Dear Readers

In June 2010, it was my great pleasure to attend the first conference of the recently established Slovenian Academy of Management at the magnificent Brdo Congress Centre. There, I was able to renew acquaintance with Slovenian colleagues as well as meet many young and aspiring academics. As you survey the contents page of this first issue of 2012, it will not escape your notice that all four articles are Slovenian in origin and that they represent the work of seven Slovenian scholars. We may be able to infer much about the state of Slovenian management theory from these studies.

It has long been recognised that the role of small business, and entrepreneurs in particular, is a crucial element in the formula for developing and sustaining a market economy, so, since 1990, how to encourage and develop entrepreneurial activity has been central to the transition process in the former communist societies of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). Moreover, the fact that women are underrepresented among entrepreneurs – especially in transition economies – leads to questions about the underutilisation of human resources in the pursuit of economic development. It is in this light that the article by *Karin Širec* and *Dijana Močnik* on 'Gender specifics in entrepreneurs' personal characteristics' should be seen as an important contribution to understanding the post-socialist transition. They consider psychological and non-psychological factors in the motivation of male and female entrepreneurs in Slovenia.

I find their attention on non-psychological factors – specifically, human capital and social capital – especially compelling, since the personality dimensions of entrepreneurs have been long studied. The findings suggest that, with the exception of human capital, these factors are important in accounting for differences between male and female entrepreneurs and that it is possible to infer typological differences between men and women. Establishing patterns of gender difference and gaining confidence in the research instrument that generated the data point the way to future research in this area and thereby complement the existing studies that have been conducted within other transition countries and developed economies. Application of these methods may for example generate increased knowledge about how and why male and female entrepreneurs differ in the way they run their businesses and how and why they generate business outcomes such as sales, profit and employment growth. This research theme has significant ramifications for both academia and policy makers.

Project management has emerged as an influential and growing field of study in transition economies. It is *Aljaž Stare*'s starting point, later supported by his findings, that project management practices in Slovenia are often unprofessional and improvised, resulting in inefficient outcomes. His arguments address why this should be so and focus specifically on motivational issues. His contribution to the theory of project management concerns the interplay of explicit cultural factors and material rewards as they affect the outcomes of projects. Taking 'project organisational culture' to be the level and kinds of support that project teams receive from the larger organisation and its management, he seeks to examine and understand the relative importance of this cultural (or climate) factor vis-à-vis more traditional rewards or bonuses.

Stare's position is strongly normative and his arguments seek to construct a framework for success. In line with much conventional management theory, he consciously develops a rational, formal take on the concept of project organisational culture in which top and senior management must be palpably involved and provide a clear infrastructure with standardised rules and procedures. The findings of the quantitative survey of project managers show significant relationships between the variables in the model: in the eyes of project managers, both the (formal) project organisational culture factors and rewards for team members positively correlate with team motivation, which in turn is related to the efficiency of the project. In addition to the matters for further research that the author raises, I think there are interesting paradoxes here that could benefit from more attention in the future. If it is true that so many projects are inefficiently accomplished in Slovenian companies, yet project managers understand that getting the formal cultural factors right is a significant cause of project outcomes, why, in practice, are they apparently inclined to evade the rationalised framework in favour of relying on intuition and improvisation?

Central and Eastern Europe comprises a rich and diverse set of social, cultural and institutional contexts, making it very difficult to generalise satisfactorily over the region. This complexity is multiplied by the fact that each post-socialist country has undertaken its own journey of transition towards a market economy. It is therefore not surprising that many diverse practices have emerged in areas even so apparently 'rational' as management accounting. It is important then that academics undertake a process of synthesising our knowledge of management systems as they have developed in CEE. This is the task that *Adriana Rejc Buhovac* and *Maja Zaman Groff* have undertaken in their article entitled 'Contemporary performance measurement systems in Central and Eastern Europe: a synthesis of the empirical literature'.

In explaining why contemporary performance management knowledge has not always permeated management practices in the CEE region, there appear to be a number of possibilities, each of which will be familiar to scholars of other fields of post-socialist management. For example, many practising managers, even at a senior level, are not aware of developments in know-how and practice; on the other hand, many CEE companies and professional managers are aware of developments in performance measurement, yet they continue to reproduce simpler or more traditional systems for a variety of contextually located reasons (see also Stare's study). On the other hand, as has been found in even established economies, small firms, critical as vehicles for spreading new know-how because of their number and spread, tend to lag behind large companies in the adoption of modern techniques.

However, as is so often the case with literature survey work, the main benefit of this article for management researchers is undoubtedly the way in which brings together a large number of distributed publications, clarifies the extent of existing knowledge by applying a unifying framework, and thereby helps to identify the critical gaps for further work in the field. Many scholars will be most grateful to have had this graft done for them!

There are interesting overlaps between *Alenka Slavec* and *Igor Prodan*'s study of 'The influence of entrepreneur's characteristics on small manufacturing firm debt financing' and the other empirical studies presented in this issue. The authors are interested in explaining the difficulties or reluctance of Slovenian entrepreneurs in gaining access to external funds in order to develop their business. Their argument identifies both personal characteristics (specifically self-efficacy) and existent social ties as major influences on debt financing. The study also examines factors such as age and education. The main thesis concerns the importance of the entrepreneur herself or himself in the process whereby a small firm comes by external finance, because both willingness to seek loans and willingness to lend money are a function, not so much of the objective state of the firm itself, but of the qualities of the entrepreneur. In other words, the propensity to borrow will depend on the interactive nature of the entrepreneur's self-image and the lender's image of the entrepreneur which shape the state of their relationship (e.g. confidence and trust).

The authors use a large scale survey approach to collect and analyse quantitative data and seek support for their main arguments. It appears that lenders have a preference for lending to entrepreneurs who project a confident self-image and that weak social ties (social capital) and education (human capital) are also influential; interestingly, given Širec and Močnik's findings, gender differences are not significant.

This is an interesting JEEMS issue, for there are many overlaps in the topics and themes and in the manner of data collection and analysis. All four articles are written by Slovenian management scholars and explore the state of contemporary Slovenian business and its economy. Two of the articles (Širec and Močnik; Slavec and Prodan) have real synergy, in that they focus specifically on the characteristics of entrepreneurs, including gender and personality, as well as their human and social capital. Most noticeable, however, are the strong methodological preferences for positivism, quantitative survey techniques and a normative orientation, research values that were also dominant at the Slovenian Academy of Management conference that I attended nearly two years ago.

This issue of JEEMS provides evidence for the emergence of Slovenian management as a vibrant yet distinctive branch of European social science. It has become commonplace to acknowledge diversity in the distribution and take-up of management practices across the CEE region, but it is also clear that academic practices in the study of management have not developed uniformly among the transitional post-socialist countries. The historical, cultural and institutional reasons for this uneven spread may well constitute a worthy and interesting topic for future academic study.

Ed Clark

Editorial Statistics 2011

Papers submitted	60
Of those papers were:	
• rejected by editorial decision	15
• handed back to authors for revision (by editorial decision)	18
• altered to Research Notes	7
• submitted to double-blind review	25
• rejected by unanimous reviewer decision	2
• Rejection rate:	28%
• withdrawn by the authors	3
• accepted for publication after revision	9
• published as Articles in 2011	3
• published as Research Notes in 2011	2
• scheduled to be published in 2012	4
Average feedback duration (i.e. time between submission of a paper and feedback):	39 days
Feedback loops of more than 100 days (Editorial committee target line):	5
Reviews provided:	75

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