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FROM THE EDITORS

REPUTATION AND STATUS: EXPANDING THE ROLE OF SOCIAL EVALUATIONS IN MANAGEMENT RESEARCH

Organizations, whether private or public, are subject to evaluations by their stakeholder community and society. These social evaluations form the basis of perceptions targeted at the organization, and influence the organization's interactions with its stakeholders. "Reputation," defined as beliefs or perceptions held about the quality of a focal actor, and "status," defined as relative professional position or social standing, are both forms of social evaluation. Following works by Fombrun and Shanley (1990) and Merton (1968), reputation and status as theoretical constructs have become popularized in the literature, and management scholars have provided empirical evidence to provide a more complete view of their influence. In this thematic issue,[1] we review trends in empirical research on reputation and status published in *Academy of Management Journal* (*AMJ*), and highlight the current issues being tackled by this stream of enquiry.

Over the past five decades, there have been far too many instances in which stakeholders of organizations, such as customers, employees, or investors, as well as society at large, have been left aghast at individual wrongdoing or inappropriate organizational action, often causing stakeholders significant social and economic distress. These actions frequently tear at the internal social fabric of an organization or violate the trust placed in the organization by external stakeholders. In an earlier editorial, we called for research on organizational purpose as a guide for individual and organizational action where businesses serve as generators, rather than consumers, of trust and goodwill, and act to repair trust violations (Hollensbe, Wookey, Loughlin, George, & Nichols, 2014). Here, we explore studies that tackle research questions on the generation or creation of goodwill, reputation, image, or status—collectively and loosely termed as "social evaluations"—and how organizations seek, leverage, deploy, and benefit from such social evaluations.

In keeping with trends in the social environment where organizational reputation and status have gained currency, *AMJ* has published 121 articles that discuss forms of social evaluation, dominated by the theoretical constructs of reputation and status. In the following section, we provide an overview of social evaluation research and the broad trends therein. Our goal is not to discuss the theoretical contribution of these articles or develop new theory, but to highlight the ever-growing breadth and depth of this literature. Then, we discuss the 15 articles curated in this thematic issue to showcase new ways of framing problems and unanswered questions, innovative methodologies used, and interesting contexts that highlight the form and function of social evaluations.

THEORETICAL PLURALITY IN SOCIAL EVALUATION

Reputation and status research has tended to evolve independently in the management literature. Reputation may well be perceived as delivering quality over time, while status flows through associations. Over the years, reputation as a construct has gained significance, with efforts to clarify rationale for the theoretical distinctiveness of status (e.g., Bitektine, 2011; Washington & Zajac, 2005). In Table 1, we see the patterns in constructs invoked to describe forms of social evaluations, with frequently occurring constructs being reputation, status, image, network centrality, and publicity/public relations in earlier decades of the journal. We see that reputation is commonly associated with a firm-level construct (28 of 43 articles that use reputation), while status has both dominant individual- and organizational-level applications (20 and 14, respectively, of 41 articles). Research stemming from early work in sociology

[1] The articles in this thematic issue were accepted into the journal under normal review processes and were not part of any Special Research Forum call. The articles were assembled to bring out a theme and highlight phenomena and theories of interest across scholars who use micro and macro approaches to address important management and organizational problems.

TABLE 1
Reputation and Status Research in *AMJ* by Unit of Analysis

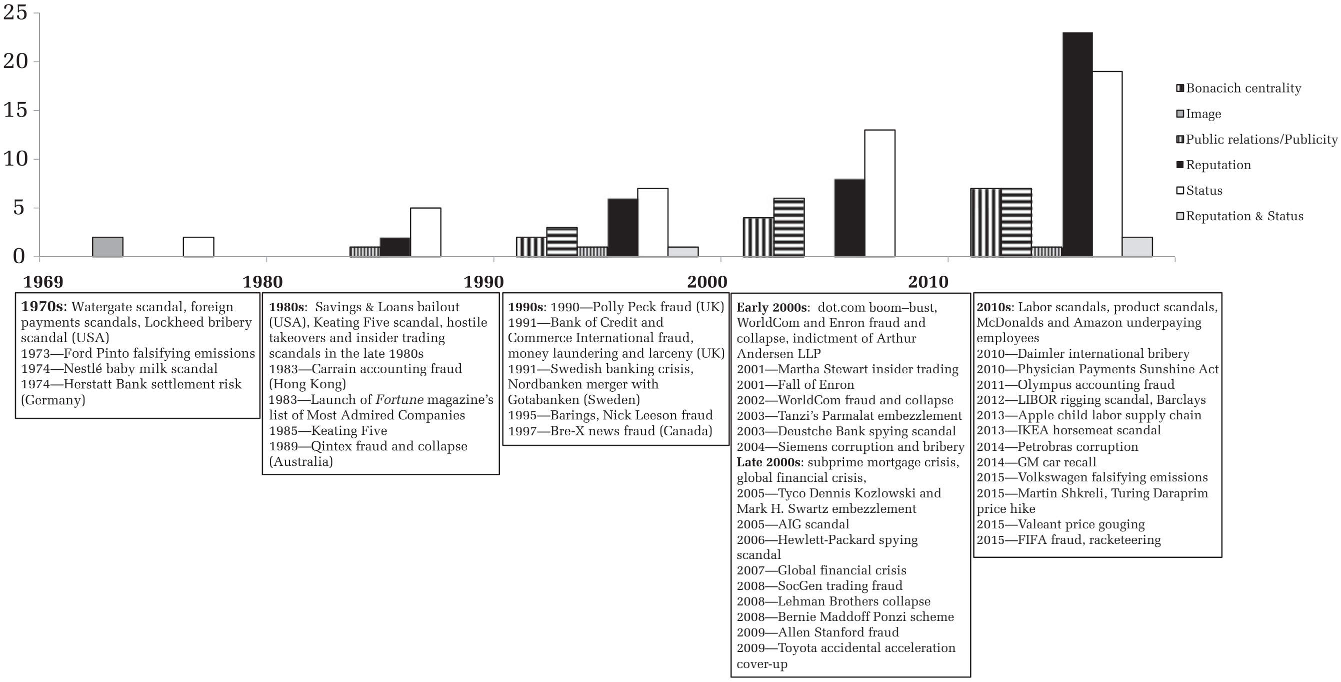
Topic	Unit of Analysis	Percentage	*n*
Reputation	Firm	23.1%	28
Reputation	Individual	5.8%	7
Reputation	Dyadic	2.5%	3
Reputation	Group or team	3.3%	4
Reputation	Other	0.8%	1
Status	Firm	11.5%	14
Status	Individual	16.5%	20
Status	Dyadic	0.8%	1
Status	Group or team	5.0%	6
Status	Other	0.0%	0
Reputation & Status	Firm	0.8%	1
Reputation & Status	Individual	1.7%	2
Reputation & Status	Dyadic	0.0%	0
Reputation & Status	Group or team	0.0%	0
Reputation & Status	Other	0.0%	0
Image	Firm	10.7%	13
Image	Individual	4.1%	5
Image	Dyadic	0.0%	0
Image	Group or team	0.0%	0
Image	Other	0.0%	0
Network (Bonacich) Centrality	Firm	5.0%	6
Network (Bonacich) Centrality	Individual	4.1%	5
Network (Bonacich) Centrality	Dyadic	1.7%	2
Network (Bonacich) Centrality	Group or team	0.0%	0
Network (Bonacich) Centrality	Other	0.0%	0
Public relations/Publicity	Firm	2.5%	3
Public relations/Publicity	Individual	0.0%	0
Public relations/Publicity	Dyadic	0.0%	0
Public relations/Publicity	Group or team	0.0%	0
Public relations/Publicity	Other	0.0%	0
			$N = 121$

uses different network measures to capture social position across individual, organizational, and dyadic levels of analysis.

In Figure 1, we chart the progression of social evaluation research over the past five decades. Over the past two decades, the rapid rise in the number of social evaluation studies has coincided with a drastic increase in the prevalence of events in which reputation and status have been lost and stakeholder trust violated. Whether on account of the FIFA scandal that rattled the world of professional football (soccer), athletic doping or "juicing" across sports, bankers misbehaving (e.g., the Libor interest rate-fixing scandal), or venture investors becoming icons of greed (Martin Shkreli and the drug pricing debacle), external stakeholders and society at large appear to have decreasing tolerance for behavioral excesses. Correspondingly, we see an increase in the number of studies that address reputation and status at the individual level of analysis. With the emergence of mobile technologies and the "sharing economy," social evaluation data has become easier to collect from social media, such that studies that use convergent public views on a topic, context, or organization by triangulating multiple sources of rich and prevalent data become possible (George, Haas, & Pentland, 2014; van Knippenberg, Dahlander, Haas, & George, 2015).

Social evaluations of corporations and corporate actions have been a topic with currency across the decades. Whether in consequence of the savings and loans crises in the United States that triggered bank defaults in the 1980s or the Volkswagen emissions scandal in 2015, stakeholders are now more prudent and seek to verify organizational reputation. Though many of these social evaluations are outcomes of good governance (Tihanyi, Graffin, & George, 2014), organizations have become more active in managing their reputations and actively seek to ensure their high social evaluation within an industry or community. Here, again, there is a noticeable increasing trend of studies published in *AMJ* that reflect how

FIGURE 1
Reputation and Status Research in *AMJ*, 1969–2015



organizations actively manage and leverage social evaluations of their stakeholders.

Management scholars have developed rich theoretical plurality to reflect the complex issues of social evaluation in the business environment. In Table 2, we highlight an illustrative set of articles that represent some of the more prevalent theoretical foundations of reputation and status research across multiple levels of analysis. The most frequently used theoretical lens is signaling theory (12 articles), followed by social identity and social network theories (6 articles each); other lenses include impression management, organizational identity, and sociocognitive theories. These theories are used to explain a wide range of outcomes, including emotions, individual social network dynamics, organizational resources, organizational change, and social legitimacy, to name a few.

In terms of how the outcomes of social evaluations are framed, we look at whether studies have tested positive or negative effects of reputation and status, as well as the antecedents to these social evaluations. Figure 2 illustrates that a substantial majority of studies (67%) consider only the positive effects of reputation and status. These studies document how positive social evaluations can enhance individual or organizational outcomes. Only 13% of the studies examine the negative effects of social evaluations, while 15% hypothesize mixed positive and negative effects. A small minority of studies (5%) document the negative effect of a negative situation; that is, when social evaluations are negative or when firms lose their reputation or status. For the most part, it appears that there is a predominant bias of the positive effects of seeking and leveraging of social evaluations, and visibly less work on losing and regaining lost reputation and status.

Past research in *AMJ* on the topic of social evaluations reveals that there is significant and growing interest on the role, effects, and contingencies of reputation and status in management research. Despite the rich theoretical foundations, the dominant model is to see how these social evaluations benefit organizations, and only limited work exists on the negative fallout or the risk associated with seeking, losing, and repairing reputation and status.

APPROACHES TO SOCIAL EVALUATION IN THIS THEMATIC ISSUE

This thematic issue was curated from articles that have gone through routine review processes rather than a specialized call for research. Consequently, the research represented in this issue offers

TABLE 2
Illustrative Theoretical Frameworks of Reputation and Status

Theoretical Lens	Illustrative Study/Studies	Research Question(s)/Topic(s)	Outcome(s) Measured
Signaling theory	Fombrun & Shanley (1990)	Types of information on which reputation is constructed	Reputation
	Polidoro (2013)	Effect of scientific and regulatory certifications on a firm's rivals' entries into a new field	Time before rival entrance
Social identity theory	Turban & Greening (1997)	Effect of corporate social performance on reputation and attractiveness as an employer	Reputation, attractiveness as employer
	Chattopadhyay, Finn, & Ashkanasy (2010)	Effects of status differences between lower- and higher-status team members	Negative emotions, negative behaviors
Social network	Ibarra (1993)	Differences between informal networks of White and minority group managers	Race, homophily, intimacy, multiplexity, network utility
	Guler & Guillén (2010)	How home-country network advantages shape firms' foreign expansion	Entry into foreign market
Impression management	Elsbach & Sutton (1992)	How controversial and possibly unlawful actions of members of organizations can lead to endorsement and support	Impression-management tactics, legitimacy
	Westphal & Graebner (2010)	How negative analyst appraisals affect CEOs' impression-management tactics	Board independence, CEO communication, analyst appraisals
	Doby & Caplan (1995)	Effects of job stressors as threats to an employee's reputation and sources of anxiety	Anxiety at home
	Dutton & Dukerich (1991)	How an organization's image and identity guide and activate individuals' interpretations of an issue and motivations, and how this changes over time	Organizational image change
Organizational identity	Boivie, Lange, MacDonald, & Westphal (2011)	Effects of CEO organizational identification on CEO-related agency costs	CEO cash compensation, CEO use of corporate aircraft
	Belliveau, O'Reilly, & Wade (1996)	Effects of social capital on CEO compensation	CEO compensation
Sociocognitive processes	Petkova, Wadhwa, Yao, & Jain (2014)	Role of reputation on decision making under ambiguity	Likelihood of investing in an emerging sector, risk reduction

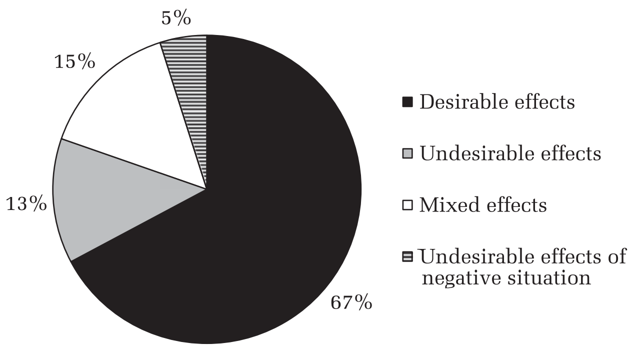
Note: We included theoretical perspectives that were applied in at least three articles published in *AMJ*. The articles listed here are illustrative and not exhaustive. The articles coded for the review often drew on more than one perspective, and, in these cases, we coded the predominant approach taken by the author(s) to develop their hypotheses and explain their results.

a window into the rich theoretical plurality, empirical unit of analysis, and the varied contexts, processes, and outcomes by which social evaluations operate and influence individuals and organizations. We begin by describing findings of the studies included in this *AMJ* thematic issue with the individual as a level of analysis, and then escalate levels of analysis to organizations and their stakeholders.

In a unique qualitative study of how language proficiency plays a role in status gain, Neeley and Dumas (this issue) build theory on how shifts in context could emphasize attributes that suddenly become more valued and confer social status on those few who possess a particular skill or attribute. On examining 90 U.S.-based employees of a Japanese organization, the authors found that a change in company mandate favoring the English language suddenly elevated the worth of native English speakers in the organization. The authors further delve into the issues of status stability and attribution to chance, and its implications for a broader theory of unearned status gain.

In the context of workforce diversity, Dwertmann and Boehm (this issue) use status as a cue that drives relationship quality between supervisor and subordinate when one of them has a disability. The authors examine the important issue of workplace inclusion in a federal agency in Germany, which has a law mandating that organizations with more than 20 employees have at least 5% quota reserved for employees with disabilities. These authors found that leader–member-exchange relationship quality

FIGURE 2
Framing of Hypothesized Effects



is worse in dyads in which the supervisor has a disability than those in which the subordinate has a disability. This study opens up the discussion on status based on disability, relational demography, and broader discussions of workplace climate for social inclusion.

In the setting of U.S. symphony orchestras and their programming norms, Durand and Kremp (this issue) delineate two distinct, previously conflated types of conformity: (1) alignment, or adopting similar attributes as peers in order to "blend in," and conventionality, or exhibiting and emphasizing highly salient attributes in order to stand out from peers. They relate these forms of conformity to individual and organizational status. Building on the middle-status conformity hypothesis, they show that alignment is more likely for middle-status organizations, while conventionality is more likely for middle-status (individual) leaders. Their work further makes a novel contribution to the status literature by examining individual- and group-level status dynamics and their interplay.

In a study of the "Best Places to Work" (BPTW) certification, Dineen and Allen (this issue) explore certifications as a form of social evaluation that has organizational implications. Using data from 624 BPTW participants in 16 competitions over a 3-year period, they find that such certifications were associated with lower employee turnover. BPTW certifications also appeared to improve job applicant quality in smaller firms. The strategic use of social evaluations such as certifications for improvements in performance—or, in this case, securing and retaining better quality talent—is a key rationale for the organizational seeking of positive reputation and social status.

Different audiences have different ways of carrying out social evaluations. Building on this argument, Ertug, Yogev, Lee, and Hedström (this issue) study the effects of actors' audience-specific reputations on their levels of success with different audiences in the same field. Extending recent work that emphasized the presence of multiple audiences with different concerns, they demonstrate that considering audience specificity leads to an improved understanding of reputation effects. They explore these issues in the context of contemporary art, where artists face two distinct audiences, in the forms of galleries and museums, that have different levels of accountability (low and high, respectively) and different reputational concerns (profitability and artistic quality, respectively). They find that audience-specific reputations can have systematically different effects on the success of actors with these respective audiences. Their findings show that audiences can differ from one another in terms of which signals—specifically, status and interaction with other audiences—enhance or reduce the value of their audience-specific reputations.

Given the importance of social evaluations, organizations often have an interest in circumventing threats from such appraisals. In a study of unfavorable consumer evaluations of London hotels, Wang, Wezel, and Forgues (this issue) find that that the severity of a consumer devaluation relative to expert raters is positively associated with the likelihood of an organizational response. They suggest that such severe devaluations elicit public responses because they hold the potential to threaten an organization's market identity. They also find that organizations will respond to a large devaluation with a response oriented to justify its actions and behaviors. Their findings provide a better understanding of how organizations interpret the combination of expert ratings and consumer evaluations by showing when and how organizations elect to respond to or ignore consumer devaluations.

Campbell, Sirmon, and Schijven (this issue) adopt a fuzzy set methodology to offer fresh insight into how investor perceptions of acquisitions affect the acquirer's stock market returns. By exploring antecedents to social evaluations, the authors suggest that investors perceive and evaluate the acquisition announcement holistically and consider elements of acquirer's characteristics and strategic and organizational fit. The study finds that "good" deals are not the inverse of "bad" deals, but instead have fundamentally different drivers. The authors develop a typology based on potential factors underlying social evaluation. This study takes the acquisitions announcement context that has previously been examined using an independent marginal effects approach and applies a holistic assessment. This approach shifts the discussion from investor action as predicated on independent judgements of several factors to a social evaluation based on the confluence of factors.

In contrast to previous research that has typically focused on the influence of one type of reputation on a particular outcome, Boivie, Graffin, and Gentry (this issue) investigate how the reputations of analysts, CEOs, and firms, individually and jointly affect the stock market reaction to analysts' upgrades and downgrades. They found that analyst reputation had the largest influence in this context, such that shareholder reactions to upgrades and downgrades were amplified by analyst reputation, while CEO reputation partially offsets the influence of analyst upgrades and downgrades. Further, they found that CEO reputation buffers the stock market reaction to downgrades by regular analysts, but, when it is issued by a star analyst, the CEO's reputation has virtually no effect on the market reaction. Together, these findings suggest that future reputational research may benefit by examining all reputations that may be relevant to a given outcome rather than simply focusing on the reputation of one focal actor.

Online B2B marketplaces expand market reach for both sides of the market, but typically have sparse social structures with limited and difficult-to-observe social cues. Lanzolla and Frankort (this issue) explore how buyers choose sellers in this environment. They integrate an institutional perspective and signaling theory, and argue that offline characteristics that are visible online convey credible signals of seller behavior. Specifically, geographic location and legal status are among the few widely available pieces of information that buyers can use to infer "institutional quality" and exchange risks. Using data from a large, Italian, online B2B marketplace, they find that buyers are more likely to contact a seller based in an area with higher institutional quality, as well as those that are subject to stronger legal obligations and controls based on their legal status. They further examined how such signals vary across buyers, finding that buyers assess sellers' quality signals relative to buyer-specific reference points. Their study contributes to signaling research, competitive heterogeneity, and market segmentation, and the broader literature on exchange risks in interorganizational tie formation.

In the context of acquisitions announcements, Graffin, Haleblian, and Kiley (this issue) examine the use of impression offsetting, a previously unexplored form of anticipatory impression management in which organizational leaders seek to *offset* perceptions of potentially negative expectancy violations—and associated negative market reactions—by contemporaneously releasing positive but unrelated announcements. Within a sample of publicly traded acquisition targets, they found that acquirer characteristics as well as the riskiness of the acquisition predict the frequency of use of this approach. They also find evidence that impression offsetting is effective, as it, on average, reduces the negative market reaction to acquisition announcements by more than 40%. These findings suggest that, when organizational leaders can anticipate how shareholders will react to an organizational occurrence, they will proactively act to influence this reaction.

In a study of how stakeholder identification and organizational reputation influence donations to universities following infractions, Zavyalova, Pfarrer, Reger, and Hubbard (this issue) find that high-reputation universities received fewer donations from low-identification stakeholders (non-alumni in their sample) when the university commits violations. At the same time, however, they find that donations from high-identification stakeholders (university alumni) actually increase in the wake of violations. Thus, the degree to which a stakeholder identifies with an organization helps determine if its reputation will be a benefit or a burden. Finally, in supplemental analyses, these authors also find that alumni donations to high-reputation universities decline as the number of infractions increases, which suggests that the benefit of a high reputation has a limit.

Organizational relationships are often terminated, and Zhelyazkov and Gulati (this issue) explore the disruptive consequences of such terminations on potential future relationships. By examining venture capital syndicates, they argue that public information on withdrawal from these syndicates can undermine the organization's reputation as a reliable and stable partner. In addition, their now-abandoned co-investors could potentially tarnish their reputation with their other network connections. The authors find that there are significant reputational costs and consequences for the termination of relationships, which could shape network dynamics, professional social structure, and information flows within networks.

In light of the power and influence of organizational media coverage, Shani and Westphal (this issue) examine how the social and psychological connections among CEOs influence the propensity for corporate leaders to socially distance themselves from journalists who engage in negative reporting about firm leadership at other companies. They find that, due to the multiple sources of social identification between CEOs, journalists who negatively cover firm leadership tend to experience social distancing from multiple CEOs, and that, in turn, this social distancing influences the valence of journalists' subsequent reporting about firm leadership and strategy across all firms they cover. These findings suggest that the collective behavior of groups of CEOs has the potential to exert a rather broad influence on the reputation of corporate leaders.

A long-standing literature on social categorization has studied the negative effects of spanning social categories (see, e.g., Zuckerman, 1999). Adding to this literature, Paolella and Durand (this issue) challenge the prevailing notion that category spanning is detrimental to an organization, leading to lower evaluations and worse performance than in organizations that specialize. Taking account of audiences with respect to theories of value, the authors posit that audiences have diverse theories of value depending on their requirements: when audience requirements are complex, their theory of value passes from type to goal based, and they will prefer category-spanning organizations, which they perceive to be more capable of handling their current (complex) case in point. Using data on corporate legal services in three markets, they find that category spanners receive better evaluations, especially when their categorical combination is more inclusive. They further argue and find evidence that evaluation mediates the relationship between category spanning and performance. Their findings help to explain why organizations span categories, when audiences will prefer specialized or diversified firms, and what forms of relatedness between activities will be valuable for potential clients.

Finally, in terms of this thematic issue, what are the career outcomes of being connected to individuals with high social evaluations? Kilduff, Crossland, Tsai, and Bowers (this issue) study the effects of being an acolyte—here, an individual with a tie to a high-reputation industry leader—in the external job market. Given uncertainty of underlying quality, ties to high-reputation superiors are likely to accrue benefits for such individuals in terms of signaling fitness for promotion. However, as quality is revealed over time, Kilduff and coworkers argue, signaling mistakes will be noticed and corrected. They explore these issues in the context of NFL coaching, and find that there are initial benefits for acolytes in the external job market, particularly for those with high evaluative uncertainty. The signaling advantage of a high-reputation tie is not driven by either knowledge transfer or intrinsic acolyte quality. Rather, it is found that these ties are somewhat randomly distributed, and that acolytes face *ex post* settling-up consequences, in the form of fewer promotions or lateral moves and more demotions.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The studies reported in this issue and broader trends in *AMJ* over the past decades show the cumulative knowledge developed on this topic. Next, we provide some synthesis to highlight unsolved problems or social evaluation trends that have become prominent and require attention from management scholars.

Multiple Levels, Multiple Domains

The research on status and reputation bears relevance at different levels of analyses: products, individuals, as well as organizations (see, e.g., Bothner, Kang, & Stuart, 2007; Podolny, 2005). Less work, however, links these different levels in the reasoning by linking micro-level mechanisms to macro-level outcomes. Recent work is heading in this direction. For instance, Skvoretz and Fararo (2016) have related how macro-status positions (e.g., belonging to groups such as men/women, highly/lowly educated, young/old) influence micro-status orderings within task groups—for example, how macro-status characteristics of individuals influence their interaction and deference within a task group, and how this shapes the micro-status ordering that emerges among the group members. In a review of the organization and management theory literatures on status, Piazza and Castellucci (2014) identified a third level between the macro (market) and micro (individuals in small groups/teams) levels: the meso level or status in formally structured environments. They used this category as a vehicle for discussing studies that don't fit comfortably in either of the other two categories, "due to social interaction often being more prominent than is observed in studies at the market level while in the presence of a medium to large number of social actors (either organizations or individuals)" (Piazza & Castellucci, 2014: 296).

Most research on status and reputation looks at these issues in one domain of activity. However, actors could in principle appeal to different kinds of domains or audiences. For instance, Ertug et al. (this issue) find that audience-specific reputations can have systematically different effects on the success of actors with galleries and museums. This suggests that it is possible that one actor enjoys high status in one domain but not another. Different measures are used by different researchers, even though they are examining the same empirical domain—this implies that there are, both in theory and in practice, multiple potential status hierarchies applying to a given set of actors. Different hierarchies may be perceived depending on where one is standing; for example, customers and competitors may have different ideas about the status of firms in a market, an audience and actors may have different ideas about the relative status of actors. Papers pursuing this theme are heading in this direction by considering multiple status domains in concert, but more work is needed.

One avenue to link different levels of analyses is to think deeper about individual-level mechanisms. To name two studies, Fast, Halevy, and Galinsky (2012) examined how roles that possess power but lack status foster demeaning behaviors toward others, while Pettit and Sivanathan (2012) explored how an actor's status can influence her perception: high-status actors are found to perceive greater audience approval than low-status actors, for identical and equivalent amounts of audience feedback. These studies are examples of an emergent literature that uses lab experiments as a tool to identify and delineate underlying causal mechanisms that operate within social evaluations. There is also promise in linking different levels of analyses using different approaches. For instance, Bhattacharya and Dugar (2014) looked at how status affects partnership formation: they found that collaboration is easiest when both partners share the same social status, with the probability of collaboration decreasing as the status gap increases. Using a different approach, Dahlander and McFarland (2013) found that ties are more likely to form and persist between academics when they are of similar status. This illustrates that future studies could adopt mixed methodological approaches of lab, field, and archival data to further establish the robustness of such findings and their relevance to management scholarship and practice.

Not in the Public Eye or Flying Under the Radar?

The vast majority of research on social evaluations tends to focus on a small subset of actors who are of high reputation or high status. For instance, within this issue, the percentage of cases within the samples that is considered to be of high reputation is roughly 2% in Boivie et al. (2016), 8% in Zavyalova et al. (2016), and 7% in Graffin et al. (2016), while Ertug et al. (2016) classify less than 1% to roughly 5% of their sample as high status, depending upon the measure. Such a small percentage of actors considered to have achieved a level of social evaluation echoes recent work on high status (e.g., Graffin, Bundy, Porac, Wade, & Quinn, 2013) and also that on reputation (e.g., Pfarrer, Pollock, & Rindova, 2010). This focus on the high-end tail of the distribution is consistent with theoretical arguments in each literature that suggest that high levels of status and/or reputation cause stakeholders to interpret actors' actions differently (e.g., Bednar, Love, & Kraatz, 2015; Merton, 1968) and hold these actors to different standards of accountability (e.g., Graffin et al., 2013; Zavyalova, Pfarrer, Reger, & Shapiro, 2012). Indeed, it has now become commonplace to include social media and sentiment tracking as part of the risk management strategies of firms.

At the same time, however, this focus on the extreme tails of the distributions means that the vast majority of the sample in these studies received little direct attention. Indeed, the only means by which outcomes for the majority of these samples can be inferred are by the benefits and hazards incurred by the outcomes associated with actors of high reputation or status. Thus, little is known about the potential benefits and hazards for the vast majority of firms or individuals who do not have a high reputation or a high level of status. In other words, what are the antecedents and consequences for those firms that fly under the radar and do not have a high level of any social evaluation?

Such research could examine the antecedents of flying under the radar. That is, why do some firms receive no media attention or never attract any third-party endorsements? Further, as suggested by Shani and Westphal (2016) in this issue, CEOs are well aware of how they are portrayed in the media, and they, in turn, take actions to influence the tenor of this coverage. Might it then be the case that there are certain actions organizational leaders can take to avoid these positive social evaluations and the accompanying hazards? Also, what are the potential benefits and hazards associated with flying under the radar? Might CEOs in such firms have greater discretion due to this lower level of scrutiny? Likewise, might organizational leaders be less severely punished for firm outcomes without the glare of attention and expectations that typically accompanies positive social evaluations?

Stability of Social Evaluations–Are Falls from Grace Inevitable?

Much research treats status as somewhat static—high status actors are assumed to maintain the advantageous positions because of the Matthew effect, according to which the rich get richer (Merton, 1968). For instance, Podolny's (2005) seminal work suggested that status ordering in the finance and wine industry remains stable and is important in ensuring market stability. Actors that work in an industry are often falling into the behaviors that are expected from them (Phillips & Zuckerman, 2001). Some of these assumptions have been put into question in recent years, though. Enron was originally hailed as one of the most innovative companies, and many business school cases were written about it. Then, a scandal of grave misconduct broke out, and several of its leading managers were sent to court. In a similar vein, in the aftermath of the financial crisis and with the downfall of Lehman Brothers, it became clear that status ordering is not stable but can be subject to unexpected and sudden change. Because a status loss challenges the self-view of high-status actors, they have a greater challenge to perform after a decline in status (Marr & Thau, 2014). In a related study, Neeley (2012) explored status loss in organizations through a qualitative study of how native and non-native English speakers in a French firm adapted to the institution of English as its lingua franca. Pettit, Yong, and Spataro (2010) conducted experiments looking at how individuals react to potential status losses and gains, and their findings corresponded to economic loss aversion, in which loss of status is more painful than an equivalent gain of status. Together, these results suggest that a negative shift in status affects the focal actor by making it difficult to attract resources and collaborations, but can also have wider ramifications on *all* actors that share attributes with the focal actor in an industry (Jonsson, Greve, & Fujiwara-Greve, 2009).

While high status comes with many potential benefits, such as attracting more resources, capable collaborators, and recognitions, it also has certain costs. A first potential cost is that high status leads audiences to raise performance expectations as well as increasing visibility and the accompanying scrutiny. This is seen in research on scientific retractions where it is often suggested that authors who are more visible in a field are more likely to be subject to scrutiny. For instance, Diedrik Stapel published in many of the top social psychology journals as well as *Science* before his scientific misconduct was brought to surface. Sadly, the examples of famous authors whose findings are later retracted are common (Azoulay, Furman, Krieger, & Murray, 2012). Once observers start to question the high-status actor, the decline can be fast and dramatic. A second prospective cost stems from the possibility that the high-status actor becomes complacent and too distracted from delivering the performance that may be expected (Burt, 2010). Reconciling the positive and negative view of status, Bothner, Kim, and Smith (2012) studied professional golf and NASCAR racing and found that there is a curvilinear effect of status on performance in which status helps initially, but the effect wanes off. This potential downside of status remains less studied, but has promise in explaining status dynamics (by not only considering upward mobility). This begs the question as to what organizations can do to circumvent potential threats to their status? In this issue, Wang et al. (2016) suggest that organizations are more likely to respond to severe devaluations than to weaker ones by justifying their actions and behaviors.

Creation and Consumption of Social Evaluations

Where do social evaluations come from, and how are they created and consumed? A core assumption in the literature is that social status and reputation are earned over time through behavior that is consistent with societal norms or conforms to stakeholder and institutional expectations. However, as Neeley and Dumas (this issue) find with respect to language and unearned status, a shift in organizational expectations confers status on individuals with a specific skill (in this study's case, English proficiency). In contrast, Dineen and Allen (this issue) document the seeking and re-seeking of best place to work certifications to recruit and retain better human capital. Now consider, for example, the announcement of a Nobel Prize winner, which creates a sudden shift in status. Here, social evaluations are not sought but conferred, and results in instantaneous status gain. These phenomena prompt us to query the drivers behind social evaluations, and whether they are earned or unearned, whether there is instrumentality in seeking out these evaluations, and how the actor adapts to these evaluations.

Do the same things that build a reputation help maintain it, or are these different processes? The simplistic assumption is that the selection environment for social evaluations is static, and that once the focal actor has selected into a high status environment, the actor retains it and isn't expected to exert more effort to maintain it. In a study of B2B online marketplaces, Lanzolla and Frankort (this issue) find that credible offline signals spill over into the online marketplace, and that relative standing of institutional quality becomes important. Graffin et al. (this issue) explore how leaders offset potentially negative impressions by making positive, but unrelated, announcements at the same time. In acquisitions, these authors find that impression offsetting is effective, and on average, reduces the negative market reaction to acquisition announcements by 40%. Similarly, Campbell et al. (this issue) find that investors make holistic assessments of acquisition announcements, as complex configurations, rather than a list of independent factors. Shani and Westphal (this issue) highlight the social distancing of journalists who provide negative coverage on a CEO by other CEOs who have friendship ties with the CEO being reported. Together, these studies point to the dynamics of how social evaluations are created or avoided, mitigated or leveraged.

Outcomes of High Status or Reputation

Numerous benefits have been associated with having high status (see Podolny, 2005, for a review), a strong reputation (see Lange, Lee, & Dai, 2011), or both reputation and status (Ertug & Castellucci, 2013). Within this issue, Dineen and Allen (2016) find that having a reputation for being one of the best places to work results in lower turnover and increased applicant quality, while Kilduff et al. (this issue) find that individuals who worked with high-reputation coaches benefit in the labor market. In a study of collaboration preferences in the plastic electronics industry, Schillebeeckx, Chaturvedi, George, and King (2015) found that status differences and relational capabilities influence the choice of collaboration partner. Further, Boivie et al. (this issue) find that the influence of upgrades and downgrades is amplified for high-reputation analysts. Thus, varied positive outcomes for individuals and organizations accompany these social approval assets.

There is also growing evidence that certain hazards or burdens have been associated with having high status (e.g., Graffin et al., 2013) or a strong reputation (Rhee & Haunschild, 2006). Neeley and Dumas (this issue) infer that unearned status leads individuals to experience discomfort and an awareness of how this increased status may have negative implications for others who did not enjoy this status gain, while Dwertmann and Boehm (this issue) find that status inequality in relationships results in lower-quality leader–member-exchange interactions. Boivie et al. (this issue) discover that high-reputation firms experience smaller stock price increases following an upgrade and are more likely to be downgraded by analysts than firms without a strong reputation. Zavyalova et al. (this issue) find that high-reputation organizations suffered the greatest decline in donations from low-identification stakeholders.

Future research might set out to understand when and how status and/or reputation may act as a benefit or burden. Indeed, such dynamics are hinted at in some of the studies in this issue. For instance, Dineen and Allen (2016) find that the influence of a BPTW certification diminishes across multiple certifications, which suggests that there may be a temporal component to the relative benefits and burdens associated with positive social evaluations. Thus, it may be the case that organizations enjoy benefits from initial positive changes in their status and/or reputation and only after a certain level of these social approval assets accumulating do the benefits or hazards begin to materialize through increased expectations and/or increased scrutiny. Such studies may require longer panels to fully observe these effects.

TAKING SOCIAL EVALUATION RESEARCH FORWARD

Our goal in this thematic issue is to take stock of broad trends in social evaluation research, and to encourage novel and insightful research. The 136 articles in *AMJ* (including the present issue) on the phenomenon reflects the growing importance of social evaluations in organizational life. It is heartening to see a rich variety in the contexts studied, and future research may consider different questions and adopt innovative methodologies to collect data to answer a profound question: How does society perceive and evaluate organizations and individuals, and how do these actors respond to shifting perceptions? Our thematic issue and the 15 articles within reveal that there is much work to be done yet.

Gerard George
Singapore Management University

Linus Dahlander
ESMT European School of Management and Technology

Scott D. Graffin
University of Georgia

Samantha Sim
Singapore Management University

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Gerry George is dean and professor of innovation and entrepreneurship at the Lee Kong Chian School of Business at Singapore Management University. He also serves as the editor of *AMJ*.

Linus Dahlander is an associate professor of strategy and the KPMG Chair in Innovation at ESMT European School of Management and Technology in Berlin, Germany. He is an associate editor of *AMJ*. His research focuses on innovation, communities, and networks.

Scott Graffin is associate professor of management at the University of Georgia. He is also an associate editor of *AMJ*. His research focuses on corporate governance, and also on the impact of reputation, status, and organizational impression-management activities on organization outcomes.

Samantha Sim is a doctoral student at the Lee Kong Chian School of Business at Singapore Management University. Her research interests are in the areas of compassion and mindfulness at work as well as organizational justice.