





University of
Massachusetts
Amherst

Dialogue as Renounced Aggression: JMI and the Case of AOM's President's Response to E013769

Item Type	article;article
Authors	Stackman, Richard W.;de Holan, Pablo Martin;Argyres, Nicholas;Cabral, Sandro;Moliterno, Thomas P.;Stoner, James;Walsh, James P.
DOI	https://doi.org/10.1177/1056492619852166
Download date	2026-04-10 16:11:43
Item License	http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/
Link to Item	https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14394/32650

Dialogue as Renounced Aggression: *JMI* and the Case of AOM's President's Response to EO13769

Journal of Management Inquiry
2019, Vol. 28(3) 268–275
© The Author(s) 2019
Article reuse guidelines:
sagepub.com/journals-permissions
DOI: 10.1177/1056492619852166
journals.sagepub.com/home/jmi


Richard W. Stackman¹ , Pablo Martin de Holan²,
Nicholas Argyres³, Sandro Cabral⁴, Thomas P. Moliterno⁵,
James Stoner⁶, and James P. Walsh⁷

Abstract

Dialogue and debate are at the core of the social sciences. In this piece, the *Journal of Management Inquiry (JMI)* editors-in-chief discuss their position and decisions pertaining to the publication of Professor Anita McGahan's response to Professor Hardimos Tsoukas. A key decision—given *JMI's* commitment to dialogue and exchange in its scholarly form—included publishing three curated pieces where renowned scholars applied their scholarly voice and expertise to McGahan's historical narrative. To conclude this piece and the entire Editors' Choice collection, five scholars speak to needed qualitative research standards or address McGahan's leadership directly. Specific corrections to Tsoukas are also provided.

Keywords

qualitative research, leadership, event history analysis

A dialogue seems to be a renunciation to aggression.

—Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits*.

Dialogue and debate are at the core of the social sciences: commentary on differing epistemological, deontological, and methodological positions is intrinsic to our field and it is hard to imagine why it should be otherwise. Perhaps that is why the *Journal of Management Inquiry (JMI)* editors-in-chief cannot recall an instance of a published piece that introduced a critique of a person's intentions and actions through a case study, no less, which didn't publish a response.

Our decision to publish Professor Anita McGahan's response to Tsoukas (2018) started when we received a message on McGahan's behalf on February 22, asking whether we would be interested in a Reflections on Experience piece, a long-standing section of *JMI*. The message outlined the following (paraphrased) chronology:

2017. While president of the Academy of Management, McGahan led the AOM to respond to EO13769, within the existing AOM rules. McGahan received numerous suggestions via email and through social media platforms on what she should do, some of them suggesting "rules be damned," and some not to do anything at all. Ultimately, McGahan was able to rewrite AOM's policy as a consequence of these events.

2018. In December McGahan learned of an article published online in July that questioned McGahan's leadership through a published case study. Prior to its publication, McGahan had not been contacted by the article's author. McGahan subsequently submitted a response to the journal at which time she was told it would be unacceptable unless it contributed to theory. McGahan also sought retraction of the article, which has not occurred.

An immediate concern was whether that could happen to *JMI*, for editors live in fear of having to deal with a Sokal (1996) event¹ and of Type I errors in general. Sometimes, a person's moral certainties hide a deep fear that, under the wrong circumstances, one would just do what one so vehemently repudiates. Could our principles and procedures

¹University of San Francisco, CA, USA

²MBSC Business and Entrepreneurship, King Abdullah Economic City, Saudi Arabia

³Washington University in St. Louis, MO, USA

⁴Inspere Institute of Education and Research, São Paulo, Brazil

⁵University of Massachusetts Amherst, USA

⁶Fordham University, New York, NY, USA

⁷University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, USA

Corresponding Author:

Richard W. Stackman, University of San Francisco, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA 94117, USA.

Email: rwstackman@usfca.edu

result in a hypothetical paper making its way through the peer review process and be published, and then to be called into question by a colleague as flawed and/or incomplete, or horrifyingly false? Would we reflect critically on the processes that led to the publication and consequently on our job as editors and our identity as scholars? Would we seek to correct the record quickly? Could *JMI* uphold its desire to be a forum for dialogue, a place that welcomed “renounced aggression,” in its different forms, or was that just a story we continually told ourselves? When, and if, the moment came and what was needed was more than just words would we be up to the values we claim to espouse?

Having worked in the newspaper industry, Richard was particularly sensitive to these questions. Because perfection is not of this earth and also because refined opinions are still opinions, reputable outlets constantly correct published articles: some require substantive corrections, some rebuttals, or outright retractions. Oftentimes, controversial articles result in additional commentary on the opinion-editorial pages or as letters to the editor and, in some cases, newspapers publish a piece authored by an editor or the publisher regarding actions related to the original paper. These derivatives of renounced aggression (Pablo’s concept based on a conference presentation given by Lacan in 1948) served as the guide to the publication of McGahan’s piece and the three curated pieces that follow it.

The process unfolded as such: First, we invited McGahan to submit her response. We asked her to write from a clear and compelling historical perspective, as robust as historical perspectives that are also personal can be, because, as the French saying goes, no one should be expected to do impossible things. We quickly learned that other scholars wanted to join the discussion and what was a dialogue turned into a larger conversation, something *JMI* was created to encourage.

Because McGahan’s and Tsoukas’s writings reflect concepts, constructs, and themes relevant to organizational science researchers (as well as sharp ideas as to how organizations and the Academy of Management [AOM] in particular should be managed, and how leaders should behave), we asked several interested persons to read McGahan (2019) and Tsoukas (2018) and then to write one to three of their best paragraphs. We instructed them, as much as a renowned scholar can be instructed to do anything, to apply their scholarly voice and expertise to McGahan’s historical narrative and to address what we, organization scholars, could learn from the events and how they informed, illuminated, and advanced or obfuscated the theory and practice of organization. These submissions are included in the three curated pieces, and we extend our customary yet sincere gratitude to the three curators, Michael Pirson, Jerry Davis, and especially Jean Bartunek, not only for their ideas but also for their humor and their devotion to dialogue. A world without dialogue would be a very sad place—and a world without humor a miserable one.

Finally, this piece is an attempt to explain our position and decisions, as editors and our unbreakable commitment to dialogue and exchange in its scholarly form. Included in this piece are five submissions—substantive in their own right—that call out needed methodological standards specifically or addressed McGahan’s actions directly. Corrections to Tsoukas (2018) end this piece.

Three inescapable—and not particularly original yet still deliciously relevant for this debate and for our disheartening times—themes cut across all papers, including Tsoukas (2018). The first one, highlighted by a 19th-century philosopher, is that we make history but never in the circumstances of our own choosing and always under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past (Marx, 1852). Leadership, perhaps, is like politics: the art of the possible given the circumstances. Another one is that context matters. It was Ortega y Gasset (1914) who noted that one is “oneself and one’s circumstances,” and if one does not take care of the circumstances,” one does not take care of oneself. Without a sound understanding of the context, qualitative research can rapidly turn into a subgenre of fiction in disguise, and even if we know that one’s translation of what happened into concepts always will be imperfect and limited, one should still aim for a certain level of rigor, especially the kind provided by standard practices, peer validation, and perhaps, in our networked world, crowd validation, without being naive about their limitations. Finally, that to lead is also to provide an answer to the eternal question “what is to be done?” The answer, invariably, needs to be anchored in reality, both the Newtonian and the socially constructed type. Against utopia, reality always loses.

The remaining commentaries are written by Nicholas Argyres, Sandro Cabral, Thomas Moliterno, James Stoner, and Jim Walsh. Argyres and Cabral both speak to clarifying protocols and raising standards with respect to qualitative research. Moliterno, in addressing his own concerns with qualitative research, focuses on inclusive leadership. Stoner and then Walsh both speak to the success (and the burden) borne by McGahan in leading AOM.

Lessons About Organizational Research Method

Nicholas Argyres

Professor McGahan’s article addresses many fascinating and important issues on the topics listed in its subtitle: moral responsibility, leadership, governance, organizational change, and strategy. I wish to highlight its lessons about organizational research methods. As organizational scholars, we are interested in understanding the behavior of organizations: what drives their decisions, the consequences of those decisions, and so forth. Understanding how organizations work often requires collecting detailed qualitative information about decision processes from interviews and internal

documents. Unfortunately, however, standards for how to report on the research process that a researcher followed to collect such data are sometimes unclear and, even when they exist, are enforced inconsistently by our journals.

For example, in my experience, it is rare for reviewers or editors of a submission based on qualitative data to ask for a list of the author's interviewees, the dates of the interviews, or to see (possibly redacted) versions of internal documents or interview notes. I don't know if it was a failing like this that allowed Professor Tsoukas to publish his erroneous conclusion that Professor McGahan lacked moral imagination; a conclusion that was reached because of a failure to systematically interview key protagonists, including Professor McGahan, and to seek all of the relevant documents. Regardless, however, an important lesson from this unfortunate episode is that all of our journals must clarify and raise their data disclosure standards for qualitative papers, just as some have done for quantitative papers. If this happens, something good will have come from Tsoukas's otherwise harmful article.

Preventing Hits by Antiaircraft Batteries

Sandro Cabral

After reading carefully both the article by Tsoukas (2018) and the response of McGahan (2019), it reminds me of something said to me some years ago—"as higher you fly, the more likely the radars will identify you and the more likely you will be hit by the antiaircraft batteries, no matter what you are doing." There is no doubt that McGahan was shot by Tsoukas artillery. According to Tsoukas (2018), the gravity of the situation should require an improved level of flexibility by McGahan to adapt the existing AOM rules and condemn the act on behalf of the AOM. As a research-oriented scholar, I always try to understand the underlying mechanisms that contribute to observed outcomes. Of course, my view is biased toward a managerial perspective. I can't deny it.

Having said that, it seems this case illustrates a common situation that percolates public and private managers: the contemporary dilemma between flexibility and compliance to existing rules and procedures devised to prevent tyranny and abuse of authority. Indeed, in an era of improved accountability, some managers hesitate to innovate and to act in a more flexible way because of the existing statutory barriers. McGahan highlights in her response that although she personally condemned EO13769 as an immoral act, she did not circumvent the AOM Constitution to impose her personal opinion. The methodological fragilities present in Tsoukas (2018) did not allow the journal's readers to understand the institutional drivers of McGahan's decision and what she did to adapt the AOM organizational structures. Probably, if some standard protocols in qualitative research

were followed—such as triangulating different sources of data—the format of Tsoukas (2018) would be different, more comprehensive, and closer to the truth.

Bad Science and Inclusive Leadership

Thomas P. Moliterno

First, an observation on Tsoukas (2018) as social science. Professor McGahan (2019) reports that "[Tsoukas] did not contact [her] when conducting the research" or publishing the essay. The editors who published Tsoukas (2018) also did not obtain comments from McGahan or "any other AOM Officer with firsthand knowledge about the [matter]" (p. 260). As a result, it appears that some very spurious conclusions have entered the scholarly record. Specifically, Tsoukas (2018) concludes that as AOM President, McGahan "scores low in moral imagination as disclosive power" (p. 9). This is a bold statement, and one belied by McGahan's (2019) report of her work to make changes to the AOM's no-political-stands policy (NPSP) as early as July 2015. Indeed, McGahan's efforts as an elected official seem to be anything but lacking disclosive responsibility. Publishing conclusions without collecting and validating the qualitative data on which to base those conclusions is at best bad science: at worst it is scholarly deception. Is this not conceptually analogous to falsifying data in a quantitative analysis?

In addition, I am struck by the naive and overly simplistic perspective of inclusive leadership in Tsoukas (2018). A truly inclusive organization allows the perspectives of *all* its members to be heard and considered. McGahan (2019) notes that "a vocal minority of [AOM] members supported EO13769" (p. 256). Now, if McGahan had been in that minority, should she have used her position of authority to articulate the AOM's support of the travel ban? The point of this thought exercise is that AOM's NPSP was—and is—designed to promote and ensure an organization that respects the perspective of all its members, as an inclusive academic organization should. As McGahan (2019) notes, "Leaders are not always on the right side of morality . . . the identity of an organization [must be] separate from the identity of its leaders" (p. 259). This is the challenge of true moral leadership: balancing the *leader's* own necessarily biased (for better or worse) perspective with the mandate that the *organization* be unbiased and inclusive. Professor McGahan walked that line very well.

Grading Change, Leadership, and the AOM

James Stoner

The success of Professor McGahan and those colleagues who supported her in bringing about change in the AOM

policy and in issuing a condemnation of the executive order seem to me to be a textbook (in the good sense) example of applying “on the court” the change theories we teach “from the stands” in our classrooms and in our articles. Doing so in a “real world” populated by some organizationally powerful AOM supporters of the executive order and/or of the man who issued that order is particularly impressive in my eyes. Grade for performance consistent with ODC theory and best practice: A+.

For me, the most impressive thing about the history of this incident is McGahan’s incredible investment of time, energy, and wisdom. Fitting this unwanted surprise into a schedule that must already have been fully and perhaps overly committed was an amazing accomplishment. And her doing so with such grace and generosity of spirit as I saw from a distance during the events speaks to me of leadership at its very best. Leadership grade: also A+.

Changing one Academy policy and issuing of one public statement could be just two blips in the long road of the Academy’s history or they could be the start of transformational change. I join others in believing that it is critical that our free institutions not be silenced, or passively silence themselves, and that they take morally correct stands on the great issues of our time in the face of systematically created social polarization, the manufacture of “alternative (fake) facts,” attempts to delegitimize scientific inquiry, and labeling questions of fact as “political issues” and thus indiscussable by scholars and teachers. In just one of many places where the Academy can build on and honor the leadership demonstrated by McGahan, the Academy can take a public stand on the need for urgent action in all aspects of society to deal with the existential crisis for our own and other species posed by climate change and global unsustainability. Excellent annual AOM programs have focused on aspects of the problem but the Academy has not yet taken a stand in this domain—a stand that would arguably be appropriate for its mission and the resources of its members. In sharp contrast to the Academy’s inaction—so far—in this domain, the International Association of Jesuit Business Schools committed in 2009 that, for 10 years, the theme of its annual World Forums would be leading for sustainability. A similar commitment by the Academy might make a great difference in what we are doing and who we become. AOM grade on global leadership: yet to be determined.

A Leader’s Burden

James P. Walsh

No one can relieve a leader’s burden, it comes with the territory . . . (Tsoukas, 2018, p. 9)

Professor Tsoukas’s words were on my mind as I digested his thoughts about AOM President McGahan’s handling of

President Donald Trump’s January 27, 2017, Executive Order 13769 to bar citizens from seven Muslim-majority nations from entering the United States. After reading both papers, I really do think that he would have written a different paper had he known then what he knows now.

Mortified by the injustice of EO13769, Professor McGahan discovered that the AOM’s Constitution prohibited any member (including the President) from speaking on behalf of the association’s then 18,000 members.² Needing to speak out, she went to work to amend the Constitution of this 80-year-old organization. Her goal was to make the AOM stronger as it found and raised its voice in times of trouble.³ And so, she worked tirelessly to mobilize the AOM’s Executive Director, Executive Committee, Board of Governors, division leaders, members-at-large, and a newly constituted task force to enable the AOM to speak with one voice about an injustice that threatened its existence.

Two weeks to the day after President Trump issued his executive order, the AOM’s Board of Governors, under her leadership, voted unanimously to amend its Constitution to permit the President to speak for the organization. Curiously, once this change became fully operational (on May 10, 2017), not a single member of the AOM asked the association to condemn President Trump’s actions (and that includes Professor Tsoukas and, yes, embarrassingly, me). After her term as president expired, Professor McGahan was the member who petitioned the AOM to formally denounce the U.S. government’s new immigration policies. On October 16, 2017, the AOM did just that. That day, the AOM formally condemned President Trump’s September 24, 2017, indefinite ban on citizens of Chad, Iran, Libya, North Korea, Somalia, Syria, and Yemen from entering the United States (a ban that was to take effect two days after the letter was sent).

Problematic Statements in Tsoukas (2018)⁴

p. 1. Abstract: “By viewing the travel ban in purely administrative terms, AOM leadership framed it as an example of ‘political speech,’ on which they were organizationally barred to take a public stand.”

The AOM did not view the travel ban in purely administrative terms (McGahan, 2017a, 2017c, 2017d, 2018). From the very outset, EO13769 was framed as a moral issue.

p. 1. “Initially, through a letter to its members from the then President Anita McGahan . . .”

The letter to members (aka “the Email”) that Tsoukas (2018) cites extensively was not the first thing that Professor McGahan wrote after EO13769. This is important because the research method in Tsoukas (2018), which is justified by reference to an earlier paper by the author (Yanow & Tsoukas, 2009), stipulates that the very first thing that Professor McGahan wrote represents Professor McGahan’s unmediated and spontaneous state of

mind (p. 2). However, the Email was not the first thing Professor McGahan wrote. It also was not unmediated as it was extensively revised by the Executive Committee.

p. 1. "Later, in April 2017, following several reactions by members to the Academy's initial response, and instigated by Professor McGahan as well as past Academy Presidents, AOM amended its policy on taking political stands."

The amendment to the policy was on February 10, 2017, instigated exclusively by Professor McGahan, and the change was initiated more than a year prior to EO13769. The proposal to change the NPSP was not instigated by past Academy presidents, but rather by Professor McGahan and Professor McGahan alone.

p. 1. "The shift was completed in October 2017, when the new AOM President Professor Mary Ann Glynn wrote officially to President Trump to 'condemn' the travel ban, 'as a threat to science and scholarship' (although her letter referred not to the original Executive Order but to the September 24, 2017 White House proclamation on visas and immigration), especially since 'it fundamentally thwarts the Academy's ability to fulfil its mission.'"

It is true that Professor Glynn wrote officially to Trump to condemn the travel ban, but the suggestion that "[T]he shift was completed . . ." is misleading in that it seems to convey that Professor Glynn, among others (including Professor McGahan), had not worked arduously to change the governance rules of the AOM to make this condemnation possible.

p. 2. "Contrary to its initial response, AOM eventually came to implicitly accept that threats to scholarly values and activities are not narrowly political and, consequently, AOM leaders taking a public stand on such issues is not narrowly political either."

There was never any construing of the threat to scholarly values and activities as narrowly political (McGahan, 2017c, 2017d). The words "eventually came to implicitly accept" suggest that there was a gradual shift in acceptance. Eighteen months prior to EO13769, Professor McGahan was concerned about threats to scholarly values and activities both on political and moral grounds. This is why Professor McGahan proposed a change to the NPSP in July 2015 and, as soon as Professor McGahan became President in 2016, made changing the NPSP a priority.

p. 2. "This represents a shift in how AOM sees itself positioned in public debates: its original policy of political neutrality in all circumstances has given way to a more nuanced approach. Such a shift is an implicit admission that its initial reaction to the travel ban was inadequate."

The AOM never had an original policy of political neutrality. The original no-political-stands policy was not an affirmative statement of political neutrality. The idea that the AOM did not have the governance mechanisms prior to February 10, 2017, to address EO13769 in 2017, was explicit in McGahan (2017c, 2017d) and was described in McGahan (2017a, 2018).

p. 2. "What makes this case particularly interesting is that AOM President McGahan was, as an engaged citizen, passionately against the travel ban and, after the incident, took the lead to change the AOM policy on taking political stands."

As described above, Professor McGahan had a much more complicated set of moral beliefs about the situation facing the AOM than this statement describes.

p. 2. "I will argue that, early in 2017, AOM leadership had more options available than they realized, had they not been bound by a bureaucratic image of leadership, whereby leaders rigidly follow organizational rules."

Here, Tsoukas (2018) does not rely on any information about what AOM leaders realized. Tsoukas (2018) does not examine any of the documents, including those that Professor McGahan wrote as AOM President prior to the issuance of the January 31, 2017, Email describing the options that were available to the AOM, and thus the assertion that the AOM leadership did not realize its options is untrue and unsupported in Tsoukas (2018). As AOM President, the actions that Professor McGahan took, and the disclosures that Professor McGahan made, were equally about resistance to polarizing falsifications as they were condemnations of EO13769.

p. 3. "In other words, the AOM President's initial response to the travel ban amounts to the following (my [Tsoukas'] rendition): 'in the aftermath of the travel ban, we as AOM will do anything technically possible to facilitate our members' participation in the Annual Meeting in Atlanta. Beyond that, however, irrespectively of what each one of us individually feels about it, and despite the travel ban opposing our scholarly values, there is nothing else really we, as the current AOM leaders, can do, since our policies restrict officers from taking a stand on any political issue in the name of AOM.'"

Here, Tsoukas (2018) offers a statement as fact about *what Professor McGahan believed that Professor McGahan could do*. This is unsupported and unsupportable.

p. 3. "AOM leadership chose to view this challenge in narrow administrative terms: to lay out technical steps AOM needs to take to counter the adverse effects of the travel ban on some AOM members."

This is not how Professor McGahan viewed the challenge associated with EO13769 and the polarizing falsifications of the U.S. president. The AOM leadership did not choose to view the challenge in narrow administrative concerns, but rather sought to strengthen the AOM.

p. 3. "The question surely arises: how does AOM manifest its respect of each of its members' voice when the US President, a priori, declares some of its members *personae non gratae*? To put it differently, when some of your members receive a hostile treatment, don't you have a moral duty to join your voice with that of others to defend them publicly? When the values on which your very existence is based are under attack, shouldn't you stand up and, through reasoned argument, oppose the attacker? (Chappell, 2009, pp. 104-105)"

Because Tsoukas (2018) does not consider Professor McGahan's other writings, actions, and communications, but relies exclusively on the Email, the analysis in Tsoukas (2018) is inadequate to support the rhetorical argument in these questions.

p. 3. "The critical assumption underlying the AOM President's message is to view the travel ban as a political issue. In her capacity as the AOM leader, Professor McGahan consistently defended this view."

Professor McGahan did not defend this view. McGahan (2017a, 2017c, 2017d, 2018) all describe Professor McGahan's concern in this domain. Even the Facebook posts that Tsoukas (2018) cites are not a defense of this view. What Tsoukas (2018) does not consider is that Professor McGahan was seeking to strengthen the AOM as an institution of science by revising the NPSP, dating back to Professor McGahan's proposal in July 2015. Thus, Tsoukas (2018) does not consider that Professor McGahan was explaining the deficiencies in the AOM governance system that Professor McGahan was seeking to remediate, not defending those deficiencies.

p. 4. "Moreover, after this incident, she was the driving force for making the case that AOM should reconsider its policy on political speech (which it did at its Board of Governors' regular meeting on 21 April 2017)."

The reconsideration and modification of the NPSP occurred on February 10, 2017, in an unprecedented special meeting that Professor McGahan called of the entire Board of Governors.

p. 5. "However, although the AOM President does not appear to be ethically blind, she does come across as 'rigidly' applying a particular frame (Palazzo et al. 2012, p. 326)—the bureaucratic frame (Anteby, 2013; Jackall, 1988) . . . When the bureaucratic frame is rigidly applied, one's role is seen as already defined, its boundaries pre-determined, and its performance strictly governed by set rules. Personal beliefs and emotions, as well as job crafting, are brushed aside (Hirschhorn, 1997; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001): the role strictly circumscribes personal agency."

This is untrue, unsupported, and unsupportable. Professor McGahan saw the AOM governance systems as inadequate, and the rules as problematic, and Professor McGahan sought to change them. Professor McGahan did not brush aside her personal beliefs. One problem in the analysis in Tsoukas (2018) is any conjecture of Professor McGahan's beliefs, including, in particular, a neglect of Professor McGahan's belief that Trump's falsifications threatened the AOM. Thus, the inferences that Tsoukas (2018) makes about Professor McGahan's perception of her role are uninformed by an accurate understanding of what Professor McGahan believed, and what Professor McGahan's moral understanding was. As a result, the assertion in Tsoukas (2018) that Professor McGahan adopted a particular frame that was bureaucratic cannot be defended.

p. 5. "In the case at hand, although the AOM President does not dismiss the moral nuances of the travel ban, she insists that they are subsumed under the category "political speech" (*Officers cannot take stands on political policies, even when those policies*

also are moral in character' my italics), which prevents her from condemning the travel ban."

Professor McGahan did not make any insistences in the Email and Facebook posts that Tsoukas (2018) analyzes. Rather, Professor McGahan explained what the AOM, as an organization separate from Professor McGahan as an individual, had as facets of its identity. Professor McGahan also personally condemned the travel ban. Claiming that the travel ban was *not* political speech would have been disingenuous. EO13769 was both moral and political, as is any action.

p. 5. "This rigid framing shows a restricted understanding of politics and a narrow conception of what ethical leadership is about."

This is mere assertion unsupported by evidence and unsupportable using the research design in Tsoukas (2018). McGahan (2011, 2012, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c, 2017d) all express Professor McGahan's understanding of politics and ethical leadership.

p. 7. "The key question for AOM leadership early in 2017 was whether the travel ban constituted a prototypical case of 'political speech' or not. The view prevailed that it did. However, the then AOM President seemed to nurture some doubts, as she allowed for the possibility that the travel ban might have a 'moral character' and, hence, it might not be a prototypical case of political speech."

Again, Professor McGahan did not view the travel ban as a prototypical case of political speech. Professor McGahan viewed it as morally and politically abhorrent, and Professor McGahan wrote so on Facebook and elsewhere, including in the post cited in Tsoukas (2018). Professor McGahan did not have any doubts. Professor McGahan expressed her objections to EO13769 and Trump's falsifications in moral and ethical terms.

p. 7. "Still, however, the view adopted by AOM leadership was that even morally loaded issues, when part of the public debate, are necessarily "political" ("the restriction on political speech is constraining all speech in this situation"). It is important to stress that this is an interpretative act, by no means the only one conceivable."

This passage is incomplete because it suggests that Professor McGahan interpreted EO13769 as only political. As an AOM leader, Professor McGahan viewed EO13769 and Trump's falsifications as both moral and political (McGahan, 2017c, 2017d). The passage is also incomplete because the reference to morally loaded issues does not consider Trump's falsifications, which Professor McGahan saw then and continued to see as political and moral acts designed to foment discord and crisis in complex academic institutions such as the AOM.

p. 7. "When AOM restricts its officials from taking a political stand (as it rightly should), it is the prototypical instances—the prototypical image—of politics it implicitly refers to."

The AOM policy does not distinguish between prototypical and nonprototypical instances of politics or public policy. All

political acts are covered, whether they are prototypical or not. Professor McGahan's concern about nonprototypical instances and images of politics motivated her July 2015 proposal to change the NPSP. Almost any political act is experienced as nonprototypical by someone, which makes the criterion of prototypicality unworkable for guiding the AOM leadership.

p. 7. "To denounce the travel ban, the AOM leaders would need to exercise their 'moral imagination' (Arendt, 1982; Johnson, 1993) to frame it as a non-prototypically political issue."

The statement implies an incorrect characterization of what Professor McGahan and the other AOM leaders imagined and framed as their concerns regarding EO13769. It was because they viewed the nature of politics as changing that they changed the governance rules, that is, the NPSP on February 10, 2017, just 14 days after EO13769. The statement also does not consider that denunciation of EO13769 prior to the change in rules would harm the AOM in line with U.S. President Trump's tactics, which Professor McGahan saw as of equal moral concern as EO13769.

p. 8. "The AOM leadership's initial response not to condemn the travel ban is intelligible relative to the background idealized cognitive model (Lakoff, 1987) AOM has adopted about non-political speech by its officials."

This statement implies that Professor McGahan had adopted an idealized cognitive model with no evidence supplied. What Professor McGahan sought to do was to strengthen and improve the AOM's governance models so as to prevent EO13769 from tearing the AOM members apart and impeding scientific progress while providing AOM with a revised NPSP and a process for achieving an organizational view to condemn Trump's immigration policies.

p. 8. "Seeing the Executive Order as a non-prototypical case of political speech, the leader is enabled to imaginatively refine (rather than merely 'apply') the rule—the particular case provides an occasion for further specifying what the rule is about . . ."

Professor McGahan, along with other AOM leaders through the history of the organization, saw the NPSP as part of the AOM's identity. Tsoukas (2018) does not cite what Professor McGahan wrote beyond two Facebook posts and the Email, however, and thus does not report what Professor McGahan wrote even prior to the Email to express her imagination and make her specification. This statement suggests that Professor McGahan applied the NPSP as a rule, when Professor McGahan did not. Neither did the Executive Committee. The NPSP reflects the identity of the AOM as an organization.

p. 9. "Thus, to invoke the absence of rules for authorizing a leader to make a 'political' statement, in the face of the travel ban, as a justification for treating the latter as a merely technical matter, is to sweep undecidability under the carpet, not break it."

This statement suggests that the only moral issue on the table was the travel ban, that is, EO13769, when in fact the other major issues on the table that shaped Professor McGahan's

responses were the U.S. President's weaponization of falsifications and her obligations to the AOM as an institution. In no sense did Professor McGahan treat EO13769 as a technical matter.

p. 9. "Although, judged by the criterion of disclosive moral imagination, the AOM President shows a restricted understanding of leadership agency, the picture is more complex, since she subsequently took the lead to change the organization from within, namely change AOM's policy on taking political stands."

This statement is unsupported. Professor McGahan was concerned about the impact of politicized falsifications as well as EO13769. Furthermore, the word "subsequently" indicates that Professor McGahan waited to change the organization from within after EO13769 was announced. The truth is that Professor McGahan had been trying to change the organization from within since she proposed the change to the NPSP in July 2015.

p. 9. "While in her initial official response to the travel ban she fails to disclosively respond to the undecidable or 'ineffable' (Lara, 2007, p. 66), through her subsequent initiative to change AOM policy she succeeds to envision a different AOM, namely an organization whose leadership does not hesitate to take a public stand when core Academy values are under threat."

First, Tsoukas (2018) does not refer to Professor McGahan's initial official response to the travel ban, but rather only to an Email and a few Facebook posts. Second, in Professor McGahan's disclosures, Professor McGahan did respond to what Tsoukas (2018) calls the undecidable (see McGahan, 2017c, 2017d). Third, Professor McGahan's initiative to change AOM policy did not occur subsequently to EO13769; it began in July, 2015, and continued intensively during those last days of January and first days of February, 2017, to culminate in the revised NPSP adopted on February 10, 2017. Fourth, Professor McGahan's vision for a different AOM began well before EO13769, and is described in writings that are not cited in Tsoukas (2018). Fifth, the last phrase suggests that Professor McGahan hesitated to condemn EO13769 publicly when Professor McGahan did, including in the Facebook posts that Tsoukas (2018) cites.

p. 9. "AOM President McGahan scores low in moral imagination as disclosive power and high in moral imagination as incremental force."

This conclusion of Tsoukas (2018) is mere assertion and cannot be legitimately derived from the methods and data in this article.

p. 9. "This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any of the authors."

This article does contain a study of a human being and draws conclusions about the said person's behavior and performance.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Notes

1. The Sokal (1996) event refers to physicist Alan Sokal who “hoodwinked a well-known journal into publishing a parody thick with gibberish as though it were serious scholarly work” (Scott, 1996).
2. Today the Academy of Management (AOM) counts 19,024 members from 120 countries (“today” is April 11, 2019). Incidentally, I noticed that Tsoukas (2018) referred to the AOM as the “America Academy of Management.” There is no such organization. Interestingly, less than half of the AOM’s members (9,503) live in the United States today; 9,521 members live in one of the other 119 countries around the world.
3. And as we can read in Exhibit 2 of her paper, McGahan also worked to help anyone needing a visa get one. She also helped any banned members contribute to, and benefit from, the conference as best they could from afar. President McGahan also expressed her fury and sadness about the ban in the first words of her August 2017 presidential address (McGahan, 2018).
4. The quotes from Tsoukas (2018) are published under the Creative Commons license (see <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10551-018-3979-y>). At the bottom of the article: “Copyright information © The Author(s) 2018. Open Access. This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license, and indicate if changes were made.” Prepared by Professor Anita McGahan. Edited by Richard Stackman, who requested it be written in the third person.

ORCID iD

Richard W. Stackman  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7326-1349>

References

- Anteby, M. (2013). *Manufacturing morals*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Arendt, H. (1982). *Lectures on Kant's political philosophy* (R. Beiner, Ed.). Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Chappell, T. (2009). *Ethics and experience*. Durham, UK: Acumen.
- Hirschhorn, L. (1997). *Reworking authority*. Cambridge, UK: MIT Press.
- Jackall, R. (1988). *Moral mazes*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Johnson, M. (1993). *Moral imagination*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, G. (1987). *Women, fire, and dangerous things*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Lara, M. P. (2007). *Narrating evil: A postmetaphysical theory of reflective judgment*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Marx, K. (1852). *Der 18te Brumaire des Louis Napoleon* [The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon]. Die Revolution Magazine, New York City, USA.
- McGahan, A. M. (2017a, February 5). Excerpt as quoted from motion to change the NPSP.
- McGahan, A. M. (2017b, February 1 and 2). Facebook posts, available online at www.facebook.com
- McGahan, A. M. (2017c, Winter). Moonshots: Achieving breakthrough innovation in established organizations. *Rotman Magazine*, Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/product/moonshots-achieving-breakthrough-innovation-in-established-organizations/ROT349-PDF-ENG>
- McGahan, A. M. (2017d). *Presidential address*. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z4OldjLZTp8>
- McGahan, A. M. (2018). Freedom in scholarship: Lessons from Atlanta. *Academy of Management Review*, 43, 173-178.
- McGahan, A. M. (2019). My presidency of the Academy of Management: Moral responsibility, leadership, governance, organizational change, and strategy. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 28, 251-267.
- Ortega y Gasset, J. (1914). *Meditaciones del Quijote* [Meditations on Quixote]. Madrid, Spain: Publicaciones de la Residencia de Estudiantes.
- Palazzo, G., Krings, F., & Hoffrage, U. (2012). Ethical blindness. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 109, 323-338.
- Scott, J. (1996, May). Postmodern gravity deconstructed, slyly. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/1996/05/18/nyregion/postmodern-gravity-deconstructed-slyly.html>
- Sokal, A. D. (1996, May 18). *A physicist experiments with cultural studies*. Retrieved from https://physics.nyu.edu/faculty/sokal/lingua_franca_v4/lingua_franca_v4.html
- Tsoukas, H. (2018). Leadership, the American Academy of Management, and President Trump’s travel ban: A case study in moral imagination. *Journal of Business Ethics*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1007/s10551-018-3979-y
- Wrzesniewski, A., & Dutton, J. E. (2001). Crafting a job: Revisioning employees as active crafters of their work. *Academy of Management Review*, 26, 179-201.
- Yanow, D., & Tsoukas, H. (2009). What is reflection-in-action? A phenomenological account. *Journal of Management Studies*, 46, 1339-1364.