Equality, creativity, academic merit: for the record or to set records up?

When we think that our successes are mostly due to a good fortune, we give more money to charities. We donate more than individuals who attribute their success to their exceptionally hard work and uniquely intelligent guesses. Nobody researched the researchers – not even a narrower group of academic authors busy with propping their bureaucratic careers up with publications of papers in peer-reviewed journals. They have not been studied from the point of their self-image and professional identity either.

When chief executive officer of Blackstone private equity firm turned 60, celebrities noticed that he had thrown a party for a couple of hundred of close friends (in New York’s Armory at Park Avenue). He is an outspoken critic of most proposals to control financial creativity, particularly when it suits him. When the US Government announced the intention to repeal the carried-interest loopholes – he suggested in public that such actions would be akin to the German invasion of Poland. The redistribution of social wealth by taxes looks to him like an act of war and aggression. Taxing the rich could be the next Pearl Harbor. Helping the poor would be like dropping the A-bombs – a mutually assured destruction if there ever was one.

In a sense, the poor rich CEO of Blackstone was right, though not in the way he had meant it. Taxation is not war, but wars do dramatically change taxation everywhere. Most economists notice that wars, particularly major, world wars, change the income distribution towards equality and away from the gilded ages.

The above comparison of a change of taxation to a beginning of the world war had been made by a financial guru of the rich in 2007. No world war had started next year, but the financial system crashed in a major way. Does it undermine the above tax/war rhetoric?

It does. Reality is not what it used to be. Moreover, if CEOs can compare taxation to war, editors-in-chief can compare peer reviews to taxation. Every author who wants to publish rather than to perish, accepts the heavy taxation of friendly, neutral or hostile review. Not every author. After all, there are people, often very creative and successful, who had never published much and yet they did not perish at all, they actually flourish and prosper. But most of them do.

There are loopholes for the rich and the famous. If you want to avoid some taxes, you can go for a special issue. It does not remove peer review, but it usually narrows down the range of potential reviewers. If I have to select a reviewer for a random paper submitted to the JOCM, I usually have a choice of ca. 10-15 reviewers with some record in the past and ca. 10-20 former authors, who might be interested in playing a role of an interviewer, if only once in a while. This is randomness. An orderly one, aided by anonymous robots of the slave empire called manuscript central, but randomness nevertheless. If a guest editor selects reviewers, he or she usually employs his or her circle of eligible competent judges – a choice is usually bound to be made among reviewers recruited from a much narrower database. Special issues are not the only way to avoid taxes of a peer review. Another loophole is linked to the different dimension – namely to the dimension of pragmatic usefulness, utilitarian happiness with some ideas and unhappiness with the others. When we produce special issues linked not to the academically identified research area but to the pragmatically, professionally defined domain of organized activities (say, neurosurgeons or intercultural trainers), we also lower the taxation of peer reviews, this time with the broad audience and membership of a professional association in mind. Do we, editors-in-chief mind? Not if we are mindful and mind our business well. Peer review is fading away and taxation moves towards blockchain idea of an increased equality, towards checked and balanced expertise, even the one of the reviewers. Reviewers stand at the threshold of being reviewed.
Is this reflected in the latest collection of papers accepted for the third issue of JOCM in 2018? Well, yes. The first paper comes from the Catalonian Technical University in Barcelona and tells us about the six emotional stages of organizational change. The second goes even further than allowing emotions into the rational choice kingdom of the quantitative experts — the Polish researcher asks if jobs matter more than nations as far as personal identities go. In other words, he is studying the cultural constraints of organizational performance, which also shows that an element of random coincidence in shifting frameworks of reference can determine if one is more likely to see oneself as a member of a cosmopolitan professional caste or as a member of a national community of football fans or tax-payers. Iranian authors go for an analysis of the mediating effect of an employee creativity upon knowledge processes as the main inputs determining the value of organizational performance. The next author works for the University of Sydney Business School but relies on the research carried on in Pakistan, since the title of this paper is “Institutions and sensemaking of change: institutional frame switching as sensemaking of microfinance in a Pakistani commercial bank”. The pair of the next authors came from a Beacon Institute in London and from a Derby business school in Derby. They discuss behavioral competence of sustainability leaders — an issue, which might gain in importance, considering the new wave of passionate debates between the “green” farmers and more politically but also economically correct bio-dynamic, circular ones. The next paper has been submitted by researchers from a Harbin Institute of Technology; the northern Chinese authors present a study of the moderating role of organizational inertia in dealing with an inbound open innovation and radical innovation capability. In other words, do I rock the boat if inertia kills the rockers who fail to appease them? The seventh paper had been written by a female Spanish researcher from the Seville University and a male French researcher from the Paris region. They write about board restructuring and successful demutualization in case of stock exchanges. Two authors from Fiji and one from Brisbane ask about our chances of facilitating cultural change in social enterprises — in view of the growing role of social entrepreneurship, their attention pays handsomely in terms of potential readers’ interest. The next two authors come from La Rochelle and Paris and they talk about the acceptance of change in hospitality industry from the perspective of the front-line (customer contact) employees. The next trio of authors shares the job locations between Mauritius in the Indian Ocean and Murdoch in western Australia. They write about partisanship and organizational change in Mauritius. The next authors come from Edmonton in Canada and from Kuwait. They return in their paper (11th in the issue) to the impact of a personal trust, communication and affective commitment upon a success or failure of a change process in organizations. Emotions again, this time in the Middle East and in Canada. Of the next three authors we can say that two are from Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia and one is from Dublin in Ireland. They focus on Malaysia, namely on employee empowerment and job satisfaction in urban Malaysia. The next paper, by two Swedish authors from Eskilstuna, is devoted to visual management for a dynamic strategic change. Two Dutch researchers, both of them female, both of them from the Twente University in the Netherlands discuss a participative change towards a digitalized, customer-oriented continuous improvement within a municipality. How to be friendly when robots surround you and computer screens make fun of you? Some fun can be found in shadowing the gray analytical hierarchy process approach to project management selection, presented by Yakup Celikbilek from Istanbul. Well, emotions are to be controlled and kept in check. Thus, the last paper in the third issue of JOCM in 2018, has been submitted by two Pakistani authors from Kohat and Peshawar and one US author from Lexington, Kentucky. It is devoted — what a nice ending — to emotions during executive succession in a public board.

Enjoy. And think about hard choices about soft issues in future.

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