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# AMD—CLARIFYING WHAT WE ARE ABOUT AND WHERE WE ARE GOING

Five years have passed since the Academy of Management's Board of Governors commissioned Andy Van de Ven to recruit a team of editors and establish a new journal capable of taking management scholarship into the realm of "discovery." Aiming at giving Andy and his team maximum flexibility, the board left it to the founding editorial team to drill down the nature and mission of the new journal. As a member of that founding team, I can attest that this was no easy task. But 2 years later—and right on schedule, the *Academy of Management Discoveries* (*AMD*) published its first issue complete with playful, animated abstracts and engaging, scholarly articles devoid of *a priori* hypotheses.

That founding team has now passed on a healthy and vibrant journal to a new team of senior editors, namely, Marlys Christianson, Paul Ingram, Jennifer Mueller, Sandra Robinson, Junqi Shi, Chris Tucci, Gail Whiteman, and I. Like most new editorial teams, we began our tenure by reflecting on AMD's strengths and weaknesses, setting our own strategic objectives, and laying out a path by which to hit our targets. Accordingly, in this first "From the Editors" column by *AMD*'s second editorial team, I would like to share the results of our deliberations, highlighting our team's vision for the journal, and the steps that we have already begun to take to ensure that we deliver on the charge given to us by the Academy and its members.

## OUR VISION FOR *AMD*

The establishment of *Academy of Management Discoveries* (AMD)—*the journal for empirical exploration in management*—represents one of the most important strategic moves ever made by the Academy of Management. Beyond establishing an additional vehicle for disseminating the knowledge produced by its members, the establishment of *AMD* signaled an effort to transform our science and promote a mode of scientific inquiry that, although dominant in the hard and life sciences, was largely absent, if not taboo, in management; namely, a mode governed by pre-theoretical, *abductive reasoning*.

This is a mode of reasoning that, at least until recently, was unfamiliar to most of us in management (to the point that when Andy first raised the concept, I wondered what *AMD* had to do with *kidnapping*!). And indeed, even among epistemologists, debates continue as to its precise nature (Campos, 2011). Nevertheless, as the only mode of reasoning offering "first suggestions" (Peirce, 1992: 139), it serves as the basis for inquiry in most scientific disciplines, the underlying framework for differential diagnosis in medicine, an important approach to product innovation and the philosophical foundation for "deep learning" (Dunne & Dougherty, 2016; Okhuysen & Behfar, 2017).

Recently, management scholars have increasingly called for the more widespread application of abductive reasoning (Van de Ven, 2016; Van de Ven et al., 2015). For example, Okhuysen and Behfar (2017) argue that abductive reasoning "is an inseparable, indispensable, and valuable approach linking the development of explanation and the testing of resulting hypotheses to advance theory." Similarly, those behind *AMD*'s establishment were convinced that by failing to harness the power of empirical abduction, the field of management would be at risk of theoretical obsolescence (i.e., relying on the same set of established theories and theoretical perspectives on which we have been grounding our models for half a century or more) and phenomenological detachment (i.e., failing to surface and explain, no less anticipate, emergent phenomena, and real-life experience in management and organizations). With this in mind, *AMD*'s founding team promoted the journal as dedicated to publishing "phenomenon-driven empirical research that theories of management and organizations neither adequately predict nor explain." Although *AMD* remains dedicated to publishing such research, what makes *AMD* truly distinct is not its focus on phenomena (after all, nearly all the AOM journals focus on phenomena to some degree) but rather the *data-driven approach* taken to surfacing phenomena and/or providing robust and parsimonious "first suggestions" for them—plausible insights into the nature, antecedents, and consequences of such phenomena, as well as the new or transformed theoretical frameworks required to make sense of them.

Our team is dedicated to strengthening *AMD*'s position as the premier journal for robust, data-driven inquiries aimed at surfacing new or poorly understood phenomena in management and organizations and offering, where appropriate, such "first suggestions" for their explanation. But before detailing this vision and what it means for the types of manuscripts we seek to publish, let us begin with

**TABLE 1**
**Differences between Deduction, Induction, and Abduction**

| | Deductive Reasoning | Inductive Reasoning | Abductive Reasoning |
|---|---|---|---|
| Objective | - To demonstrate that if premises are true, it is impossible for the conclusion to be false<br>- To demonstrate the situational validity of a generalizable rule or claim | - To generate a knowledge claim where "it is improbable that the conclusion is false if the premises are true" (Hurley, 2000)<br>- To demonstrate the probable generalizability of a situational reality | - To generate plausible, conjecturable explanations<br>- Discovery |
| Strength of knowledge claim | Strongest (certain) | Strong (probable) | Weak (plausible) |
| Role of theory | Provides *a priori* explanations (hypotheses) to be challenged empirically | Provides a guiding framework and systematic approach to generate a generalizable explanation from the data | Provides assumptions to be challenged and frames anomalies to be explored and suggests the variables on which to sample |
| How data are used | - To disconfirm the null<br>- To disconfirm alternatives | To confirm a generalizable outcome when premises are met | - To describe phenomena<br>- To elicit tentative claims<br>- To narrow range of possible explanations |
| Type of reasoning and how used | Necessary reasoning<br>Used to test falsifiability of presumed means-ends linkages | Probabilistic reasoning<br>Used to demonstrate generalizable means-ends linkages or processes | Contrastive reasoning<br>Used to identify patterns indicative of alternative dynamics, processes, mechanisms, or means-ends linkages |

Primary sources: Campos (2011), Folger and Stein (2017), Okhuysen and Behfar (2017).

a quick primer on the epistemological basis for that vision, namely, abductive reasoning.

## Abductive Reasoning in Management Scholarship

Abduction was first proposed as a mode of reasoning and inference by Charles Peirce in his 1867 paper entitled "On the Natural Classification of Arguments" (Campos, 2011). In this paper, Peirce conceptualized arguments as falling into one of three different classes, with deductive reasoning serving as the basis of analytic arguments and inductive and abductive (or retroductive) reasoning serving as two forms of "synthetic arguments." Since then, numerous authors have offered definitions of abductive reasoning, with Thagard and Shelley (quoted in Thagard & Shelley, 1997; Weick, 2005: 433) defining it as "reasoning that forms and evaluates hypotheses in order to make sense of puzzling facts," and one of the most popular definitions offered by Harman (1965: 88–89) who referred to it as "inference to the best explanation." However, I find it easiest to understand abduction by contrasting it with the two more conventional bases of inquiry familiar to all of us in management scholarship, namely, deduction and induction.

According to Campos (2011), "*deductive reasoning* consists in drawing an inference about a specific character of the objects or events in a sample on the basis of our knowledge of the character of the objects in the population from which we know the sample to be drawn at random." As suggested in Table 1, deductive reasoning is grounded on the logic of confirmation, with prior knowledge about the phenomena and the population in which it is embedded, along with a robust method of sampling, allowing the researcher to conclude with certainty something about the character of the sample. Inquiries grounded on deduction use theory as the embodiment of this prior knowledge and the basis for generating falsifiable statements about broadly generalizable, mean-ends relations (hypotheses) which are then tested for confirmation.

*Induction* works in the opposite direction, with the aim of learning something about the probability with which some general rule or law may apply in a population on the basis of what we observe in a sample. As summarized by Campos (2011), "when we reason inductively, we infer the probable prevalence of general laws on the basis of our sample of experience." Nevertheless, theory provides us with the general rules or laws that we seek to better understand on the basis of sampled observation. Accordingly, as shown in Table 1, in inductive analyses, theory is used as a guiding framework for addressing a research question, with the researcher using systematically collected data to generate a generalizable solution or explanation. However, as

Peirce (1992: 139) emphasizes, although inductive reasoning can lead to knowledge of the probability that attaches to general rules and the conditions potentially governing those probabilities, it "can never make a first suggestion." That is, as the analytic structures inherent to induction are defined by the theoretical framework guiding the inquiry, true induction pays little attention to those patterns or regularities—as dominant or interesting as they may be—that are not within the universe specified by the guiding theoretical framework.

As suggested by the rightmost column of Table 1, *abductive reasoning* is the weakest form of reasoning of the three, allowing the researcher to emerge with only a plausible conjecture and some insights into what this conjecture might mean for the development of new or alternative conceptual frameworks (Shapira, 2011) and down-the-road theorizing. Although abduction offers a logic for considering conjectures about complex phenomena, it does not produce simple or clear answers. Locke, Golden-Biddle, and Feldman (2008: 907) note that "deduction proves that something must be, induction shows that something actually is operative; abduction merely suggests that something may be." Thus, as Weick (1989: 525) argues, "plausibility is a substitute for validity" in considering conjectures. At the time of its conception, it is often not possible to determine the validity or truth of a conjecture.

Folger and Stein (2017: 307) similarly define abduction on the basis of this relatively weak outcome, framing it as "the act of proposing speculative—but plausible—conjectures about the nature of a phenomenon, and hence what kinds of evidence might increase the prospects of further insights into it." In contrast to the other two, more conventional modes of reasoning, in abduction, *a priori* theory is relevant only to the extent that, relative to observed patterns, it may serve as the basis for questioning theoretical assumptions or surfacing anomalies demanding resolution and explanation. But for the most part, abductive reasoning is applied in the context of pretheoretical inquiry, when—whether by chance or intention—we confront new, puzzling facts which cannot be easily typed into some existing category nor parsimoniously explained on the basis of extant theory. As noted by Dunne and Dougherty (2016: 135), "scientists cannot confirm hypotheses deductively when knowledge is limited and fragmented, because experiments will likely fail and the results provide no indication of where else to explore." It is in such situations that we enter the realm of empirical exploration, digging deep into patterns embedded in our data to generate the tentative and fallible conjectures that may eventually lay the groundwork for innovative theorizing and subsequent hypothesis testing.

Abductive reasoning in management research, although perhaps rare, is by no means absent. Indeed, much of the research aimed at generating grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), although typically framed as inductive, is in fact often driven by abductive reasoning. This is because those engaging in grounded research often work as scholarly detectives, unbounded by the constraints of extant theory (Czarniawska, 1999). Starting with a question for which extant theory offers an inadequate explanation, they "follow the trail of evidence," narrowing the range of alternative explanations until they can offer a plausible, data-grounded conjecture (Weick, 2005).

Moreover, as noted by Folger and Stein (2017), abductive reasoning has a long history in the social sciences, underlying the development of several of the most important theories in management and the social sciences including Brehm's (1966) theory of reactance, Festinger's (1957) cognitive dissonance theory, and Bandura's (2005) social cognitive theory. Similarly, much of what we now know as the human relations school of management theory emerged as a result of abduction. Roethlisberger, Dickson, and Wright (1956), seeking to confirm *a priori* hypotheses regarding the relationship between lighting and productivity, generated paradigm-shifting conjectures by shifting their attention to the glaring anomalies in their data and executing a series of experiments (varying data sources to ensure replicability) aimed at narrowing the range of plausible explanations for the unexpected patterns they observed. These examples are interesting not only in that they show the significance of abductive reasoning to the development of key theories in the social and management sciences but also because they suggest that there is more than one trigger for abduction and that abduction can take multiple forms incorporating a wide range of study designs and research methodologies.

## When and How Should Abduction be Applied?

Abduction may be applied in a wide range of circumstances in which we encounter a phenomenon or patterns of relations that challenge extant knowledge. When this occurs, we can engage in one of two alternative types of abductive reasoning.

The first type, which I refer to as *exploitative abduction*, involves the systematic collection of "facts," followed by an attempt to identify a framework which explains the pattern of facts identified. In the same way that physicians apply differential diagnosis to identify an underlying disease, researchers applying

exploitative abduction engage in a process of elimination, eliminating concepts and theories that fail to connect the (observed) dots. Accordingly, when engaging in exploitative abduction, we first collect as much information as we can about the phenomenon of interest. We then contrast what we observe with what we would expect to observe was some general framework or theory to apply, ruling out explanations that fail to account for the configuration of evidence we observe. Finally, by demonstrating that some general rule or theory which could not be dismissed explains a lot or most of what we observe, we conclude that this general rule may be what Lipton (1991: 61) calls the best available or "loveliest" explanation. This type of abduction can be deemed exploitative in that although our goal is to generate a conjecture on the basis of what we observe in the data, the resulting conjecture is itself grounded on some extant theory. Whiteman and Cooper's (2016) paper on "decoupling rape" is a good example of such exploitative abduction in that, after clearly describing the phenomenon of interest (i.e., corporate social irresponsibility), the authors consider and then dismiss a number of conventional but poorly fitting explanations, settling on decoupling theory as the best possible explanation for the patterns observed.

The second type of abduction, which I call *exploratory abduction*, occurs when the researcher is confronted with puzzling facts, but unable to cleanly apply a theory or theoretical perspective to readily explain them, uses the pattern of results to conceive a plausible explanation, or at least identify the criteria that an explanation would have to meet to be plausible. Engaging in exploratory abduction, the researcher must herself conceive the general rule and use the pattern of findings to argue for its plausibility. As with exploitative abduction, here too the steps taken to move toward a plausible conjecture involve contrastive reasoning, comparing what we observe in fact to what we would expect to find were some extant theory to apply (for a more complete discussion of modes of contrasting, see Fisher & Aguinis, 2017). Such contrasts allow the researcher to narrow the range of plausible explanations, providing a grounded basis for the development of conceptual frameworks (Shapira, 2011) and down-the-road theorizing. In qualitative research, these contrasts are usually generated on the basis of theoretical sampling (often in the form of sampling on the dependent variable). In quantitative abduction, these contrasts are executed on the basis of sensitivity or robustness analyses where the investigator *openly* plays with the sample or model specification (i.e., including or excluding controls and/or particular sets of observations) in an effort to "rule out the usual suspects," or on the basis of experimental manipulations designed to do the same. For example, after first demonstrating that the organization adversely impacts the norm of reciprocity, Belmi and Pfeffer (2015) used a series of experiments to rule out a variety of explanations, ultimately conjecturing that the adverse effect stems from the tendency of organizations to elicit more instrumental/calculative frames when individuals consider how to respond to others' prosocial behavior.

These two types of abductive inquiries cannot always be cleanly differentiated. One may initially search for an extant concept or theoretical perspective that reasonably captures or plausibly explains the observed characteristics or pattern of relations, only to conclude that to "fit" such a concept or perspective to the data would require extensive theoretical contortionism. In such situations, the obvious next step would be to move from a more exploitative frame to a more exploratory one. Applying a more exploratory frame, the focus is less on fitting extant theory to the patterns in the data and more on (a) confirming that the patterns are what they appear to be (including replicating the findings in independent samples and where they would be least likely to replicate) and (b) inferring from those patterns how extant theory may need to be modified or advanced to account for those observations [similar to what Fisher and Aguinis (2017) refer to as "theory elaboration"].

Finally, both types of abductive inquiries may be initiated on the basis of a common set of triggers. Based on my experience in handling manuscripts for AMD over the past 3 years, I can identify two main types of triggers for abductive reasoning. The first is deliberate, whereas the other is more opportunistic. Deliberate abduction is driven by an interest in understanding a phenomenon that although commonly observed, cannot be readily explained by extant theory. For example, Rockman and Pratt (2015) were intrigued by how organizational identity might emerge in distributed work situations as the usual factors driving such identification are missing. Accordingly, they designed their qualitative study to try to uncover those factors that might explain the emergence of identity where, according to extant identity theory, it should not really exist.

By contrast, opportunistic abduction is evidenced in those situations in which, in the process of conducting an inquiry into some intended research question (e.g., how light affects productivity), we stumble across findings that are surprising, counterintuitive, and/or anomalous to extend understandings (e.g., productivity increases as we approach complete darkness). As Barley describes in the "In the Author's Voice" feature accompanying his 2015

*AMD* paper on internet car sales, such findings can be even more interesting than the initial subject of inquiry. Of course, because such anomalous results, although interesting, may be context-specific or a statistical artifact, opportunistic deduction demands replication, or, at the very least, extensive robustness tests to ensure that, as hard as we may try, we cannot make the surfaced relationship "disappear."

The discussion aforementioned suggests that abductive reasoning might be viewed as the "approach of last resort"; an appropriate means by which to advance knowledge only when (a) a constellation of facts is observed that fits no extant conceptual framework, (b) an observed, robust pattern of relations is not easily explained by an extant theory or theoretical perspective, or (c) conventional theory fails to offer a compelling explanation for equivocal or widely divergent findings. Accordingly, the discussion aforementioned also suggests that other modes of reasoning (i.e., deduction and induction) should be considered the options of choice when existing constructs, typologies, and conceptual frameworks are sufficiently robust to take account of the observed facts or when extant theory offers a compelling basis for offering *a priori* conjectures regarding the nature of relations between constructs, the mechanisms underlying that relationship, and/or the conditions governing such relations.

## Why is Abductive Reasoning Important to Management Scholars?

As noted earlier, *AMD* was established to address a wide range of concerns over the nature of our science and the way in which we create new knowledge about management and organizations. Underlying these concerns was what many viewed to be an overreliance on the hypothetico-deductive model, or what Hambrick (2007: 1346) described as our discipline's "blanket insistence on (*a priori*) theory." By using empirical exploration to surface and describe phenomena and offer empirically grounded "first suggestions" as to the possible mechanisms underlying their relationships with other constructs, abductive reasoning responds to such concerns, offering an important alternative to conventional modes of reasoning in management, and complementing and even guiding research undertaken on the basis of the hypothetico-deductive model. In this context, inquiries grounded on abductive reasoning are important to our discipline for four main reasons.

First, such inquiries offer a critical means by which to surface anomalous relations, stylized facts (Helfat, 2007), and empirical regularities (such as a link between smoking and cancer). This is important according to Hambrick (2007: 1348) because by doing so, "subsequent researchers can then direct their efforts at understanding why and how those facts came to be." In other words, abduction precedes research in the hypothetico-deductive tradition by identifying and describing the phenomena worthy of study and laying out the parameters of plausible explanation that can then be integrated into some theoretical framework subject to testing and confirmation. Indeed, the emergence of the human relations school of research in the mid-20th century serves as a great example of how findings generated on the basis of abductive reasoning can spawn an entire generation of research in the hypothetico-deductive tradition.

Second, as in medicine, abductive inquiries in management are likely to uncover important phenomena and relationships that have meaningful importance to those our research is meant to serve. This is not to say that research in the hypothetico-deductive tradition does not have such potential importance, but as Hambrick (p. 1349) suggested in his 2007 paper, when we "subjugate" important and interesting findings by retrofitting them in the context of an often "ill-fitting theoretical framework," we not only do little to advance theory we also limit the potential for significant scientific and practical impact. For studies that were truly exploratory in nature, abductive reasoning allows us to present our findings for what they are, without the need to for retro-fitted theoretical packaging, but of course with a *post hoc* effort to ascertain their robustness and offer a *balanced* conjecture about their theoretical drivers and implications. After all, as Albert Einstein posited "intuitive conclusions based on immediate observation are not always to be trusted for they sometimes lead to the wrong clues" (in Agafonow, 2017: 7).

Third, with its emphasis on drawing first suggestions from empirical observation, abductive reasoning demands the researcher to explore beyond extant models and frameworks when these generalized rules fail to fit the empirical reality. In this sense, rather than motivating the retrofitting of a rather closed set of extant theories and perspectives (Cortina, 2016), the abductive approach pushes scholars to identify how the theories at the core of our existing repertoire (e.g., self-regulation theory, the resource-based view, institutional theory, and human capital theory) may need to be tweaked, overhauled, or even replaced, with a focus on refining rather than supplementing linkages (Cortina, 2016). This is critical to our field in that work and organizations continue to evolve and transform in often surprising ways at an ever-quickening pace (Bolman

& Deal, 2017). It is also important in that, as Lipton (1993: 69) points out, the hypothetico-deductive approach is grounded on confirming an *a priori* theorized model, rather than isolating a model offering the *most* understanding (i.e., the "loveliest explanation," p. 186). Accordingly, abduction offers a reality-grounded means by which to revitalize and refresh our theoretical repertoire, reducing the risk of theoretical obsolescence.

Finally, inquiries grounded on abductive reasoning are important in that they are grounded on pragmatism (rather than positivism) and are open and transparent, therefore, offering an important response to questionable research practices. In abduction, there can be no HARKing because there are no *a priori* hypotheses. Indeed, although one can argue that abduction is all about HARKing (i.e., the data drive the inferences), it is critical to remember that the objective is to infer plausible yet fallible conjectures from empirical realities, not to confirm them. Similarly, one can argue that, particularly with regard to exploratory abduction, the researcher is simply engaging in raw empiricism or "fishing." But such "fishing" may only serve as a starting point in abductive reasoning, as the contrastive logic underlying such reasoning demands that the researcher take steps to demonstrate the robustness and replicability of opportunistic findings as a basis for establishing plausibility. Accordingly, abduction is important to management scholarship in that it offers an open and transparent means by which the "interested scholar" (Hudson & Okhuysen, 2014) may unabashedly engage in the natural and playful modes of inquiry underlying nearly every other scientific domain and driving some of the most important discoveries ever made.

## Implications for *AMD* and What We Publish

What does all of this mean in terms of the kind of research that AMD will be publishing in the years ahead and the vision of the new team in securing the best in-kind research for AMD? First, it means that AMD will focus on publishing rigorous empirical research that aims to do at least one of the following:

- *Surface significant new/emerging or poorly understood phenomena (i.e., facts, experiences, or patterns of occurrences)* using any number of empirical approaches including rich description (Meyer, Lu, Peng, & Tsui, 2017), quantitative construct specification (Adair, Buchan, Chen, & Liu, 2015; Lee, Koopman, Hollenbeck, Wang, & Lanaj, 2015), and/or empirical taxonomic analyses (Golan & Bamberger, 2015). Those adopting a quantitative approach to surfacing a new/emerging or poorly understood phenomena should make sure that (a) their study goes beyond simply enhancing our ability to measure established constructs and (b) the analytics applied meet the standards proposed by such scholars as Edwards (2003), Fisher and Aguinis (2017), Hinkin (2005), and Schwab (1980).
- *Identify and explore surprising relationships* using rigorous qualitative (Fraher, Branicki, & Grint, 2017; Zuzul & Edmondson, 2017) and/or quantitative methods (Song, Liu, Shi, & Wang, 2017; Wooley, 2017) to develop plausible explanations for those relationships and provide a grounded basis for innovative theorizing. Such studies need not necessarily aim to establish the basis for new theories (after all, we already have a vast inventory of largely untested theories and conceptual models; Kacmar & Whitfield, 2000). However, they should, at the very least, offer a strong basis for theoretical elaboration (Fisher & Aguinis, 2017).
- *Offer empirically driven insights into and/or a plausible resolution of critical anomalies and discrepant findings* [what Locke et al. (2008) refer to as a "conundrum"]. Okhuysen and Behfar (2017) argue that abductive inquiries may be helpful in such cases "because the situation presents a need to explore and discover a new and plausible explanation, an explanation that restores theoretical coherence in light of empirical reality." Indeed, abductive (or inductive) inquiries of this sort are often perfectly positioned toward advancing the kind of midrange theories necessary for capturing the nuance and complexity inherent to many of the phenomena we study in management (Birkinshaw, Healey, Suddaby, & Weber, 2014).

To date, most of the studies that *AMD* has published have been grounded on original or secondary data (Doyle, Lount, Wilk & Petit, 2016; Shaw, 2015; Ten Brummelhuis, Rothbard, & Uhrich, 2017). Nevertheless, with regard to all three of the types of inquiries noted previously, we encourage authors to consider alternative forms of data including "big" data (Nielson & Sarasvathy, 2016).

Furthermore, in pursuing these three forms of inquiry, *AMD* is open to meta-analyses and replication studies, as well as experimental studies. Those interested in submitting meta-analytic or replication studies to *AMD* are advised to read the "from the editors" piece by Miller and Bamberger (2016). Those interested in submitting experimental research to AMD should look at some of the exemplary experimental studies already published (Belmi &

Pfeffer, 2015; Salmon, Gelfand, Ting, Kraus, Gal, & Fulmer, 2016). Notably, nearly all of the experimental studies published by *AMD* to date apply implicit hypothesis testing to narrow the range of plausible explanations; a mode of reasoning that might be referred to as "deduction in the service of abduction." By contrast to studies designed to test *a priori* hypotheses grounded on extant theory (which are unlikely to be sent out for review), *AMD* looks quite favorably at manuscripts using a series of experiments to test hunches and tentative hypotheses, particularly those made salient by virtue of patterns observed in the data. Indeed, Denrell, Fang, and Leventhal (2004) suggest that such a process is not at all uncommon as scientists move toward discovery. By making predictions from tentative or intermediary models, researchers are able to tweak and enhance their conjectures, thus accommodating deviations "as they navigate in the labyrinth" (Dunne & Dougherty, 2015: 136).

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND STEPS ALREADY TAKEN

To pursue this vision and position abductive reasoning as a legitimate and widely applied tool in our knowledge creation toolkit, *AMD*'s new editorial team determined that it would work toward three primary objectives by the end of its 3-year term. First, given that most management scholars have had limited exposure to abductive reasoning and are unfamiliar with how such studies are executed and presented, we set as a primary objective the enhancement of our discipline's understanding of this important approach to knowledge creation. Following the efforts of the founding team in this regard (Van de Ven, 2016; Ven et al., 2015), this FTE and several of those following it are one element in our educational campaign. A second element involves "taking abduction on the road"; that is, conducting hands-on paper development workshops offering personalized, developmental feedback to those interested in doing such research. Finally, recognizing that our editorial review board and ad hoc reviewers are our "front line" educators, we are making a concerted effort to develop our pool of referees and ensure that all those who review manuscripts for AMD have a common understanding of just what it is that the journal is trying to achieve. With this in mind, we ran an *AMD* reviewer development workshop at the 2017 AOM meeting and we plan to run similar workshops at future annual meetings. Furthermore, as action editors, we are making a concerted effort to provide more developmental feedback to our reviewers, highlighting those aspects of the review that are developmental and particularly consistent with the mission of our journal.

Recognizing that some of the most important discoveries may come from places we least expect to find them, we are also determined to expand the geographic footprint of our discipline and, in particular, promote "indigenous discoveries." Lipton (1993) writes that one of the major advantages to abductive over deductive reasoning is that whereas the latter often neglects context, the former leverages it using contrastive logic as a means by which to glean meaning and insight from otherwise hidden patterns in the data. Accordingly, abduction offers scholars with access to unconventional contexts (Bamberger & Pratt, 2010), the opportunity to explore a myriad of indigenous phenomena, and draws insights from them that have the potential to dramatically shift the way we think about management and organizations. For example, we know little about the organization of indigenous tribes in South America or Africa, or how tribal elders manage competition and conflict within and between their tribes. Similarly, what might be discovered about organizational learning by studying learning processes in Buddhist monasteries or the Muslim madrasa? Our aim is to help our colleagues in developing regions and countries leverage their proximity to the "unconventional" and offer empirically driven insights with potentially profound implications for down-the-road theorizing. To execute on this aspect of our strategy, we are committing resources to bringing our paper development workshops to regions that have rarely been targeted for development activities by our mainstream journals, such as Africa and India. In addition, with most of our senior editorial team based outside of the United States, we are leveraging our global presence to try to attract and develop scholarship from "off the beaten track." Finally, we have commissioned a special research forum on the role of organizations and management in achieving sustainable development (https://aom.org/uploadedFiles/Publications/AMD/Sustainable_Development.pdf), dedicated to issues of primary concern to developing countries. Our hope is that this special issue not only includes papers of particular interest and relevance to scholars in developing countries but also brings manuscripts authored by them.

Our third objective is to extend the type of papers published in *AMD*. The FTEs cited previously should make it clear that *AMD* is committed to publishing numerous forms of empirical research including experimental studies, construct specification research, meta-analyses, and replication studies. Beyond this, the incoming team has also committed itself to the publication of "smaller" discoveries in the form of "Discoveries-in-Brief". These

short papers may be based on any empirically grounded methodology but should (a) provide incremental insights into the nature and structure of emergent or poorly understood phenomena, (b) expose stylized facts and provide evidence of their consistent and non-spurious nature, (c) offer plausible data-driven explanations as to how it may be possible to resolve discrepant results, or (d) suggest through replication or meta-analyses the potential limitations (or expanded generalizability) of extant theory. Authors of such papers should ensure that their manuscript (a) offers scientifically rigorous evidence of the relationship's consistent (e.g., evidence of the robustness of the relationships across methods and/or samples) and non-spurious nature (e.g., reasonable assessments of robustness and sensitivity), (b) provides preliminary evidence about or at least speculates on the mechanisms underlying the phenomenon or relationship, (c) explains the significance of these findings to management and organizational research, and (d) lays out a strategy for further exploration and/or downstream theorizing. Our interest in these studies stems from the recognition that new insights and understandings need not always be "revelatory" or paradigm shifting in nature to be impactful (Corley & Gioia, 2011; Cortina, 2016) nor need they always be accompanied by a full-fledged investigation of underlying mechanisms and boundary conditions to offer a meaningful contribution. Such findings often deserve publication in that even the most incremental finding may be the missing link allowing others to piece together important theoretical breakthroughs.

### Building on the First Team's Successes

Although the new team is dedicated to taking the new steps noted previously as a means by which to push *AMD* forward and ensure that it emerges as a journal no less prestigious than its more established sister journals, we are also cognizant of the unique attributes that the founding team built in to the *AMD* brand. These attributes include (a) a commitment to try to make a firm decision to (conditionally) accept or reject a manuscript after the first revision, (b) keeping the authors voice and avoiding a review process in which referees end up coauthoring the final manuscript, (c) state-of-the-art media and interactive graphics making the knowledge presented more accessible and meaningful to the reader, and (d) strengthening our collective interest in knowledge creation as a community of scholars by encouraging readers to comment on the articles we publish. These features are part of what makes the author and reader experience unique at *AMD*, and it is our intention to work hard to reinforce and extend each and every one of them.

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