

# 2016 ACR Fellow Address

## Brand Attachment: Theory and Practice

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Ladies and gentlemen, it is my honor to share with you today my ever-evolving thoughts about the *attachment-based customer-brand relationship*. When we think about human relationships, there is a saying: we should never forget the 3 types of people in our lives: (1) those who helped you in your difficult times, (2) those who left you in your difficult times, and (3) those who put you in difficult times. Surely, we must remember who put, helped, or left us in our difficult times. But perhaps more important is not to forget what caused them to help, leave, or put us in difficult times. Depending on what we have done to other people, they may also either help, leave, or put us in difficult times. Similarly, depending on what a brand does for its customers, the customers may help, leave, or put it in difficult times. This brings up the topic of customer-brand relationship management. The important issue is what type of customer-brand relationship can secure customers who are willing to help the brand not only in its good times but also in its difficult times.

For the next 25 minutes or so, I will address the above issue by proposing that the attachment-based customer-brand relationship is the most effective one in securing loyal customers. In order to deliver this proposition in a time-efficient manner, I introduce the

overall model of brand attachment (Figure 1) and address four questions sequentially that relate to the components of the model. Before proceeding with the first question, I want to point out that my talk today reflects our collective view based on many long years of collaborative research with my colleagues. Those who collaborated with me at different stages of the brand-attachment research are Andreas Eisingerich, Sasha Fedorikhin, Dawn Iacobucci, Deborah MacInnis, Jason Park, Joseph Priester, and Matthew Thomson.

### QUESTION 1: WHAT SHOULD SERVE AS THE METRIC FOR JUDGING THE STRENGTH OF THE CUSTOMER-BRAND RELATIONSHIP?

The best way to judge the strength of the customer-brand relationship is to consider how far customers are willing to go to support the brand; what I call pro-brand behaviors. We can think about many pro-brand behaviors that are difficult to enact. What I mean by “difficult” is how much consumers are willing to expend their resources (time, reputation, money, etc.) to support the brand. Examples of difficult-to-perform pro-brand behaviors include the following: (1) Buying Nike shoes, (2) Recommending Nike shoes, (3) Buying Nike

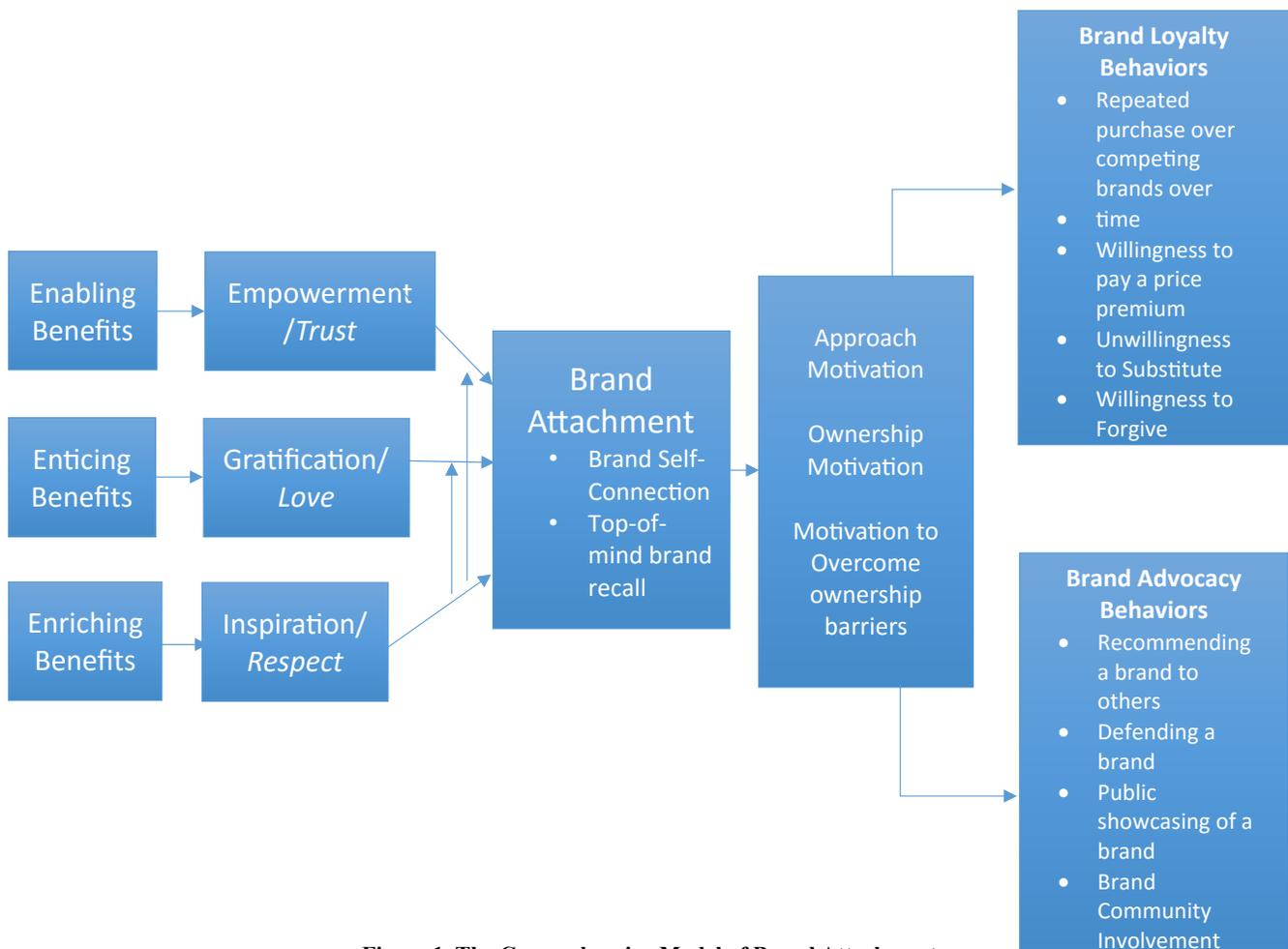


Figure 1. The Comprehensive Model of Brand Attachment

shoes despite their price increase, (4) Defending Nike against negative information, (5) Postponing the purchase and refusing to buy any other competing brands when Nike shoes are not available, and (6) Promoting the Nike brand by participating in Nike community events (spending time and money on behalf of Nike events).

We may assign the above difficult-to-perform pro-brand behaviors into two categories, as noted in Figure 1: (1) brand loyalty behaviors and (2) brand advocacy behaviors. Brand loyalty behaviors refer to repeated brand purchases over time. Brand advocacy behaviors refer to efforts to promote, protect and defend the brand. Engaging in these two types of difficult-to-perform pro-brand behaviors is analogous to helping a brand during difficult times. When customers are willing to engage in these difficult-to-perform behaviors, the relationship between a brand and its customers is like a tree with deep roots. It can resist against strong winds and hard times. A brand in this relationship should be able to secure strong revenues and profit over time.

### QUESTION 2: WHAT DRIVES CUSTOMERS TO ENGAGE IN THESE DIFFICULT-TO-PERFORM PRO-BRAND BEHAVIORS?

We propose that *brand attachment* drives customers to engage in difficult-to-perform pro-brand behaviors. It is defined as the psychological state of mind in which customers have a salient, personal connection with the brand. Consumers feel personal connections with a brand and the brand becomes highly prominent in their minds (top-of-mind recall). This brand attachment is, in turn, developed through three key relationship variables: brand trust, brand love and brand respect (see Figure 1). We often use these three words to describe our relationships with others such as “because he is such a trustworthy person, because I love him or because I respect him, I did so and so.”

Interestingly, we typically use only one word to describe our relationships with others. We rarely use these three words together to describe our relationships. For example, it is uncommon to say “because I not only trust and love him but also respect him, I did so and so for him.” However, when we think about certain special people such as our mothers, our high school teachers, our benevolent bosses, or Mother Theresa, we know that all these three words are needed to describe our relationships with them. Similarly, in the context of a product or service, we typically use one of these three words to describe our feelings toward a brand such as “I love brand X”, “I respect the company X”, or “I trust Brand X”. It is not common for customers to use all three words to describe their feelings toward a brand. But there are a few brands toward which all three words are needed to describe our feelings. They are the ones that are destined to secure efficient profit and growth over time. Let me explain why these three words together — not one, or two, but all three — need to be present together in order for customers to develop strong brand attachment and to enact their loyalty and advocacy behaviors.

Does only trust alone motivate us to enact difficult-to-perform pro-brand behaviors? Before answering this question, we need to be clear about the meaning of trust. Researchers in the past defined brand trust with three different bases: competence-based, benevolence-based, and integrity-based. I think that this is part of the confusion we have regarding the effects of trust on customer-brand relationships. Because these three bases have different theoretical origins, lumping them all under trust makes it difficult to understand what trust does on customer-brand relationships. We need to separate competence from the other two bases so that we can have a better and sharper understanding of what trust does for us. I will get back to this issue shortly.

I define trust in terms of competence since in the brand context, we tend to understand trust more in terms of how much consumers can rely on the brand to solve their problems. Trust, defined in this way, lacks energy to propel people to engage in difficult-to-perform behaviors. Brand relationships with trust but no love is like a year without summer. It is cold. Brand trust in the absence of love makes consumers too lethargic to enact brand loyalty and advocacy behaviors. Therefore, brand trust without love makes customers highly vulnerable to superior competitive options. Whenever another competing option offers better performance at the same or lower price, they will switch to the competing brand quickly.

What about brand love? Does brand love alone motivate us to enact difficult-to-perform pro-brand behaviors? I doubt it! Let us pause a minute and ask ourselves how we use this term, *love*, in a brand context. For example, when I say I love Godiva chocolates, I do not mean that I am willing to sacrifice my life because of my love for the Godiva brand. I do not really mean the *Romeo and Juliet* or *Tristan and Isolde* type of love. Rather, I use the term “love” more or less in terms of my affective predisposition toward a brand and my positive interest in it. I doubt this type of love alone will cause people to engage in difficult-to-perform pro-brand behaviors. Love needs to be accompanied by trust. Love without trust is like a car with no engine. You can make the car go by pushing it, but it won’t get very far.

How about brand respect? Does brand respect alone carry people to difficult-to-perform pro-brand behaviors? I define brand respect as the degree to which consumers look up to and hold a brand in high regard. Respect alone, however, does not trigger strong behavioral motivation. Respect without love involves an arms-length relationship between customers and a brand. Respect is normally accompanied by trust (but not necessarily the other way around). But respect without love makes people only bow at a distance. Without love, a relationship with only respect cannot have a lasting close bond.

Therefore, in order to have a truly meaningful and strong attachment-based customer-brand relationship, a brand must elicit all three attachment-inducing variables: brand trust, love and respect. Using a tree metaphor, trust without love is like a tree without nutrients. It cannot grow well. But a brand relationship based on trust and love can flourish into a tree with lush leaves. That tree might be lovely to look at, and we’re OK with just visiting it sometimes — maybe for a picnic. A brand that is based on trust, love, and respect is a different entity altogether. It’s not only lovely to look at, it’s majestic. It has stature. People notice it, take photos of it, and visit it frequently.

### QUESTION 3: WHAT DOES A BRAND HAVE TO DO TO INDUCE BRAND TRUST, LOVE AND RESPECT? ENABLING, ENTICING AND ENRICHING BENEFITS

This is perhaps the most important question to address. My colleagues and I proposed that a brand should offer three different types of benefits shown in Figure 2. They are enabling, enticing and enriching benefits. Enabling benefits offer functional pleasure in two different ways: (1) by solving customers’ problems and (2) by conserving their resources like time, money and mental, physical or emotional energy. Enticing benefits offer consumers experiential pleasure, also in two different ways: (1) through any one or a combination of their five senses or cognitive stimulation or (2) by warming their hearts. Enriching benefits offer consumers spiritual pleasure in two ways as well: (1) through internal self-enhancement by reflecting consumers’ cherished values or by confirming their self (e.g. their own heritage) and (2) through external self-enhancement by fostering belongingness and distinctiveness.

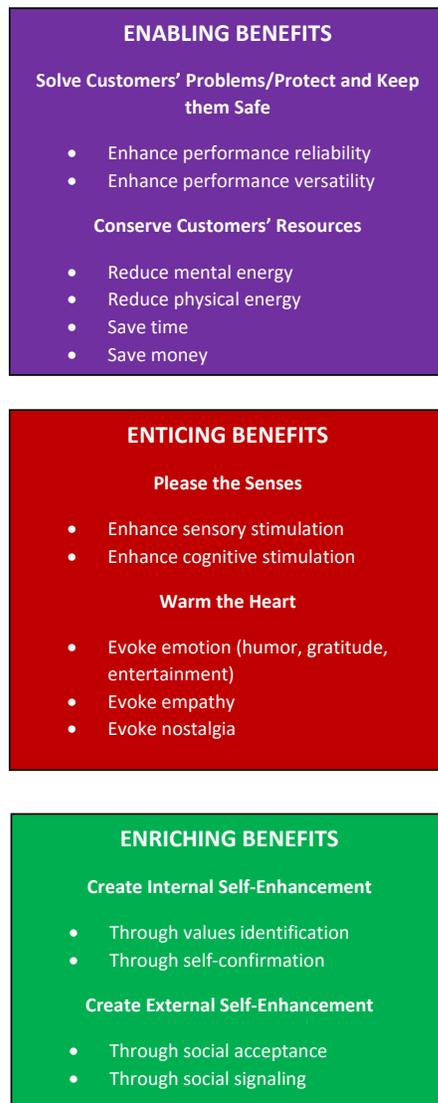


Figure 2. Three Types of Brand Benefits

The functionally effective problem-solving ability of a brand satisfies consumers' psychological need for competence and elicits the emotion of empowerment. As Figure 1 shows, we expect that the empowerment emotion most strongly leads to brand trust. Swiss Army Knives is a great example for the enabling benefits. Remember that we define brand trust in terms of a brand's competence to solve customers' problems or difficulties.

The enticing benefits gratify consumers' psychological need for hedonic well-being. As shown in Figure 1, they elicit an emotion that's best called gratification. As Figure 1 shows, we expect consumers come to love brands that gratify them. In this context, love reflects one's affective predisposition toward a brand. Hello-Kitty is perhaps the best example for these enticing benefits. It is interesting to note that despite its deformed features, it commands so much love from tens of millions of people around the world.

Enriching benefits fulfill consumers' psychological needs for self-affirmation and elicit the emotion of self-esteem. We expect that the self-esteem emotion most strongly leads to brand respect (see Figure 1). Patagonia and Toms Shoes are good examples for the first method (i.e., reflecting consumers' cherished values) of these enrich-

ing benefits because they stand for noble causes like protecting the environment or caring for fellow human beings.

My colleagues and I suggest that brand trust, love, and respect each have a main effect on brand attachment. In addition, we believe that brand respect acts like a multiplier. People do not expect or ask for enriching benefits from a brand. As long as the brand performs satisfactorily and offers experiential gratification, they are content with it. Enriching benefits are not considered. However, strong enriching benefits amplify the contribution of the other two brand attachment drivers: brand trust and love. Enriching benefits *exponentially* increase the positive impact of strong enabling (thus trust) and enticing (thus love) benefits on brand attachment (see the moderating role of the enriching benefits on brand attachment in Figure 1). Perhaps one way to describe the exponential power of enriching benefits is as unanticipated delight or pleasant surprise. Because of its unexpectedness, its impact on brand attachment becomes multiplied.

#### QUESTION 4: HOW DOES BRAND ATTACHMENT MOTIVATE CUSTOMERS TO ENGAGE IN DIFFICULT-TO-PERFORM BEHAVIORS?

To address this final question, we need to understand how each of the three attachment relationship-inducing variables motivates consumers to enact difficult-to-perform pro-brand behaviors in its own manner.

As Figure 1 shows, we propose that brand love taps into consumers' readiness to positively respond toward a brand. Gratification-based brand love makes consumers ready to move toward and approach the brand. Competence-based brand trust, on the other hand, directly influences consumers' desires to purchase or own a brand. Finally, self-esteem-based brand respect produces strong energy or drive to overcome any barriers that make it difficult for a consumer to buy or own a brand. Brand respect has perhaps the most potent motivational force that bridges the gap between behavioral intention and actual behavior. It generates strong motivation that is necessary for consumers to actually perform difficult-to-perform pro-brand behaviors. Respect only makes people bow at a distance, as I mentioned earlier. It has a limited impact on consumers. However, when respect is accompanied by trust and love, it has an exponential power on them.

#### FINAL THOUGHT

I must point out that strong brand attachment is a relative term. What I mean is that brand attachment isn't an all-or-none state. Rather, consumers are attached to brands at varying degrees. Even if consumers are strongly attached to a brand, marketers should still look for ways to keep that attachment strong. And just because a brand evokes limited attachment doesn't mean it can't improve. By continuously improving the 3 E's, every marketer should be on a continual quest to enhance the degree to which consumers are attached to their brand. As long as a brand is better than its competitors on at least any one of the 3 E's while being the same on the other two E's, it can still be highly successful. However, the magnitude and the sustainability of the market success of individual brands becomes strongest when a brand offers the 3 E's simultaneously. I particularly think that we need to pay careful attention to the role of the enriching benefits on the strength of the customer-brand relationship. They should deserve more attention and research from marketing scholars.

Think about the time-defying and classic entertainment brands such as *Gone with the Wind*, *Casablanca*, *Star Wars*, and *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Think about Nike or Apple — despite their relatively short histories, they are very powerful brands. Also, think about time-defying brands like Tiffany, Rolex, and Caterpillar. There is a

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common thread that ties all of these brands together: they have benefits that enable, entice and enrich their customers.

When a brand offers the 3 E's together, it should help consumers to emit several chemical transmitters in their brains that are important for feeling happiness, such as oxytocin, endorphin, dopa-

mine, and serotonin. I would thus say that a great brand with all 3 E's together can be a happiness inducer, sustainer and enhancer. This also means that we in the marketing field pursue a science of creating, sustaining and enhancing customers' happiness. Thanks.

# 2016 ACR Fellow Address

## What I have Learned about Variety: (And are there any lessons here for our polarized US?)

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### PREFACE

*I prepared this talk the month before the November 2016 election and delivered it a week before Donald Trump was elected President. During the campaign season, diversity issues were front and center in much of the nation's conversations. Given my career-long interest in variety-seeking behavior, I wondered if there were any parallels in what I had learned about variety, and what management professors might tell us about how diversity within organizations affects firm outcomes and team performance.*

*Although I am clearly not an expert in these types of diversity issues, I read some well-cited review papers in the area and perused HBR and other popular business press articles to get a sense of the major findings. I then categorized my variety-seeking research into four major areas. I reviewed the major findings in each of these areas and then looked for parallels in the diversity literature.*

### 1. WHAT IS VARIETY-SEEKING BEHAVIOR?

My interest in variety-seeking behavior began in the early 1980's when I was working on my dissertation at Columbia University under the tutelage of Donald Morrison. Don had discovered an interesting working paper in the library that had been written by Leigh McAlister who was a professor at MIT at the time. In this paper, she introduced the idea of variety-seeking behavior, a somewhat unusual focus for marketers who were naturally more interested in brand loyalty and building market share. We wondered at the time – what exactly is variety-seeking behavior, could we provide parsimonious measures for the behavior, and was this an important idea for marketers to embrace?

As I studied the area more deeply, I learned that others in addition to Leigh (who published her paper in *Journal of Consumer Research* (McAlister 1982) had begun to describe the behavior (e.g., Bass, Jeuland and Wright (1976), Huber and Reibstein (1978), Laurent (1978), Jeuland (1979), McAlister and Pessemier (1982), Givon (1984), Lattin and McAlister (1985), Lattin (1987), Bawa (1990). Interestingly, many of these papers were dissertations, illustrating how new this idea was at the time.

Together these papers defined variety-seeking behavior as deliberate behavior where consumers derived utility from *change*. Thus by definition, satisfying these types of customer needs would not lead to customer loyalty, which was thought to be the best strategy for profit maximization. Rather satisfying these customers' needs would suggest encouraging customers to switch away from a firm's brand, or provide a portfolio of options, which of course could increase costs. Obviously encouraging variety-seeking behavior then would not be a manager's first-choice strategy, but if the behaviors were naturally occurring, it would be foolhardy to ignore the phenomenon.

At the time, marketing academics had access to panel data that allowed us to observe consumers' actual shopping behavior in grocery stores. This gave me an opportunity to observe just how common variety-seeking behavior was in these types of categories. In my dissertation (which was published as Kahn, Kalwani and Morrison 1986), I proposed a model which could distinguish between variety-

seeking, brand loyal and zero order behavior and used this model to describe purchase patterns across four product categories.

Like it or not, consumers were definitely seeking variety in some product categories and the behavior was more prevalent for some brands than for others. I also identified distinct types of variety-seeking behavior: (1) pure variety-seeking, where consumers seek change on every choice occasion, (2) learning or exploring variety-seeking, where consumers seek change early on in a product category, and then move to brand loyal behavior, and (3) satiation behavior, where consumers are reasonably brand loyal for a period of time until they satiate or get bored and then they start seeking variety.

Using the models that I developed in my dissertation, I then studied how variety-seeking affected market share in different types of promotional conditions. Working with various co-authors (Kahn and Raju 1991; Kahn and Louie 1990, Feinberg, Kahn and McAlister 1992), I learned that in general more variety-seeking behavior **hurts high market share brands and helps low market share brands**. In markets where variety-seeking is common, major brands benefit more than minor brands when marketing activities make all the brands seem more similar and when promotional activity is high.

Are there parallels between these findings and what we were observing in the country on attitudes about diversity? I looked at Pew Research Center surveys that had specifically examined voters' attitudes towards diversity prior to the election. Trump supporters at the time were generally thought to be white men, whereas Clinton supporters were thought to skew more towards non-white and female. The survey showed, consistent with what my research had found for high-market share brands, that Trump supporters who would not benefit from diversity initiatives were significantly more likely to say that "compared with 50 years ago, life for people like you in America today is worse (81%), better (11%), same (18%) as compared to Clinton supporters: worse (19%), better (59%), same (6%). Diversity, like variety seeking, helps "lower share brands" or non-majority groups. Consistently, only 40% of Trump supporters agree that an increasing number of people of different races and ethnicities makes the United States a better place to live, whereas 72% of Clinton supporters agree with that statement. 16% of Trump supporters thought diversity made the US a worse place to live whereas only 2% of Clinton supporters thought that.

### 2. WHAT CONSUMER BEHAVIOR FACTORS AFFECT VARIETY-SEEKING BEHAVIOR?

In the 1990's I worked with several co-authors to better understand what consumer-relevant factors increased or decreased variety-seeking (Kahn and Isen 1993, Mitchell, Kahn and Knasko 1995, and Menon and Kahn 1995). Across all the studies, I generally found that positive affect increases variety-seeking behavior for several reasons. First positive feelings cue and facilitate access to positive material in memory. Positive is also more diverse than other material and a happy person has more ready access to a diverse set of cognitive material. Finally, all of this increased awareness of the differences among items make those items more stimulating and thus there is more interchange among brands.

On the other hand, stimulation exhibits an inverted U relationship with variety-seeking behavior. Consumers have an optimal stimulation level, and these differ by individual. This means that if the consumer feels insufficient stimulation, they are likely to seek more variety and if they are over-stimulated they are less likely to seek variety. Stimulation or variety in one context can also affect the amount stimulation or variety the consumer desires in another context, suggesting again that there is some optimal stimulation that consumers crave.

When I looked at the diversity literature there also was a u-shaped connection between stimulation (or creativity) and diversity, but those researchers looked at it from the opposite direction, i.e., not how stimulation affect variety-seeking, but rather how diversity stimulates decision-making. Their findings indicated that diversity (or variety) within a team or group could on one hand could cause too much stimulation resulting in discomfort, rougher interactions, a lack of trust, greater perceived interpersonal conflict, lower communication, lower group cohesiveness, and more concern about disrespect. But diversity or variety in race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation could also increase perspectives and thus stimulate creativity and encourage the search for novel information and perspectives that would lead to better decision making and problem solving. Some research indicated that diversity could also improve the bottom line and lead to breakthrough innovations.

My research would add to these findings by suggesting the alternative causality that if there is more stress and conflict in the environment, people would less likely to accept or seek out diversity and variety. This could predict that the stressful pre-election environment made some people less tolerant of differences or diversity among people.

### **3. ARE PEOPLE CHOOSING TOO MUCH VARIETY?**

In 1990, Itamar Simonson wrote a seminal paper that spawned a whole stream of research that asked whether consumers were choosing too much variety. Ironically, by this time, variety-seeking behavior had become so well understood and accepted that people were now questioning whether people should cease seeking variety and stick to their favorites. Simonson (1990) showed that holding consumption constant, the time and patterning of the choice process (e.g., simultaneous vs. sequential) could affect how much variety people chose. Others looked at how preference uncertainty (Kahneman and Snell 1992), choice difficulty (Simonson 1990), flexibility for future (Kahn and Lehmann 1991), choice bracketing (Read and Lowenstein 1995), group choice (Ariely and Levav 2000), and self-monitoring or public image (Ratner and Kahn 2002) affected how much variety people chose.

My most cited paper in this stream was with Danny Kahneman and Rebecca Ranter (Ratner, Kahn and Kahneman 1999). In this paper, we asked participants to listen to sequences of music snippets over time. We varied the sequences to have high or low variety, and by design, the low variety sequences that had more repetition also included more of the participants' favorite songs, while the high variety sequences had less repetition but included less preferred songs. We found that there was a preference for high variety sequences when we asked participants to rate the sequences retrospectively, but when we asked them to rate the sequences in real-time they rated the lower variety sequences with more preferred songs higher. When participants chose their own sequences of songs, they tended to include songs that they did not enjoy as much just for the sake of variety. We concluded that consumers sacrifice utility for variety as a learned response to preferring the variety in memory.

These marketing results suggesting that consumers may be choosing too much variety and sacrificing utility for the favorites does have a direct parallel in the diversity literature. Critics of Affirmative Action initiatives argue that these types of policies in college admissions or in recruiting can yield less optimal candidate choices by prioritizing diversity over raw "intelligence" or "quality" metrics. This is obviously a more controversial discussion in the organizational literature than in marketing.

In defense of Affirmative Action programs, McKinsey (2015) studied the effect of diversity on organizations and found that these policies did have a positive impact on many key aspects of organizational performance. More diversity in an organization was found to help in the war for talent, strengthen customer orientation increase employee satisfaction, improve decision-making and enhance company image. Diversity in organizations also yielded financial returns higher than industry medians, and a BCG study showed that diverse companies could outperform homogenous ones.

Here the organization literature seems to have some implications for marketing in that it suggests that even when consumers choose "too much variety" and thus sacrifice consuming their favorites, there may be value in this variety that is not captured just by looking at utility.

### **4. ARE MARKETERS PROVIDING TOO MUCH VARIETY?**

In 2000, Iyengar and Lepper wrote another seminal paper about variety. Here, they argued that too much choice leads to choice overload and consumers choose not to choose or they delay their choices. This research generated so many studies that there are several review papers and meta-analyses on the topic. My own contribution in this area was in two areas.

First, in Huffman and Kahn (1998) we found similarly to Iyengar and Lepper (2000) that consumers can get overwhelmed by having too much variety, particularly in situations where they were customizing their own products making the assortment seem almost limitless. We found that if we helped consumers learn their preferences through simple techniques the consumers were much more able to appreciate the variety, the perceived complexity was lessened and they were more likely to make choices without delay. I found parallels to these ideas in the diversity literature such that if participants were told to elaborate and think more about the spectrum of information that was offered by diverse teams, the positive effects of diversity increased. Thus in both cases, elaboration helped people appreciate variety.

The other way I have thought about this issue of too much choice is to reframe the discussion into thinking about it as actual variety versus perceived variety. In various studies, I show different ways marketers can arrange the assortment such that the actual variety is held constant but the perceived variety varies – and it is this perceived variety that ultimately affects decision-making.

The first paper I did in this stream was with Brian Wansink (Kahn and Wansink 2004) where we found that increases in perceived variety, holding actual variety constant, increased how much participants consumed. More recently Townsend and Kahn (2014) found that holding everything else constant, that depiction of an assortment visually is found to have more perceived variety than depiction of the same assortment in text. Further, when the assortment is small, people prefer the visual assortment and are more likely to not defer choice compared to the same assortment shown in words. However, when the assortment size gets big, people still prefer visual depiction but this can make the assortment appear too complex and can delay choice as opposed to the same assortment depicted in

text. Most recently in Deng, Kahn, Rao, Unnava and Lee (2016) we showed that holding the actual variety constant but displaying the assortment horizontally (as opposed to vertically) will increase perceived variety and will increase variety-seeking behavior.

Interesting in the diversity literature there have been similar types of investigations comparing actual to perceived impressions. Generally, one of the advantages of diversity in an organization is that different perspectives and different information can come into the discussion and that improves decision making. One study that showed even if the actual information is held constant, mock juries performed better at considering case facts and made fewer errors recalling relevant information and displayed a greater openness to discussing race when the juries were diverse as opposed to all one race. Thus, although the actual diversity of information was held constant, the perceived diversity of information varied and that made people more diligent and open-minded.

### CONCLUSIONS

As I reflect back, I feel fortunate that the ideas I explored in my dissertation continued to interest me all of these years later, and that this area could attract other researchers who helped to expand the boundaries of inquiry. Further exploration of variety seeking in marketing seems to have some parallels in other areas that look at variety in different ways.

Summarizing, I found that variety-seeking (or diversity) can threaten the status quo, and the “haves” are hurt, and the “have-nots” are helped. Open-mindedness and positive thinking enhances desire for variety (diversity) and vice versa. However, too much conflict (stimulation) can diminish the desire for variety (diversity). Choosing for the sake of variety can undermine choosing the most preferred options, but is that all bad? Is there such a thing as too much variety? Even if variety is enormous, structure, learning of preferences and elaboration can help. Finally perceived variety (diversity) matters more than actual variety (diversity).

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# 2016 ACR Fellow Address

## Reflections: Progress Made and Perspective Shifted

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Being named an ACR Fellow prompted me to think back to my first ACR conference, which was 44 years ago, almost to the day. As I reflected, I wondered about what has changed and what has stayed the same. What *progress* have we made and how has my *perspective* evolved?

When I attended what was the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference in 1972, ACR had 254 members, 20 of whom were students and 19 of whom were from outside North America. The conference was held on the campus of the University of Chicago at the Center for Continuing Education and the program was printed in the Newsletter. JCR was but an idea in the minds of the leadership of the young organization... it would launch two years later. To give younger ACR members a sense of the time, fashion-forward attendees were wearing polyester bell-bottoms, their data analysis was conducted using punch cards, and their paper submissions to the conference were prepared using a typewriter and submitted by U.S. mail. And, I was a first year, first quarter doctoral student at Northwestern attending the conference with my fellow doctoral students and several faculty members.

By last year's conference, ACR membership had grown more than seven-fold to 1973, 628 of whom were students and 714 of whom were from outside North America. Today, we are meeting in Berlin, marking the first time that the main (fall) conference has been held outside North America—this conference has traditionally been called the North American Conference but obviously a new description is needed. JCR is a thriving journal with 3,518 subscribers. Instead of a hard copy program, there's Whova app with the program and much more. You can look around the room for current fashion, data collection is often electronic and uses "M-Turk" to recruit participants, and all conference materials are prepared and submitted online.

Much has changed and I think it is fair to say we have made progress as a field by engaging such a diverse group of scholars who examine a wide range of topics using a variety of methods. The one thing that has stayed the same is my affiliation. I just can't seem to get out of Evanston, IL. And bell-bottom pants are again fashionable, though they've gone in and out of fashion so it's not the same as my unwavering attachment to NU.

In 1972, not only was I attending ACR as a newbie to the field, but thanks to my advisor, Jerry Zaltman, who was in charge of the conference arrangements, I found myself on the program. Let me explain. I was just settling in at Northwestern and stopped by to visit with Jerry, who had been instrumental in my decision to come to Northwestern for my doctoral training. During our conversation, I mentioned that I had conducted a study while at Ohio State, where I did my undergraduate and master's degrees, in which I surveyed women's attitudes toward the feminist movement, a hot topic at the time. The Equal Rights Amendment or ERA as it was called, had been passed by Congress and was being ratified by states across the country, Gloria Steinem and the National Organization of Women were regularly in the news, and women were demonstrating in favor of more equitable treatment in the workplace and at home. Although not active in the feminist movement, I supported equal rights and was interested in the degree to which other women felt the same. However, I was stunned when in response to my mention of the study, Jerry enthused, "That's great, there's a session at the ACR confer-

ence that's coming up where you could present your findings. I'll put you on the program!" Apparently, no long, drawn-out formal review was required to get on the program back then, something I couldn't appreciate at the time! The behavior was pure Jerry. He'd throw you in the deep end of the pool confident you'd figure out how to swim! It made him a great mentor and I'm thankful for the opportunities he gave me.

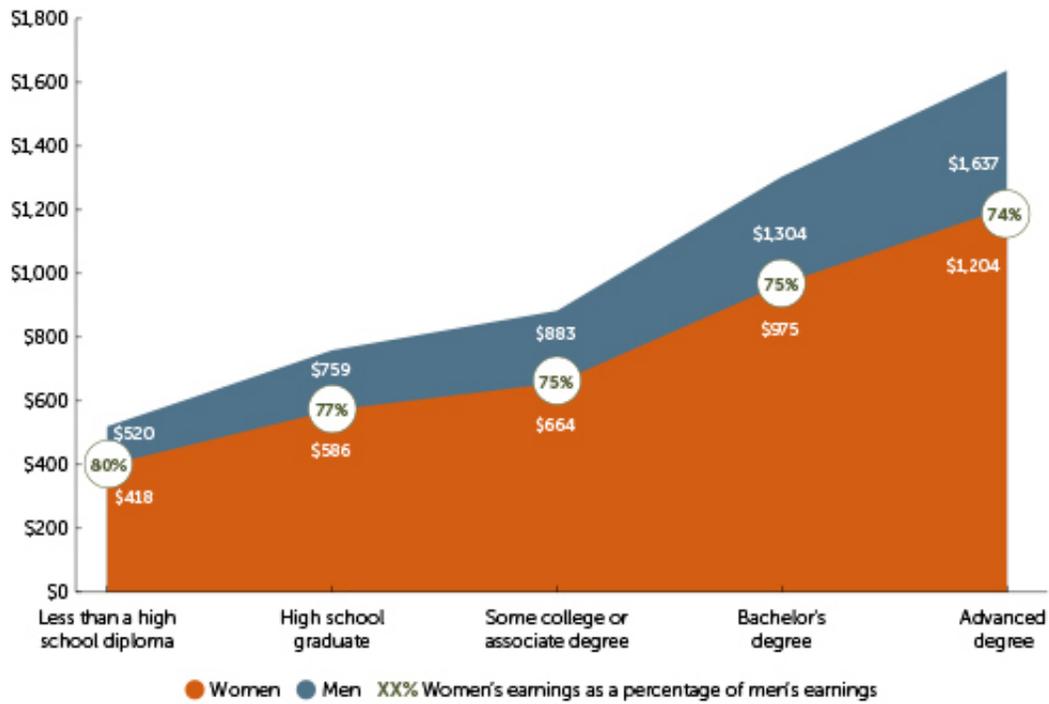
I was more than a bit intimidated but I set about preparing a presentation based on my study. I'd conducted a telephone survey of 94 women in Columbus, Ohio in which I asked questions regarding their beliefs about equality in the workplace and their knowledge of the Equal Rights Amendment, which was under consideration for ratification by the state of Ohio at the time. My paper was entitled "The Feminist Movement: Attitudes, Behavior, and Potential" and was part of a session on called "Ms. and Consumer Behavior: Some Perspectives" (Beery 1972).

When I re-read my paper in preparing my remarks for today, I couldn't help but wonder about the progress made in terms of women's equality, particularly in light of volatile discussions surrounding the presidential election in the U.S. How might women today respond to the questions I asked in 1972? It didn't seem reasonable to repeat the same telephone survey but I thought it would be interesting to ask some of the same questions to a sample of women and see how different or similar their responses were.

My sample a few weeks ago was 248 women from the Midwest who responded to an online survey. I did not repeat the questions about the Equal Rights Amendment. I suspect most respondents today would either be unfamiliar with the E.R.A. because it was never ratified by the 38 states required for passage, or they would confuse the acronym with ERA the brand, a detergent marketed by P&G.

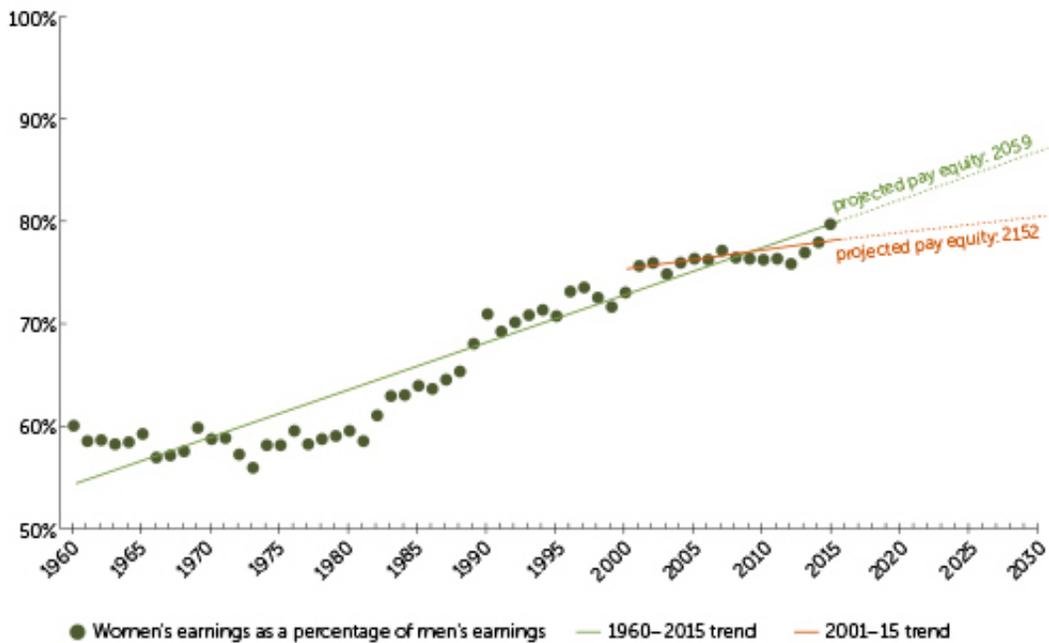
Differences between the responses in 1972 and 2016 wouldn't be surprising given the myriad of changes in just about everything from the sample and mode of data collection to changes in the workplace. What was interesting to me was the fact that there were both differences *and* similarities. Views toward women working outside of the home when they have young children are now far more liberal; only 6% of the 2016 sample agreed with the statement "Women with young children should not work," versus 47% in 1972. Most likely this reflects the economic necessity of women working either because they are single mothers or because two incomes are often required for a family to earn enough to cover basic expenses. Likewise, agreement with the statement "Because men often have a family to support, they should receive higher pay than women for the same work," had declined from 27.7% in 1972 survey to 3.6% in 2016. Further, women who responded to the recent survey were more likely to believe that their family members support equal employment than was the case in 1972 (57% versus 82%).

However, women were *not* optimistic about work place fairness either then or now. Few agreed with the statement "Women generally receive the same pay as men when they perform the same work (21.3% in 1972, 18.5% in 2016)" and they have good reason to be skeptical. Recent studies report that on average women are paid 20% less than men in comparable positions and this disparity is *greater*, not smaller, for women of color and women with advanced degrees (see Figure 1). This pay gap is not anticipated close before 2052 (see



Note: Based on median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers, ages 25 and older, 2015 annual averages  
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey*, reported in U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *2015 Usual Weekly Earnings Summary*, *Economic News Release USDL-16-0111*, Table 9

Figure 1. Median Weekly Earnings, by Level of Education and Gender, 2015



Source: AAUW analysis of data from Proctor et al., U.S. Census Bureau, *Income and Poverty in the United States: 2015*

Figure 2. Women's Median Annual Earnings as a Percentage of Men's Median Annual Earnings for Full-Time, Year-Round Workers, 1960-2015

Figure 2). I won't live to see that the happen and my now 23 year old daughter will be nearing retirement by that time. A significant portion of women in both samples also shared a belief that employers discriminate against women in hiring (36.2% in 1972 and 40.7% in 2016) and felt that women do not have the same opportunity for advancement as men (57.4% in 1972 and 62.1% in 2016).

What do I conclude from comparing the responses to these two surveys? As I look around this conference, it is obvious that women make up a substantial portion of the membership and fill many of the leadership positions in ACR. Moreover, many marketing departments have a number of female faculty at all ranks. My own department and school are led by female faculty. And woman heads the ticket of a major party in this year's presidential race for the first time. These are significant changes and represent considerable progress. But the persistent pay gap, the small number of female CEOs and limited representation of women on corporate boards suggests that there is much still to be done to achieve equality in the workplace. Perhaps the glass is moving toward full but it certainly isn't there yet.

In addition to prompting reflection on the topic of my presentation at the 1972 ACR, looking over the program from that conference reminded me that ACR's founders had a vision bringing together not simply academics from a broad range of disciplines but also practitioners and those who work in government to address issues related to consumers. A number of sessions at the 1972 conference focused on public policy issues and involved speakers from industry and government. Indeed, my dissertation research involved field experiments funded by the Illinois Department of Public Aid in which I examined the effectiveness of various persuasive communication strategies for enrolling Medicaid recipients in an HMO program. Listening to Presidential addresses by Punam Anand Keller and Angela Lee at ACR over the past few years, I sense a resurgence of interest in research that has an impact in addressing real world problems.

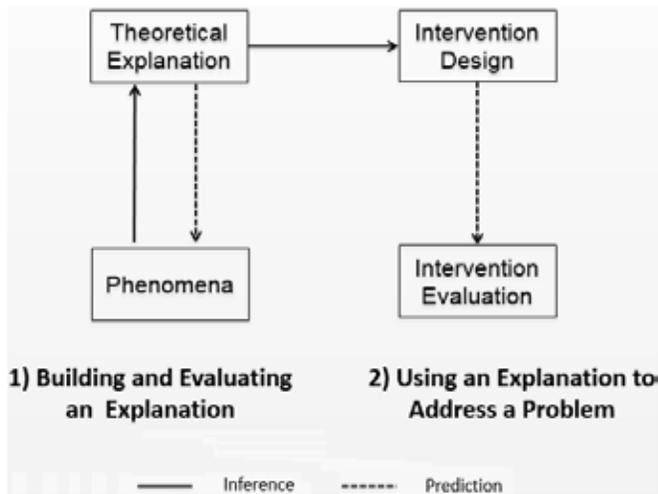
Since my dissertation, my own effort to contribute to using my skills as a consumer researcher to address practical problems have taken a more philosophical bent and my thinking in this regard has evolved. A paper entitled "Designing Research for Application," which was coauthored with Bobby Calder and Lynn Phillips and published in JCR in 1981, is my most frequently cited work and it details two alternative paths to research application. Let me briefly recap what motivated us to write the paper and the essence of what we said. In 1977, JCR had a new editor, Robert Ferber, an economist and statistician whose own research relied heavily on surveys. In the tradition of new editors, Ferber wrote an editorial entitled "Research by Convenience," in which he argued strenuously against the heavy reliance on convenience samples of students as participants in consumer research. Ferber's position was grounded in principles of statistical generalization; one must draw a probability sample from the relevant population in order to generalize the finding from the sample to the population.

We did not dispute Ferber's argument about statistical generalization. If generalizing observed effects from a sample to a larger population is the goal, then randomly drawing subjects from that population would support such generalization. However, we viewed Ferber's admonitions about the use of student subjects and the related arguments against laboratory settings as too sweeping and inappropriate when the researcher's goal was not to generalize specific effects but rather to test theory. We argued that, in theory testing research, the goal is to test hypotheses under conditions where the expected effect can be detected if it indeed exists. Homogenous samples of students and controlled settings can strengthen such tests

by minimizing the variance attributable to factors unrelated to the causal relationship under investigation, thereby reducing Type 2 error, the danger of accepting the null hypothesis when the alternative hypothesis is correct. Theories that have been so tested and survived rejection are ones that are appropriate for application to real world problems. The theory, rather than the effects observed to test the theory, is what is generalized and the basis for generalization is the understanding provided by the theoretical explanation not the representativeness of the sample. We also noted that using theory to address a specific real world problems requires translating the theory into a viable intervention, something that involves creativity and the impact of which cannot be known on the basis of the theory. Therefore, when the stakes are high, we argued it may be prudent to stress test the intervention by subjecting it to noisy conditions that characterize the natural setting to assess its impact. Thus, we saw theory as a framework for designing interventions that had a stronger foundation than intuition and avoided problem of induction when generalizing specific effects.

Our paper prompted some debate when it was published and the issue of how to conduct research that is interesting, valid, and applicable continues to engage the ACR community. A recent paper by Lynch and others (Lynch, Alba, Krishna, Morwitz and Gurhan-Canli 2012), distinguishes between two types of research; that which is has the goal of documenting important substantive phenomena and that which is the goal of building and testing theory. The crux of their argument is that both types of research are useful but they should be judged by different criteria. To confuse the two creates unnecessary schisms in the field; the solution is separate but equal. At the same time, questions about reproducibility of effects/phenomena documented in psychology and consumer research have surfaced concerns about the validity of many phenomena and thus their generalizability. The Open Science Collaboration spearheaded by Brian Nosek (2015) documents that many efforts to replicate previous published studies fail. Specific examples can be found in the literature on the attraction effect in choice sets (Huber, Payne and Puto, 1982 vs. Frederick, Lee and Baskin, 2014) and the impact of global versus local norms in encouraging the pro-social behaviors (Goldstein, Cialdini, Griskevicius 2008 vs. Bohner and Shluter 2014). Recommended solutions to improve reproducibility include greater statistical power and conducting more exact and conceptual replications.

These recent discussions prompted me and my colleagues, Bobby Calder, Miguel Brendl and Brian Sternthal to again consider the relationship between effects, theory and developing solutions to practical problems. Our emerging view is that treating phenomena capture and theory testing as separate enterprises may hamper our progress and ability to address real world problems. Yes, it is important to pin down phenomena to be explained and some researchers may elect to focus on this whereas others may emphasize building and testing theory or using theory to construct interventions. But it is always necessary to move from phenomena to explanation as the basis for application in new settings. Insightful explanations for *when and why* the phenomena occur and careful construction and testing of theory-based interventions will help us address real world problems (see Figure 3).



**Figure 3. Integrating Phenomena-Focused and Theory-Focused Research to Design Effective Interventions: A 2-Step Process**

And, both steps in the process require imagination, which is the theme of an article that Bobby and I recently published as a commentary on Jerry Zaltman's AMS article titled "Marketing's Coming Age of Imagination" (Calder and Tybout 2016). My current perspective is grounded in my earlier work, but my appreciation for the need to integrate phenomena and explanation and to think abstractly and with imagination about explanations and interventions has increased.

You may have noticed an emphasis on two Ps in my reflections thus far, the *Progress* we've made as a society and field and how my *Perspective* has evolved. One thing that I haven't yet mentioned but that has been a constant in my years on the Northwestern faculty is what I've taught. I started out teaching the core marketing MBA course and 41 years later I still teach the core marketing MBA course. All of you who teach the core know there are four Ps, not two! And indeed, I do have four Ps in mind today. My Progress and my Perspective are attributable to People and Place. I was blessed to have wonderful mentors as a doctoral student (a special thank you Jerry Zaltman and Sid Levy, but my thanks extend to each and every faculty member who taught me at Northwestern and at Ohio State). I also have been blessed with, fabulous colleagues and doctoral students since joining the faculty at Northwestern, and most especially, I am grateful to my numerous, brilliant coauthors. The interdisciplinary nature of the department and the spirit of comradery and mutual respect fueled my personal growth. Which brings me to place. Nearly all of my coauthors share a connection to Northwestern, which has been a very special place for me. In Evanston, we have shared the home called the Jacobs Center. What it lacks in aesthetics (it was built on the heels of campus riots in the 1960s and therefore is more a fortress than a structure designed to foster collaboration and lofty thoughts), it compensates for in the warmth and intellect of the people who work there. In January, Kellogg will move to our new Global Hub. Its open architecture and view of the lake and Chicago skyline promise a place that will fuel even greater imagination and collaboration.

On the people front, I also want to express a special thanks to dear friends who have been by my side on this journey. Carol Scott was there to calm my nerves and support me at that first ACR and we've shared ups and downs in our careers and personal lives ever since. Leigh McAlister joined us a few years into Carol and my journey and her energy, positive attitude and huge commitment to everything she does are a source of inspiration.

In addition, I want to acknowledge my husband Brian, who is also a colleague and coauthor (a trifecta), and our daughter Caroline. The two of you have provided an important work/life balance and brought me great joy. Finally, I want to thank my Dad who is 96 years young, a retired economics professor from OSU and an incredible, ongoing source of inspiration. Dad is still as sharp as ever and spends his time writing to advise President Obama on the correct stance to adopt on issues related to energy and foreign relations, giving humorous speeches at his chapter of Toastmasters, swimming and keeping on top of all family events with cards and calls of celebration and congratulation. My Dad set a standard for mindful engagement in professional and personal life that I may not be able to achieve but I'll keep reaching for.

Today my glass is neither half full nor half empty, it is overflowing with gratitude for this honor.

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