The Primacy of Management Schools in a New Perspective of Scientific Research

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Abstract

Since the 1980s, globalization has profoundly changed the social life of nations & has marked the decline of schools of management in the progress of managerial sciences. In the following decades, due to the serious European publishing crisis, major international publishers have developed M&A processes, offering growing paid subscriptions to universities and research centres.

The publishing industry is now global with a growing number of editorial products, less and less differentiated & commercially oriented, that marginalize the scientific production of management schools.

And now? today a new global perspective in management research is needed. A new global perspective in management research must be focused in schools of management, universities, academies and most authoritative global journals.

Keywords: Managerial Sciences, Schools of Management, DORA, Publishing Industry, Pay-per-Publish, APC's, Sciences Progress, Global Markets

1. Since the 1980s, Globalization has Profoundly Changed the Social Life of Nations & has Marked the Decline of Schools of Management in the Progress of Managerial Science

Since the 1980s, globalization has been driven by policies that have opened economies internationally. Many governments have adopted free-market economic systems, increased their own productive potential and created myriad new opportunities for international trade and investment. Governments also have negotiated dramatic reductions in barriers to commerce and have established international agreements to promote trade in goods, services, and investment. Taking advantage of new market opportunities, corporations have built factories and established production and commercial arrangements with foreign partners.

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A first feature of globalization, therefore, is an international industrial and financial business structure.

Technology has been the other principal driver of globalization. Advances in information technology, in particular, have dramatically transformed economic life.

Information technologies have given all sorts of individual economic actors—consumers, investors, businesses—valuable new tools for identifying and pursuing economic opportunities, including faster and more informed analyses of economic trends around the world, easy transfers of assets, and collaboration with partners in the world.

From the Second World War to the early years of globalization, most scholarly journals were still published by Scientific Societies and by local university schools of management (Kaufman, 1998).

Up to the first phase of economic and social globalization, scholarly journals had maintained their position, as the main media for diffusing management research (Meadows, 1979). Scholarly journals also contributed to the professionalization of scientific activities by delimiting the frontier between popular science and the research front and, as a consequence, increased the level of specialization of research (Larivière, 2015) and the formation of disciplines and the creation of local management schools.

In fact, until the end of the 70s, people with a tertiary education made up a relatively small fraction of the worldwide population. Universities were relatively elitist institutions which remained out of reach for the majority of people (Trow, 1973).

> □ *In the 70', the European universities focused on the glorification of the American higher education system, citing this system as a target of excellence and success without exploring the general American higher education system. Focus was directed exclusively at Harvard, Yale, MIT, Princeton and other Ivy-League universities, which cover only a small percentage of the university US system. In this euphoria, it is intentionally overlooked that the majority of colleges and universities displays an intellectually modest standard and hardly contributes to academic progress. Much of what European universities celebrate as 'globalization' and 'international standards' is in reality a provincial 'copy and paste' of US models and programs (Larivière, et al., 2015).*

> □ *"The bubble economy of the 1980s was the final flourish to the period that began with the growth boom starting in 1955 and matured with the steady growth that began toward the end of the 1970s… The industrial structure in Japan shifted in the 1970s from manufacturing to services, and Japan experienced a rapid change in its information society in the 1990s. At the end of the 1990s, Japan was trying to digest the lessons of this era, and it launched a heated public discussion on the state of the nation's education—the*

"academic decline" debate. Ten years after the end of debate over the decline in Japanese education, Japanese society still lacks vision. The two decades from the start of the 1990s through today are known as Japan's "lost years". (Kōichi, 2012).

□ *In the 1980s, in Europe, the Thatcher government, inspired by its belief in markets and competition, would have loved to privatize all institutions engaged in academic activities and to let markets decide which kind of science was needed, and which was not. Connected to the euphoria about markets and competition, the former British minister of education Charles Clarke characterized "the medieval search for truth" as obsolete and unnecessary. Modern universities should produce applicable knowledge, which can be transformed into growth of the gross domestic product, and additionally make it more sustainable. Universities should think "entrepreneurial" and adjust to economic needs. Hence universities are forced to construct illusionary worlds of utility and to pretend that all research serves an immediate purpose (Binswanger, 2014; Körner, 2007).*

By the end of the '80, four parties were involved in the academic publishing process: 1) editors, prominent university professors that manage journals' editorial process; 2) international and national publishers (e.g., Elsevier) that manage journals' publication process; 3) authors, researchers who publish on publishers' journals and 4) readers, researchers who read journals to follow the latest development.

In this period, the revenues of scientific journals derive only from the subscriptions of readers (scientists, research institutions, universities and libraries), while researchers can publish their scientific work (free of charge) which, however, must pass a very selective review and acceptance phase (data check, originality of the work) before being published. In a nutshell, scientific papers focus on a very small number of highly qualified journals, where articles are subject to a tough selection, carried out by a small number of peers (often known) with a high international profile.

The focal point of the editorial process, however, was the professors and their schools of thought, who judged the scientific work of the trainees and determined their academic career progression.

2. Since the 2000s, Major International Publishers have Developed M&A Processes, Offering Growing Paid Subscriptions to Universities and Research Centres

In the early 2000s, as a result of globalization and digital technology, the editorial process changes dramatically. Local management schools and, more generally, university professors and universities themselves cease to be the focal point of research evaluation and the engine of scientific progression. The model of the editorial process does not proceed from within the schools of thought, but develops externally with apparently democratic and objective mechanisms (double blind peer review; editorial journal metrics; metrics for newspapers used as a proxy for the scientific nature of research, etc.). This new research evaluation model starts with an author submitting a manuscript to a journal and a publisher decides whether to accept the submission. If the manuscript is accepted, the publisher will process, enhance, and publish the manuscript in the journal, which is passed on to readers, most often electronically.

In other words, the evaluation of scientific work is placed outside universities and schools of thought and entrusted to publishers who set the evaluation model on mechanisms created and developed only for commercial purposes (unknown reviewers with unknown professional skills, acceptance of articles on a profit basis of individual journals, etc.).

Under the new pay-to-publish model, publishers can maximize their revenues by building a reputable journal with the minimum-quality content, defined on a case-by-case basis on the summary of the articles in a given issue. The author-pay policy, tends to reject as few articles as possible, instead directing authors of unaccepted articles to other journals they own, with similar titles and content. And by constantly creating new newspapers, especially by multiplying existing titles.

In the 2000s, the journal publishing market was transformed into a complex and very commercial system, with journals changing publishing companies and publishing firms acquiring or merging with competitors. In the past years, there have been many mergers and acquisitions involving entire publishing houses or elective parts of them.

> □ *In recent years, the mergers and acquisitions of major publisher have involved: American Chemical Society, American Institute of Physics, American Physical Society, Cambridge University Press, Emerald, IEEE, Institute of Physics, Karger, Nature Publishing Group, Optical Society of America, Oxford University Press, Reed-Elsevier, Royal Society of Chemistry, Sage Publications, Springer, Taylor & Francis, Thieme Publishing Group, Wiley-Blackwell, and Wolters Kluwer (Larivière, et al., 2015). In 2016 Elsevier bought SSRN.*
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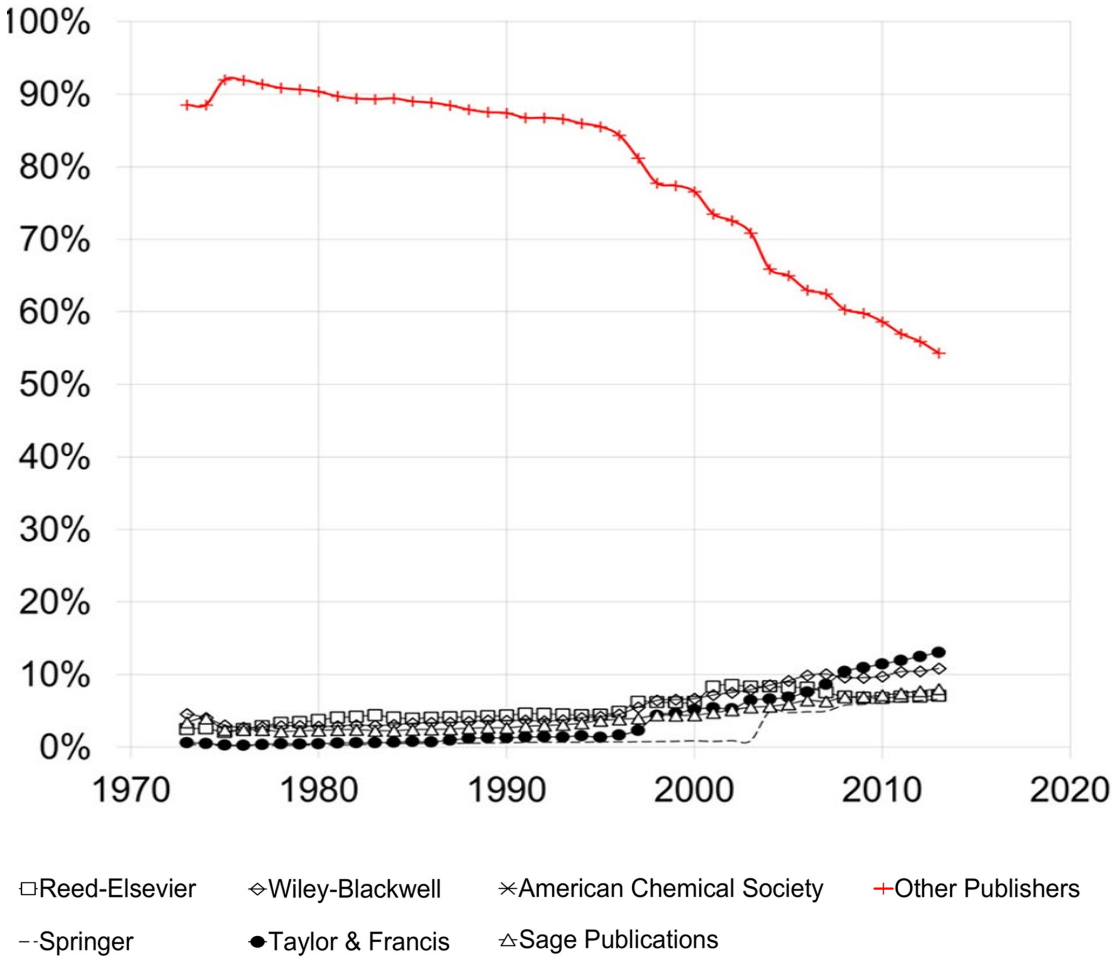
> *In terms of publishing market share, the five major publishers in Natural & Medical Sciences (NMS), accounted, in 1973, for little more than 20% of all papers published. This share increased to 30% in 1996, and to 50% in 2006, the level at which it remained until 2013 when it increased again to 53%. In this domain, three*

publishers account for more than 47% of all papers in 2013: Reed-Elsevier (24.1%; 1.5-fold increase since 1990), Springer (11.9%; 2.9-fold increase), and Wiley-Blackwell (11.3%; 2.2-fold increase) (Larivière, et al., 2015).

The market share of the world's largest research publishing houses has skyrocketed since the 1970s, with five corporations (Reed-Elsevier, Taylor & Francis, Wiley-Blackwell, Springer and Sage) controlling 50 percent of all the journal articles that are published. Back in 1973, the same publishing houses controlled just 20 percent of the journals, and 30 percent in 1996. But over the past two decades, the market share greatly increased thanks to the hard policy of mergers and acquisitions (Figure 1).

Figure 1: *Social Sciences and Humanities Papers Published by Top Publishers, 1973–2013*



Source: Larivière, et al., 2015

Now the scientific publishing market is dominated by the so-called ‘big four’ companies: Springer (which reports hosting 2,987 journals), Elsevier (3,057), Wiley (2,339) and Taylor & Francis (2,105). Together, they comprise around 30% of the world’s total scholarly peer reviewed journals, which number 34,585 (28,134 English language). There follows an enormous number of smaller publishers: Macmillan publishes only 160 journals, but many of them bear the well-known Nature brand. Springer is also the world’s largest publisher of open-access journals

The modern university is only marginally concerned with gaining knowledge, even though the public from time to time is assured that this is still the major goal. Today’s universities are, on the one hand, fundraising institutions, determined to receive as many research funds as possible (Binswanger, 2014).

> □ *When Elsevier was founded, in 1880, it took its name from the legendary Dutch publishing house Elzevir, which had ceased publishing more than a century earlier. As its logo, Elsevier used the Elzevir family’s printer’s mark, a tree entwined with a vine alongside the words Non-Solus, or Latin for “not alone”. The logo represents, Elsevier has suggested, “the symbiotic relationship between publisher and scholar.” It is a nice sentiment, but certainly not a universal one.*

The number of scientific publications produced in the world each year has increased more than tenfold since 1970: the articles published and indexed in 2022 on the Web of Science exceed two and a half million (there were two hundred thousand in 1970 and eight hundred thousand in 2000). Scientific publishing is a market with an annual turnover of 30 billion euros, a global industry that could implode especially because of the work of "mega-magazines", scientific journals that everyone can read and in which scientists can publish only by paying very high APCs (Author Publishing Charges) (Boccia & Pezzullo, 2023).

Today, "mega-magazines" have commercial and profit objectives first. Scientists pay to publish their work, while readers are free to consult. The growing number of journals also determines a less stringent selection process of works, which can encourage the publication of scientific fakes and "photocopy research". This growing scientific degradation makes scientific research less transparent, with a risk of directing science towards wrong or inconclusive goals. In addition, the high fees charged by "mega-magazines" for publication tend to penalize fewer wealthy researchers and to devalue funds, including public funds, intended for scientific research (Boccia & Pezzullo, 2023).

3. The Publishing Industry Is Now Global with a Growing Number of Editorial Products, Less and Less Differentiated & Commercially Oriented, that Marginalize the Scientific Production of Management Schools

To satisfy the growing and enormous need for publication of "mega-magazines", new journals for ever more finely divided sub-areas of a research discipline are launched constantly. Thus, the total number of worldwide existing scientific journals is estimated between 100,000 to 130,000, and each year there are more (Mocikat, 2009).

By getting increasingly specialized and narrow-minded, chances for publication are improved (Frey et al. 2009). It is advisable to be specialized in a very exotic but important-sounding topic which is understood only by very few insiders, and establish a scientific journal for this topic. Consequently, the few specialists within this field can promote their chances of publication by writing positive reviews in the peer-review process, so that they will all get published (Binswanger, 2014).

> □ *"Let us just take the topic of "wine" as an example: There is the "Journal of Wine Economics", the "International Journal of Wine Business Research", "Journal of Wine Research", the "International Journal of Wine Marketing," and so on. All of these are scientific journals that deal with wine on a "highly scientific" level covering topics such as wine economics, wine marketing or sales" (Binswanger, 2014).*

The number of scientific publications grows faster than the global economy and significantly faster than the production of goods and services in industrial countries, from where the largest number of publications originates (OECD, 2008).

> □ *"In 2021, 10,752 refereed tourism, hospitality and event articles appeared in 272 journals…Do we have too many tourism journals? In normal marketplaces, demand determines firm survival. But publishing is not a normal market because (1) demand comes not only from subscribers but also from academics under publication pressure, (2) subscribers purchase journal packages rather than individual journals, and (3) editors and reviewers typically donate their time, reducing the costs that need to be recovered to make a journal financially viable. The problem is not unique to tourism. Across all disciplines, over 30,000 English language journals exist (Altbach & de Wit, 2018)…Commentaries published in other areas such as oncology (Bates, 2017), medical physics (Caon, 2016) and management (Kai & Thomas, 2020) argue that too many journals are publishing too many papers of questionable quality… Pressure to publish is at an all-time high and shows no signs of slowing as institutions seeking to improve their world rankings impose a publish-or-perish culture on their staff" (McKercher & Dolnicar, 2022).*

The big scientific publishers keep costs low because academics write up their research –typically funded by firms, charities and the public purse– for free. They "peer review" each other's work to verify it is worth publishing for free, and academic editors collate it for free or for a small stipend. Academics often have to pay high APC's (Article Publishing Charges, or Submission Fees, or Author Publishing Charges, in the accommodating vision of large commercial publishers) to publish their scientific works in open-access journals, or universities will pay very high subscription charges (Fazackerley, 2023).

In management research the number of journals has become enormous (even with many cases of 'paste & copy' products) and often without any progress in managerial sciences.

Both original themes and unconventional people have little in the way of chances in a system based on artificially staged competitions. The peer-review process causes potential authors to converge upon mainstream topics and approaches, as novel ideas and approaches get rarely published or financed. Neither Albert Einstein nor Friedrich Nietzsche would be able to pursue a scientific career under the current system (Binswanger, 2014).

In the current system, scientific knowledge is often replaced by measurable outputs. Not the content of an article or a project counts, but the number of published and cited articles. The need to publish constantly leaves no time to worry too long about the progress of knowledge.

The large publishers have established an incredibly lucrative business model based on taking advantage of scientists to create content for them for free, and then selling it to back to them once it's published. In fact, publishers do not even pay for quality control - which is done by other scientists for free in the form of peer review - and their overheads are much lower since the arrival of the Internet.

The large commercial publishers charge greedy fees to access research, but they do not create value themselves; in other words, the current model is no longer in the best interests of scholars, scientists or universities (Binswanger, 2014).

> □ *From March to November 2021, the European Commission consulted European and international stakeholders on how to facilitate and speed up reform so that the quality, performance and impact of research and researchers are assessed on the basis of more appropriate criteria and processes. The consultation identified objectives and outlines of a reformed research assessment system, with principles and actions that could be agreed between research funding and research performing organisations… The proposed way forward consists of a European agreement… The agreement would confirm the aim for research and researchers to be evaluated based on their intrinsic merits and performance rather than on the number of publications and where these are published, promoting qualitative judgement with peer-review, supported by a more responsible use of quantitative indicators. The way in which the*

system is reformed should be appropriate for each type of assessment: research projects, researchers, research units, and research institutions. A reformed system should also be sufficiently flexible to accommodate the diversity of countries, disciplines, research cultures, research maturity levels, the specific missions of institutions, and career paths (European Commission, 2021).

□ *Major publishing houses have announced that most academic journals are now in a state of "transformative" that will see all articles gradually transition to Open Access (OA). Publishing a single article will cost several thousand dollars; the costs will be entirely borne by the authors and their institutions. Understandably the academic world protests, but the decision of the publishing houses is consistent with the request for complete OA long advanced by the Academy (Della Sala & Cubelli, 2021*

4. And now? Today a New Global Perspective in Management Research is Needed. A New Global Perspective in Management Research Must Be Focused in Schools of Management, Universities, and Authoritative Global Journals

With open access (open access began in the 1990s, when internet became widely available and with the spread of online publishing in scientific communities), the research process is undergoing digital transformation, and is becoming less linear and less collaborative, and more multidisciplinary with a larger diversity of outputs. Reforming research assessment is increasingly seen as a priority to ensure the quality, performance and impact of research.

At the same time, the current research assessment system often uses inappropriate and narrow methods to assess the quality, performance and impact of research and researchers. e purchase, use and sale of products depend on numerous technical, economic and psychological elements that require a continuous task for a balance between costs to be incurred and quality levels to be respected for the function of use.

□ *The drive towards more transparency and accountability in the academic world has created a 'culture of numbers' in which institutions and individuals believe that fair decisions can be reached by algorithmic evaluation of some statistical data; unable to measure quality (the ultimate goal), decision-makers replace quality by numbers that they can measure. (…) But this faith in the accuracy, independence, and efficacy of metrics is misplaced. (Adler, et al., 2008).*

The quantity of publications in journals with high journal impact factor and citations are currently the dominant proxies for quality, performance and impact. But the research and innovation major evolutions are not aligned with the metrics that often dominate assessment: the number of publications and citations, and the quantity of publications in journals with high journal impact factor (JIF).

The journal impact factor was originally created as a tool to help librarians identify journals to purchase, not as a measure of the scientific quality of research in an article. The term 'impact factor' has gradually evolved to describe both journal and author impact. Journal impact factors generally involve relatively large populations of articles and citations. Individual authors generally produce smaller numbers of articles, (Garfield, 2006). The impact factors used in science today are calculated annually by the American company Thomson Reuters Scientific; these then get published in the Journal Citation Reports. Thomson Scientific has a de facto monopoly for the calculation of impact factors, although the exact calculation is not revealed, which has been questioned repeatedly (Rossner et al. 2007).

The race for publications –the so-called publish-or-perish culture– comes at the expense of quality, integrity, and trust in research (European Commission, 2021).

> □ *"To address the issue pay-per-publish, a group of editors and publishers of scholarly journals met in San Francisco, CA, on December 16, 2012. The group developed a set of recommendations, referred to as the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA).*
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> *DORA recommendations focus primarily on: the elimination of journal-based metrics, such as Journal Impact Factors, in funding, appointment, and promotion considerations; the research assessments based on its own contents rather than on the basis of the journal in which the research is published; and the capitalization of the opportunities provided by online publication (such as relaxing unnecessary limits on the number of words, figures, and references in articles, and exploring new indicators of significance and impact).*
>
> *The DORA statement has been signed by more than 20.000 individuals and organizations from 148 different countries, and major national and international research funders (e.g. NWO, ERC, NIH) are saying goodbye to assessment based on journal metrics (DORA, 2012).*

There is a pressing need to improve the ways in which the output of scientific research is evaluated. Funding agencies, institutions that employ scientists, and scientists themselves, all have a desire, and need, to assess the quality and impact of scientific outputs. Universities, research institutes, learned societies, policy makers, and others have all joined recently the discussion to identify ways forward. Awareness has

grown that revising assessment procedures must be a shared responsibility and requires a systems approach uniting these main actors (Sainen, et al., 2021).

Today, in a global world of knowledge, the evaluation of scientific management research and career progression in many European universities and research centers are still based on a 'derived readership' (anonymous cites, not related to the progress of the cited research) of journals with reputations built on non-transparent and self-referential metrics. A disastrous situation, built in a few years on the growing profits of an oligopoly of large commercial publishers (often with the complicity or servility of national funding Agencies) and which to a large extent explains the retreat since the 80s of European scientific research compared to China and the US (Brondoni & Risso, 2024).

In the USA, on the other hand, where the advances in management science have always been the absolute point of reference, the evaluation of scientific research is still based on the progress of results and quality is certified by well-known and highly professional editors, included in editorial committees of reviews published by universities or international professional associations; however, non-profit institutions and organizations (see following 'vignettes' of Harvard Business Review, MIT Technology Review, and more generally Table1). Therefore, with the absolute exclusion of cunning and greedy commercial publishers.

> □ *Harvard Business Review (HBR) is a general management magazine published by Harvard Business Publishing, a not-for-profit, independent corporation that is an affiliate of Harvard Business School.*
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> *MIT Technology Review is a bimonthly magazine wholly owned by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and editorially independent of the university. It was founded in 1899, in Cambridge, Massachusetts.*

Table 1: *Global Management Journals without APC's*

Journal Title	**Subject area**	**Publisher**
Accounting Review	Accounting	American Accounting Association
Harvard Business Review	Management	Harvard University
Journal of Marketing	Marketing	American Marketing Association
Journal of Marketing Research	Marketing	American Marketing Association
MIT Technology Review	Technology	Massachusetts Institute of Technology

MIS Quarterly	Information Systems	Management Information Systems Research Centre, University of Minnesota
Administrative Science Quarterly	Management	Cornell University
Academy of Management Journal	Management	Academy of Management
Journal of International Business Studies	International Business	Academy of International Business
Journal of Consumer Research	Marketing	Oxford University Press
Academy of Management Review	Management	Academy of Management
Management Science	Management	INFORMS Publishing
Organization Science	Organizational Behaviour	INFORMS Publishing
Marketing Science	Marketing	INFORMS Publishing
Information Systems Research	Information Systems	INFORMS Publishing
Manufacturing & Service Operations Management	Operations	INFORMS Publishing
Operations Research	Operations	INFORMS Publishing
INFORMS Journal on Computing	Information Systems	INFORMS Publishing
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Universities, research institutes, research funding organizations, learned societies, policy makers, and others have all joined the discussion to identify ways forward. Awareness has grown that revising assessment procedures must be a shared responsibility and requires a systems approach uniting these main actors.

Therefore, even in Europe a new global perspective in management research must be focused on schools of management, universities, academies and global journals, with non-profit corporate policies strongly oriented towards the progress of science, in compliance with evaluation policies independent and really authoritative.

> □ *In 1945, the then president of Harvard University wrote in a letter addressed to the New York Times (August, 13th, 1945): "There is only one method to guarantee progress in science. One has to find geniuses, support them and let them carry out their work independently."*

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