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Harnessing Exogenous Shocks for Leadership and Management Research

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Overview

Exogenous shocks are sudden changes that can dramatically affect individuals, organizations, and societies (Meyer 1982; Ramey 2016). Examples of such shocks include natural disasters (e.g., earthquakes, tsunamis), terrorist attacks (e.g., 9/11, Paris Attacks), pandemics (e.g., Spanish Flu, COVID-19), economic crises (e.g., The Great Depression, 2008-2009 Global Financial Crisis), and sudden policy changes or unexpected changes in laws (e.g., the immediate phase-out of nuclear energy in Germany after Fukushima).

Over the last thirty years, scholars from various disciplines within the social sciences, including economics, management, political science, and sociology, have leveraged exogenous shocks to answer consequential questions. This trend is in part because of two key factors. First, exogenous shocks can have “revelatory power” in that they can allow researchers to inquire into new phenomena and empirical relations or re-examine extant theories and phenomena in a new context (e.g., the impact of CEO duality on firm performance in competitive environments, see Yang and Zhao 2014). Second, exogenous shocks can be harnessed to uncover causal relationships because they can constitute natural experiments in which subjects are—as-if—randomly assigned to a treatment or receive different levels of a treatment (Dunning 2012).

Leadership — and management scholars in general — also are increasingly using exogenous shocks to examine the influence, effects, and behaviors of leaders (Sieweke and Santoni 2020). For instance, Jones and Olken (2005) leverage accidental deaths of national leaders to estimate the causal effect of leaders on the economic growths of countries; Stoker, Garretsen, and Soudis (2019) explore the impact of the 2008-2009 Global Financial Crisis on leadership behavior; Besley, Folke, Persson, and Rickne (2017) show that a zipper quota implemented by the Swedish Social Democratic Party as a response to outside pressure raised female representation and the competence of male politicians; and Giani and Méon (2019) examine how the outcome of the most recent US presidential election.

This special issue of *The Leadership Quarterly* seeks to provide a platform for researchers to leverage exogenous shocks to advance leadership and management research (we include “management” here to also cover basic and strategic management functions and governance systems, which can also overlap closely with leadership-related antecedents, and outcomes). We invite scholars to study the leadership-related effects of exogenous shocks, to analyze leader responses to shocks, and to exploit natural experiments created by shocks to causally test leadership theories. We are interested both in leadership topics that have not yet been studied and in topics that have already been studied but where we lack rigorous causal tests. Important to note is that studies must consider the causal claims made and bearing in mind important counterfactual conditions and controls. That is, authors must ensure to theorize and robustly test causal claims (refer to the section titled “How to make a more useful contribution to the research record,” Antonakis (2017)). Authors should carefully consult the recent editorial statement by the journal editors to see what kinds of manuscripts the journal actively solicits (Antonakis et al. 2019).

Topics that will be considered — for either empirical, methodological or theoretical contributions — include, but are not limited to:

1. Strategic or political-level leadership (e.g., how do top executives and public/political leaders respond to shocks? How do responses change across individuals, collectives, and cultures and with what consequences?)
2. Dispositional (trait) theories of leadership (e.g., how do extreme/turbulent environments affect the predictive power of traits/skills with respect to leadership outcomes?)
3. Leadership and information processing (e.g., how are followers' cognitive representations of leaders and followers affected by shocks?)
4. Neo-charismatic theories of leadership (e.g., how is the way in which charisma is enacted affected by shocks?)
5. Behavioral theories of leadership (e.g., how do participative, shared leadership behaviors affect task, individual, and inter-personal outcomes as contingencies rapidly and unexpectedly change?)
6. Leadership emergence and leadership role occupancy (e.g., do shocks systematically change leader selection procedures? Do exogenous shocks create opportunities for new leaders to emerge? How robust are incumbent leadership positions to exogenous shocks?)
7. Leading for creativity and change (e.g., how do leaders influence/ manage organizational change during shocks?)
8. Identity-based leadership theories (e.g., how do leaders project a reference social identity in the aftermath of an exogenous shock and with what consequences?)
9. Team leadership and group diversity (e.g., how do leaders deal with unexpected team membership change and, possibly, diversity changes?)
10. Methodological contributions in the area of quasi-experiments or natural experiments.

Submission Process

Authors can submit their manuscripts starting from 1 February 2021 but no later than the submission deadline of 15 March 2021, online via The Leadership Quarterly's Editorial Manager submission system at <https://www.editorialmanager.com/LEAQUA/default.aspx>. To ensure that all manuscripts are correctly identified for consideration for this Special Issue, it is important that authors select "SI: Exog Shocks" when they reach the "Article Type" step in the submission process. Manuscripts should be prepared in accordance with The Leadership Quarterly's Guide for Authors available on the journal web page. All submitted manuscripts will be subject to The Leadership Quarterly's double blind review process.

Research Data

Research data forms the backbone of research articles and provides the foundation on which knowledge is built. Researchers are increasingly encouraged, or even mandated, to make research data available, accessible, discoverable and usable. Although not mandatory, the journal encourages authors to submit their data at the same time as their manuscript. Further information can be found at: <https://www.elsevier.com/authors/author-services/research-data>

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