

Call for Papers

Academy of Management Review Special Topic Forum

NEW THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON MARKET-BASED ECONOMIC SYSTEMS

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Market-based economic systems have enabled unprecedented prosperity and material well-being (Norberg, 2016; Radelet, 2015). Preceding and catalyzing both the Industrial and Information Revolutions, the market system's wide diffusion and adoption are testimony to its effectiveness and allure. Today, despite government regulation, the control and direction of resources in most sectors lie mostly with entrepreneurs, enterprises, and executives. Market allocation of material, labor, capital, knowledge, and other factors of production has become conventional around the world. Invention and innovation proceed apace in nearly every sector of human activity (Dutta, Lanvin, & Wunsch-Vincent, 2018), and an impressive architecture of international exchange has emerged and become elaborated.

Not surprisingly, research on market and market processes has also flourished. Theories of production and consumption, of firms, markets, contracts, competition, value, exchange, prices, power, information, incentives, institutions, risk, time preferences, innovation, technology, knowledge, operations, networks, leadership, decisions, organization, culture, and governance, not only describe and explain the workings of the market system but also identify optimal conduct by its actors.

Now, however, the market-based economic system faces scrutiny and skepticism. While it has clearly delivered high levels of performance, some wonder if it continues to deliver a similar level of progress (Rangan, 2015). To be sure, some part of this discontent must be attributed to rising expectations. The bar is higher today on issues like social mobility, wealth concentration, gender parity, corruption, and animal welfare. In other cases, such as climate, employment, and health, market

failures are significant and hard to ignore (Ostrom, 1990). In many societies, while GDP is up, well-being is down; while the power of elites is up, fairness is down; and while profitable business models are up, business morals are down (Sen, 1999).

In this setting, trust is in decline, not just in capitalists but also in "capitalism" itself (Foroohar, 2016). Regulation is rising—carrying rent-seeking lobbyists in tow (del Rio & Lores, 2016)—and shortcomings in the economic system are provoking political and populist pushback (Moffitt, 2016).

At times like this, what is needed is not the old rhetoric of capitalism versus communism, or even capitalism versus socialism. Rather, this new situation—where capitalism dominates the world yet apparently fails many of its inhabitants—calls for new conceptions and theories about what capitalism is, how it operates, and how it might evolve.

The purpose of this special theory forum (STF) is to provide a context where these new theories can be developed and shared. Papers submitted to this special theory forum could address a variety of questions, including the following:

- What is progress? Is it the same as economic expansion, and, if not, how are expansion and progress different? What are the implications for economic actors, especially business organizations?
- Can ideas like progress, well-being, and sustainability be addressed through an enterprise-centric market economy, or are these objectives fundamentally non-market in nature? To what extent can economic actors integrate performance and progress?
- What is the legitimacy of private firms acting in the public/collective interest? Will they crowd out collective action (and

inadvertently make societies less resilient)? Do they undermine democracy?

- Given the evident governance problems that we witness at firms in the modern economy, what alternative forms of organization might be more satisfactory?
- Can ideas like fairness be satisfactorily addressed through a market economy? That is, can value creation and distribution both be addressed at a micro level, or, despite shortcomings, does the latter have to be addressed at a macro level (say, via taxes and transfers)? Will incentive effects crowd out or crowd in effort and creativity at firms?
- How can the market and economic actors integrate in their decision-making criteria beyond merit, such as needs and rights? To what extent will economic actors have to relax their adherence to the notion of Pareto optimality?
- Beyond the social sciences, what disciplines and areas of scholarship seem well suited to help understand and address this category of questions?
- Can aspirations such as progress and well-being be realized without destroying our planet? How can trade-offs between these aspirations and the limits of the planet be better addressed?
- Can markets help eradicate the abject poverty that still touches a large segment of humanity, or does this require other mechanisms, such as changed politics and policies?
- What are the proper objectives of the business firm? Who has and who should have the decision rights to address this question?
- Should net worth be measured in monetary terms? What alternatives to rankings of accomplishment and status might one consider, and how would we operationalize those alternative approaches?
- What is the role and what are the limits of regulation in modern capitalism? Does the risk of regulatory capture condemn regulation as a viable remedy?
- What is the complex role of firms in modern capitalism—wealth generators, employment generators, investors in collective goods, or simply providers of goods and services to consumers? What implications do these different roles have for managers in firms? To what extent are these different roles complementary or contradictory?
- How can firms reconcile the legitimate but sometimes contradictory interests of their stakeholders?
- Does “globalism” exacerbate the limitations of capitalism? How should firms respond?
- Has the emergence of the “entrepreneurial” and “gig” economy addressed some of the

limitations of classic capitalism, or have these exacerbated those limitations?

- If firms wish to rewrite and improve “the employment relationship,” what sound avenues might they pursue?
- The increase in independent and diverse board members does not seem to have brought all the improvement in board governance that was expected. Does management theory have any new advice on better boards? Do boards need more “troublemakers”? Or are we condemned to accept second-best solutions here?
- When is corporate social responsibility socially responsible instead of corporate marketing? Is there a conflict between corporate social responsibility and corporate marketing?
- When does social inequality within a firm motivate and when does it demotivate employees?
- What is the value of work in the modern economy? Can it be ennobling and engaging, or is it simply instrumental—a way to make money? What are the implications of the value of work for employees, entrepreneurs, and managers?
- As our expectations of the economy evolve, does the concept of leadership have to evolve as well? If yes, in what ways? If no, why not?
- How will emerging technologies influence the complementarity between people and machines, and, in consequence, how will the power of labor move relative to that of capital?
- As big data make rationality less bounded, will morality become more central in big data’s use and diffusion? How will data straddle the realm between property rights and human rights?
- Why is trust in the capitalist paradigm in decline? Does it matter? To the extent that it does, how might it be reversed?

The preceding questions are inherently multidisciplinary. To this end, we encourage submissions to the STF from not only organization and management scholars but also interested sociologists, economists, psychologists, political scientists, philosophers, and so forth.

TIMELINE AND SUBMISSIONS

The timeline for submissions is between October 1 and October 31, 2019, with publication approximately eighteen months later. In line with *AMR*’s guidelines, the quality of a paper will be judged with respect to its ability to extend current theoretical conversations or

develop new theoretical conversations in organization and management theory.

All submissions must be uploaded to the Manuscript Central/Scholar One website (<https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/amr>). Submissions must follow the guidelines for contributors and the *AMR* Style Guide for Authors. Submissions that do not adhere to the style guidelines will be returned to the author(s). Reviews will follow a double-blind process.

For questions about submissions, contact *AMR*'s managing editor (amr@aom.org). For questions about the content of this STF, contact Jay Barney (jay.barney@eccles.utah.edu).

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