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## Building A Better Future: Restoration, Resilience, and Sustainability

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# BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE: RESTORATION, RESILIENCE, AND SUSTAINABILITY

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Articles published in the Journal of Vincentian Social Action (JoVSA) address issues of social justice, and at times the Journal publishes special issues to highlight certain topics in greater detail to show the depth of a specific problem. In this Special Issue, we include a selection of articles that suggest policies that could contain a component where social justice could be applied.

As we see from the daily media, there are many issues affecting those who are poor, or underemployed for whom certain opportunities are scarce. Such issues could result from policies, regulation, projects, transportation, healthcare, and other items that are addressing the general population with good intent, but somehow have difficulties reaching those who are struggling in our society.

Many business issues are of this type, although well meaning, may need adjustments so those less privileged receive the full benefit of an intended policy. The featured articles in this Issue provide analysis of topics intended to benefit all in a community, however, without refinement, those benefits are not realized by all in need. When any law is passed, the full impact is not known in advance, and only time will tell what needs to be altered. Therefore, a well-intended policy could have a negative effect on a segment of a population and may need an adjustment to distribute a benefit to all via social action. We, the Special Issue Editors hope that these articles serve as starting points for appropriate conversation and potential action on social justice issues that can be considered within the broader scope of business policy decision making.

The papers in this Special Issue were presented at the Global Business Research Symposium

in Rome, Italy in July 2022. Three papers in this issue have an interesting perspective on the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, ranging from various responses by states, changes to the life-work balance, and predictive models of cultural influences. In these articles, all citizens were not able to benefit or be positively impacted by these issues.

Bryan Foltice and Michael Parker in “Economic Implications of State-Wide Covid-19 Response Aggressiveness” evaluated how each state’s response to the Covid-19 pandemic affected their respective economies from Q2, 2020 through Q2, 2021. The state policies, such as business closures, masking policies, etc. impacted unemployment and that always had a larger effect on the poor. Their findings confirm that government policies do have a strong impact on the unemployment level of all industries. In addition, their paper supports arguments of other researchers that the government is the most important institution regarding economic recovery.

In support of the thesis that the worker is a self-reliant service provider, rather than an employee, Carmine Gibaldi, Gerald Cusak, and Niall Hegarty examine the challenges of working at home and returning to work. They argue that working at home expanded a work life balance. If a worker is viewed as a “whole person” then this supports a Humanistic Theory of the firm, a new phase of the Postindustrial era.

Claiming that all social behavior is affected by cultural influences, Charles Lanier and Navpreet Pooni search for positive and negative influences that may prevent contagion. In “Covid-19 and Culture: Individualism versus Collectivism, Short-Term versus Long-Term Orientation,

and Indulgence versus Restraint,” they test implications and limitations for mathematical modeling of social behaviors, model parsimony, and potential modulation of cultural influences based on Hofstede’s six cultural dimensions. Some interesting questions arise from their work: Could nation-level benefits be increased by raising awareness of our own cultural tendencies, or would populations allow fixed cultural behaviors to negatively influence pandemic outcomes? Or is there an ability for nations to modulate – exert a modifying or controlling influence on – behaviors linked to culture?

Other articles in this Special Issue focus on topics such as supply chain and fraud that indirectly affect employment and health in the underserved communities. Also, as war is raging in Ukraine, the testing of boycott policies is examined. Additionally, the final article in this Issue analyzes potential risks of robotic process automation that has raised a multitude of concerns, particularly how such automation impacts those who are marginalized.

The global difficulties in the last two years due to Covid-19 raised questions about reliability of the supply chains for most businesses, and their stakeholders. In the article “Sustainability Across the Supply Chain: A Case Study in the Automotive Industry,” Janaina Siegler, Angelyn Bidlack, and Sarah Harrison, explore many issues that affect the supply chain. The objective of their research was to evaluate CMF’s value chain and understand the challenges and opportunities related to the United Nations 17 Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs).

As supply chain disruptions continue to impact businesses and therefore individuals around the world, Thomas G. Drape and Reginald P. Parker in “Leveraging Next-gen Technologies for Supply Chain Security,” aim to identify the supply chain security problem of counterfeit goods. Mentioning the example of a simple product, such as olive oil where as much as 80% could be fraudulent and counterfeit, they focus on the pharmaceutical industry where the production is

much more complex. They show the application of technologies that promote anti tampering, bar codes, drug tablet printing, individualized data matrixes, and the global usage of blockchain technologies that successfully prevent fraud. In addition to the business quality and reputation issues, counterfeit and lower quality goods are often the only available goods for underserved markets.

Jolanta Zralek, in the article “Consumer Boycotts in the Time of War Crisis: An Efficient Citizenship Strategy or a Temporary Spurt of Solidarity,” measures whether solidarity is an economic force that could have significant effect in target markets. By drawing from the theory of consumer citizenship, collective activism, and consumer boycotts, this article strives to understand the nature of the current calls for consumer resistance and consumer actions that resulted from the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The author aims to identify the character, motives, and tools of ongoing boycotts and thus estimated their actual and probable effectiveness.

Initially, when discussing robotic process automation, the concepts of fraud and cybersecurity would not come to mind. Colin Robinson and David Chan in the article “Potential Risks Inherent in Robotic Process Automation” point this out rather clearly noticing that the effective use of such technology will ultimately come down to how businesses adapt to risks in an ever-changing business environment. They suggest that effective governance can be improved by focusing on financial and reputational risks associated with an unauthorized code modification. Corporate policies governing such changes have clear implications for different segments of the population.

## ABOUT THE EDITORS

### **Biagio Pilato CPA, CFE, JD, LL.M**

Professor Pilato is an Associate Professor of the Practice at the Peter J. Tobin College of Business at St. John's University. He is an Attorney, a Certified Public Accountant, and a Certified Fraud Examiner. Professor Pilato teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in law and is the Pre-Law Advisor for the College of Business. Professor Pilato is also a Senior Vincentian Fellow at the University.

### **Igor Tomic, PhD**

Professor Igor Tomic taught Economics at the Peter J. Tobin College of Business, St. John's University, and retired in October 2020 after 33 years of teaching undergraduate, graduate and honors courses. In addition to his teaching, Professor Tomic is a Fulbright Fellow, Senior Vincentian Scholar, and founder of the Global Business Research Symposium. He also served as the Editor of the Review of Business journal for 10 years. Professor Tomic published two textbooks, *Managerial Economics: Tools and Concepts*, and *Essentials of Monetary and Fiscal Policy* with co-author Chaman I. Jain. In addition, he published over a hundred articles in a variety of publications the last one being: "The New Meaning of the War Economy and the Effects of Improved Planning," in the journal *Challenge* (8-11-2022).