals less endowed with power in a social setting such as a group meeting (Tost, 2015; Tost, Gino, & Larrick, 2012). Some powerful individuals also have a propensity to view other people simply as instrumentalities to attain ends (Pfeffer, 2010). Thus certain individuals who hold

hierarchical power as gatekeepers for top tier-scholarly journals may succumb to the temptation to use it to advance personal goals that may be incompatible with that of producing rigorous and relevant knowledge based on fair reviewing practices.

Reviewers serve their field by contributing time and energy in evaluating manuscripts. In providing these evaluations, reviewers can be more sensitive to the status or the power of their positions or they can even be sensitive to both aspects of their roles, although this may not always be a conscious process. Arguably, submitting authors prefer to have their manuscripts evaluated by editors and reviewers who are more disposed to associate status with their positions, i.e., members of the journal hierarchy who are inclined to review fairly by showing concern for the authors' interests in a constructive, developmental manner. However, due to the double-blind peer review process of our journals and the private exchanges between authors and editors that remain invisible to outsiders, authors cannot assess ex-ante whether reviewers are concerned more with building status than with exercising power. Only after they received the editor's decision letter and copies of the reviewers' comments can authors determine whether they have been evaluated fairly and constructively or fell prey to biased judgements or aggressive critiques. If authors experience bias and unfair critiques (sometimes repeatedly), it is not surprising that they may become frustrated and cynical and lose their 'taste for science.' Consequently, blossoming academic careers may wither, as Donald Hambrick (2005), one of the most prominent critics of the strategic management field, has pointed out.

It is reasonable to assume that most journal editors and reviewers attempt to be constructive and fair because the journals have been aware of the perils of peer review for some time and have taken steps to mitigate unwanted effects. For example, board members are selected carefully and the norm of developmental reviewing is reinforced by editorial practices (Miller, 2006; Ragins, 2015). However, it is questionable whether these steps suffice in generating fair and developmental review processes, because neither do they remove the power imbalance between authors and editors/reviewers nor the system's lack of transparency. In fact, considerable evidence suggests that power issues and unfair reviewing practices are widespread (Gabriel, 2010). For example, Bedeian (2003) surveyed authors who had published in *AMR* and *AMJ*. He found that between 24 and 56 percent of these accomplished authors complained that:

- The recommended revisions in their manuscripts were based on editor or reviewer preferences (39%);

- They experienced pressure to conform to the personal preferences of the editor or reviewers in their revisions if they wanted their work to get published (34%);
- They made changes to their manuscripts that they felt were actually wrong (25%);
- They were treated as inferiors rather than peers by an editor or reviewer (34%);
- The editors regarded a reviewer's knowledge to be more important than that of authors (56%).

Apart from selecting and training reviewers carefully, several recommendations have been advanced to increase the likelihood that authors will obtain fair and developmental reviews. Frey (2003) and Ashforth (2005) advocate a strong editor system where the editor decides whether a manuscript is worth publishing and where reviewers' recommendations are treated as suggestions that authors can disregard.[3] Miner (2003) recommends that an appeal procedure above the editor level should be instituted so that dissatisfied authors could get the editorial decision revisited and reversed if recommended by the appeal process. Dunbar and Bresser (2014) make two suggestions aimed at increased transparency and a redistribution of power. On the one hand, they propose that all written exchanges between authors, editors and reviewers including their identities should be made publically available after a paper has been published by using internet databanks. Such transparency might go a long way in discouraging biased decision making. On the other hand, Dunbar and Bresser suggest that authors should be allowed to submit their work to several journals at the same time. This measure would empower authors to pursue a publication path with the journal that has provided the most constructive feedback.

While all these suggestions are steps in the right direction to ascertain that authors' legitimate interests are being met, they also operate within the current governance structures of our journals that they seek to amend and modify. A question that begs answering is whether a promising alternative governance system exists? Such a system should be designed to encourage fair and developmental reviewing, give authors more influence in ascertaining that their views are being heard, and it should not sacrifice the quality controls necessary in academic publishing and afforded by the current system of governance. We believe that, when properly designed, a governance system based on OA and OE can perform these multiple tasks. Before developing such an alternative model, we will discuss the interests of the other two stakeholder groups, i.e., the scientific community and the broader society.

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[3] A modified version of such a strong editor system has been adopted by the *Strategic Management Review*.

3   The scientific community of strategic management scholars and their interests

The scientific community of strategic management scholars has a legitimate interest in advancing and consolidating the management field. These aims require innovative research contributions and replications of previous findings. However, attaining these aims is strongly influenced by the governance structures and research preferences of our journals and universities, and, unfortunately, the current structures work against these objectives.

In an attempt to gain academic respectability (Gordon & Howell, 1959; Dunbar & Bresser, 2014), the academic fields incorporated in business schools have adopted a positivistic approach to science over time and, being concerned with an 'objective reality', thus developed a preference for quantitative empirical studies based on large samples and multivariate statistical analyses (Bettis, 1991, Daft & Buenger, 1990; Ghoshal, 2005; Hambrick, 1990, 2004, 2007). This preference is disturbing, because after decades of research, it is well known within the field that strategic management knowledge often advances through alternative approaches, e.g., by way of conceptual research or qualitative empirical research. For example, Graebner, Martin, Roundy (2012) identify five distinct reasons why qualitative empirical research may be instrumental in enhancing strategic management knowledge: to build new theory, to capture the experiences and interpretations of individuals, to understand complex, interdependent process issues, to illustrate abstract ideas, and to examine linguistic phenomena contained in media accounts and strategic organizational communications.[4] Yet, the bias toward quantitative empirical research remains largely intact both in the business schools' promotion and tenure committees and in the publication policies of our top management journals that, officially, are open to a wide variety of research approaches (Bettis, 1991; Ashforth, 2005). Consider the trend of the increasing number of quantitative empirical studies published in four leading scholarly journals targeted by strategic management scholars (*SMJ, AMJ, ASQ*, and O*rganization Science*). Figure 1 plots a count of the total number of publications in those journals by publication type for four years: 1993, 2003, 2013 and 2017. The preeminence of quantitative empirical studies published in these top ranked journals is striking with proportions rising from 70% in 1993, to 75% in 2003, 74% in 2013, and 78% in

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[4] Bettis and Blettner (2020) address a major methodological shortcoming common to many quantitative studies. The typical dataset analysis tool used in quantitative empirical studies is linear regression modeling. Bettis and Blettner demonstrate vividly that linear statistical modeling does not correspond to the complex, interdependent strategic realities the business world faces today and that, e.g., qualitative research can help in better understanding these realities.

2017. In contrast, the proportion of conceptual papers has fallen substantially from 16% in 1993 to 4% in 2017. Interestingly, the share of qualitative empirical studies has also increased from 11% in 1993 to 15% in 2017. However, Table 1 reveals noteworthy differences across the four journals. On the one hand, the prevalence of quantitative empirical research is particularly strong in *SMJ*, strategic management's flagship journal, with the proportion rising from 58% in 1993 to 84% in 2017. On the other hand, the trend towards more qualitative empirical research is shared by *AMJ, ASQ*, and *Organization Science*, where the proportion of qualitative empirical studies surpassed 20% for each journal in 2017.

Figure 1: The prevalence of quantitative empirical studies in four top-ranked management journals: *SMJ, AMJ, ASQ, & Organization Science*
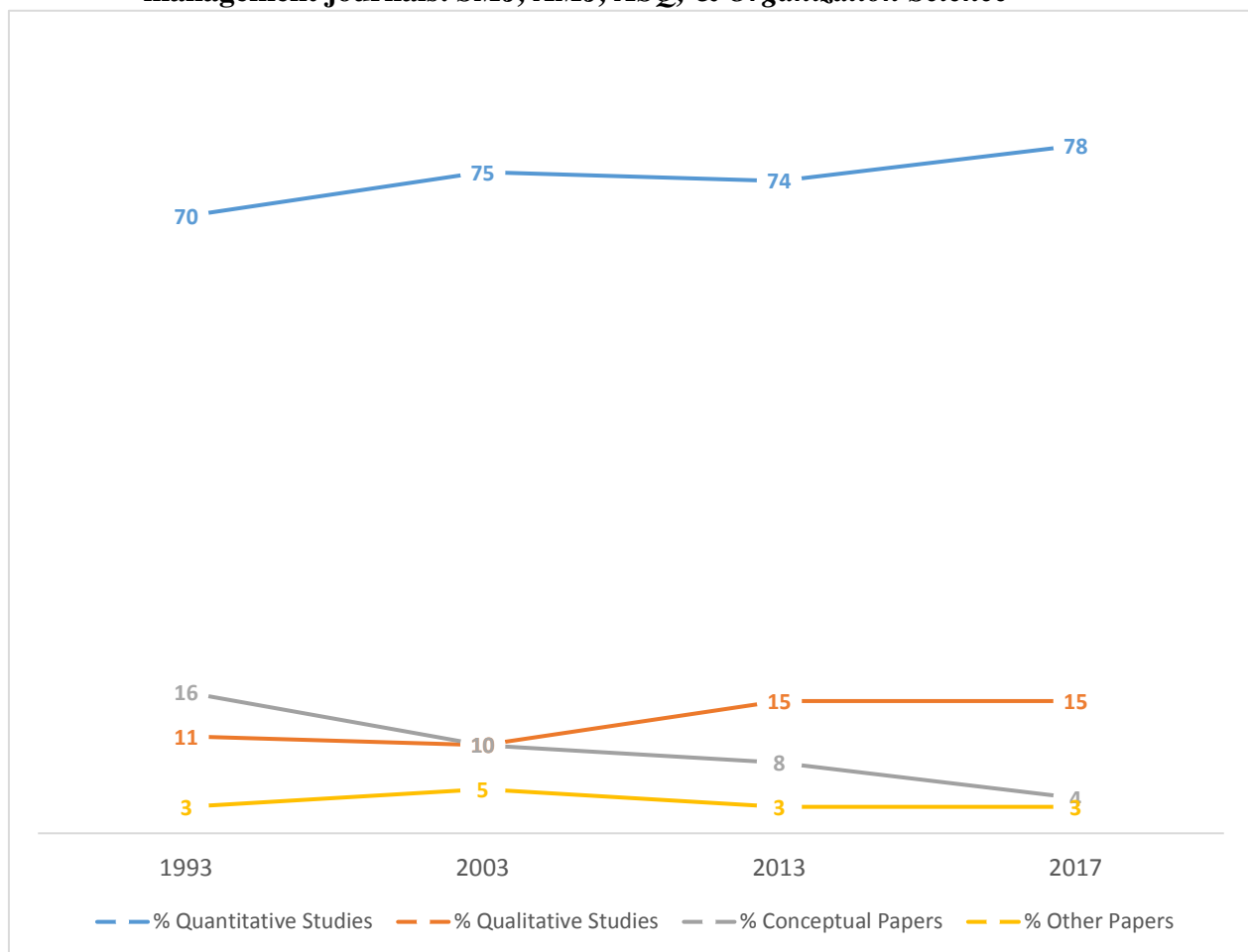
Table 1: *SMJ, AMJ, ASQ, & Organization Science* **by type of publication**[5]

SMJ	1993		2003		2013		2017	
	Sum	%	Sum	%	Sum	%	Sum	%
Quantitative empirical articles	34	58%	57	72%	74	81%	119	84%
Qualitative empirical articles	8	14%	5	6%	2	2%	4	3%
Conceptual articles	13	22%	11	14%	9	10%	12	8%
Other articles	4	7%	5	6%	6	7%	7	5%
All articles	59	100%	79	100%	91	100%	142	100%
AMJ	**1993**		**2003**		**2013**		**2017**	
	Sum	%	Sum	%	Sum	%	Sum	%
Quantitative empirical articles	60	94%	44	92%	51	70%	66	73%
Qualitative empirical articles	4	6%	4	8%	22	30%	24	27%
All articles	64	100%	48	100%	73	100%	90	100%
ASQ	**1993**		**2003**		**2013**		**2017**	
	Sum	%	Sum	%	Sum	%	Sum	%
Quantitative empirical articles	15	68%	12	75%	15	88%	16	76%
Qualitative empirical articles	6	27%	1	6%	2	12%	5	24%
Conceptual articles	1	5%	2	13%	0	0%	0	0%
Other articles	0	0%	1	6%	0	0%	0	0%
All articles	22	100%	16	100%	17	100%	21	100%
ORG.SCI.	**1993**		**2003**		**2013**		**2017**	
	Sum	%	Sum	%	Sum	%	Sum	%
Quantitative empirical articles	14	45%	28	62%	64	67%	45	74%
Qualitative empirical articles	2	7%	8	18%	17	18%	13	21%
Conceptual articles	14	45%	5	11%	11	12%	2	3%
Other articles	1	3%	4	9%	3	3%	1	2%
All articles	31	100%	45	100%	95	100%	61	100%

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[5] The category 'Other articles' includes papers that neither draw on empirical data nor are clearly conceptual, e.g., mathematical simulations. Because *AMJ* publishes empirical research only based on quantitative or qualitative data, the categories 'Conceptual articles' and 'Other articles' are not applicable and omitted in Table 1 and the plots of Figure 1.

At the very least we must assume that the dominance of quantitative empirical studies in our journals constrains advancements in the field that may result from different research approaches, e.g., the rich contextual knowledge that can be unearthed by qualitative empirical research (Chia & Holt, 2008; Dunbar & Bresser, 2014). But the preference for quantitative empirical studies is not just a concern with regard to the field's advancement and innovation. Additionally, what is intriguing about the strategic management field's obsession with quantitative data is that the studies' research questions tend to be limited to "what's fresh and novel" (Hambrick, 2007: 1350). New arguments, relationships, or patterns are sought, whereas replications of past research are rare, and if replications do occur, they are publishable in our top-journals only with considerable difficulty. This fact is disconcerting because replications are crucial for a field's consolidation (Durand et al., 2017; Hambrick, 2007; Helfat, 2007). Furthermore, the quest for novelty does not only impede replications, it also has led to an increasing fragmentation of the strategic management field, thereby further preventing consolidation (Hambrick, 2004; Agrawal & Hoetker, 2007).

Journal editors noticed these deficits and responded with special measures. For example, both *AMJ* (Bansal & Corley, 2011, 2012) and *SMJ* (Bettis, Gambardella, Helfat, & Mitchell, 2015) actively encourage qualitative empirical research, and *SMJ* promotes replication studies and will publish a special issue on replication (Bettis, Ethiraj, Gambardella, Helfat, & Mitchell, 2016). Moreover, to counter strategic management's fragmentation, *SMJ* has published a special issue of integrative research reviews (Durand et al., 2017). Again, while these measures are laudable, they operate within the current journal governance structures, and it remains to be seen whether they will suffice in generating more non-quantitative, alternative research, a sizable number of replication studies, or other efforts geared at consolidation and synthesis. A telling example of how the preference for rigorous, quantitative empirical research is being continuously reproduced in the strategic management discipline, are developments within the emerging field of strategic entrepreneurship. Citation patterns in this new field have evolved so that research based on quantitative studies and rigorous methodologies receive the most attention, regardless of the studies' practical implications (Flickinger, Tuschke, Gruber-Muecke, & Fiedler, 2014).

What aggravates the negative effects of our field's preference for quantitative empirical studies is that at most universities and business schools an "audit culture" (Walsh, 2011) governs academic life. The audit culture is based on agency theoretical premises (Jensen & Meckling, 1976) and

presumes, for example, that scholars must be expected to behave opportunistically on their jobs and have to be monitored and sanctioned just like managers of business firms. Thus, university administrators and academics have developed multiple rating and ranking schemes based on algorithms to assess and compare faculty in terms of research productivity and teaching effectiveness (Worrell, 2009; Dunbar & Bresser, 2014).

An immediate consequence of the audit culture is that ratings and journal rankings dominate academic publishing and tenure and promotion decisions today. Scholars feel the pressure to produce a high volume of articles that are considered 'A-level' according to their university's preferred journal rankings list, such as the Financial Times top 50 journal list (Walsh, 2011). In spite of their flaws (Adler & Harzing, 2009; Osterloh & Frey, 2009), these metrics are widely used because, as one dean explained, they "can help to clarify successful patterns of research scholarship" (Worrell, 2009: 129). For faculty members it is rational to adhere to the hierarchies provided by ratings and rankings not just to ascertain tenure and promotion but also pay increases. Gomez-Mejia and Balkin (1992) demonstrated that the primary determinant of faculty pay is the number of top-tier journal publications.

Thus, publishing articles in top-tier A-journals has become crucial to a college professor's career, and strategic management professors are not an exception. Instead of pursuing intrinsically meaningful research, all that may count for many researchers is to achieve 'hits' in top-tier journals in short succession (Ashforth, 2005; Walsh, 2011). Unfortunately, seeing publishing "as a game of hit and miss" (Alvesson, Gabriel, & Paulsen, 2017: 5) is a consequence of the audit culture that inhibits advancements and consolidation in strategic management and other social science fields. Clearly, there is the risk that excellent research motivated by passionate intellectual curiosity may be driven out and substituted with mediocre research that is just "good enough" to earn acceptance in a top-tier journal. Three developments in academic publishing can be considered paramount in preventing innovation and consolidation: gap-spotting, crowding-out, and cheating.

Gap-spotting research. Because researchers know that editors and reviewers may have preferences for and vested interests in established theories, they shy away from fundamentally challenging existing theory and its related publications. Such challenges, even if intriguing and innovative, may increase the risk of rejections and thus may be damaging for careers, if, for example, a reviewer is driven by the 'wrong' motive to defend an established theory against criticism (Dunbar & Bresser, 2014). Instead, it has become common for researchers to position

their work as trying to fill an important gap in the literature and as an extension of what is known (Johanson, 2007; Alvesson & Sandberg, 2011). Arguably, in the current system, gap-spotting and -filling is far less risky to a submission's fate than a fundamental and innovative challenge of existing theory. Gap-filling also blends nicely with the preference for quantitative empirical research because it facilitates the 'slicing' of data sets for milking a succession of 'hits' on narrowly related research questions (Ashforth, 2005). The very search for gaps, however, limits the scope of a paper's contribution to an incremental contribution, adding marginally to existing knowledge. Therefore, gap-spotting comes at the expense of more comprehensive innovations and advancements in the field.[6] Some have even argued that the norm of identifying and filling gaps in the literature has contributed to a rise of largely trivial (Ashforth, 2005) research, devoid of meaning and social value (Alvesson et al., 2017).

Crowding-out effects. Since attaining high scores on academic rankings and ratings are tied to monetary and other extrinsic rewards, they may crowd out a scholar's intrinsically motivated curiosity (Osterloh & Frey, 2009), i.e., his or her 'taste for science' (Merton, 1973). In psychology, considerable evidence suggests that extrinsic incentives have the effect of replacing intrinsic with extrinsic motivation, in particular when goals leading to extrinsic rewards are externally imposed (Amabile, 1996; Hennessey & Amabile, 1998). Crowding-out effects must be expected among faculty members who are driven by attaining 'hits' in top-tier journals, i.e., extrinsic rewards. The consequence of crowding-out effects is that bold new thinking and challenges of the existing does not occur because bold thinking may jeopardize attaining 'hits' and high scores in rankings. Thus, crowding-out effects also inhibit a field's advancement. A further problem with crowding-out is that the effects tend to be permanent. Once intrinsically motivated curiosity has been replaced by extrinsic motivation, it will be very difficult for individuals to regain a self-imposed intrinsic desire. This problem is evident in universities where faculty members may continue their gap-spotting and hit-seeking publication habits even after they have earned tenure. Although now secure enough to

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[6] Note that our criticism of incremental contributions squares with what Daft and Lewin (1990: 1) characterize as "incremental, footnote-on-footnote research" on well-established themes. We fully acknowledge that most research contributes incrementally to the growth of knowledge and that many incremental contributions may provide the foundation for a radical innovation, similar to how a period of 'puzzle solving' and 'normal science' may cause a paradigm shift (Kuhn, 1970). Our point is that, to the extent that gap-spotting research becomes the norm, it will discourage bold, fundamental challenges that may be more appropriate to address novel phenomena and lead to more comprehensive innovations (Bettis, 1991).

engage in challenging and controversial research, tenured professors often have lost the motivation and will to do so (Hambrick, 2005; Ashforth, 2005).

Cheating. The audit culture in universities provides inducements to 'game' the system. In their quest to attain multiple journal 'hits' in short succession, researchers sometimes seek short-cuts and engage in unethical behaviors. The strategic management discipline is not immune to transgressions. Surveys by Bedeian, Taylor, & Miller (2010) and Honig and Bedi (2012) among business school faculty, including strategic management scholars, suggest that the number of academics involved in plagiarism, data falsification, fabrication of results, harking (hypothesizing after the results are known) and other forms of cheating is staggering (Walsh, 2011). In particular, harking is widespread in our field and distorts the meaning of a study's results and inferences if performed secretly (Hollenbeck & Wright, 2017; Shaw, 2017). Needless to say, cheating not just flies in the face of advancement and consolidation, it jeopardizes the credibility of an academic field.

In combination, research preferences for quantitative empirical studies and an audit culture encouraging gap-spotting, crowding-out effects, and cheating suggest that the field's interest in advancement and consolidation is not being met satisfactorily. The literature discusses several remedies to move the management disciplines more convincingly towards its goals. Apart from journals encouraging replications, integrative research reviews, and alternative research approaches, most suggestions focus on the need for new editorial and tenure and promotion committee policies. New policies, it is argued, should encourage and reward bold and challenging theorizing, discourage gap-spotting and cheating, and curtail the omnipresent audit culture (e.g., Bettis, 1991; Ashforth, 2005; Walsh, 2011; Alvesson & Sandberg, 2011; Alvesson et al., 2017). It is noteworthy, however, that these reform proposals typically do not question the current governance structures of our journals. Just like in the case of measures that have been proposed to encourage fair and developmental reviewing, the proposals made at the field level seek to modify and amend current structures, which again raise the issue of alternative structures. We believe that the OA/OE governance system presented below can contribute greatly toward our field's advancement and consolidation, mainly by encouraging more innovative research and necessary replications.

4 Broader society and the interest in improved strategic decision making

Of all three groups concerned with and affected by management research, i.e., university faculty, the scientific community of strategic management scholars, and the broader society, the interests of the broader society have received most attention. Society invests huge sums annually in business school research, business education, business libraries, management consulting, etc. Ashforth (2005) estimates this cost to reach billions of dollars every year. Even the cost of producing a single A-journal article published by business school professors has been appraised at astounding levels: the cost estimates range between $ 400,000 and $ 3,000,000 (Martin, 2012; Byrne, 2014).[7] Given these expenditures, society has a legitimate interest in academic research that has practical relevance and improves management and strategic management practices in organizations (Bettis, 1991; Ashforth, 2005; Dunbar & Bresser, 2014). Although Rumelt et al. (1994) already recommended and urged for a balanced view of theory and application for the strategic management field, a strong imbalance has resulted instead. Managers and numerous researchers (e.g., Mintzberg, 2004; Goshal, 2005), including past presidents of the Academy of Management (e.g., Hitt, 1998; Rousseau, 2006; DeNisi, 2010), do not attribute much practical relevance to strategic management research, and have warned that the gap between research and relevance is widening (Van de Ven, 2002).

This gap has not always existed. In fact, during the early stages of business schools a strong focus on managerial applicability of research and teaching took place (Gulati, 2007). This concentration on relevance led, however, to criticisms that business schools were not sufficiently academic in their attempts to generate knowledge during the 1950s and 1960s (Gordon & Howell, 1959; Pierson, 1959). As a result, business schools adopted a preference for a detached, positivistic science approach, thereby hoping to acquire academic respectability (Bettis, 1991; Daft & Buenger, 1990, Dunbar & Bresser, 2014).

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[7] Byrne (2014) quotes a Wharton Business School report (Terwiesch & Ulrich (2014), https://mackinstitute.wharton.upenn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Terwiesch_Ulrich_Threat-and-Opportunity-of-MOOCs-for-MBA-Programs1.pdf) suggesting that the cost of an A-journal article is $ 400,000. In the ensuing debate to Byrne's essay, accounting professor Daniel Szpiro estimated that the full cost of an A-journal article can be as high as $ 3,000,000. This estimate implies that, in the aggregate, the cost of business school A-journal publications alone can surpass the billion dollars mark. For example, when multiplying all 314 articles published in *SMJ, AMJ, ASQ*, and O*rganization Science* in 2017 (see Table 1) by $ 3 million, the total comes to $ 942,000,000.

The quest of business schools to become academically credible has led to the developments outlined above. In particular, the strong preference for quantitative empirical research prompted more and more abstract modeling, detached observation, sophisticated data collection, and rigorous analysis. The results of this research are (at best) understood by the scholars involved, but they are not meaningful to wider society (Chia & Holt, 2008; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011). To become meaningful and relevant to management practice, strategic management research needs to be grounded in practical problems (Drnevich, Mahoney, & Schendel, 2020), and the results of empirical research must be "communicated in a widely comprehensible way" (Alvesson et al, 2017: 18). Additionally, practical recommendations must be developed and tested in real organizations. However, these latter steps of translating research into actionable knowledge has hardly occurred as most research remains hidden in academic journals. Not surprisingly, the contemporary debate on rigor and relevance in management research emphasizes that business school education has suffered: what is being taught are increasingly sophisticated, rigorous methods of analysis at the expense of practical skills needed to master the challenges of the real world (Mintzberg, 2004; Daft & Lewin, 2008; Chia & Holt, 2008; Walsh, Tushman, Kimberly, Starbuck, & Ashford, 2007).

The debate on how the gap between rigorous research and managerial relevance can be bridged is ongoing and far from resolved. In addition to numerous calls to embrace the full range of knowledge-generation approaches, apart from quantitative empirical studies (e.g., Dunbar & Bresser, 2014; Bennis & O'Toole, 2005), recommendations include: appeals to scholars to conduct more practitioner-oriented research (Drnevich et al., 2020) and to translate findings into actionable prescriptions (Hitt, 1998; Rousseau, 2006); pressures to be exerted by business school governors and alumni to realign priorities and promotion policies toward relevance (Ghoshal, 2005); and encouraging professors to become proficient practitioners (Chia & Holt, 2008). There are also challenges for business practitioners who must show a greater willingness to collaborate with strategic management scholars in developing practical solutions. Additionally, practitioners must abstain from seeking 'quick fixes' to strategic problems to avoid falling prey to the latest 'fad' that is unlikely to satisfy a firm's long term strategic needs (Rumelt et al., 1994: 555; Rumelt, 2011; Dimon & Buffett, 2018).

While these recommendations may help to some extent, it is questionable whether the rigor-relevance gap can be closed without changing the structures of academic governance and the values on which these systems are based (Ghoshal, 2005; Kieser & Leiner, 2009). In a system where 'hits'

in A-journals and quantitative empirical projects have become paramount, conducting research meaningful to society, i.e., practically relevant research, is not much more than a nice idea. Such research will not happen to a sufficient degree because too many scholars may have lost their 'taste for science' (Merton, 1973) in an environment that has lost the 'taste for pluralism' (Ghoshal, 2005: 88). Scholars simply cannot be expected to engage in inquiries that do not improve their chances of gaining promotion or tenure. However, practically relevant research may become very common if it is supported by a governance system of academic publishing that gives managerial relevance the same status as research originality or methodological advancement.

5 The alternative governance system of academic publishing

If fair and developmental reviewing, innovative research, field consolidation, and practical relevance are to be achieved by academic publishing, our field would be well advised to transition to a system of open access (OA) and open evaluation (OE). OA journals have become increasingly popular in academia during the past fifteen years. The major argument in favor of OA is that the benefit of scientific papers to society will become apparent more rapidly if they are freely accessible (Antelman, 2004). The DOAJ, a comprehensive directory of high quality, peer-reviewed, open access journals (doaj.org,) currently lists close to 11,000 journals from 123 countries. Originally, OA journals have been freely accessible at no cost to the reader. However, to the extent that private publishing companies have embraced the OA operating model, journals often are accessible only with a subscription or pay-per-view fees.

OA, even in the original freely accessible form, does not go far enough to meet the interests of the three stakeholder groups: university faculty, the scientific community, and broader society. To satisfy these interests, OA has to be complemented by OE (Kriegeskorte, 2012). Next, we will present a model for a new journal, Open Evaluation Journal of Strategic Management (OEJSM), to demonstrate how an OA/OE governance system can work.

5.1 The governance system of the OEJSM

We begin by providing a few preliminary remarks on the foundations of the governance system of the OEJSM. First, the centerpiece of our governance model is the concept of OE, a process in which papers are evaluated by means of open peer review in an ongoing fashion. The concept of OE has been developed in the neurosciences, most notably by Nikolaus Kriegeskorte and his colleagues (Kriegeskorte, 2012; Kriegeskorte et al., 2012), and it is this work that has inspired

many of the features selected for the OEJSM. Secondly, we propose that the governance structure of the OEJSM will consist of one or two editors initially, and an unlimited number of editorial board members who will volunteer in testing and developing the new system. Thirdly, to avoid overloading the capacities of the new system, we propose to accept only a limited number of manuscript submissions for an initial period, e.g., between 100 and 200 manuscripts. Fourthly, the OEJSM can be launched independently from currently existing journals, or it can complement an established journal during a trial period.

5.2 Features of the alternative OEJSM

The new system has the following specific features, summarized in Figure 2:

1. **The system is web-based and OA in the original sense**, i.e., all publications are accessible to all at no cost.

2. **A newly submitted paper is instantly published** and accessible to all at any time. This measure guarantees that authors` opinions are undiluted by reviewer and editor preferences.

3. **Peer review remains intact, but all reviews are post-publication and open.** Peer review is instrumental in evaluating the merits of a paper, and it stays at the core of the new system. However, a crucial difference to the current system of pre-publication reviewing is that post-publication and openly accessible peer-reviews do not decide on whether a paper will be published. Rather, post-publication reviews are likely to focus on the merits of a paper that has already been published, and the system's transparency discourages unfair and self-serving reviewer practices.

Figure 2: Features of the new OA/OE Strategic Management Journal

1. **Web-based system; OA at no cost to readers.**

2. **Submitted papers are instantly published.**

3. **Open, post publication peer reviews.**

4. **Three initial reviews requested by editor.**

5. **All authenticated scientists can freely submit reviews or commentaries on any paper.**

6. **All reviews and commentaries are published instantly and linked to the original submission.**

7. **Reviews and commentaries are signed, but can remain anonymous.**

8. **Signed reviews are mini publications.**

9. **Reviewers can build a reputation of fairness and excellence.**

10. **Reviewers provide numerical ratings on the papers by considering four criteria of excellence:**
    (1) scientific originality, (2) methodological quality,
    (3) contribution to the field's consolidation, (4) practical relevance.

11. **Numerical ratings are statistically analyzed, consolidated, and posted continuously to identify exceptional, outstanding papers.**

12. **Outstanding papers are published in a second, higher tier of the new OEJSM.**

4. **The editor requests three initial reviews from renowned peers** once a paper has been submitted and published; **one** reviewer will be chosen **at the recommendation of the authors**. Three invited initial reviews by highly qualified peers will get the open review-process started without delay. It will be the action editor's obligation to select initial reviewers who represent a balance of opinions, research preferences, and expertise within the field to minimize the possibility of obtaining one-sided reviews during the initial post-publication phase (letto-Gillies, 2012).

5. **Any scientist can submit a review or commentary on a paper**. Since peer reviewing is open, any scientist or scholar can freely submit (and post) a review or commentary on a paper, or a commentary on a previous review. To maximize the chance of soliciting informed and constructive reviews and commentaries from scholars, evaluators' identities should be authenticated, e.g., by requiring a system-login with a password. We suggest to extend the ability to freely provide reviews and commentaries to the members of the Strategic Management Society and the Academy of Management, at least initially.

6. **The initial reviews, subsequent reviews, and commentaries are all published instantly and permanently and linked to the original submission**. The open peer review process is ongoing, not time-limited. To the extent that a paper touches off a lively debate, the scientific or practical merits of a paper's ideas will become apparent within a short time. Due to the system's openness, all reviews and commentaries are communications to the community at large.

7. **The initial three reviews must be signed**, **subsequent** reviews and commentaries can be **signed or anonymous**. While the system encourages the signing of reviews and commentaries, it does allow for anonymous reviews. Signed reviews discourage biased or aggressive reviewing. Anonymity provides the opportunity to criticize a paper without fear of repercussions, e.g., if the critical reviewer is in a hierarchically dependent position in relation to the author of a paper. Additionally, to further discourage bias, evaluators of signed reviews will be asked to disclose information that might imply biases, e.g., information on personal connections to the authors or the extent to which the arguments and findings of a paper support or contradict the evaluator's work.

8. **Signed reviews are mini publications** and, as such, subject to subsequent reviews. The new systems adds reviews as a new type of publication. Thus, the quality and quantity of a reviewer's signed reviews are a new source of the reviewer's scholarly reputation and status.

9. **Reviewers can build a reputation of fairness and excellence** and, therefore, are motivated to sign reviews and to minimize bias. Mainly due to its transparency, the new system works so that reviewers are sensitive to status (i.e., promoting knowledge based on fair reviewing processes) when evaluating papers, not power (Blader & Chen, 2012).

10. **Papers are** not only reviewed by reviewers but also **rated based on Likert scales**. Ratings should encompass at least **four criteria** of excellence:
    (1) a paper's **scientific originality**,
    (2) a paper's **methodological quality**,
    (3) a paper's **contribution to the field's consolidation,**
    (4) a paper's **practical relevance.**
    Additionally, citation frequencies of the paper will be published.

    Reviewers are asked not just to provide written reviews and/or commentaries, they are also requested to specify numerical ratings of a paper using Likert scales. On the one hand, the criteria chosen for ratings include a paper's scientific originality or methodological advancement, i.e., two criteria that are commonly considered in the current system. On the other hand, the criteria also include the goals of consolidation and practical relevance, and thus objectives and interests that are not being met satisfactorily in the current system. The four criteria of excellence are not mutually exclusive but they are of equal importance.

11. Based on the available information, **numerical ratings of a paper are statistically analyzed** and consolidated by the editor's office and posted continuously. The analyses can be based on simple descriptives (e.g., frequencies, averages) or more complex algorithms (e.g., averages of ratings weighted by the rater's H-index). A distinction will be made between consolidated information resulting from signed and anonymous reviews. The idea is to **identify the truly exceptional, outstanding papers** according to the four rating criteria. We propose to assess a paper's exceptionality solely based on information from signed reviews.

12. As a paper obtains more positive ratings, it will and **should become more visible** to a broad audience. Therefore, the **new OEJSM is a two-tier-system:**

* Articles that are evaluated as outstanding over time, will be published in a **second, higher tier of the journal**. This second tier is reserved **for excellent papers** only.

* To be **published in the second tier of the new OEJSM,** a paper must have **obtained outstanding ratings at least with one of the four criteria** proposed above, and at least average ratings with the other criteria.

* The **authors** of a paper accepted for inclusion **in the second tier** of the journal **have the option to revise their paper before publication**.

We believe that the proposed alternative governance system of a new OEJSM can meet the needs of all three stakeholder groups that have motivated this paper's inquiry. Fair and developmental reviewing can be expected because of the system's transparency and the elevated status of signed reviews as publications in their own right. Since the four criteria of excellence are of equal importance, each criterion enables a paper to be included in the second tier of the journal that is reserved for outstanding papers. Not all papers can excel in all categories. Some papers will excel in scientific originality, others in methodological quality, contribution to the field's consolidation, or practical relevance. As long as a paper that, for example, excels in scientific originality obtains at least average ratings with the other three criteria of excellence, it will advance to the second tier of the journal. Thus, the new governance system encourages research originality and methodological advancements, as is common within the current governance system. However, the new governance format also provides strong incentives to remedy the two major problems of the strategic management field at present, the lack of consolidation (Hambrick, 2007; Durand et al., 2017) and the lack of practical relevance (Mintzberg, 2004; Goshal, 2005).

6. Discussion

Arguably, for the new governance system to succeed it will be necessary that the cultural values of academic publishing and associated policies within universities change toward a more transparent

peer review system and toward according equal status to the goals specified by our four criteria of excellence. To bring about this change, strong support is required from senior scholars, editors, and university and business leaders. Based on a new set of espoused values, the new system of journal governance should allow for replacing the 'taste for multiple publications', which is widespread in academe and symptomatic of the current system's failure to meet legitimate interests, by a 'taste and passion for meaningful research' (Merton, 1973; Alvesson et al., 2017).

Another requirement for the success of the new governance system is that it will be subjected to tests and continuous improvements. While we advocate that these tests will be conducted by our top management journals, they are not yet manifest. Nonetheless, a few potential shortcomings of the new system are known and will be discussed to guide the test phases.

The discussion of potential weaknesses is structured by five objections (Figure 3) that readers might bring up as they consider the alternative system. While it is not our intention to diminish the validity of any objection, we will, however, explain how critical concerns can be resolved so that tests of the new system can succeed.

Figure 3: Objections to the new system of journal governance

1. **The literature will be inundated with low-quality papers that are never evaluated.**
2. **Authors will abstain from submitting papers in an open peer-review system.**
3. **Scholars will abstain from submitting signed reviews and commentaries.**
4. **Signed reviews will be positively biased.**
5. **The new system is incompatible with privately owned journals.**

1   The literature will be inundated with low-quality papers that are never evaluated

It is possible that many low-quality papers will be submitted, at least initially. But that would not really be a problem (Kriegeskorte, 2012). First, low-quality papers would get critical initial reviews and maybe not even a single subsequent review, comment, or rating. As readers, we will not pay much attention to papers that do not fare well during the round of initial reviews and also fail to incite a lively debate in terms of subsequent reviews, comments, and citations. In the current system, many papers receive little attention and only few citations, and this fact will not change. However, in comparison to the current system of pre-publication peer review, the ideas of a paper will never be lost in the new system and may be discovered later, when the context has changed and a previously disregarded and critically evaluated paper may become relevant.

Secondly, we suspect that the incidence of low-quality publications may be much lower than what some critics may expect. After all, authors are submitting their scholarly business cards when publishing a paper, and they will be aware that substandard publications will tarnish their reputations. The openness of the system provides a strong incentive to submit very good papers that have been improved upon as a result of many friendly reviews before they are published. Ironically, members of the editorial review board of an open evaluation peer-review journal such as OEJSM may discover that the work of a reviewer is made easier due to the incentive for all authors to have their papers rigorously critiqued by friendly reviewers prior to submission to the journal. In fact, practical experiences with open peer-review systems refute this objection: on average, the quality of the submitted papers was not substandard (Sandewall, 2012).

Thirdly, editors-in-chief of academic journals under the new governance system will continue to perform desk-rejects of inappropriate manuscripts submitted to their journals. However, this pre-publication screening-process should be kept to a minimum because it is non-transparent and comes at high costs. Much excellent research was initially misunderstood (Kriegeskorte et al., 2012) and misunderstandings and disagreements are common in the management disciplines (Starbuck, 2003). Thus, to minimize a loss of knowledge through errors in the editors' initial evaluations, particularly in a multidisciplinary field such as strategic management, the editorial vetting process should be parsimonious. Desk-rejects should occur only if a submitted paper (a) does not meet the technical standards set by the journal, (b) uses non-professional, mocking language, or (c) the topic clearly does not fit into the content domain that is defined in the mission of the journal. Restricting editorial screening and desk-rejects to a minimum should not create a

capacity problem during the trial period of the new OEJSM because, as proposed, only a limited number of manuscript submissions will be processed.

2 Authors will abstain from submitting papers in an open peer-review system

Authors may fear that they will draw too many negative criticisms in the new system to ascend to the second tier of the new OEJSM and, therefore, may prefer to submit their work to a traditional journal with pre-publication peer-reviewing. To the extent that this fear will ensue, it would be a reflection of the current system that favors anonymity. Prospective authors have to be informed that the new journal's reviewers will be strongly incentivized to provide fair and developmental reviews. Reviewers know that their own reputations are at stake when submitting harsh and unjustified critiques. Also, a paper that draws no critique is hardly innovative. Thus, constructive critiques will not prevent a paper from obtaining outstanding ratings, particularly so, if authors explain in subsequent comments how they would address a valid critique in a revision of the paper.

Several steps can be taken to help authors to overcome their fear of being exposed in a fully transparent system. On the one hand, universities could reward authors for participating in the new system by assigning stronger weights to publications that transitioned to the second tier of the new OEJSM. On the other hand, a set of maybe a dozen seasoned strategy scholars may be asked to help jumpstart the journal by agreeing to publish articles in the new system.[8]

3 Scholars will abstain from submitting signed reviews and commentaries in the new system

Again, this concern would also be a reflection of the current culture of anonymity (Kriegeskorte, 2012). But we believe this concern will not really matter or, at least, can be overcome over time. First, signed reviews are not altogether uncommon in management journals: book reviews are always signed and often quite critical (letto-Gillies, 2012). Secondly, members of the new journal's editorial board are volunteers who are committed to transcending the current system by testing a promising alternative. Thus, from the beginning there will be a large pool of reviewers who are willing to post signed reviews. Thirdly, reviews in the new system are mini-publications that will be widely visible and help to enhance a scholar's reputation and career. In fact, in creative fields that include literature, art, theatre, film, video and music, some talented reviewers have already

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[8] Although these scholars will have established their careers within the current journal governance system, they can be expected to help jumpstart the new system if they are convinced that the potential merits of an OEJSM should be tested and developed.

built successful careers by providing high quality reviews that can impact creative choices made to undertake subsequent projects by authors/artists/performers, as well as influence the creative community that is likely to obtain greater understanding of a work's meaning and significance from a perceptive review. For example, famed novelist John Updike (winner of the Pulitzer Prize) reviewed novels written by other writers as a literary critic in *The New Yorker* and collections of his reviews were published as books (Rourke, 2009). In another example, celebrated movie critic Roger Ebert started his career as a journalist and general reporter for the *Chicago Sun-Times* and soon found his calling as a movie reviewer for the newspaper which eventually led him to reviewing movies on a syndicated weekly television program, and that success also encouraged him to become an author of books based on collections of earlier published film reviews (Ebert, 2011). Similarly, experienced scholars may discover a new career opportunity (e.g., giving invited lectures or media interviews, writing books that aggregate reviews into a more expansive narrative, etc.) that arises after they develop a reputation as a successful reviewer in their academic field. Therefore, we believe that the system provides strong incentives to participate in an open, constructive debate.

4 Signed reviews will be positively biased

Reviewers may be inclined to avoid conflict and social stigmatization, and thus submit reviews affected by positive bias. Three factors work against submitting overly positive reviews. First, all reviewers invited by the editor to provide a review will be advised against being overly lenient or harsh in their reviewing practices.

Secondly, it is in the reviewers' best interest to minimize positive bias because their reputations will be in jeopardy if they are undiscerning. If the history of a reviewer's signed reviews suggests that his or her reviews are generally overly lenient, influenced by social connections, or by specific research preferences, the reviewer will be considered as not contributing value to the field. Rather, this reviewer's comments and reviews should be adjusted for bias, and they will be corrected and downweighted in our system.

Thirdly, we recommend that the statistical analysis of paper ratings should estimate and correct for bias before ratings are consolidated and used to determine whether a paper should be regarded outstanding and elevated to the second tier of the journal.[9] A correction of a general leniency bias

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[9] The search and correction for bias would be part of the statistical analysis proposed in system feature 11 (see Figure 2).

could be accomplished, for example, by comparing all of a reviewer's ratings to the mean of all the other reviewer ratings for all the papers that were reviewed (Kriegeskorte, 2012). A correction of bias resulting from social connections to the author or due to self-serving preferences could be achieved by comparing a reviewer's rating(s) of a specific paper to the mean of all the other ratings posted for a paper. The requested disclosure of information that might imply bias during the system login-phase will act to deter positive bias, because reviewers will know that the editor will check for bias and that overly positive ratings, should they be observed, will be downweighted.

5 *The new system is incompatible with privately owned journals*

Many of the highest ranked academic journals are owned by private corporations such as Elsevier and John Wiley & Sons. Thus, critics may consider the proposed changes toward a no-fee OA/OE system naïve. While the new governance system may be more easily implemented for journals owned by professional societies, such as the Academy of Management publications, for-profit publishers do not have to be marginalized or squeezed out. Private publishing houses could, for example, concentrate on publishing and selling prestigious journals for business practitioners, by communicating the most important findings generated by the new system of academic publishing in a comprehensible way, and with specific recommendations for improved managerial actions. To this end, the authors of papers published in the second, higher tier of the new OEJSM might be invited to participate in writing articles that communicate their findings to the business community.

Alternatively, professional societies such as the Strategic Management Society may opt to acquire journals or to find new forms of collaboration. For instance, the advantages of OA and OE have led to a collaboration between F1000[10] and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to establish Gates Open Research, an open research publishing platform in the medical sciences (STM Publishing, 2017). With convincing arguments in favor of a better academic publishing system, it should be possible to obtain the financial support of a research foundation or business sponsor to acquire academic journals from private owners.

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[10] F1000 (2018) is a provider of services that support researchers, institutions and funders (https;//f1000.com)

7. Conclusion

This paper considers the interests of three stakeholder groups concerned with the quality of strategic management research. We show that the current academic governance system encourages knowledge generation processes within the field that do not satisfy legitimate concerns. University faculty cannot rely on the governance system to provide a fair and developmental review process, and too often researchers may have lost their passion for meaningful science. The scientific community of strategic management scholars is disappointed at the field's fragmentation and lack of consolidation. And society at large voices important concerns about practical relevance, i.e., the insufficiency of strategic management research in helping practicing managers to make better strategic decisions.

To better comply with the expectations of these stakeholders, we propose a transformation of our academic governance systems, most notably the system governing our academic journals. Specifically, we advocate transitioning from the current anonymous, pre-publication review system to one that is based on transparency and post-publication reviews. Although the features of our proposed OEJSM are specific, we do not suggest that they are in any way final or unchangeable. Rather, we hope to start a conversation within the strategic management field about the merits of an alternative governance system. Arguably, we also hope that this conversation ultimately will lead to tests of a newly established OEJSM.

Once a new journal will be tested, it can use our model as a starting point. But the new format should be amended and corrected with experience and as the strategic management field faces new challenges. Amendments clearly are possible with regard to the four criteria of excellence that reviewers use in our model to rate publications. For instance, should journal editors come to the conclusion that the field's consolidation would benefit strongly from studies "applying a single theoretical approach to a range of separate but related [strategic] phenomena" (Durand et al., 2017:12), a criterion of excellence measuring precisely this type of contribution could be introduced and communicated to prospective authors. Over time, we anticipate that, with corrections and amendments, the new system of academic governance will provide insightful answers to the field's canonical questions, newly emerging strategic issues, and the need to keep a balance between theory and application, and all this within a culture of intrinsic curiosity, transparency, and fairness.

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