Call for Papers in

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CAN NEURONS MANAGE?

A special issue guest-edited by

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Deadline

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**Call for papers**

**CAN NEURONS MANAGE?**

**Background and Rationale**

The theoretical and methodological approaches of neuroscience find increased application in the broader study of management phenomena, including leadership (Ashkanasy, 2013; Lee, Senior, & Butler, 2012; Lindebaum & Zundel, 2013), strategy (Hodgkinson & Healey, 2011), intuition research (Akinci & Sadler-Smith, 2012), entrepreneurship (de Holan, 2014), marketing (Bagozzi et al., 2012; Hedgcock & Rao, 2009), and studies on Machiavellianism (Bagozzi et al., 2013). However, while these conceptual and empirical contributions have furthered our understanding about the relationship between neural activity and important behaviours and outcomes at work, fundamental theoretical, methodological, and ethical challenges remain underexplored.

For instance, Lindebaum and Zundel (2013) raise theoretical and methodological concerns about the possibility of straightforwardly translating the findings of brain research to leadership practice. Such translations require, among other things, the ‘bridging’ (Nagel, 1961) of the heterogeneous logics and terminologies that characterize the fields of neuroscience and leadership. Given the need for these translations from one level to another, the field of organizational neuroscience is inherently a multi-level type of inquiry (Ashkanasy, 2003; Becker, Cropanzano, & Sanfey, 2011).

In addition, there are increased concerns about the veracity of neuroscientific results. For instance, a recent meta-analysis demonstrates that neuroimaging studies (using functional magnetic resonance imaging or fMRI) have very low statistical power due to publications biases, small sample sizes and methodological inconsistencies (Button et al., 2013). Finally, there is meta-analytic evidence that emotions and other mental phenomena that inform behaviour at work cannot straightforwardly be associated with particular locations or networks in the brain. Rather, they entail
complex and dynamic interrelations of multiple brain regions (Lindquist, Wager, Kober, Bliss-Moreau, & Barrett, 2012). And yet, much advocacy of organizational neuroscience is based upon the assumption that specific behaviours reside in distinct brain areas or networks (see e.g., Bagozzi et al., 2013).

Related to these theoretical and methodological challenges are mounting concerns about the ethical implications of neuroscience in management research. Hitherto, management debates focus primarily on the putative benefits of neuroscience, such as the possibility of generating advanced theoretical and empirical insights (Becker & Cropanzano, 2010; Cropanzano & Becker, 2013; Scherbaum & Meade, 2013). However, in so doing, scholars broaden the use of neuroscience from clinical (i.e., for the treatment of mental disorders) to enhancing applications in the workplace (i.e., cognitive enhancement in healthy individuals, see Sahakian & Morein-Zamir, 2009). Some management scholars have made that transition in an effort, for instance, to identify and develop inspirational leadership capability (Waldman, Balthazard, & Peterson, 2011). Neuroscientific applications, therefore, can raise serious ethical questions, especially against the background of the prevailing theoretical and methodological inconsistencies and ambiguities (Lindebaum, 2013a; Wastell & White 2012).

Taken together, the overarching aim of this special issue is to foster constructive debate amongst advocates and sceptics about the possibilities and limitations of neuroscientific approaches in management research. In posing the question ‘Can neurons manage?’, we invite contributions that explicate methodological, theoretical and ethical challenges of neuroscientific approaches, and how to develop ideas how these can be resolved in the context of management research and practice. Below we provide an indicative rather than exhaustive set of example questions.
Example Questions

- What are the methodological and theoretical challenges involved in neuroscientific management research, and what processes are enlisted to translate neuroscientific findings (e.g., brain patterns) into management phenomena that are often relational and recursive in nature (Duster, 2006; Latour & Woolgar, 1979)?

- How and why are organizational categories created (e.g., ‘good management’ or ‘effective behaviour’), which then form the basis of neuroscientific interventions? How does this influence the generation of work behaviours that are deemed desirable or undesirable when neuroscientific interventions are proposed (Lindebaum, 2013b; Scherbaum & Meade, 2013)?

- What are the implications of neuroscientific interventions for individuals at work, social selection and inclusion, well-being, and the development of a fair society?

- How does the uptake of organizational neuroscience impact on existing management research infrastructure, such as research training, funding, or the generation and maintenance of databases (Duster, 2006)?

- How does the proliferation of neuroscience inform organizational and social practice, such as personnel recruitment processes, surveillance and control, issues of privacy and the appropriate security of person and body (Cropanzano & Becker, 2013; Lindebaum, 2013a)?

- Are current discrimination policies at work fit to accommodate findings generated by neuroscience and what ethical frameworks govern neuroscientific research, and are they fit to accommodate the technological advances made by neuroscientists?

- What practical implications emerge from neuroscientific research, and how does this affect professional and private relationships of managing and managed individuals at work?

- Can neuroscientific data be integrated with other forms of data to form one coherent whole?
Please note that we particularly welcome articles that shed new light on existing problems or offer solutions to these. We are receptive to (i) contributions from a variety of ontological perspectives, (ii) studies conveying innovative and challenging theorizing, (iii) interdisciplinary contributions, and (iv) studies from a multiplicity of methodological backgrounds. Importantly, while the special issue is open to laboratory studies, these studies must explain how they connect to management phenomena at work. We, therefore, do not seek studies which critique laboratory work per se. Rather, the concern is the translation of neuroscientifc knowledge of various forms and kinds into concrete and contextually sensitive situations at work.

Note that a prerequisite for all submissions must be firm theoretical grounding in the relevant literature. For theoretical pieces, we expect that they clearly articulate underlying theoretical frameworks, either identifying overlooked issues, or showing ways of overcoming acknowledged theoretical problems. For empirical papers, we expect that they have a strong methodological design, competently execute the data analysis, and offer significant new insights as a result. These should be explicitly related to organizational policy and practice, with implications clearly elaborated for the domain of management. Authors are strongly encouraged to refer to the Journal of Organizational Behavior website and the instructions on submitting a paper for more details about the types of manuscripts that will be considered for publication (see http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1002/%28ISSN%291099-1379/homepage/ForAuthors.html). An overarching need for all submission is that they connect the field of neuroscience to the study of management with all its relational and recursive connotations, while constructively advancing a new approach.

Questions about expectations, requirements, the appropriateness of a topic, and so forth, should be directed to the guest editors of the Special Issue. They are also open to discussing initial ideas for papers, and can be contacted by email:
References


